

260505- Item 27 - Highways Report

1. Purpose of the Report

To provide an update on the proposed A382 closure including:

- Correspondence sent on 10 April
- Responses received from Devon County Council South West Water, the Environment Agency, Dartmoor National Park Authority and Mel Stride MP
- A meeting held with Devon County Council
- Recommended next steps

2. Correspondence Sent (10 April 2026)

2.1 Letter to South West Water

- Requested coordination of SWW works with DCC's six-week A382 closure
- Highlighted cumulative economic impact of repeated road closures
- Warned of risk of a second closure if works are not aligned
- Invited SWW to meet with the Parish Council.

Copied to: Cllr Richard Keeling, Mel Stride MP. *(Full text at Appendix A.)*

2.2 Letter to Devon County Council Highways

- Acknowledged engineering need and EA permit constraints.
- Raised concerns about the economic impact of a summer closure
- Requested reconsideration of timing and improved communication
- Highlighted concerns from businesses and the Carnival Committee.
- Sought mitigation options (weekend/night openings, event access, coordination with other works)

Copied to: Cllr Keeling, John Farrand-Rogers, Mel Stride MP, Environment Agency, SWW, DNPA. *(Full text at Appendix B.)*

3. Responses Received

3.1 Response from SWW, Area 4 Manager (received 10 April 2026)

- Acknowledged the letter.

- Confirmed a site meeting has taken place to discuss the issues raised.

3.2 Response from Rt Hon Sir Mel Stride MP (received 13 April 2026)

- Has raised concerns with DCC's Chief Engineer
- Plans a site meeting with the Highways team

3.3 Response from SWW (received 14 April 2026)

- Responded on behalf of the Chief Executive.
- Stated SWW has no works planned that align with the proposed A382 closure.
- Provided a dedicated Council Enquiries email address.

3.4 Response from the Environment Agency (received 15 April 2026)

- Acknowledged receipt.
- Passed enquiry to the local Customers & Engagement Team.
- Provided enquiry reference 260415/CC27.

3.5 Response from DNPA (received 21 April 2026)

- Acknowledged receipt.
- Look forward to seeing the response from DCC.

3.6 Response from DCC (received 22 April 2026)

- Confirmed that the revised dates for the A382 closure are finalised, citing diversion requirements and existing road-space bookings
- Reiterated that the summer holiday period is the only viable window due to engineering, safety and EA constraints
- Noted the possibility (but not guarantee) of two-way temporary lights towards the end of the works if conditions allow
- Stated that completing retaining wall repairs, drainage works and resurfacing together should avoid further lengthy closures
- Clarified that the retaining wall is a highway support structure, not a flood-defence asset
- Confirmed that unofficial diversion routes are used at motorists' discretion, though DCC will inspect the likely routes identified by the Parish Council

(Full response attached at Appendix C.)

4. Meeting with Devon County Council Highways

4.1 Attendees

Ines Scilitoe (DCC), Chris Passey (EDG), Nicola Shears (Carnival Committee), Cllr Catherine Fileman-Wright, Sam Parkin.

The meeting was arranged at the request of the Carnival Committee to discuss concerns about the proposed A382 closure. The Parish Council Chair and Clerk were invited to attend.

4.2 Key points from DCC

- Retaining wall has rotated; rapid deterioration since last inspection
- Carriageway collapse is likely without intervention
- Three of five gullies have failed; surface and drainage work planned concurrently
- Road too narrow for safe working with traffic; traffic lights not possible
- EA consent limits in-river works to 20 July–28 August
- TTRO and permissions already submitted; timing difficult to change
- Tender decision expected end of May; programme confirmed thereafter
- DCC hopes SWW will coordinate but this is not yet agreed

4.3 Community and Economic Impact Raised by PC

- Third major closure in under 12 months
- Significant impact on hospitality and tourism businesses
- Concern about late engagement with the community
- Challenged the assumption that school transport costs outweigh economic harm

4.4 Mitigation Measures

- Diversion adjusted to allow Carnival procession on 27 August
- The Parish Council requested improved communication, including a public statement and photographs that can be shared with residents to explain the engineering need.
- DCC can repair potholes on unofficial diversion routes
- Based on local knowledge of driver behaviour during previous closures, the Parish Council believes that many motorists are likely to use the following route as an unofficial diversion: taking the road opposite Wray Barton, then turning right towards North Bovey, and turning right again down Brinning Road/Lane. Some users might carry on towards North Bovey and turn right at Hospitt Cross (*Appendix D*). As this route is already well-used and is the most intuitive alternative for through-traffic, we will ask DCC to inspect it in advance of the closure and carry out any necessary pothole repairs or safety measures to help manage the increased traffic that is likely to use this road.
- Possibility of separate HGV and non-HGV diversion routes

- Ines confirmed that businesses or the Council may put up “open for business” signage and that DCC will ensure these are not removed.

