

West Devon Borough Ward Councillor Update: Cllr Andy Coulson – Tavistock North Ward

Dear Tavistock Town Councillors

Please see below a selection of what I believe to be notable items from within WDBC that have occurred recently. For further detail on any of these or anything else please get in touch.

West Devon Plan:

Replacing the 'Corporate Strategy' the recently released 'A Plan for West Devon' sets out WDBC's vision for the next 20 years as well as how it intends to deliver this over the next 3 years with partners and the community. The plan can be found at [here](#).

This was developed after public and partner consultation and respondents overwhelmingly from Tavistock. Some headline responses are here:

- Poor transport links, lack of affordable housing, low pay and limited access to healthcare were the main areas of concern highlighted by our residents.
- Finding great people to hire and lack of investment in transport links to the rest of the UK are the main challenges highlighted by our businesses.
- 94% of the 79 visitors we spoke to were pleased with their experience of visiting the area – with 70% of them being return visitors.

When asked what residents would most like WDBC to focus on as part of post-pandemic recovery the most common answers were:

- Reinstatement of railway & improved bus services
- Better cycle lanes and footpaths
- Improved internet connections
- Review of parish councils
- No housing developments in small rural villages
- Access to education and learning for all age groups
- Support for small businesses
- Youth employment
- All housing to be affordable for local residents and not just a small percentage
- Ensure all new developments are truly sustainable
- Support for farming/farmers
- Less focus on tourism
- Stricter control on second homes and holiday lets
- Electric car charging infrastructure
- Fix the roads/potholes
- Better access to facilities such as doctors and dentists
- Protect open spaces and the natural environment

Bannawell Street Play Area:

S106 Money has been secured from the Emden Grange (Butchers Park Hill) development and the clock is now ticking to spend it in the next 4 years. A WDBC officer is on hand to work with TTC to help develop some ideas and address any possible issues. The money must be spent by 20 Sep 2023. As a Tavistock North Ward Councillor and parent, I am keen to see this brought back into use. Many local parents were saddened to see the previous facilities removed from the location which benefits

from its proximity the countryside. Rob Sekula (WDBC Natural Resources and Green Infrastructure) would be happy to offer his services in his own time free of charge to help project-manage the project. For more information, please feel free to get in touch with one of the Tavistock North Councillors.

Traffic Volumes in Tavistock:

An ongoing concern and of no surprise to any Tavistock councillors, WDBC Overview & Scrutiny Committee hosted Councillor Stuart Hughes (Cabinet Member for Highway Management) and Mr John Fewings (Devon Highways Maintenance) to answer questions on traffic and road maintenance around Tavistock. Members concerns included the poor state of repair of the roads (potholes), poor coordination between various roadworks which cause significant misery and the ability of the roads to cope with more traffic (against a backdrop of more development), given that the Plymouth Road appears close to capacity already.

Market Traders Grant:

A third tranche of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) will be made available and delivered via WDBC Officers as either:

- **The Market Traders Grant.** As either £500 or £1000 grants. Market Traders on the Communications distribution list will be notified shortly.
- **The Community Recovery Fund:** Designed to fund projects that deliver more for the community or for the economy. Applications will be invited from businesses that can maximise the money to benefit the area in two ways:
- The **Community/Social/Societal** portion of the fund will lean toward projects such as events that provide a social benefit, community cohesion, local quality of life, tourism, or promoting the area.
- The **Local Economy** portion of the fund will be for projects that recirculate money around the local economy and provide more benefit by the applicant using local suppliers, services and support to deliver a project.
- There will also be a small fund available for business start-up support (not for stock purchase) for people made redundant during the Covid lockdown period.

3 Weekly bin collections:

The 3 weekly refuse collection trial which took place at select areas in Tavistock, Okehampton and Bridestowe has concluded with WDBC Hub deciding to not to rollout three weekly collections across the Borough. Over the period of the trial the pandemic brought about changes to peoples living and working circumstances which increased home delivered and waster produced in households. Despite there being a small increase in recycling and only a small rise in incidences of fly tipping there was still concern amongst some councillors and residents about the ability of some households to store three weeks worth of waste – particularly in HMOs/flats in and around Tavistock town centre.

Councillor Andy Coulson
Tavistock North