

Everyone could win with a single Devon unitary

THE shape of local Government across Devon could soon change if proposals for a new single council for Devon get the go ahead.

Following Exeter City Council's failed bid for unitary status last year the Government asked the independent Boundary Committee to come up with a model of unitary government for Devon.

After much investigation and wide consultation, their final suggestion is likely to be the creation of a single council covering the whole of Devon. It is then up to the Secretary of State to decide whether or not to go ahead with the creation of a new Devon authority in April 2010.

Devon County Council, local businesses, the Devon Association of Parish Councils, the police, health services and educationalists all back this proposal and the opportunity to renew and rebuild local democracy in Devon from the bottom up – based on natural communities and market and coastal towns.

To see a short video about a single council for Devon log on to mydevon.tv

Why it makes good sense

Some people argue that the downturn in the economy means the Government should scrap the idea of reorganisation. But if ever there was a time to strip away inefficiencies and save Council Tax payer's money the time is now.

The fully audited financial case which is based on bringing council tax down to the lowest across the county for everyone shows that a single Devon council will:



Exmouth is one of many communities across Devon to express an interest in helping to explore a new form of local community governance

- save over £28 million in the first five years
- pay back all set up costs within three years and eight months and then give annual savings of £19 million a year

How will savings be made?

Fewer councils means less bureaucracy. A single unitary

council will remove duplication and cut management, administration and other costs. It would also allow for huge economies of scale. For example, do we really need eight different waste collection services or IT systems?

Cutting costs will release money to improve local services and help keep council tax down.

Did You KNOW ...?

more than **85%**

of all your local government services are already provided by Devon County Council





After selling Exeter International Airport last year for £60 million, Devon County Council has made available £48 million to enable hundreds of projects to take off. Here, *DevonTalk* features some of the initial beneficiaries from one-off cash grants in East Devon...

Funding the return of the valued village shop

VILLAGERS in East Budleigh are celebrating the return of their village shop, opened with the help of a £12,300 grant from Devon County Council.

The area had been without a local shop since Christmas 2005, but last year a project team, backed by strong public support, was formed to bring it back.

The result is the new community shop which is located in the village hall car park and managed by local resident Colin Weston, helped by 40 volunteers who keep the shelves stocked with a wide range of fresh local produce as well as day-to-day items.

The shop is open Monday to Friday 8am to 7pm, Saturday 8am to 4pm and Sunday 8am to noon.

Funding for the shop has also come from East Budleigh with Bicton Parish Council, Otter Valley Association, Viscount Amory's Trust, the Norman Family Trust and East Budleigh with Bickton Women's Institute.

Linda Florey, Chairman of the project management team, said: "Since we started to look at establishing a village shop again we have had a great amount of local support.

"With our membership scheme and bonds scheme, our shop is truly owned by the community and run by the community."

Visitor centres will be world-class

PLANS to develop World Heritage site interpretation centres on the Jurassic Coast at Exmouth and Seaton have been awarded £500,000.

The money will help create first-class facilities celebrating the unique geology and associated wildlife. As well as being visitor attractions, the centres will create employment and education opportunities.

The £500,000 from the sale of Exeter Airport is in addition to £500,000 already committed to these projects by the County Council.

Both centres will be important

parts of the two town's regeneration programmes.

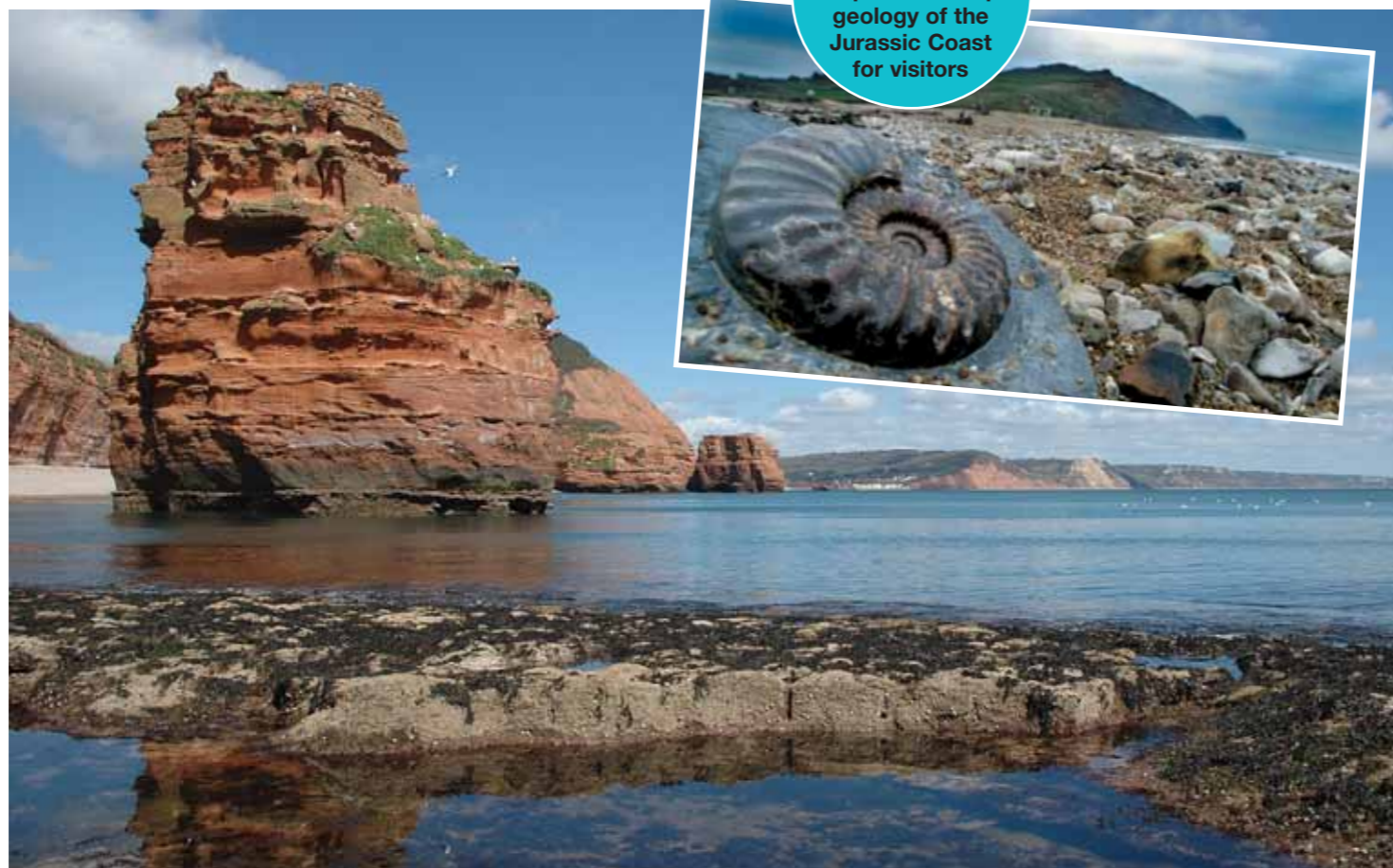
Margaret Rogers, Seaton Coastal County Councillor and Executive Member for Environment, said: "This is great news for the Gateway Towns in order to progress and promote the Jurassic Coast. These centres will provide information about the Jurassic Coast while linking with other projects such as the Stop Line Way cycle route from the Bristol Channel to the English Channel. They will be important to the work, leisure and tourism features of the area."