4.5 Outstanding Issues

- SWW has not yet confirmed whether it will undertake its works during the closure, creating a risk of a future additional closure.
- Final timings remain dependent on the tender outcome
- Further mitigation options (e.g., weekend openings) remain unconfirmed

5. Recommendations for Council

Council is asked to:

1. **Note** the correspondence sent and the responses received.
2. **Decide** whether to continue pressing DCC to reconsider the timing of the works (29 June–7 August) in light of the updated explanation.
3. **Decide** whether to issue further correspondence to SWW pressing once DCC confirms its final programme.
4. **Decide** whether to issue a public update to residents and businesses (*Appendix D*).
5. **Delegate** ongoing liaison with DCC, SWW and other agencies to the Clerk and Chair.

6. Appendices

Appendix A: Letter to South West Water (10 April 2026)

Dear Mr Haslett,

Proposed Maintenance and Road Closure – A382 near Moretonhampstead

I am writing to urge South West Water to take all possible steps to collaborate and coordinate with Devon County Council’s planned maintenance near the Moretonhampstead water treatment works on the A382 this summer.

Devon County Council is in the late stages of planning a major and urgent repair project to replace a flood defence wall, repair road surface damage and replace drainage pipes on the A382. The extent of the works means a full road closure will be required for six weeks, and in-river works will also be necessary.

I understand from Devon County Council that South West Water also has essential works to carry out in the same location, which would likewise require a road closure.

However, although Devon County Council is attempting to coordinate with your company, they have not yet been able to secure agreement for your works to be undertaken and funded at the same time.

Moretonhampstead is a very small town whose economy relies heavily on holiday visitors. Another road closure during the summer season would be potentially devastating for our local businesses. This proposed closure also comes hard on the heels of several others: the A382 closure in October 2025 half-term (DCC), the ongoing B3212 closure (DCC), and South West Water's poorly signed A382 closure at the start of this Easter's school holidays.

The possibility that, due to a lack of coordination and commitment from South West Water, a further road closure may be required in the future to carry out works in the same location as Devon County Council's project is extremely worrying.

I therefore urge you to take all possible steps to ensure that South West Water's works are carried out at the same time, in full coordination with Devon County Council.

Members of the Parish Council would be pleased to meet with your representatives to discuss our concerns.

A copy of this letter has been sent to Cllr Richard Keeling, Devon County Council, and the Rt Hon Sir Mel Stride MP.

Appendix B: Letter to Devon County Council Highways (10 April 2026)

Dear Devon County Council Highways Team,

Moretonhampstead Parish Council wishes to formally express its concern regarding the proposed six-week closure of the A382 during the summer holiday period.

We fully recognise the importance of the stabilisation works and the need to ensure the long-term safety and resilience of the route. We are grateful to the Neighbourhood Highways Officer and Chris Passey from the Engineering Design Group (EDG) for meeting with us to explain the background to the scheme, including the deterioration of the retaining wall since the last inspection a couple of years ago, the impact of recent severe winters, and the need to undertake the works within the relevant Environment Agency (EA) permit window.

We also appreciate the positive steps being taken to coordinate the wall repairs with surface and drainage works, and the fact that the asset team, Highways and EDG are working together to minimise disruption. We understand the safety constraints that prevent the use of traffic lights due to the narrow road width.

The Council asks that Highways adopts an open, collaborative approach with the community. Residents and businesses want to feel that they are being treated as trusted partners, rather than simply being informed of decisions once they are finalised.

Clear, proactive communication—including a public statement and photographs illustrating the condition of the retaining wall and the reasons the works are necessary—would go a long way towards addressing community concerns.

However, despite understanding the engineering and safety rationale, the Council must emphasise the significant adverse impact that a full six-week closure during the summer holidays will have on the community and local economy—particularly given that this would be the third major road closure affecting Moretonhampstead in less than twelve months (A382 closure in October half term, B3212 closure over February half term and Easter, and now this proposal).

We also note that the original intention was to close the road from 1 June to 17 July, and that this was rescheduled due to concerns about school exam periods. This demonstrates that alternative timings have been considered and that adjustments are possible.

Impact on the Community and Local Economy

Councillors have heard directly from a number of local businesses, including at the Annual Parish Meeting where several business owners raised their concerns with County Cllr Keeling and the attending Highways officer. The Council has also been copied into correspondence sent to Mel Stride MP by a local business owner and the Carnival Committee, outlining the likely impacts on trade, visitor numbers and community events.

The Carnival Committee has highlighted the particular risk to the Food Festival on 22 August and Carnival Day on 27 August—major events that attract visitors from across Devon and raise vital funds for local charities. These events depend on good access for traders and visitors, and any restriction risks reducing participation, footfall and the economic benefit they bring to the town.

