County Councillor's Report 22nd April - Kingskerswell

From Sunday 20 April, there will be changes to the Devon bus network.

Stagecoach is making changes to its services to improve reliability and punctuality, and there are also some improvements to services funded by Devon County Council using the Department for Transport's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding.

For customers travelling within Exeter, there will be more buses to Alphington, Exwick, Pennsylvania and Wonford. Outside Exeter, Appledore, Bideford, Dawlish, Newton Abbot and Tiverton are among the areas that will also benefit from more frequent buses.

The operator will also be making a number of changes to timetables to improve the reliability and punctuality of its services.

A comprehensive list of all of the changes and improvements, plus new timetables, can be found on the Travel Devon website - https://www.traveldevon.info/bus/latest-news-service-updates/service-changes-20th-april-2025/ .

The Cabinet have agreed a 12-month trial which will alter the dimming regime of around 80% of Devon's residential streetlights will get underway in April, following the pilot last year in Abbotskerswell, Holcombe Rogus, Kingskerswell and Sidmouth, where 550 streetlights underwent earlier switch-off times and additional dimming.

The trial is possible thanks to the upgraded technology of our Central Management System, which allows adjustments to be made remotely to around 80% of Devon's 80,000 streetlights. We calculate that this change will achieve a reduction of circa 225 tonnes of carbon per annum.

It will be introduced in phases, starting in Exeter, before moving on to the previous pilot areas followed by other market towns such as Ashburton, Barnstaple, Crediton and Honiton, and then rural areas.

The scheme will mean that in market towns, lights will be dimmed to 40% output from 8:30pm to midnight, then switched off from midnight to 5:30am, with 40% output from 5:30am-6:30am. Rural areas will see streetlights dimmed to 40% from 7pm to midnight, switched off from midnight to 5:30am, with 40% output from 5:30am-6:30am. Rural parts of this Parish are not on the management system and so will not be affected. There will be no change to the current policy on streetlighting on main roads.

Devon worked closely with the Police throughout the pilot earlier last year, and in developing this trial. If Police raise any safety concerns over the lighting levels, they can be reviewed and altered.

After nearly fifteen years as a local Councillor, and twelve years as your County Councillor, this will be my final report to you in that role.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to everyone for your help and kindness over the years—you've truly been my eyes and ears, and I could not have done the job effectively without your support. Local government doesn't always see things the way our communities do, and I fully understand the frustration when progress feels slow. But despite the challenges, I can honestly say I've loved every minute. Representing our community has been one of the greatest honours of my life.

Being elected to the County Council in May 2013 was a significant step up from my time on the District Council, but it was a challenge I embraced wholeheartedly. In 2017, I had the privilege of being appointed Chair of Scrutiny. While not a particularly public-facing role, it was fascinating and often demanding

work—representing backbench colleagues across a large council. I'm especially proud of our groundbreaking work on Child Sexual Exploitation and Problem Gambling.

Finally, I would like to thank Cllr Phil Cook and his wife, Cllr Sheila Cook, for teaching me so much about campaigning and standing up for our communities. I'm also deeply grateful to Cllr Alan Connett, my mentor, who taught me everything I know about local government. Obviously, I have worked closely with the Parish Council and their Clerks - their knowledge and experience of Kingskerswell have been invaluable and working with them has been such a pleasure.

Thank you again for the trust and support you've shown me. It's been an incredible journey.

Alistair Dewhirst - alistair.dewhirst@devon.gov.uk / Tel 07836 704127