County Councillor Report – July 2025

Dear Parish Councillors,

As we move into the heart of summer, I want to thank everyone who has continued to reach out, share concerns, and invite me to local events. It’s been a busy and productive month, and I’m pleased to share some updates from across the division and the wider County Council.

**Council Finances and Budget Pressures**
Devon County Council has closed the 2024/25 financial year in balance, but the outlook remains challenging. The Council is facing a £30 million funding gap for the current year, and difficult decisions lie ahead. I’ll continue to scrutinise spending - particularly on external contracts and agency staffing - to ensure we’re protecting frontline services and delivering value for money.

**Highways Update – Pothole Repair Blitz**
You may have seen that the Council is trialling a new “pothole repair blitz” as part of an £83 million investment in road maintenance. This includes a more proactive approach to fixing clusters of potholes and improving drainage. I’ve submitted dozens locations from our division for inclusion in the trial and will be monitoring progress closely. Please keep reporting defects and copying me in - your input really does make a difference.

Hopefully you’ve noticed an uptick in pothole repairs in your parishes, as I’ve been out in every single one reporting defects and chasing repairs. We have a long way to go to get the roads into a condition that I’ll be happy with.

**Mount Sandford Road – Landkey**

I recently spent the morning with District Cllr Haworth-Booth talking to residents on Mount Sandford Road, between Landkey and Barnstaple. I couldn’t quite believe the speed at which some motorists travel in that 40mph limit. I have even more respect for the Community Speedwatch group that regularly monitor that road. We are pushing for a combined footpath/cycleway to connect Barnstaple with Landkey, to provide a safe walking route for schoolchildren, as well as allowing residents to walk and cycle to the shops. There will be a petition circulating soon.

**Improving Outcomes for Vulnerable Children**
The new Cabinet has launched a 10-year plan to improve outcomes for Devon’s most vulnerable children. This includes better early intervention, more support for families, and a renewed focus on education and care standards. As a member of the Children’s Scrutiny Committee, I’ll be keeping a close eye on how these ambitions translate into real improvements for children and young people in our area.

**Bus Gate Enforcement – Old Torrington Road**
From later this year, the bus gate on Old Torrington Road in Sticklepath will be enforced by new CCTV cameras. This follows the granting of powers to enforce Moving Traffic Offences, previously only handled by the police – to the County Council. The cameras aim to improve road safety and ensure compliance with long-standing restrictions that prioritise buses, cycles, and taxis. For the first six months, drivers caught breaching the restriction will receive a warning letter; repeat offences or violations after this period will result in a penalty charge notice.

**Household Support Fund – Continued Help for Families**
Despite a huge reduction in government funding, the Council has committed to continuing vital support for households in need. The Household Support Fund remains open, offering help with food, energy, and essential costs. If you know of anyone struggling, please encourage them to apply or get in touch with me for guidance.

**Parish Visits and Local Issues**
I’ve now attended most of the parish councils in the division and continue to rotate attendance to ensure regular contact. I have committed to attending every third meeting of each council, with a focus on answering your questions and raising your issues with the relevant departments. Recent visits have highlighted ongoing concerns about speeding, overgrown verges, and drainage. I’m especially incensed by the poor workmanship I’ve seen on some road repairs. I’ve raised all your issues with the relevant departments and will keep pushing for action.

**Community Events and Engagement**
It was a pleasure to attend Pesticide-Free Devon Conference this month, as well as take part in the Chulmleigh Open Gardens as the Chulmleigh Allotment Association. I arranged for North Devon Homes to host a clear-up day on Bakery Way in Landkey, which was a great opportunity to meet residents and help improve the area. These events are a testament to the energy and dedication of our local volunteers. I’m always happy to support and promote community events - please do let me know what’s happening in your parish.

**Resident Casework**
I’ve continued to support residents with a range of issues, from housing concerns to school transport queries. If you or someone in your parish needs help navigating council services, I’m here to assist.

**Locality Budget**
There’s still funding available through my Locality Budget for community groups, village halls, and local projects. So far I’ve fully funded a Holiday Club for children in Chulmleigh, and contributed towards the bus service for the North Devon Show in August. I’d love to see more applications from across the division.

In the month ahead, I’ll be focused on:

* Monitoring the pothole repair blitz and pushing for improvements in our area.
* Holding the Council to account through the Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee, and the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee.
* Helping local groups access funding and support.
* Continuing to build strong relationships with every parish council.

Thank you again for your support and partnership. Please don’t hesitate to get in touch if I can help with anything locally.

With best wishes,
**Cllr Ed Tyldesley**