

# Report from your District Councillors

June 2025

## New Leader of South Hams elected

Following Full Council yesterday, we have issued a press release announcing the appointment of our new Leader of the Council, Cllr Dan Thomas.

Here is a reminder of the Executive appointments:

- **Cllr Dan Thomas** - Leader
- **Cllr Simon Rake** - Deputy Leader
- **Cllr Julian Brazil** - Waste and Recycling, Community Services & Operations, Leisure Centres
- **Cllr David Hancock** - Planning, Strategic Planning
- **Cllr John McKay** - Climate change and biodiversity
- **Cllr John Birch** - Economic Development and Commercial Strategy, Governance
- **Cllr Nadine Dommett** - Community Development, Decarbonisation of council operations, Arts and culture
- **Cllr Denise O'Callaghan** - Housing, Environmental Health & Licensing
- **Cllr Jacqi Hodgson** - Waste and community composting
- **Cllr Nicky Hopwood** - Service quality, including customer service and improvement, IT and digital services



## Chairman's cheque presentation

Our chairman has been raising money for the British Heart Foundation and Diabetes UK for the last 12 months, raising £1,650 for each organisation.

At Annual Council, Cllr Taylor presented a cheque to the British Heart Foundation's Mark Hawkins.



## Celebrating our young local heroes

Cllr Bernard Taylor, in his role as Chairman, also met up with Kai and Willow Wakeling recently to present them with their 2025 Young Persons Community Award.

Kai and Willow, have over several years helped monitor Kingston Playing Fields with their Grandpa.

On behalf of Kingston Parish Council, they have gone out on weekends every 6 weeks to inspect the play equipment, grass areas, collect litter and report back their findings.



## Continuing support for VCSE organisations in the South Hams

As part of the continuing support for our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE) organisations in the South Hams - please find the May edition of Funding News for South Hams VCSE communities [here](#).

Please share this with voluntary and community groups and organisations in your Wards and please encourage them to sign-up to the new partnership offered by our neighbouring Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) organisations: West Devon CVS and Teignbridge CVS, at the new South Hams' email address: [southhamsvcs@outlook.com](mailto:southhamsvcs@outlook.com)

By signing up, they will receive regular sector updates, details of upcoming events and training opportunities as well as Funding News.

## Illegal tree felling



We have successfully prosecuted a person for unlawfully felling a protected Holm Oak tree in East Portlemouth. The individual was fined nearly £3,000 after removing the mature tree, which was safeguarded by a Tree Preservation Order, without obtaining the necessary permission.

Protecting our natural environment is one of the our top priorities. This case highlights our commitment to enforcing environmental laws and preserving the district's rich biodiversity.

## RTS Electricity Meters Being Switched Off This June

For residents who have a **Radio Teleswitch Service (RTS)** electricity meter, it will need to be replaced soon.

### What's happening?

- The **RTS signal**, which controls some older electricity meters, is being **switched off this June**.
- RTS meters use a radio signal to switch between **peak and off-peak electricity rates**.
- The technology is being retired as the equipment has reached the end of its life.



### How does this affect you?

- If your **RTS meter isn't replaced**, your **heating and hot water** might stop working properly.
- Your **energy supplier will contact you** if you need a new meter.

### What should you do?

- If your supplier gets in touch, **book your meter replacement appointment** as soon as possible.

For more information, visit:

[ofgem.gov.uk/replacing-your-radio-teleswitch-electricity-meter](https://ofgem.gov.uk/replacing-your-radio-teleswitch-electricity-meter)

## Catbikes scheme launching later this month

Totnes' new e-bike scheme is all set to go live on Friday 20 June.

We've [announced the launch date](#), [unveiled the Catbikes page on the website](#) with full details on the scheme, and [published a video showing off Totnes and the scheme](#).



### Messages for residents:

- The Catbikes scheme goes live on Friday 20 June
- Anyone wanting to hire a Catbike will need to download the Appbike app and register for the scheme on their smartphone before going for a ride
- The app is available to download from both the App Store on iPhone and the Google Play Store on Android phones
- The e-bikes will be available to hire from eight "bases" around the town
- It's free to sign up, and users can choose from two tariff prices depending on how long they want to hire an e-bike
- The scheme has been funded by a UK Government grant to help promote cycling in rural areas
- [Watch our video](#) on the scheme
- [Visit the website](#) and [read our PR](#) for more information

## Government response to remote attendance and proxy voting consultation

Following time-limited Covid remote attendance permissions that expired in 2021, local authority meetings have been required to be held in a single, specified, physical 'place'.

On 24 October 2024, the government published a consultation on remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings. The consultation closed on 19 December 2024 and received 5,844 responses. The consultation sought views on the practical implications of allowing remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings.



### In summary:

- The Government is of the view that in-person authority meetings remain vital for local democracy, but that hybrid and remote attendance, and proxy voting, will enable local authorities in England to develop more modern, accessible, and flexible working practices.
- The Government have carefully considered arguments for and against remote attendance and proxy voting, and we plan to legislate to support permanent provision in relation to both policies, when parliamentary time allows.
- On remote attendance, the Government plan to permit local authorities to develop their own locally appropriate policies, if they decide to hold remote meetings.
- On proxy voting, the Government plans to require principal (unitary, upper and second-tier) councils to implement proxy voting schemes, to provide consistency for members who are absent when they become a new parent, or for serious or long-term illness. We plan for this requirement to apply to meetings of full council. For all other meetings, proxy voting may be used but will not be required, and substitute or pairing schemes may be more appropriate. The Government plan for other local authorities not listed above to be enabled but not required to implement proxy voting schemes, for any of their meetings, in the context of member absences for serious or long-term illness or becoming a new parent.

Read the full consultation results and Government response [here](#).