We have also received representations from local businesses, including the Union Inn, which has traded in Moretonhampstead for over 22 years and employs 20 local residents. They stress that the summer holiday period is essential to the viability of hospitality and tourism-dependent businesses, particularly following the recent three-month closure of the B3212. There is real concern that visitors will be deterred by lengthy diversions onto minor roads, and that the cumulative impact of consecutive major closures places the local economy under significant strain.

More broadly, the Council remains concerned about:

- the length of the closure and its cumulative impact so soon after the B3212 disruption
- the effect on local businesses, many of whom rely heavily on summer trade and tourism

- the wider impacts on residents, including access to services, increased journey times and reduced connectivity
- the fact that Moretonhampstead is a rural community with limited alternative routes, making the A382 a critical access corridor

Timing of the Works

We understand the constraints of the EA permit window and the need to undertake the works safely. However, we also understand that the tender has not yet been awarded.

Given this, we strongly urge DCC to reconsider the proposed timing and explore whether the works could be scheduled in a way that avoids the peak summer holiday period. The economic impact on local businesses far outweighs the additional cost of diverting school transport for a short period—there is simply no comparison.

We also wish to express our disappointment at the late timing of engagement with the community, given the length of time the scheme has been in development. Earlier dialogue would have allowed concerns to be raised and explored sooner.

Mitigation Measures

Should a full closure during the summer holidays remain unavoidable, we request that Highways explores all possible mitigation measures, including:

- whether weekend and/or night-time openings of the road are feasible
- whether the Willowrey Farm wall repairs can be coordinated within the same closure to avoid future disruption
- clear, timely and accessible communication with residents and businesses
- proactive engagement with event organisers, including the Carnival Committee
- whether full or managed access can be provided on 22 August and 27 August to allow the Food Festival and Carnival Day to proceed without severe disruption

Conclusion

Moretonhampstead Parish Council is committed to working constructively with Devon County Council to ensure that essential infrastructure works can proceed while minimising harm to our community. We ask that you approach this matter with flexibility, transparency and a willingness to explore all reasonable alternatives.

We would welcome a prompt response.

Appendix C: Devon County Council's Response

Thank you for providing the letter in response to our in-person meeting on Friday 10th April, as well as the Highways Report for the upcoming Parish meeting, and my

apologies for not responding to you sooner.

I hope the in-person meeting proved informative regarding the scheme along Pepperdon Retaining Wall. Despite the continued concern from the Committee and Parish Council Chairs, the revised dates are finalised due to a number of factors including acquiring National Highways' network for the official diversion and isolated road space bookings further south along the A382. The plan is to keep all concerned and relevant parties in the loop regarding the scheme, including yourselves, Dartmoor National Park Authority, transport services, local businesses and even neighbouring parishes, as well as numerous others who may well be affected by the scheme. I have attached a couple photographs showing the more significant areas of degradation of the wall, which will of course be repaired or replaced in July/August.

Of course, closing the A382 during the summer holidays sounds ridiculous on paper, but in practice it really is the only viable window of opportunity we have to complete the works. As I have stressed, we will make every effort to ensure the works are completed as efficiently as possible, with the hope of reopening the road before the estimate end date of the 28th August. There is also the potential for two-way temporary lights to be installed prior to completion, should the degree of completion be sufficient to allow traffic to pass whatever aspects remain to be finished. This is not a guarantee, just a matter which may be possible at the discretion of the principal contractor. The planned resurfacing works, working in collaboration with another department, may disrupt this however, as this will be the final stage of the scheme before reopening.

Reading the many pieces of correspondence I have received regarding my scheme, the closure of the B3212 has not helped matters, but both schemes are responses to the particularly unsettled winter we experienced, leading to the accelerated decline of highway assets and associated terrain. Whilst this will be the third successive closure, the fact the A382 scheme will incorporate the retaining wall repairs, drainage improvements and resurfacing in one hit will mitigate the need to carry out another lengthy closure in the foreseeable future.

