

County & District Councillor's Monthly Report Cllr. Jacqi Hodgson - Date of Report: 8th January 2024

**Devon County Councillor for Totnes & Dartington
(incl. Harberton, Harbertonford, Staverton, Landscope & part of Berry Pomeroy)
South Hams District Councillor for Dartington & Staverton
SHDC Executive Portfolio Councillor for Waste and Composting**

Devon County Council: key issues

FUNDING: A very worrying Council Budget update was circulated by Donna Mooney, Devon County Council's CEO on December 14th '23.

"It's important to provide you with an update on the Council's challenging budget position and the work we have been focusing on with many colleagues from across the Council to manage financial pressures and contain overall costs.

In February, the Council set a balanced budget for the current financial year (2023/24) and at that stage we were forecasting a gap between expected costs and income for the following year (2024/25) of around £21million.

When we reviewed our financial projections and updated our assumptions in July, the forecast gap for 2024/25 increased to around £55million. And in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, the Government's decision to increase the National Living Wage to £11.44 per hour was confirmed. This is 30p higher than our initial budgeted assumption and adds significant further pressure to our costs.

In response to the financial challenge, at their September meeting our Cabinet approved a strategy: 'Working Well Together for a Sustainable and Stronger Council'. While progress has since been made around budget options and plans, bringing costs much closer in line with our income, we are still facing a very challenging financial environment and need to continue to do all we can. The Sustainable and Stronger Council report clearly sets out that the need to reduce our costs includes staff costs across the authority.

We updated Trade Union colleagues last week that, in the New Year, we will begin the first phase of a number of staff consultations on service restructures. Colleagues who will be affected in this first phase, and where there will be consultation, have been contacted by their Directors. As we move into other phases of targeted service restructures, teams will be communicated with by the Directors and senior managers leading the process.

We will do everything possible to mitigate redundancies, and where possible we will remove vacant or soon to be vacant posts, as well as remaining committed to seeking to redeploy staff where affected. However, it is likely that we will not be able to avoid the need for any redundancies.

The next important event in terms of our funding is the Government's Provisional Finance Settlement, which is likely to be announced in the week before Christmas and will set out most of the Council's expected grant funding for next year. This, together with our ongoing focus on identifying ways to balance the budget, will inform the budget reports taken to elected Members in January and February."

Extreme Weather, Flooding and Storm Henk on January 2nd: Flooding was reported to me by local parish Councillors in Week Lane, Dartington. The flooding was coming onto the road from both Broom Park Construction site and down the lane itself. From a highway perspective there doesn't appear to be too much we can do for the long term prognosis. There are currently two highway gullies that sit on a watercourse generated by a spring in Brock's Park Copse where it passes under the road, it then heads through the worksite towards the school where it then discharges into Bidwell Brook:



The photos show a significant volume of surface water in the fields on the right so with the weather we are experiencing it's difficult to know if the system has a problem or is simply overwhelmed. I have emailed our S38 officer who will have a presence on site and should be able to provide information on the system and request it is checked and cleared/jetted if required. I have also emailed our Flood Risk Team to get some assurances that the development drainage is not the cause of this flooding.

Further to which it was reported that the flooding was a simple blocked gully grating and the flooding had dissipated.

However, the high winds had caused lightweight polystyrene type insulation boards and pieces from the building site at Broom Park to be blown around the site and over the fencing onto adjacent lane and into hedgerows. I later discovered this had been happening across the Christmas holidays and residents had collected and cleared up much of the mess and put weights on some of the huge heaps of polystyrene boards around the site. They sent me photographs and I went out and took some myself which I sent into SHDC. I reported this in to SHDC Planning Enforcement and Environmental Health who are looking into this and will hopefully take action as it is the responsibility of Bakers to manage their site responsibly. I have requested an urgent clean up and for investigation into any legal challenges to pursue to cover the costs and as a deterrent to this happening again.

Flooding between Staverton Station & Idverde

Further to reports of severe flooding in late November and mid December, I met with the Chair of Staverton PC and an officer from DCC Highways team to investigate whether the severe road flooding that through a very old, valved drainage system discharges directly into an adjacent resident's garden could be modified to re-route the water more directly towards the nearby tributary of the river Dart.

The follow up report came back from the Flood Risk Team officers in relation to the drainage at The Halt and the investigation they undertook since their visit earlier last year. They hold no records on who constructed the system in the garden. They did investigate for upstream land management issues but didn't find a source, or any fields which were obviously causing an issue. The officer had also spoken to some of the upstream landowners but they too were not aware of their land causing any sediment issues.

