

# 260505 – Item 13 -Correspondence

## 1. Correspondence received 04/05/2026

I was disappointed to see what had happened to the oak tables. My company made those 'at cost' as a contribution to the community. The wood was donated by Bradfords. Whilst the wood is not of the highest quality it is still oak and should have served the community well for many years.

When we installed the tables and benches, we were aware that the wood would quickly decay at the bases owing to the way they were embedded in the ground. This was done due to limitations of the budget. However, we informed your predecessor, that it should be possible to cut the timber flush once the decay was bad and fit metal bases when additional funds might be available.

So you can imagine my surprise when I discovered that the tops of the table had been removed, replaced with tanalised floor decking, whilst leaving the rotting bases in place.

I regularly walk past the tables and have been monitoring the condition of the timber and had been meaning to contact the parish council to discuss upgrading the bases.

I was aware that the sap wood has been decaying as expected, but the heart wood will last much longer. When we made the tables we attempted to 'place' the areas of heart wood so that the sap could rot away leaving the heart wood to continue for many further years. You will note how we did this with the back of the bench to the upper table. You can pull away the decaying sap wood, but the heart wood remains leaving a pleasing characterful back shape that should last many years.

I was slightly reticent in sending this mail because you made it clear that you felt the tables were fully rotten and had to be replaced. From your manner, I doubted there was anything I could say that would change your mind and it was in any case too late as the tops have already been removed.

I would like to know what happened to the wood? I would like to inspect it myself and I believe it should rightly be the property of Bradfords. The oak would now be air dried and might have been useful once re-machined.

I am also surprised that you didn't feel the need to consult me as the designer and constructor of the tables? Surely there were records of my involvement in the parish council files and as a Chartered Building Surveyor and director of a specialist timber construction company I would have thought you would want to discuss the matter with me if you felt there was a problem with the tables.

## **Clerk's Background Summary**

On a Saturday evening in early May, a resident approached me in the street to ask about the condition of the Sentry benches and tables. I explained that the table tops

were being replaced because they were rotten. At that point he became visibly upset, so I advised him to contact me during office hours so the matter could be discussed properly. He then walked away abruptly.

At the time of this conversation, I was not aware that his company had been involved in constructing the original benches. There is no record of this in the current Parish Council files. It is likely that any documentation held by the previous Clerk was destroyed in line with GDPR retention requirements, which would explain the absence of historical information about the designers or builders.

The resident has stated that they have been monitoring the condition of the benches over time. However, the first set of benches was removed over 12 months ago due to advanced deterioration, and no contact or concerns were raised with the Parish Council at that time.

The Council's decision to replace the tops was based on the condition of the timber observed on site.

## **2. Correspondence received 11/05/2026**

Dear Catherine and Councillors,

I wanted to write a short note to appreciate the appointment of Juliane as the Parish Council representative to the Moretonhampstead Development Trust (MDT). We are delighted and recognize the commitment that this represents.

I have just taken over as the Chair at MDT and I am very keen to better understand your goals for Moretonhampstead, how you operate, your opportunities and constraints, and (most importantly) how we can work together to improve the lives of those who live and work in Moretonhampstead. With Juliane participating in Board meetings I am sure our communications will strengthen and you will get a greater insight into how we work and what we aim to achieve.

As Catherine recently reminded us, we already collaborate in many ways, and we hope that this will continue.

Catherine and I have already spoken of the need to meet and chat, and I will take this forward with her.

I have copied in our current trustees: Holly Stapley, Beatrice Kilroy-Nolan, John Willis and Richard Foxwell. We aim to recruit more trustees, and I will keep you informed as we do.

Warmly, Koy

Koy Thomson

Chair MDT

## **3. Correspondence received 15/05/2026**

Thank you for the update email regarding the latest Parish Council meeting. Concerning the matter regarding advanced communication, the timings of what has occurred in this instance are about right for a scheme of this stature. Whilst a potential 6-week duration is a reasonably long time, compared to the A382 widening and developments in Newton Abbot for example, which is predicted to be a 2-year scheme, the extent of community and stakeholder liaising is ultimately far smaller. It is not typical practice to alert every community to an upcoming smaller scale scheme months in advance.

The dates are to remain as they are; Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July until a worst-case end date of Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2026. This scheme will encompass my own retaining wall repairs but there will also be a drainage scheme running alongside, as well as a resurfacing scheme at the tail end of the closure. A significant amount of collaboration and planning has occurred in order to allow each contractor to carry out their duties in tandem and these dates are now set in stone.

