

Community Road Warden Scheme

Introduction

The scheme is a formal agreement between Devon County Council (DCC) and Berrynarbor Parish Council (BPC), that enables the community to undertake approved minor works on or around the public highway. DCC does not direct communities to carry out specific tasks; instead, we may choose the activities that will deliver the greatest local benefit. The scheme operates within the statutory framework of the Highways Act 1980.

Participation does not transfer any of DCC's legal responsibilities. Rather, it provides BPC with the opportunity to carry out additional works that enhance and complement the services DCC delivers. All activity is undertaken under powers delegated by DCC and is governed by formal agreements, mandatory training, insurance requirements, and risk assessments. This approach supports DCC in meeting its statutory duties and managing the network through an asset-management model that ensures public funds are used effectively.

The Road Warden will act as the primary point of contact between the community, BPC and DCC. All proposed activities must be agreed in advance with DCC and carried out in full compliance with safety requirements.

Role of the Parish Council

The Parish council has powers to support such community initiatives¹. acts as facilitator and their responsibilities include:

- Appointing a Community Road Warden
- Supporting volunteer recruitment
- Ensuring appropriate insurance and governance arrangements
- Liaising with the DCC highways officers

Training and Risk Management

- All volunteers must receive appropriate training, including Chapter 8 (Traffic Signs Manual).

¹ The Local Government Act 1972, s 137

- Risk assessments must be completed before any work is undertaken².
- Personal protective equipment and signage must be used at all times.

Scope of Works

Permitted activities include minor maintenance tasks. Complex or high-risk works remain the responsibility of DCC. Examples of work that may be approved under the scheme include:

- pothole repairs (that do not meet DCC safety intervention levels).
- clearing weeds
- cleaning road signs
- cleaning drainage features (for example, gully gratings).
- repairing fingerposts

Approval depends on:

- type of work proposed
- volunteer qualifications
- traffic flow and speed
- safety considerations outlined in the risk assessment

All works **must** be pre-agreed with the local Neighbourhood Highway Officer (and carried out using our method statements. Work on high-speed roads is unlikely to be approved. Some tasks (for example, sign cleaning) may be allowed on main roads if training, signing, and guarding meet Chapter 8 requirements³.

Roles & Responsibilities

Road Warden, should:	Road Warden Volunteer, should:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be nominated by a local council or organisation• communicate with Devon County Council• work within the formal Road Warden Agreement• coordinate all minor works in the parish or town• ensure risk assessments are completed and available upon request• record what works they do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• be nominated by a local council or organisation• receive the necessary training for the work they undertake• work within the arrangements agreed with the Road Warden

² Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

³ [Traffic signs manual chapter 8 part 1 road works and temporary situations: designs](#)

Insurance

- DCC provides third party insurance⁴ for volunteer work completed in accordance with DCC guidance.
- DCC provides Public Liability Insurance⁵ for voluntary work on the public highway, **provided the work is undertaken safely and in line with DCC guidance.**
- DCC provide guidance on insurance⁶, however parish and town councils are advised to discuss insurance requirements with their insurance provider.

Benefits & Outcomes	Risks & Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables communities to complete small-scale works locally, improving road safety and local environment • Meaning a faster response to minor issues • Free training (on DCC-arranged courses). • Priority consideration for the Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund (HMCEF)* • Increased community involvement and ownership. The scheme reflects the principles of localism and community empowerment. It enables residents to take an active role in maintaining their environment, improving responsiveness to local issues and strengthening community resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependence on volunteer availability, • Health and safety compliance • Potential confusion over responsibilities • Financial burden on Parish Council • Volunteer capacity – ensuring sustainable participation. • Governance and insurance – confirming coverage with DCC and insurers. • Training commitments – ensuring volunteers can attend required courses. • Record-keeping – maintaining logs of works and risk assessments. • Scope creep – avoiding pressure to undertake tasks beyond capacity or safety limits. <p>These risks must be managed through clear governance and communication.</p>

* The HMCEF⁷ provides financial support to towns, parishes, and community groups for volunteer-led enhancement work. Priority is given to organisations signed up to the Road Warden Scheme. Initial applications must clearly outline the work and the benefits to the community. Organisations may apply to the fund to purchase items including tools and equipment (including personal protective equipment) and pothole repair materials.

⁴ [third-party \(public liability\) insurance](#)

⁵ [public liability insurance](#)

⁶ [guidance on insurance](#)

⁷ [Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund - Devon Funding News](#)

Budget

The Parish Council has 5.5k ringfenced for environmental improvements in the 2026-27 budget. The project would need to stay within this budget unless more funds can be raised from alternative sources.

Recommendations

- Berrynarbor adopts the Road Warden Scheme in a phased, low-risk, model, focusing first on tasks that deliver high visual impact and reduce small maintenance issues. This approach plays to BPC strengths: strong community engagement, a tidy village ethos, and a manageable precept.
- The Clerk has engaged with other Clerks running this scheme to share information and knowledge, e.g. we have a shared risk assessment.
- Hold a public meeting and form a project group
- Appoint a Road Warden with the Right Profile
- Develop a risk assessment (based on those shared from other PC's)
- Avoid high-risk tasks, initially, given the parish's limited volunteer time and the need to avoid liability and keeps the scheme safe, manageable, and compliant
- Put governance in place, this protects both the Parish Council and the volunteers.
 - Adopt a short Road Warden Policy
 - Adopt a Volunteer Policy
 - Ensure insurance is confirmed in writing (via DCC's indemnity)
 - Keep a simple log of works
 - Ensure all volunteers sign a participation form acknowledging training and safety rules
- Review – after 6 months

Decision Required

Council is asked to consider:

- Does Berrynarbor Parish Council wish to join the DCC Community Road Warden Scheme?

If so, to authorise the Clerk to:

- Meet with DCC and sign the Road Warden Agreement with DCC.
- Organise a community meeting
- Appoint a Road Warden.

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Prepared by Julie Irwin Clerk/RFO at the June 2026 meeting and approved, item 2606-14.