This means that the outcome is not positive for the owners receiving the drainage. I was further informed "DCC cannot control the surface water that is coming onto our highway naturally, or the level of sediment and debris it carries. We cannot take on the maintenance of the chamber in the garden and I cannot fully understand the use of perforated pipe around the garden. There is no point to consider increasing the highway drainage as the only outlet available is the system through the garden. The only relief that could be given to the two gullies and piped system around the garden would be to clear the open channel pond. That requires some serious maintenance to get it flowing properly and is probably now beyond hand cleaning and needs a mechanical digger, that of course has a cost involved. Moreover, it then needs regular maintenance,"

The DCC officer did express his sympathy, but the outcome was that regrettably this is the responsibility of the land owners.

Flooding on the A384 between Lower Stretchford and Charlie's Cross. 02.01.24. This was reported in as a very deep and dangerous area of flooding. As DCC's Emergency phone number was not being answered, I went out to check that flood notices had been erected, which was the case. I've reported in the DCC Emergency line issue, but suspect it was due to overload with the aftermath of the storm across Devon.

Households will be able to dispose of small amounts of DIY waste for free at Devon County Council Household Waste Recycling Centres, from the January 1st 2024: The government has changed the legislation such that a small amount of DIY waste will be accepted at our Household Waste Recycling Centres, free of

charge, from the New Year. Councils will need to cover the additional costs of disposal themselves, so proposals to help mitigate the additional costs are being developed and are likely to include some DIY waste restrictions at some sites, as well as developing a system to manage the free DIY waste allowances. So what waste will be accepted as household waste?

A free allowance for DIY type waste will be available to households as follows:

This is limited to four single visits per household in any four-week period with either:

- A. up to 2 rubble bags (which can be safely carried by the depositor) per visit**
- OR**
- B. 1 single (unbagged) item up to a maximum of 2 metres in length per visit**

Any excess DIY waste material, oversize DIY material, or additional visits over a household's free weekly allowance will incur charges as normal.

- The free allowance is only provided to householders generating DIY waste produced by their own DIY works at their own domestic property,
- Construction/demolition waste generated by works for which a payment has been made is not accepted.
- Householders undertaking large DIY projects should consider hiring a skip/Hippo bag, or similar, to dispose of their waste.
- The scheme will not apply to certain items, such as tyres and hazardous asbestos, and the charges for these will continue in the normal way.

Healthwatch Stakeholder Briefing - Patient Experiences of Pharmacy Services

Healthwatch in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay have released a report on Patient Experiences of Pharmacy Services, detailing a total of 141 experiences about Pharmacy Services across Devon, Plymouth and Torbay during the 18-month period. Issues raised by those surveyed include medication delays and supply problems that affect the prescription/repeat prescription service, patients not knowing when their medications are ready for collection, and phone calls going unanswered. We have shared the report and its findings with NHS stakeholders in Devon and made key recommendations for them within the report.

Please click the link below to download the detailed responses and the report in full:

<https://healthwatchdevon.co.uk/report/patient-experiences-of-pharmacy-services/>

20mph Speed Limit Programme 'Expression of Interest' 24/25

The eleven selected 20mph speed limit schemes in the first two tranches are underway or completed. There is now an opportunity for a third tranche to be progressed through the 24/25 financial year.

The first two tranches received a significant amount of interest (152 submissions) and it is proposed to utilise the same scoring matrix as used for the previous years. Therefore, where communities have already submitted their expression of interest, they need not do so again, this will be reviewed again and against any expressions from new communities. If a community wishes to modify their proposal they may do so, and this will be reassessed.

A further £150,000 has been secured in DCC's Road Safety Capital Allocation for the 24/25 tranche (Item 210, <https://democracy.devon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=133&Mid=4460&Ver=4>). It is anticipated that 4-6 further communities (depending upon the size of the schemes) could benefit from new 20mph limits with this additional funding.

The next steps will be for elected Members to work with their communities to complete new or modified applications, it is important that every application is supported both by the Town or Parish Council and Elected Member prior to assessment. To allow for assessment and prioritisation for schemes to be delivered in 24/25 Financial year all new or modified submissions must be completed by 1st March 2024. The application form can be found here: [20mph Community Self Assessment form \(Tranche 3\)](#)

CASTLE STREET: requests for improvements to avoid further accidents or incidents that have caused substantial damage to buildings and endangered life. This is the response from DCC Highways Team:

“There are already signs on the approach to this section of Castle Street so I am simply not sure additional signs will have any effect. Delivery drivers are now so focused on their schedules that they appear to drive without the necessary due care and attention driving requires, to mount a kerb because of the size of your vehicle and the width of the carriageway really should ring alarm bells!

