

County Councillor's Report 31st July – Abbotskerswell & Kingskerswell

Transport Secretary Mark Harper officially opened the brand-new railway station at Marsh Barton in Exeter. The ceremony was carried out ahead of the station opening to passengers the next day when the first service started at 0538.

The station will be served by hourly Great Western Railway services between Paignton and Exmouth, with half-hourly services at peak times.

The two platforms are linked by the pedestrian overbridge which has ramps to facilitate cyclists and provide disabled access to the whole station.

You might be interested to know that one of the first things I had to do as a new County Councillor, twelve years ago, was approve the planning application for this station . . .

Two new high-tech speed cameras have been installed on roads in Devon with a history of speeding issues. New bi-directional digital cameras will replace older Gatso cameras on Exeter Road in Exmouth and the A385 Ashburton Road in Totnes. All of these routes have had problems with collisions and speeding vehicles, prompting numerous complaints from residents to local councils and the police.

The cameras, which have been funded by the Vision Zero South West road safety partnership, have been erected on bright yellow posts for maximum visibility and have the ability to enforce speed in both directions simultaneously.

Vision Zero South West is undertaking an ambitious programme of new camera system installation, either replacing outdated technology at existing sites or introducing brand new schemes where an evidenced problem exists.

Two of our Council services that support children and young people have been applauded by people who have used the services at an anniversary celebration this week.

Y-Smart supports children and young people who have drug or alcohol-related issues, and those who experience parents or carers and siblings misusing drugs or alcohol.

The service has supported thousands of young people in the 21 years it's been operating - around 8,250 young people since 2002, and has about 650 people referred to it each year. It has also delivered around 4,560 education sessions into schools, talking to young people about risks associated with drugs and alcohol.

And the council's Reach Team, which supports young people at risk of going missing from care or home and potentially becoming victims of exploitation, has been running for 10 years.

This month marks the first birthday of the Growing Communities Fund (GCF) and since its launch it has been supporting local communities through the cost-of-living crisis.

The Council have awarded more than £530,000 to 300 different local projects, many of which are helping communities cope with continued high costs of food and bills. The GCF supports proactive, effective, measurable and sustainable actions to enable individuals and communities to build self-reliance and improve mental health and wellbeing.

According to the Office of National Statistics, the price of consumer goods and services rose at the fastest rate in four decades in the year to October 2022. The cost of food increased by 14.6% in the year to last September reaching its highest level since 1980 and continues to rise.

The grants aim to help local groups and organisations to become more resilient and help those in their communities' cope with these financial pressures. More details can be found at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/communities/growing-communities-fund>

The Holiday Activities and Food programme, has had a good take-up so far by young people, but there are still places available.

Parents of children aged five to 16, who receive benefit-related free school meals, are invited to take part in a range of exciting activities these summer holidays.

A full list of the activities and how to apply are on the Holiday Activities and Food programme website.

Sports including swimming and football, paddleboarding, kayaking, canoeing, mountain biking, arts and craft, treasure hunts, forest school, magicians and storytellers...the list goes on.

And this year there are more places available for secondary school age ranges, with activities including go-karting, climbing, trampolining, high ropes and surfing.

You can access the full range of activities here

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/document/haf-providers-summer-2023/>

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