

AGENDA ITEM 9b

West Devon Borough Councillor Report Cllr Anne Johnson

The Devon County Council elections will take place on Thursday 1 May 2025. The votes will be counted on Friday 2 May 2025. WDBC electoral team have been busy preparing for the election.

For residents who have a disability:

- The Electoral Services Team can tell them about physical access, for example wheelchair ramps and disabled parking spaces, low-level polling booths, and any specific equipment they need.
- Each polling station has a large print display version of the ballot paper available if needed, they can ask the clerk.

WDBC recently held the very successful Mayor's Awards and had some wonderfully deserving recipients. Due to the pre-election period restrictions the video, PR and photographs from this event will be available once the elections are over.

There is a planned West Devon Matters Meeting on Wednesday 23rd April 7pm to 9pm at Okehampton Police Station or on Teams. These meetings are open to Town Council members to attend these useful meeting with the Police.

From 15 April, buying a property in West Devon will become quicker and more simple.

That is when we will our transfer local land charges search (LLC) function to HM Land Registry's national digital register as part of a national roll-out. The Council will continue to be responsible for updating and maintaining the register.

The LLC Register allows users to search information online so buying decisions can be made earlier in the conveyancing process. It will allow instant access to the information, so buyers don't have to wait hours or days.

Most local land charges are restrictions or prohibitions on the use of property or land, such as planning permissions or listed building status. A search of the national register will reveal whether a property is subject to a charge to help the buyer make an informed decision about the purchase.

Customers who access the register will benefit from:

- instant online access available 24/7.
- standard, easy-to-read information in a digital format.
- properties searchable by text-based address and geographical location.

- geospatial maps that provide greater assurance about the boundaries of each charge.
- official search results offer unlimited repeat searches for six months, and a search history dashboard that gives access to previous searches.

The local land charges team will continue to provide more detailed CON29 searches for property transactions, which includes information on building regulations, a full planning history, road adoptions and environmental health notices.

There have been a few instances where residents have recently fallen victim to fraudulent PayByPhone accounts after using fake QR codes or downloading from unofficial websites. When using car parks across West Devon residents and visitors should remember to download the PayByPhone app from PayByPhone directly or through the official app stores.

The Leader, Officers and Members have been fully engaged in looking at Local Government reorganisation.

We continue to work to bring 3 Spring Hill and 20 Plymouth Road ready to provide accommodation for those at risk of homelessness, hopefully by the time you read this report the first residents will be living at these properties. 20 Plymouth Road will provide three homes, while also maximising energy and carbon savings to align with WDBC's net zero targets.

Following the successful delivery of UK Shared Prosperity Fund money in 2024/25 when it supported 300 businesses and community organisations, WDBC have secured £259,000 of funding for 2025/26.

Each WDBC member continues to have a locality fund of £1,000 annually. This can be used to support communities with projects in their wards. The minimum grant that can be applied for is £100, Tavistock members often join up to grant more than that for projects.

Anne Johnson 9th April 2025