

Brendon Parish Council

County Councillors Report

October 2025

Libraries- upcoming Consultation

The County Council Cabinet recently approved the launch of a **12-week consultation** regarding the long-term sustainability and future models for our library services. This is a vital process that requires input from every community to help us find the most effective and efficient path forward.

Our libraries, currently run successfully by the charity Libraries Unlimited, are undeniably invaluable local assets. We recognise the profound impact they have:

- **High Engagement:** Last year, our 50 libraries recorded **2.3 million visits**, demonstrating their status as essential community anchors.
- **Family Focus:** With over **113,000 active users**—and children representing the single largest group at 28%—libraries are fundamental to early literacy and lifelong learning.
- **Diverse Programming:** They hosted more than **12,000 events**, including crucial 'bounce-and-rhyme' sessions, digital literacy classes like Coder Dojos, and social groups, attracting over 218,000 participants.

A Critical Role in Rural Life

We must approach this review with careful consideration for our remote rural communities. For these areas, the local library is often much more than a place for books; it is a key hub for social cohesion and essential access. Libraries serve as:

1. **Warm, Safe Spaces:** Providing a free, neutral venue to tackle social isolation, particularly for our older residents.
2. **Digital Gateways:** Offering the only free public access to computers and broadband, which is crucial for digital inclusion—a necessity for accessing vital services, applying for jobs, and staying connected in today's world.

The challenge before us is how to preserve these core functions while ensuring the service is financially robust for the future.

The upcoming consultation is designed to explore a range of thoughtful options. These include innovative approaches such as revised, flexible opening hours; extending access through enhanced volunteer and technology support; and exploring the transition of some libraries into community hubs.

This transition would see local organisations take on management with ongoing support from the County Council.

I strongly encourage everyone to participate fully in the 12-week consultation. I will forward the details when they are available.

Exmoor National Park Management Plan

As you maybe be aware we formally launched the new Management Plan at Lynton Town Hall this morning. There was a good turnout and a positive reaction with some great contributions from Julian Glover OBE and partners.

The full plan is available both as a download, but also nicely presented as a micro site on our website and this is the primary place to point people who want to know about the details (e.g. specific targets etc) within the plan.

www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/management-plan

Illegal money lending arrests in North Devon.

A man and a woman were arrested on suspicion of illegal money lending following an operation in North Devon on Wednesday September 24.

The suspects, both aged 23, were arrested at an address in Barnstaple and were taken into custody to be questioned by IMLT investigators. Two mobile phones were seized. There are up to 1.08 million people in debt to loan sharks in England, according to figures from the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ).

Many illegal money lenders are well known within their communities and are often introduced to borrowers through friends or family members. They are unregulated and give loans with no paperwork, charging extortionate interest rates. They often resort to threats, intimidation and even violence if repayments are not made.

Anyone who has been affected by illegal money lending should call the Stop Loan Sharks 24/7 Helpline on 0300 555 2222 or access support online at www.stoploansharks.co.uk. Live Chat is available on the website from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Local Government Reorganisation in Devon

[A stronger future shaped by communities: Devon unveils 'leading' option for local government change - News](#)

I have linked the press release above. Decon County Council will submit their preferred option for Devon by the 28th December, the final decision about what that will be will be made by the Devon County Council cabinet in November.

Highway Defects

With the winter fast approaching it is more likely there will be defects in the highway network, this includes streetlights and signs.

[Report a problem - Roads and transport](#)

The DCC website is very useful for reporting problems and the reports go straight to the contractor. Alternatively the highway contact number is 0345 155 1004

If it's a river flooding the environment agency can be contacted on 0345 988 1188

Please do get in touch if you think I can help with anything;

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