

# 260707 – Item 13 – Correspondence

## 13.1 Correspondence received 06/06/26

We are writing to the Parish Council to protest at the continued unnecessary strimming of the churchyard under the following headings:

1. The removal of beauty. Strimming does NOT make a place beautiful - it makes it 'neat and tidy'. Beauty is found in all of creation, not just short grass. Just look at 'Caring For God's Acre' for the answer.
2. The loss of valuable habitat and feeding grounds. A well-managed churchyard would provide food for many more essential arthropods and the vital food web that follows, not least the (declining population of) birds. The number of swifts in Moretonhampstead has declined, for a number of reasons including lack of insects. There will be some, I'm sure, who will point to the surrounding countryside and say that is where the wildlife is / should be. Unfortunately, this is simply not the case. Surrounding farmland is grazed year round or cut for silage, removing all chance of the meadows of old developing. It is the diversity of plants possible which is the key point here and can only be achieved by allowing the perennial wildflowers to flower and set seed. Some of the recent strimming seems to have left some plants in flower, but this is fruitless (literally) unless they are left afterwards to produce seed and the surrounding plants yet to flower are not strimmed.
3. Noise pollution. As two of many people living in the vicinity of the churchyard, we are subjected to days of end to end machinery noise. This is also the most polluting (air) equipment - two-stroke petrol engines. It appears your contractors have yet to discover the joys of battery technology, now essential for contractors in other parts of the country.
4. Failure to compromise. Those wishing for a shaved, sterile churchyard would actually have their wishes granted for half the year. Wildflowers are cut down after setting seed and the vegetation would be at a level, presumably, commensurate with the wishes of those who want year-round strimming.
5. Cost. To continually cut the churchyard will cost so much more than managing it as a wildflower area. The late July / early August cut for the latter would be a bigger (marginally) operation but easily offset by the money saved in not strimming for much of the year until then.
6. Lack of respect. Who is to decide what is respectful of the people buried in the churchyard and the people who tend their graves? Personally, we think it is disrespectful to desecrate nature / God's creation by strimming. It takes a lot more careful thought and management to create a beautiful resting ground for our loved ones. Main paths would be kept strimmed.

7. Bad horticulture. The contractors and / or the people directing them clearly don't understand plants as indicated by the removal of all bulb tops before they had a chance to rebuild and then die back naturally.

Thank you for your time.

### **Suggested Reply:**

Thank you for your email and for taking the time to set out your concerns about grass-cutting and strimming in St Andrew's Churchyard. The Parish Council recognises that people hold a wide range of views about how the churchyard should look and how it should be managed, and your comments have been noted.

The Open Spaces Committee reviewed the churchyard maintenance tender in detail last year and made significant changes to the way the space is cared for. Rather than maintaining the entire churchyard in a tightly cut condition year-round, the Committee sought to achieve a compromise between accessibility for visitors, respect for those buried there, and opportunities for biodiversity.

### **Current Management Approach**

The churchyard is now managed on a zoned basis:

- Most-visited areas (including the older sections with the highest number of regular visitors) are cut fortnightly if required, following advice from the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM). BRAMM guidance states that areas regularly visited by the bereaved should be tidy, safe, and easy to access. Long grass can obscure uneven ground and memorial edges, creating trip hazards for visitors.
- Less-visited areas are cut every four weeks.
- Two sections are cut only three times a year (March, June, August), with cuttings removed.
- The designated wildflower area is cut once a year in late summer, again with cuttings removed.
- The daffodil bank is cut only after the leaves have fully died back, and again in October.

This approach was introduced specifically to reduce the amount of strimming and mowing across the site, while still meeting safety, access, and regulatory requirements.

### **Wildflower Areas**

You are correct that perennial wildflowers need time to flower and set seed. The Council has already designated a wildflower area in the newest part of the churchyard, but unfortunately it has not flourished as hoped. We would genuinely

welcome any practical advice or expertise you may be able to offer to help improve this area.