DCC are not in a position to consider new restrictions, but it may be possible to adjust the existing signage. I can have a design drawn up to replace the existing advisory sign at Antrim Terrace to include both width and height. I would need to seek advice as the building does not actually overhang the carriageway, but we may be able to install warning sign 530A and 530.1 on lamp column 3 as you approach the hazard.

My only concern is that the sign at this location is not very prominent. Finding another location is tricky, the most prominent location would be the old lamp column at the entrance to the castle, but during the walkaround with TTC it was thought this column should not be used due to its appeal and association with the conservation area.

I agree with the view that this incident is likely only to be stopped by closing Castle Street between North Street and High Street. However, this does have an impact on the residents who live in the centre of the town so would have to be considered by the Planning Committee and Traffic and Transport forum in conjunction with the other traffic projects being investigated.

Please let me know if you want me to progress the signage changes and additions outlined.”



May be used with diagram 530.1, 530.2 or 572.
The height may be varied.

Figure 7-19 Diagram 530A (S2-4-2)
Single sign showing available headroom
in both metric and imperial units



May be used only in combination with diagram 530A. A distance, an arrow pointing to the left or right or both may be added. "building" may be varied to "buildings" or to "structure"

Figure 7-20 Diagram 530.1 (S2-5-1)
Building overhanging part of a carriageway

It would have to be fitted above the light for the 'No Left Turn' but would appear something like as shown below:

Please can the Town Council indicate their views on the DCC response and this signage proposal.

Proposed new Zebra Crossings at St John's School, Bridgetown, Totnes

There is a new parents' campaign to get a crossing + lollipop person + flashing yellow lights outside St John's. There is a complete lack of safety mechanisms for this school, which is nestled alongside two of the most dangerous roads in Totnes, both on blind bends. They want to see provision on both Westonfields and Weston Lane. I will be meeting with the residents and our SHDC Ward Members for Totnes to support this proposal and hopefully take it forward with DCC.

Roadworks notifications:

Wales & West – Totnes Gas pipe upgrade – Fore St Totnes. Starts 2nd January. Anticipated end in March.

Traffic management will be in place throughout the works and motorists are advised to allow extra time for travel. There will be 2 way traffic management in the Narrows.

Any issues or enquiries should be referred to their Customer Service Team on 0800912 2999 or by email to enquiries@wwutilities.co.uk (or via X (formally Twitter) @WWUtilities or Facebook.com/wwutilities.

Full road closure In Fore St. Subject: (South) Temporary Traffic Order - High Street, Totnes (TTRO2351883)

This is for the use of the disabled bay outside 27 High St., used for scaffolding The expected end date for these works has moved and is now 1/3/24.

Subject: RE: A381 Totnes - Vehicle Restraint System replacement at rail bridge

These works on the A381 have progressed more or less as planned and are due to finish by the 12th of January. The contractor has undertaken slightly more work than originally anticipated, including working around buried services and unknown poor ground conditions, but they have worked hard to keep to programme. There is a sign and its foundations to be replaced just to the south (uphill) of the road bridge which will not be completed until mid to late January, but this should only lead to limited disruption (a lane closure for 2-3 days).

Subject: 240109 Weirfields ORD2301468

Forthcoming patching and drainage resetting works in Weirfields Totnes. These works are due to commence on 9th and 10th of January: The drain between Quarry Lodge and Weir View will also be reset and cleaned. DCC politely and respectfully ask that no vehicles park on Weirfields on the two days concerned as getting the equipment through may be difficult.

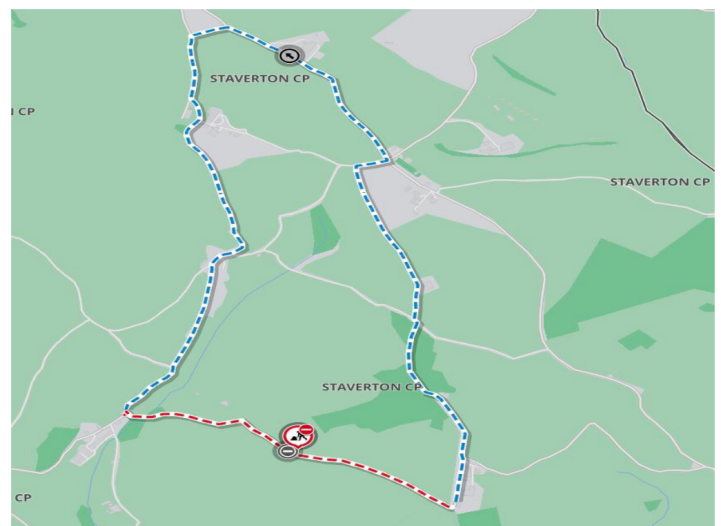
Subject: [CORRECTION] Temporary Traffic Notice - A385 SHINNERS BRIDGE TO QUEENS ARMS, Dartington

