

Axminster Division, 10th January 2020 – DCC Cllr Ian Hall

Happy New Year to you all and please find below my first report of the new decade.

Police Advocate Scheme Meeting Friday 28th February @7pm for Parish Councils in the Axminster Division

I am presently arranging a meeting with you as Parish & Town Cllrs/Clerks for an evening meeting on Friday 28th February.

The purpose of the meeting is to engage and look at best practice for our Rural Area. I hope as many Cllrs from all the Seven Parishes are able to attend and will hopefully will consider signing up to the Police Advocate Scheme.

Police & Crime Commissioner – Alison Hernandez and Inspector Groves from 'Rural East Devon Police' will be in attendance.

Please feel free to 'copy & paste' this part of my report and share this with Parish Councils outside the 'Axminster Division' but, do fall within the 'Rural East Devon Police Area'

Please will all Clerks give me an indication of how many Cllrs & Clerks will be attending.

Police Community Liaison Meeting

Date: Friday February 28th 2020

Time: 19:00 – 21:30

Venue: All Saints Village Hall, Nr Axminster EX13 7LX

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Apologies for absence
3. To agree the purpose of the liaison meetings and terms of reference
4. Presentation by Insp Groves - policing structure, resources, crime trends and priorities followed by questions
5. To discuss the role of Parish Councils in communication, prevention and identifying priorities
6. Date and venue for the next meeting

Draft terms of reference.

To update councils on policing matters and current crime threats;

To identify areas where Councils can be effective around policing issues, whether working independently or with police support;

To provide a forum through which the police team can receive feedback from communities;

The forum will be strategic in nature and not to address individual cases or individual local policing issues.

<https://www.devonandcornwall-pcc.gov.uk/take-part/councillor-advocate-scheme>

HMRC & other telephone Scams

The issue of telephone scams is highlighted at this time of year with tax returns for many due by the 31st of January. DCC staff have been picking up reports of scam calls where people impersonating HM Revenue and Customs staff stating that a sum of money is owed to HMRC and requesting personal and Bank details.

Do not give any details of this type out to people over the phone and, if in any do terminate the call and contact HMRC yourself. The advice is to treat calls of a similar nature requesting your confidential information in the same way.

Economy

With the General election done and dusted, whatever your view of the outcome, we clearly need to move on from a period of stagnation where much important 'day to day' legislation potentially has been sat on the back burner and this needs to be addressed.

The Chancellor has confirmed March 11th as the date for a tax-and-spend Budget designed to begin a promised "levelling up" of economic performance across the UK. It is understood that Sajid Javid will announce a shake-up of the way the Treasury allocates investment in an attempt to even up spending between the regions, with northern England and the Midlands expected to benefit.

While it is nice to slice up the National 'cake' a little more fairly, individually as County Councillors and collectively as Devon County Council, we will be lobbying our M.P.'s throughout Devon and the wider South West at every opportunity to make sure that we get a more proportionate amount of it. A small fraction of the infrastructure money amount being mooted for other parts of England would fund a massive amount of pothole repairs, carriageway resurfacing, better funding for schools and our infrastructure needs for starters!

A railway passing loop to the east of Exeter enabling a half hourly service on the Exeter-Waterloo line would bring huge economic benefit to the wider Greater Exeter sub-region and reduce carbon emissions at the same time.

2020/21 budget

While DCC waits to hear the delayed announcement on the financial settlement from Government for the next financial year, the DCC Cabinet recently agreed a draft budget which will include inflation busting increases on spending for vital services, where there will be a rise of 6.4 per cent in spending on children's services, adult care and roads across the County, meaning an extra £16 million for adult care, £9 million for children's services and £1.7million for highways.

This means that the councils spending will rise by £31.8million from £498 million in 2019/20 to nearly £530 million in 2020/21. Clearly, with rising demand for all services, there is no room for any complacency that this increase will solve all of the challenges faced by DCC and why more funding from central Government is needed.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service have published its recommendations on how its services should be delivered in the future, following a public consultation exercise last year.

The changes that the Service is recommending for approval by the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority thankfully have no local impact for us in terms of our fire stations with the key recommendations below.

- a) Defer the decision to implement day crewing at Barnstaple, Exmouth and Paignton subject to a revised 24/7 crewing model being agreed with the Fire Brigades Union, including roving appliances, before the end of the 19/20 financial year.*
- b) Close Budleigh Salterton fire station and allow affected firefighters to respond from Exmouth fire station.*
- c) Relocate Topsham fire station to Service Headquarters (Clyst St George) and relocate one of the fire engines to Middlemoor fire station (both fire engines to be relocated to Service Headquarters until an on-call crew can be established at Middlemoor).*
- d) Remove the third fire engines from Bridgwater, Taunton, Torquay and Yeovil.*
- e) Remove the second fire engines from Crediton, Lynton, Martock and Totnes.*
- f) Introduce variable fire engine availability dependent on risk.*