Exmouth Littleham and Town

County Councillor Eileen Wragg said: "This is very welcome news for Exmouth, and for Devon as a whole.

"A great deal of work has been done over the past two years to try and bring the project to fruition, and this money will be a significant step forward in achieving that aim. It will bring visitors to the town and surrounding areas who will learn how wonderful our environment is and that in turn will be good for regenerating the local economy."

Centres at Exmouth and Seaton will interpret the unique geology of the Jurassic Coast for visitors



County Councillor Eileen Wragg joins members of the Exe Sailing Club for a trip on the Sailability boat which is being adapted for disabled people to use

Sailing boat will carry up to three wheelchair users

DISABLED people wanting to follow the example of local Olympic sailing silver medallist Joe Glanfield are one step closer after Devon County Council granted £23,350 for a specially-adapted boat.

The boat, which will belong to Exe Sailing Club for their Sailability project, will be adapted for up to three wheelchair users with a remote control steering mechanism so the craft can be steered from a fixed seat, and a hoist to enable wheelchair users to embark and disembark from the boat.

"I'm delighted that we have been able to obtain this funding," said local County Councillor Eileen Wragg. "This gives many people, some of whom have severe disabilities, the chance to experience an activity that would otherwise be unavailable."

Support for young people

A PLANNED centre at Colyton for 1,000 young people aged from 11 to 19 will be receiving £160,000. The centre will be used to deliver a range of youth support services including positive activities to promote personal and social development.

Sports boost at Honiton

TOWER Road in Honiton is one step closer to a new sports complex – thanks to a £50,000 grant towards the project. The complex will consist of 22 hectares of land made into football and rugby pitches, a cricket pitch, changing rooms and pavilion.

Pavilion gets a makeover

THE pavilion at Newton Poppleford has received £12,000 towards repairs and improvements. Work will include repair and replacement of the flooring, the heating and hot water system. There will also be new furniture and improvements to the kitchen.

New slide at playground

A PLAYGROUND at Uplyme has been given £4,000 for a new slide – an item of equipment that was chosen by the children at a local primary and secondary school. The playground is essential for local children and attracts a large number of visitors in the summer including children from Lyme Regis.

Know your councillors

There are 62 councillors on Devon County Council, each representing an electoral division.

Here, the County Councillors in the East Devon area are pictured with their phone numbers and email addresses.

The political group to which they belong is indicated by the abbreviation Lib Dem (Liberal Democrat), Con (Conservative), Lab (Labour) and Ind (Independent).

Leaders of the political groups are Brian Greenslade (Lib Dem), Leader of the Council; John Hart (Con), Shadow Leader; Saxon Spence, Labour Group Leader; and Mary Turner, Independent Group Leader.



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Storms cost set to exceed £1m

THE clean up and repair bill for Devon County Council from the aftermath of the severe storms which hit parts of East Devon in October could exceed one million pounds.

More than 120 County Council highway staff were deployed to re-open roads in areas devastated by the flooding and hailstorms, in particular in Ottery St Mary and Feniton.

County Council Leader Brian Greenslade praised the co-ordinated efforts between the Council and other agencies. He said: "We played a significant part in the clean up operation and in other areas. Thanks have to go to everyone involved in the aftermath of this unfortunate event and we need to look at what, if anything, needs to be learned."

Inspections of the roads and bridges in the area were carried out, but none were thought to have been severely damaged.

The drainage system for the main



Gardens of homes at Feniton flooded during severe storms
Photograph by Chris Abbott

residential areas of Feniton and Ottery St Mary had to be cleared. There is ongoing work to clear the remainder of the network of debris before the damage and any blockages of the drainage system can be fully assessed and dealt with – which could take several months.

As well as highway management during the storms, Devon County Council was

also involved in establishing an emergency rest centre at the Kings School in Ottery St Mary, which helped around 45 people.

County Council staff were joined by British Red Cross and the WRVS in providing shelter and food at the centre. Meals on wheels continued to be delivered to people's homes and calls were made to vulnerable people in the community.