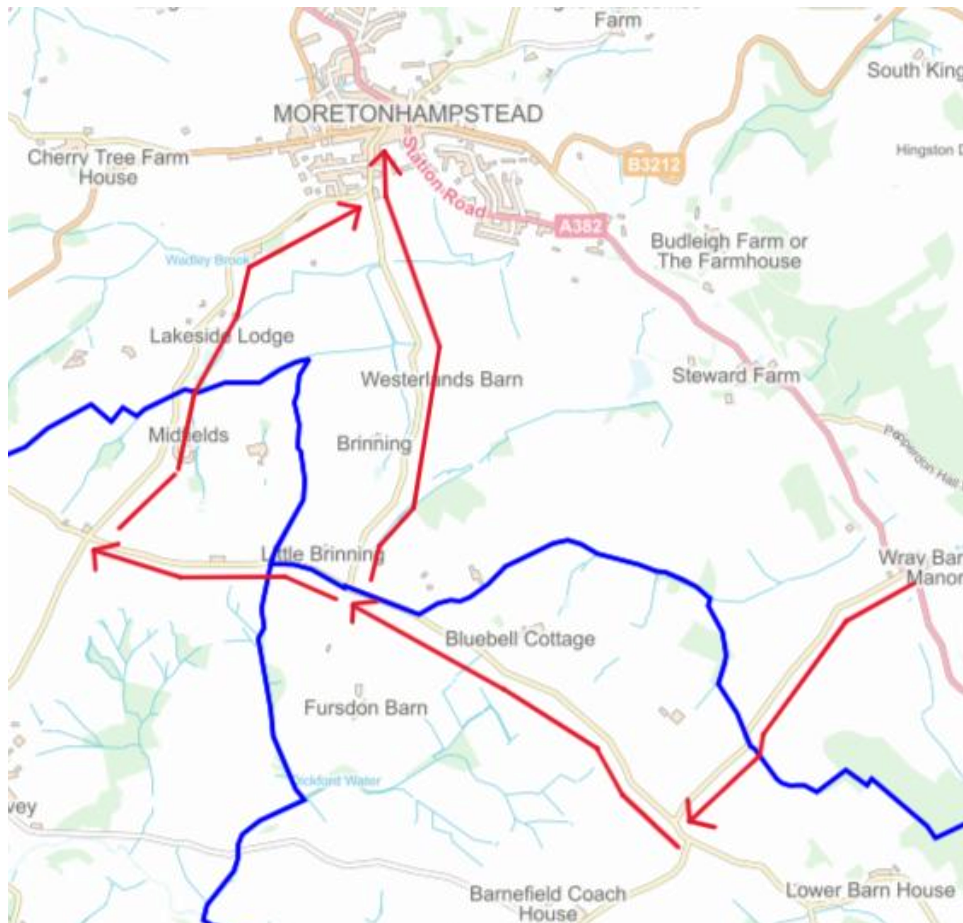
Regarding the Highways Report letter, the majority of that document reads absolutely fine. I wouldn't say this is late engagement with the community, rather fairly early as we're still 3 months away from the start date and informing relevant parties too far in advance can cause additional issues should the scheme be deferred to altered beyond the original scope of works. I also wanted to stress something mentioned in the letter in Appendix A in that this retaining wall isn't a flood defence structure but retains the highway substructure behind it. I'm aware flooding is an ongoing issue within the extent of the closure but the wall is there to support the highway and channel water along its intended route, rather than mitigate flooding. The accompanying drainage works to be

completed alongside the retaining wall repairs should help to alleviate some of the flooding issues, but this is being orchestrated by a different department. The unofficial local diversion routes highlighted on the map are purely at the discretion of the motorist. I recall Ines was to report on the condition of these roads prior to the closure but I cannot vouch for their suitability as an alternative means of getting around the closure.

Best Regards,

Assistant Engineer
Bridges & Structures Capital Maintenance
Engineering Design Group

Appendix D: Map of Unofficial Diversion



Appendix D: Suggested Public Update

A382 Road Closure – Parish Council Update

Devon County Council (DCC) has now issued the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (below) for a full closure of the A382 this summer. Moretonhampstead Parish Council has raised strong concerns about the timing and impact of this closure, especially given the significant disruption the town has already experienced over the past year.

We are very disappointed that these concerns were not addressed before the TTRO was issued.

We recognise the engineering need for the works. At a recent meeting, DCC officers explained that the retaining wall has deteriorated rapidly, three of the five gullies have collapsed, and there is a genuine risk of sudden road failure if repairs are not carried out. The road is too narrow for traffic-light control, and in-river works must take place within the Environment Agency's consent window.

DCC has responded to the Parish Council's correspondence and confirmed that the revised dates for the closure are finalised, citing the need to secure the official diversion route and existing road-space bookings further along the A382.

The Parish Council remains extremely concerned about the cumulative impact on local businesses, residents and visitors, particularly during the peak summer season. We have reiterated to DCC that earlier engagement with the Parish Council would have allowed local knowledge to inform their planning and helped reduce the impact on the community.

We have also asked DCC to provide an official public statement explaining the condition of the retaining wall and the need for the works, so that we can share accurate information with residents. We will publish this as soon as it is received.

We will continue to press for clear communication from DCC and for all possible steps to reduce the impact on the town. The Parish Council will provide further updates once DCC confirms the contractor and final programme.

(The TTRO will be published alongside this update for residents to view.)