I have attached a few photographs showing the current condition of the wall in various places, including a collapse, rotated section and dilapidated gabion basket section. Do feel free to redistribute these with the community to provide a visual aid as to why the repairs are being conducted.

I can of course share updates of scheme progress as it goes, as I shall no doubt be on site a reasonable amount. Providing photos of the excavations and assortment of materials and machinery on site should hopefully provide certainty as to why the road had to be closed.

Best Regards,

Chris Passey

Assistant Engineer  
Bridges & Structures Capital Maintenance  
Engineering Design Group

Clerk's reply sent 19/05/2026:

Thank you again for your recent update and for providing the photographs showing the condition of the retaining wall. These will be very helpful in explaining the engineering need to residents.

At our meeting, I suggested the possibility of two diversion routes: one for HGVs and one for light vehicles. As you know, the official diversion via the A382, A38, M5, A30 and back to the A382 is a very long detour for cars, and it is unlikely that visitors will choose to make such a journey. Please could serious consideration be given to an alternative diversion for light vehicles through the Teign Valley and onto the B3212. This would help reduce the impact on local businesses and support visitor access during the summer period.

Any mitigation measures that can be put in place for local businesses would be greatly appreciated.

I also wanted to make you aware of an additional event that will be affected by the closure: Chagford Show on 20 August. If at all possible, it would be helpful if temporary traffic lights could be used for this event, as well as for the Food Festival on 22 August and Carnival Day on 27 August. The Parish Council and the community are very concerned that visitor numbers will be significantly affected by the closure and the length of the diversion.

Thank you again for your continued engagement with us. Please let me know if any of my suggestions are possible.

DCC's reply received 19/05/2026:

The difficulty with signing two diversion routes is that it confuses the average motorist. In an ideal world a separate route for HGVs and light vehicles makes sense, but even with separate symbolism on the signage the likelihood of misdirection is high. As is the case in Newton Abbot currently with the A382 widening scheme, there is a two-tier diversion route in place but every single minor lane has warning signs at their respective junctions attempting to deter vehicles from using them. It simply isn't feasible to implement such a complex signing schedule for this scheme.

The B3212/B3193 will act as the unofficial route for those who are informed and given the intelligence of satnavs/mobile-based route software, should redirect motorists along this route when prompted. Those who choose to follow the official diversion in light vehicles will form a very small proportion of the overall traffic volume.

Regarding the Chagford Show and in particular that stretch of road between Mill End and Sandypark, I have discussed with the NHO the possibility of suspending parking along the wider section of road just after Dogmarsh Bridge. Implementing this as a temporary measure may ease the passage of traffic, particularly for larger vehicles such as Thompsons HGVs, something which was raised in their latest correspondence. I was initially reluctant to do this but have been reassured implementing a temporary clearway along here should help ease congestion around showtime and for the remainder of the closure. This is assuming it can be enforced as the likelihood of some motorists ignoring the temporary clearway is high. Whilst temporary traffic lights could be considered, the queuing traffic could potentially cause more harm than good around the Mill End Hotel. Utilising them as part of the Moretonhampstead events is a separate matter that would have to be approved and organised independently.

#### **4. Summary of correspondence received over various dates**

Correspondence has been received inviting the clerk to attend a workshop on Monday 8 June, organised by Devon Community Foundation as part of research into supporting youth provision in the local area. The workshop will involve key local stakeholders and representatives from potential funders, including DCF and SPACE. Participation is expected to last approximately 1.5 hours, and a £50 reimbursement is available, which may be paid to the Parish Council. The invitation follows earlier discussions regarding social health mapping and the Parish Council's identified role in local youth provision.

## **5. Correspondence received 20/05/2026**

### UPCOMING DALC CONNECT EVENT

Libraries Unlimited

The future of Devon's libraries - hear the latest from Libraries Unlimited

With Devon County Council's decision on the future of library services still pending, there is real uncertainty ahead for communities across the county.

As a council with a library serving your community, DALC is pleased to invite you to a free member event with Libraries Unlimited, where Alex Kittow (CEO) and Kate Turner (Head of Library Service and Customer Experience) will cover:

- How Libraries Unlimited plans to respond to the county-wide consultation
- The new service model being developed for Devon and Torbay's 54 libraries
- How parish and town councils, friends groups and Libraries Unlimited can work more closely together - including opportunities for external funding

There will also be plenty of time for questions.

### EVENT DETAILS

When: 25 June, 12pm - 1pm

Where: Online (Zoom)

[REGISTER HERE](#)