

Yeo Ward Parish Councillor Newsletter – March 2026

Dear Parish Councillors,

Mid Devon District Council has agreed the Council Tax Resolution for 2026/27. For parished areas, the average Band D bill will be £2,656.41, a rise of £135.24 on the previous year. Mid Devon's own charge increases to £246.29, and the County Council, police, and fire service have also applied modest increases. Parish precepts continue to vary, with the district average rising to £106.07. Despite national funding changes and ongoing inflationary pressures, the District Council has delivered a balanced budget for the year ahead without reducing service levels.

The Business Rates Drop-In Day held in February was well attended, offering local businesses clarity on their forthcoming bills, guidance on appeals, and support with occupancy changes. Many received early confirmation of their new charges, easing concerns raised by recent national reporting. A follow-up session is likely once bills are issued, which may be of interest to businesses within or serving our parishes.

The government's consultation on local government reorganisation is now open. Proposals would see the existing county and district councils abolished and replaced with new unitary authorities from 2028. Several structural options are under consideration, ranging from a single Devon-wide authority to multi-unitary arrangements. The consultation runs until 26 March, and rural representation and service delivery are central issues for parishes to consider.

A new 120kW rapid electric vehicle charger has been installed at Tiverton Pannier Market. Powered entirely by renewable electricity, it provides a convenient option for residents travelling into Tiverton for work or shopping.

Energy-efficiency improvements continue through the Home Upgrade Grant programme. Twenty-six Mid Devon homes, mainly off-gas rural properties, have received upgrades such as heat pumps and solar PV. This work helps reduce energy bills for low-income households—an important consideration for many rural communities.

Active Mid Devon has invested in accessibility with the installation of Pool Pods, enabling swimmers with reduced mobility to enter and exit pools with dignity and independence. Plans are advancing for new padel courts in Tiverton and potential padel or pickleball facilities in Crediton. The Active Mid Devon app is now playing a key role in simplifying bookings for leisure users.

Devon County Council has begun early works for the Cullompton Relief Road. Ecological and archaeological tasks are underway, and new temporary paths and bridge links will maintain public access during construction. Replacement sports pitches are progressing, and some traffic improvements, such as the new bus layby at the Weary Traveller, are being delivered ahead of the main construction phase, expected to start this summer.

A number of funding programmes are currently available that may be of interest to community organisations, halls, schools, or volunteer groups within our parishes.

- **School-Based Nursery Capital Grant (2027–2030)**

Apply & guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-based-nursery-capital-grant-2027-to-2030>

[\[gov.uk\]](#)

- **Ending Homelessness in Communities Fund (£37m, 2026–2029)**
Prospectus & application:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ending-homelessness-in-communities-fund-prospectus>
[\[gov.uk\]](#)
- **Royal Society Partnership Grants (STEM projects for ages 5–18)**
How to apply:
<https://royalsociety.org/grants/partnership-grants/application/> [\[royalsociety.org\]](#)
- **Boost Charitable Trust (sport projects for disadvantaged groups)**
Fund information & application:
<https://www.boostct.org/> [\[boostct.org\]](#)
- **Trading for Good – Community Business Programme (South West, 2026)**
Programme details & registration:
<https://www.the-sse.org/programme/trading-for-good-community-business/>
[\[devon.gov.uk\]](#)
- **Geovation Accelerator Programme (Spring 2026)**
Apply here:
<https://geovation.uk/apply/accelerator/> [\[geovation.uk\]](#)
- **Speech, Language & Hearing Foundation (children’s communication needs)**
Application information:
<https://voda.org.uk/the-speech-language-and-hearing-foundation/5/> [\[voda.org.uk\]](#)
- **The Happiness Fund (grassroots wellbeing & inclusion projects – £5,000 grants)**
Details & application:
<https://laughology.co.uk/happiness-fund/> [\[laughology.co.uk\]](#)

If you would like further information on any of these matters, or if there is anything you wish me to follow up on, please do get in touch.

Warm regards,
Sandy
Yeo Ward