

Report from your District Councillors

July 2025

Have your say on local government re-organisation

Last week we launched the first phase of our engagement on Local Government Reorganisation.

Please continue to encourage your residents to have their say.

Messages for residents:

- We need your help to shape the future of local government in Devon by letting us know what matters to you.
- Everyone with a connection to the South Hams is being asked what matters to them to help shape our final proposals so they reflect the needs and aspirations of people living and working in the area.
- Take part in the short survey here - www.southhams.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation
- Over the next few months, a series of engagement events around the South Hams will also be taking place. Details on how you can get involved will be available soon.



We are promoting the survey via social media so please do re-share to any of your local community groups and other networks.

We have been working to schedule some residents' engagement events to talk about 'Shaping Devon's Future'

We are still working to confirm the exact venues for some dates but we wanted you to have early sight of the draft plan which is set out below.

Due to venue capacity, we will need residents to book on to a session to avoid any being oversubscribed. We will confirm the remaining venues next week along with a notification that the booking system has gone live.

Date	Time	Broad Area	Venue
16 September	18:15 - 19:30	Sparkwell, Cornwood, Harford	TBC
17 September	18:15 - 19:30	Ivybridge	Watermark - Stowford Hall
18 September	18:15 - 19:30	Ugborough, Ermington, Holbeton	TBC
23 September	18:15 - 19:30	Newton and Noss	Newton Village Hall (Main Hall)
25 September	18:15-19:30	Woolwell, Bickleigh, Shaugh Prior	Woolwell Centre
30 September	18:15-19:30	Brixton	TBC

1 October	18:15-19:30	Wembury	War Memorial Village Hall
2 October	18:15-19:30	Kingsbridge	Kingsbridge Community College School Hall
7 October	18:15-19:30	Salcombe	TBC
8 October	18:15-19:30	Dartmouth	Flavel Centre
9 October	18:15 - 19:30	Totnes	Follaton House

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](#).