(TTRO2454729) (The attached Notice supersedes previous Notice ref: TTRO2454652). Roads affected - HUXHAMS CROSS TO SHINNERS BRIDGE, DARTINGTON (FROM NEAR ST MARY'S CHURCH TO NEAR THE CIDER PRESS CENTRE CAR PARK ENTRANCE). The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via - A384, A38, A385, A384, AND VISA VERSA. From 26 March for 2 nights to end morning of 28 March 2024 (both dates inclusive) Between the hours of 19:00 and 06:00

Subject: 240111 Baddaford Cross to Higher Penn Cross - RESURFACING

"Due to the nature of the works traffic measures a road closure is required and advance signs will also be placed on the Highway. I apologise in advance for any inconvenience caused, including construction noise. We will endeavour to keep all disruption to a minimum.

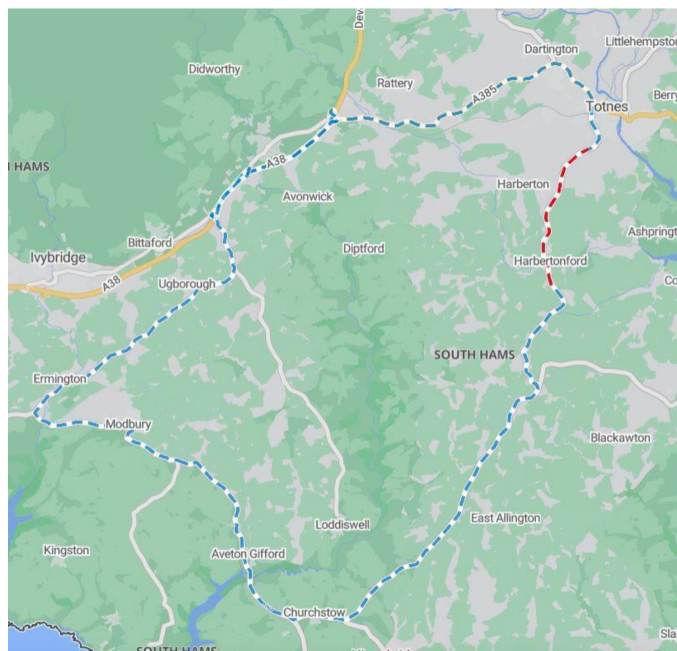
The planned on-site working hours will be Thursday 11th January 2024 to Friday 19th January 2024 between the hours 0700 and 1700hrs for Resurfacing works. The road will be reopened over the weekend of Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th January. Please see a map showing the area which is being worked on highlighted in orange and the official diversion route in blue dashes:



Subject: (South) Temporary Traffic Notice - PARKFIELD CROSS TO HIGHER PENN, Staverton (TTRO2454661)

From MONDAY 19 FEB.2024 for a maximum of 5 days Until THURSDAY 22 FEB.2024 (both dates inclusive). No person shall cause or permit any vehicle to proceed or wait on the sections of Affected Roads. Roads affected PARKFIELD CROSS TO HIGHER PENN, ASHBURTON. The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via - Baddaford cross to Higher Penn Cross, Bulland Cross to Baddaford Cross, Chuley Cross to Bulland, Chuley Cross to Parkfield Cross, & vice versa

This temporary restriction is considered necessary to enable - RESURFACING WORKS



Subject: Temporary Traffic Order - A381, Harberton (TTRO2454267)

From **MONDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2024** (for a maximum of 18 months). Anticipated Finish **FRIDAY 22 MARCH 2024**. Between the hours of **20:00** and **05:30**

No person shall cause or permit any vehicle to proceed on the sections of Affected Roads.

