

West Devon Borough Councillor Update for Tavistock– February 2025

Tavistock Neighbourhood Plan Moves Forward

The Tavistock Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has successfully passed independent examination, confirming it meets the required standards for adoption. The plan, which sets out a long-term vision for the town's development, will now go to the WDBC Hub Committee for consideration. If approved, it will move to a public referendum, giving residents the opportunity to directly influence local planning policies.

Tavistock Conservation Area Consultation

WDBC is consulting on updates to the Tavistock Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. Proposals include a small boundary extension and additional protections to preserve the town's historic character while allowing for sustainable development.

The consultation provides an opportunity for residents and businesses to share their views on how best to balance heritage protection with Tavistock's evolving needs.

Okehampton Interchange Railway Station Construction

Work has begun on Okehampton Interchange, a £15 million investment designed to improve rail connectivity for West Devon. Funded by the Department for Transport, Devon County Council, and WDBC, the station is expected to strengthen the case for reinstating the Tavistock–Plymouth rail link, which would reduce congestion and support local economic growth.

Garden Waste Collection Renewals Open

Subscriptions for garden waste collection are now open, with an annual charge of £65 for 2025/26. The service includes four reusable sacks collected fortnightly, with collections starting 1 April 2025. The fee increase reflects rising operational costs, including fuel prices and waste management expenses.

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

The government's English Devolution White Paper encourages the restructuring of local government, with discussions ongoing about replacing two-tier councils with unitary authorities. Devon's district councils have issued a joint statement raising concerns about how any reorganisation could affect local accountability and service delivery. In general, a single Devonwide unitary is gaining little support. Discussions are ongoing.

Government Rejects Devon County Council's Bid to Delay Elections

As part of its discussions on unitary status, Devon County Council (DCC) applied to postpone the May 2025 elections, citing concerns that ongoing reorganisation discussions could impact governance. However, the government has rejected the request, confirming that elections will proceed on 1 May 2025.

This decision ensures that electoral processes remain uninterrupted, reaffirming that any future local government restructuring will not delay democratic participation.

Voter ID Required for May Elections

Voters in the Devon County Council elections on 1 May 2025 must present photo ID at polling stations. Accepted forms include passports, driving licences, blue badges, and official government ID cards.

Recommendations for Tavistock Town Council

I am aware that the TTC and its councillors already help to promote many of the issues below but I list them for information.

- Neighbourhood Plan – Continue to promote awareness of the upcoming referendum and encourage resident engagement.
- Conservation Area Consultation – Encourage participation in the consultation to ensure local priorities are reflected in final planning policies.
- Rail Infrastructure – Continue supporting discussions around the Tavistock–Plymouth rail link, ensuring Tavistock is included in future transport plans.
- Garden Waste Renewals – Support WDBC in helping to inform residents about renewal deadlines.
- Devolution and Local Government Changes – Continue to monitor discussions on unitary status and ensure that Tavistock retains strong local representation in any reorganisation.
- Elections and Voter ID – Raise public awareness of election dates and ID requirements to ensure high voter turnout on 1st May.