

Words from Devon's Chief Executive: "While the Prime Minister Boris Johnson has launched a back-to-work drive, I wanted to make it very clear that Leadership Group and I are urging you all to continue to work from home wherever possible.

"Coronavirus is still a very real threat to us all. You may have heard England's Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jonathan Van Tam, describing the latest "big change" in coronavirus infections across the UK as a "great concern" and that he believes we are in for a "bumpy ride over the next few months" if people did not adhere more stringently to the social distancing rules.

"Your health, safety and wellbeing, and that of your family and friends, remains our first priority and, with this rise in the incidents of COVID-19 across the country, it is absolutely vital that we do all we can to protect ourselves and our loved ones. We are also very alert to the fact that we have an ageing demographic in Devon and that older people can be particularly susceptible to the virus."

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Devon residents are being urged to breathe new life into their old clothes and 'Wear what you have' to help reduce their carbon footprint and to pass on clothes they no longer want to keep them out of the bin.

By making at least one of a series of pledges, residents will be entered into a prize draw with a chance to win one of 10 Duronic Fabric De-Bobblers. Last year £2.7billion was spent on clothes that were worn just once. Each household is estimated to have a wardrobe value of £4,000, almost a third of which has not been worn for at least a year.

The 'Wear what you have' campaign seeks to encourage Devon's residents to reduce the amount of clothes they buy, to extend the life of garments they already have and to donate clothing they no longer want.

By doing so, every one of us could save money and reduce our carbon footprint – WRAP, the waste charity, says that extending a garment's lifespan by just by nine months could reduce its carbon footprint by as much as 30 per cent. Repairing clothing will also save you money and you may learn some new skills too. With the average lifespan of clothing being just over three years, wearing something for an extra nine months can significantly reduce its carbon footprint.

To make a pledge and enter the prize draw visit the Recycle Devon website.

A public consultation is underway on Devon's latest flood risk management strategy. The draft document outlines how the risk of flooding to property and infrastructure will be managed and reduced over the next six years, from 2021-2027.

The strategy looks at how plans for flood alleviation schemes can be developed and how communities can increase their resilience against flooding and the impact of climate change. Natural and sustainable flood management measures will be promoted, where appropriate, in all flood investigations and improvement projects, to reduce the scale, or need, of hard engineering solutions.

The second part of the strategy prioritises areas and communities to be considered for investment in flood alleviation works. Although priorities are subject to change, it currently includes Exeter, Kingsbridge, Tiverton, Dawlish, Teignmouth, Exmouth, Newton Abbot, Seaton, Kingsteignton, Totnes, Bideford, Ilfracombe, Budleigh Salterton, Sidmouth, Crediton and Okehampton.

Industry professionals, town and parish councils and members of the public are all invited to have their say before the consultation closes on Thursday 15 October. The draft strategy can be viewed on our Have Your Say webpages where you will also find the [online consultation form](#) if you would like to comment.

Devon's householders have the chance to help the county become net-zero by joining Devon Climate Emergency's (DCE) solar panel group-buying scheme.

The DCE's latest project is Solar Together and, with group buying experts iChoosr Ltd, they are offering homeowners the chance to buy high quality solar PV more cheaply than if they were buying alone. Led by Devon County Council, the scheme is partnered by East Devon, Mid Devon, North Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge and Torridge District Councils, West Devon Borough Council, Exeter City Council and Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities.

Research by the University of Exeter shows that 19 per cent of all Devon's carbon emissions are created by our homes, with more than half of those by grid-supplied electricity. Installing solar panels will reduce the amount of grid-supplied electricity needed for things like hot water, with a transfer to more eco-friendly solar energy.

If you are interested, the first step is to register for free at solartogether.co.uk/devon/home – by registering, there is no obligation to install panels. Registered households will then receive a recommendation, specifically tailored to the details they submitted in their registration.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced school transport guidelines as it prepares for a full return of students in September, and Devon County Council has been working with schools, colleges and transport operators to plan for this return.

Social distancing guidance, which applies to passengers on public transport, will not apply on dedicated school transport which is not open to the general public. This is because the government believes the overall risk to students and young people from coronavirus (COVID-19) is low, they do not mix with the general public on those journeys, and the home to school transport carries the same group of students and young people on a regular basis.

However, the County Council, is asking that students aged 11 and over wear a face covering when travelling on school transport, unless they are exempt from wearing one.

Many young people travel to and from school or college by public transport. With social distancing measures remaining in place on these public services, we have identified areas where additional capacity is required, and will be providing around 70 duplicate vehicles across the county at peak times dedicated to school and college students. Full details of these additional services can be found on our Travel Devon website.

Although school “bubbles” cannot be replicated on dedicated school transport services, children will be asked to sit in their year groups on larger vehicles, wherever possible, with youngest students sat at the front. Schools are also being invited to draw up seating arrangements if they wish, and to be on hand at the end of the school day to assist students.

Students, drivers, and passenger assistants will be advised that they must not board school transport if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus. If they develop symptoms while at school, they must not travel home on school transport.

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Finally, I want to say thank you again to all the amazing NHS workers, the Social Care staff, the Council bin men & sweepers, those behind the scenes keeping everything going, the teachers, the shop workers, the delivery drivers and those providing vital services - thank for all you have done!

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