Roads affected -**A381, HARBERTONFORD**

The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via - A381 SOUTHBOUND, A379 TOWARDS MODBURY, A3121 VIA ERMINGTON,UGBOROUGH, A38 VIA BRENT CROSS, A385, A381. This temporary restriction is considered necessary to enable -

RESURFACING AND DRAINAGE WORK WITH PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

For additional information contact:

WSPTTelephone: **01392 229700**

Subject: Patching Works - ORD2103787 - East

Moore Cross to West Leigh Cross Harberton

Patching works, to be carried out in late January and early February 2024 on the road from East Moore Cross to West Leigh Cross Harberton, which may have an impact on this area.

Works will take place Monday 29th January to 9th February 2024

Due to the nature of the works a road closure will be necessary, and a diversion route will be in place, details of the diversion are included below. The contractor will be doing a letter drop to residents to provide them with details of the works.

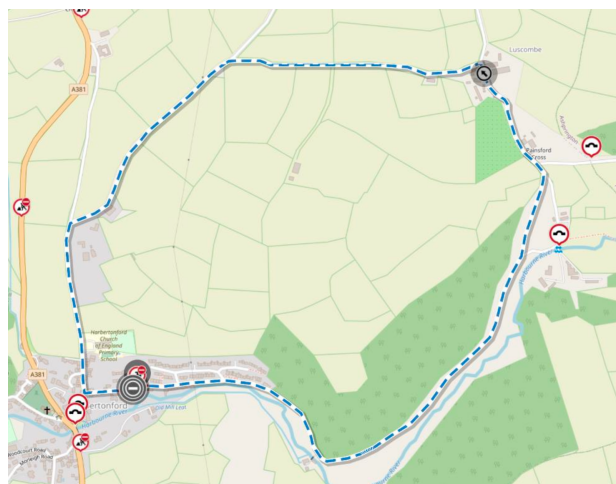


Subject: Temporary Traffic Notice - BOW ROAD, Harberton

(TTRO2454251)Temporary prohibition of traffic.

From Thursday 29th Feb – Monday 4th March (incl). The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via - Bow Road, Old Road, Luscombe towards Harbertonford,Luscombe Cross to Painsford Cross, Painsford Cross to Bow Road along zc322, Bow Road and vice versa. This temporary restriction is considered necessary to enable -

temp to perm reinstatement. For additional information contact: **Kier on behalf of south west water: 01726-224400**



Education / Local Schools: KEVICC site sales – no updates

Totnes replacement Skate Park: A meeting took place last week of the Skate Park group together with Rob Sekula who is heading up the development elements on behalf of South Hams District Council. Last year's public consultation with local residents and skatepark users had confirmed that the current location in Borough Park had 75% preference (compared to the alternative proposed location behind the Pavilions Leisure centre) and a planning application can now proceed. As this is SHDC owned land on the same location (albeit slightly moved to avoid the root protection areas of the surrounding mature trees), it will simply require a Certificate of Lawfulness to proceed. Funding was discussed in some detail and the need to raise a target of £300,000 will be mainly done through a Crowdfunder which is expected to be set up to run from April to June this year. It is hoped that local and neighbouring Town and Parish Councils, District and County Councillors will contribute support funding to enable the Crowdfunder to obtain some match funding. The recent success of the Kingsbridge Skate park was used as a model for progress to speed up this long-awaited replacement skate park in Totnes.

Traveller at Staverton – on the road between the Sea Trout Inn and Blacklers Land Cross. The occupant and caravan has left the site but a lot of items have been left on site. This has been reported into both the Rough Sleepers Navigators team and the waste team at SHDC. The issue is being monitored to see what is going to be removed by the owner in the first instance, then SHDC waste services will step in. I have been asked by a resident to look into some kind of obstruction on this lay by to prevent further illegal occupation; I have made enquiries with DCC.

South Devon Rural Housing Association (SDRHA) news: I have been advised by some affected residents and other concerned parties that South Devon Rural Housing Association (which originally took over the Dartington Hall Estate owned social housing) is in discussions about a possible merger with Places for People. This comes in the wake of their closure of Forder Lane House, where all the remaining residents finally moved out before Christmas. SDRHA announced a six week merger on January 9th that runs until February 7th '24 (6 weeks?). this is the posting:

"MERGER PROPOSAL CONSULTATION

We want to hear your thoughts on our proposed merger with Places for People. So we've launched a six-week consultation period that runs until the first week of February.

You may have comments on what you've read in the Merger Special edition of your SDR newsletter. You can find answers to a lot of your likely questions [HERE](#) Or you may have other questions about the proposal that you'd like us to answer.

