

REPORTS – JULY 2018

County Councillor Alistair Dewhirst

Dedicated community transport volunteers and staff members received prestigious awards at a ceremony at County Hall. The annual Community Transport Awards, organised by Devon County Council recognises outstanding contributions to Devon's community transport providers. Ten accolades were presented, with the top award for Community Transport Volunteer of the Year going to Simon Edwards, in recognition of his 11 years as a volunteer minibus driver for the Exe Valley Market Bus. Simon was also one of three people to receive volunteer minibus driver awards. The Community Transport Employee of the Year was presented to Paul Cooper, of East Teignbridge Community Transport Association. Paul drives primary age children to school before starting his daily community transport duties and also delivers and collects mobility scooters.

Devon County Council's parking enforcement team is to receive additional powers to crack down on drivers who persistently evade parking fines. As part of a review of highway management, the Cabinet has approved proposals to take tougher action against drivers who repeatedly contravene parking restrictions and avoid paying penalty charges.

Since 2014, around £400,000 has been lost in unpaid Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) in Devon from a number of UK and foreign registered vehicles. For the last financial year alone, foreign registered vehicles have accounted for 768 unpaid fines. In the same period, UK vehicles that were not correctly registered with the DVLA accounted for 1,262 unpaid fines.

The Council agreed that, as a last resort, it will be able to seize and remove vehicles of owners with three or more unpaid penalty charge notices. The proposed option would only be used in extreme cases but would act as a deterrent. The system cannot generate profit but would be cost neutral to cover the cost of administering the scheme.

Police have launched a campaign to raise awareness of County Lines and how the public can help spot the signs of such criminal activity ongoing in their community.

County Lines is a term used for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and coastal towns using mobile phone lines, also known as 'deal lines'.

This is a national trend and a method of drug dealing involving dangerous drug networks operating from the cities of London, Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham supplying the smaller towns and cities across the UK.

County lines gangs will often target children and young people aged between 15 and 16, women and vulnerable adults to deliver drugs and money between locations.

An operating base is also an essential feature of county lines gangs who regularly exploit vulnerable people, by building up a debt or using threats of violence in order to take over a person's home, a practice is known as 'cuckooing'.

Signs to look out for

A young person's involvement in county lines often leaves signs, below are some of the indicators of county lines involvement and exploitation:

- Has a child or young person gone missing from home or school?
- Have they acquired money, clothes or mobile phones they can't account for?
- Are they meeting unfamiliar adults?
- Are they in excessive receipt of texts or phone calls?
- Are they in relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang association?
- Do you have suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries?
- Has there been a significant decline in school performance and significant changes in emotional well-being?

Vulnerable adults who are in financial difficulties or have mental health problems are usually the most likely victim of cuckooing.

If you have concerns surrounding children, follow safeguarding procedures and share your concerns with local authority social care services. If you are being effected by any of the above or know someone who is then contact police via 101@dc.police.uk or by calling 101.

Finally, Devon Councils and Devon and Cornwall Police are launching a pilot scheme to help raise finance for local community projects.

Devon County, West and Teignbridge District Councils, Exeter City Council and the Police, are all working with Crowdfunder, to build opportunities for community groups to bid for finance to help local projects get off the ground. The partnership will be called Crowdfund Devon.

Crowdfunding is a way of raising money from people who are happy to donate it to good causes, or it's given in return for some sort of reward later on. It's an idea that has grown in popularity, along with other alternative ways of raising cash.

Collectively, Devon's councils already give thousands of pounds each year to support community groups and to help kick-start local projects that make a positive difference for residents. The Crowdfund Devon pilot partnership will enable the County Council, West Devon, Teignbridge and Exeter City Councils and the Police, to explore crowdfunding as an alternative way to support communities and to see if bringing together their funds with those of the public and other funders will make a greater impact; making the things that matter locally a reality for more communities. Crowdfund Devon is set to launch this month with an event at County Hall on the 12 July to which community groups and interested members of the public are invited to find out more about how the crowdfunding scheme will work. To book a place visit the Eventbrite website.

Twinnings Report – Cllr Dot Simmons

Last month, June, was quite a quiet month, no fund raising just quiet social get togethers. This is an important element of the Twinnings. Time to develop friendships, find time to talk to each other and share interests.

The game of Pétanque took place at Cathy French's on her purpose built course.

It was a small number which meant we all had plenty of play. Afterwards we shared a picnic in Cathy French's lovely courtyard.

Another delightful affair was Jill Connole's coffee morning. Again" time out" to sit and chat and admire the views from her home and eat cake.

Jill Connole and I will be attending a Devon Twinning Circle meeting in Cullompton 21st July to meet other village's Twinnings, keep up to date with their activities, invite them to ours and raise our profile.

August is our month off.

Friday September 14th sees our annual treasure hunt. It takes part in our local vicinity and ends up in a venue booked by this years organisers, where we have a drink and evening meal

If you want more information and want to take part but are not members of the group simply contact Bernard Stanley tel.873454 or me, 872211

A talk by the Devon Wildlife Trust has been booked for next Spring, 8th February,
A gin festival for before Christmas is being investigated and a French themed evening at the Church
House Inn is being planned.

We are always happy to greet new members, so if you want to make new friends, be involved in the
community, have a chance to stay with French families and return the hosting, come and join the
group; you do not have to be able to speak French!