

West Down Parish Council

County Councillors report

September 2024

Winter Woes

At the time of writing it is a warm September day but all too soon we will be back in the colder months. With the announcement that pensioners will not be receiving a winter fuel allowance this year I am concerned that there will be more people worried about turning on the heating in the area, especially as a lot of us have no access to gas. In addition the energy price cap is as is reported likely to rise, adding to the concern.

To check if you are eligible for pension credit, below is the link to the Pension credit claim form; gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim

Alternatively, it is also worth looking at the Rural Devon Citizens advice webpages or calling them on the number below.

North Devon Citizens advice; www.ruraldevoncab.org.uk

Telephone; 08082 787999

Mobile Boost Scheme

The Mobile Boost scheme has been hugely popular and it's extremely rewarding to hear from people that it's made such a difference to their business or their daily lives. People in some rural areas continue to struggle with their mobile signal and I know there are many in Combe Martin rural area. There is new funding support will enable more people to benefit from improved connectivity,

<https://www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/better-connection/mobile-boost-voucher-scheme/mobile-boost-voucher-scheme-guide/>

The latest round of the scheme will continue to enable businesses and residents in Somerset, Devon, Torbay and Plymouth to apply for a voucher of up to £1,300 towards the cost of a mobile signal booster from a number of registered suppliers. Applicants have to pay towards the cost of installation themselves.

A361 closure

Monday 16th September -Friday 11th October

Due to the nature of the works a road closure is required and the diversionary route for traffic will

be signposted and advance signs will also be placed on the Highway. Emergency access will be

maintained, as well as access for residents within the closure. The closure will be lifted on Saturday

21st September 2024 as this is the date of the Barnstaple Carnival, part of which takes place on the diversion route.

Information on current and planned roadworks in your area can be found on the one.network: Causeway one.network

We apologise in advance for any inconvenience caused, including noise. We will endeavour to keep all disruption to a minimum and appreciate your co-operation. Should you have any questions please contact DCC and we will do our best to try to help.

Email: highway.highwaysliaison-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Website: [Roads and transport \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://roadsandtransport.devon.gov.uk)

Following the concerns raised by the chairman I contacted highways liaison and we had the following reply;

I have been in discussions with the local delivery team regarding the concerns raised and as Andrea has kindly advised these closures can be difficult to plan. The reason for these closures is to undertake drainage and patching works to the A361 following investigations which have highlighted issues on the existing drainage system, with this section of carriageway forming part of the primary gritting route it is important that these issues are resolved for the safety of the travelling public. As Andrea has also mentioned the sections of carriageway which require closing are narrow and we are governed by the New Roads and Streetworks act on the live carriageway widths and the resulting traffic management required, as the sections being worked on cannot be undertaken under lights due to the safety of both the work force and travelling public.

As part of the legislation surrounding road closures the roads where possible on the diversion have to be the same classification therefore the A road network which has been selected. Whilst we understand concerns that this closure is likely to lead to an increase in traffic through the village there is little which can be done regarding this with the roads being public highway and locals legally able to use these roads if they choose to do so. We do not close surrounding roads of the existing closure with various issues arising of different communities then being impacted; for example Saunton, Croyde and Muddiford which are also likely to be impacted by higher traffic flows.

Whilst the first couple days of the closure may cause some disruption with individuals trying to use West Down but once locals discover issues on the traffic flows in the past it is likely they will find more suitable routes such as Muddiford.

I can confirm that my experience is that the first few days of any closure are problematic as drivers don't allow extra time, think they will be able to use alternative routes, forgot or just weren't aware.

What we can't get away from and we can all agree on is that the work needs to be done, there will be disruption. Any complaints, questions etc the address is highway.highwaysliaison-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

Reactive sign.

Leave this with me and I will liaise with the new clerk. The only thing I need for you all to agree and minute is that you are happy to own the sign and will move it around the sites at this point. Daniel and I will sort out what we can and get back to you should the PC need to fund anything, I'm fairly sure I will be able to completely fund but we will sort it out between us the specification and what might be needed. I will ask Bratton Fleming and Combe Martin about theirs which is working well and I'm sure is not as heavy as 23kg!! Will report back next month in the meantime I will get the forms over to Daniel and we will get the money secured from my locality budget.

Andrea Davis

County Councillor

Combe Martin Rural Division

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