### **Retention of Flowers in Cut Areas**

The contractors recently asked whether they should leave naturally occurring flowers—such as ox-eye daisies and other beneficial species—standing within the areas they are cutting. The Council was in favour of this approach, as it allows seasonal flowers to remain for pollinators and for visual interest, even in the more regularly maintained zones. We will continue to support this practice and monitor how it works in the different sections of the churchyard.

### **Noise and Equipment**

We appreciate that living close to a churchyard means you will hear grass-cutting activity from time to time. The contractors work within reasonable hours and are required to minimise disruption. While battery-powered equipment is improving, it is not yet practical for the size and duration of work required across the whole churchyard.

### **Cost and Practicality**

Leaving the entire churchyard uncut until late summer would not be workable. The grass would become extremely dense and difficult to cut, requiring more labour, more machinery time, and ultimately higher cost. The current zoned approach is designed to balance cost-effectiveness with environmental benefit.

### **Respect for the Churchyard**

The Council does not agree that the current approach shows a lack of respect. A churchyard survey was carried out, and responses from residents—both with and without family members buried there—showed a wide range of views. The Committee therefore adopted a compromise that maintains safe access for the bereaved while allowing other areas to remain more natural to support biodiversity.

### **Horticultural Concerns**

The tender specification includes clear instructions regarding bulb management, careful cutting around memorials, and the need to avoid cutting snowdrops and daffodils until the foliage has died back. The Council is aware that some daffodils were cut earlier than they should have been this year and has already raised this with the contractor to ensure it does not happen again.

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## **13.2 Correspondence received 02/06/2026**

We are making steady progress with repairs to the Library building, even if a bit slower than we had hoped for - the roof repairs carried out by DCC's contractors had more defects than we initially realised, we have found a small active area of dry rot (now, hopefully, dealt with), and by deciding to use local tradesmen rather than a

large firm, we have to cope with them suddenly having medical or other problems, which can cause unexpected delays.

We have recently invited groups from the Friends of Moreton Library to visit and inspect the work in progress; and would like to extend the same invitation to Parish Councillors - visits have been taking an hour or slightly longer, and look at all three floors and, for those who want to, the basement as well.

If you could let me know which councillors would like to accept this invitation, we can arrange a convenient date. For health and safety reasons, we can't take groups larger than 6 people round, so if more than six want to come, we would need to arrange two dates and groups. You are of course also included if you would like to see the work in progress.

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### **13.3 Correspondence received 26/11/2026**

Dear Sir / Madam

#### **REVIEW OF THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY**

The Council's review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy has now commenced its consultation process. The District Council welcomes comments from the police, licence holders, the trade, businesses, residents and their representatives.

This document can be viewed on our webpage at [Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy - Teignbridge District Council](#) or you can contact the Licensing Team by email to arrange for a hard copy.

We have also provided a [survey monkey](#) to assist with making any comments.

All comments must be received by **Noon on Friday 7 August 2026** at the latest.

If you require further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Licensing Team by email.

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### **13.4 Correspondence received 30/06/2026**

To Dartmoor Parish Councils

By email only

Date: 30 June 2026

Dear Parish Clerk,

I am writing on behalf of the Dartmoor National Park Authority to notify you of our **Notice of Intention to Commence Local Plan Preparation**. Please find the attached notice for your information; the notice can also be viewed on our [website](#).

The purpose of this notice serves as a formal signal to stakeholders, consultees and members of the public that the plan making process has begun. The notice outlines the geographical area the plans will cover and includes a link to the updated Local Plan Timetable.

We would be grateful if you could display the notice on your community noticeboard and, where possible, circulate it to residents through your usual communication channels.

The first stage of consultation on the new Local Plan will run this summer, from **13 July to 23 August 2026**. This is just the beginning of the conversation, and there will be further opportunities to share your views as the plan develops.

Your Parish Council plays a vital role in shaping the Local Plan, and we greatly value your input. We will be in touch shortly with more details on how we plan to work closely with Parish Councils throughout the process.

If your residents would like to be kept informed of the Local Plan process or of consultations, they can be directly informed by us by signing up to our consultation newsletter found on our [website](#).

Thank you for your assistance.