It's important to us that we consider your views, so please reply by 07 February 2024. It should take no more than 15 minutes to complete the online form, which you can access [HERE](#)"

Meetings with Dartington Hall Estate acting CEO Robert Fedder. To date I have met 3 times with Robert Fedder since September in my role as your local Councillor. This has been with others, mainly from SHDC and once with Dartington Parish Councillors. While there has not as yet been any formal public announcements, it seems that the Estate is in a far sounder footing now than it was in July when he was brought in. In his briefings he has outlined some of the root and branch investigations into the financial structures and issues on the estate and taken a number of challenging decisions including changes of staff contracts. He has given assurances that he has no intention of seeking to sell off more of the Estate land, but rather to make it work for the estate. He is seeking to improve and extend better use of all the estate buildings, including bringing in additional franchises. He says the Board are behind him and supporting him. I have received some requests for meetings to be set up for various sectors of the community to meet and discuss their concerns and ideas; this is in progress.

Other matters:

















Totnes Climate & Ecological Emergency Working Group. The Group has now moved to be held at the Totnes Climate Hub at the Mansion House, Totnes. The intention is to work on a more project-based approach. The

first inaugural meeting will take place on Tuesday 16th January at 6.30pm. Future meetings will take place on the third Tuesday of the month at 6.30pm. All welcome.

Totnes Rural Area Youth Engagement (TRAYE) Project – the minutes of the Steering Group meeting on 15th Dec’23 have been circulated to all participating Town and Parish Councils. The outcome of that meeting was a less formal Memorandum of Understanding to replace the draft Service Agreement previously proposed as a funding arrangement for the participating Town and Parish Councils to provide 50% of support funding for TRAYE project in their parish. Parish Councils are being asked to consider this for their current precept and budget deliberations for the 2024/25 financial year.

Please continue to use the Report it webpages on Devon County Councils website to report in any potholes, broken street lamps, overgrown hedges obstruction pavements, simply ‘Google’ Devon County Council Report It or use this link: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem/>

Any severe potholes or dangerous areas of the road can also be reported via this link on the Report It website: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/help-and-support/make-a-complaint/#:~:text=If%20you%20have%20a%20complaint,Centre%20on%200345%20155%201004>

 <p>Pothole Large 40 mm vertical-edge hole that is also greater than 300 mm wide</p>	 <p>Parking Request enforcement in residents' parking and on-street parking zones</p>	 <p>Overgrown vegetation Pedestrians forced into road, cars over central line, reduced visibility</p>
 <p>Public rights of way For example, blocked access or broken stiles</p>	 <p>Hazardous or fallen trees Trees that have fallen into the road or are leaning, unstable, diseased or dying.</p>	 <p>Debris or obstruction Thick mud, soil, stones, embankment slips, large branches, fallen trees</p>
 <p>Defective road markings or signs White and yellow, stop or give way lines or warning signs</p>	 <p>Trip hazard Hole or significant difference in level on pavement or cycleway</p>	 <p>Traffic lights Damage or fault to traffic lights or signals or school crossing patrol light</p>
 <p>Broken manhole cover Broken, missing or rocking manhole cover</p>	 <p>Grit bin Empty bin, damaged bin or a bin with contents that are unuseable</p>	 <p>Bridges and retaining walls Structural damage or significant obstructions restricting water flow</p>
 <p>Fences and barriers Damaged or missing roadside fences or barriers</p>	 <p>Ice Ice or snow on the road</p>	 <p>Street lights, lit signs, lit bollards Faulty street light, zebra crossing, bollard, lit sign</p>
 <p>Flooding and blocked drains Standing water, blocked drain, flooded property, impassable road</p>		

Pillar and Wall at Plymouth Road /Weston Bypass:

The Senior Engineer for Bridges and wall at DCC has provided a couple of hand sketches that shows the situation they are faced with and how the options will work. I am contacting the affected residents for their views on these options.

“Drawing A shows the existing situation and where the pillar was originally. Below that is our recommended pillar location at the back of the footway and the straightening of the wall. This opens up the end of the footway and provides safe pedestrian egress in this area. The footway can also be ramped down to remove any trip hazard.

Drawing B also shows the existing situation, with a sketch below showing the pillar set back by 500mm (I am advised that a 300mm set back has never been discussed). You will note that this does not tie in particularly well with the existing wall and may look ‘clumsy’ when complete. It will also create a 0.5m gap that is of no use to pedestrian safety and leaves at least a 100mm upstand that may become a trip hazard. It is for these latter reasons that both Safety Audit and my team are strongly in favour of the option shown on Drawing A.”

