

Teignbridge District Council owes an apology to all the residents of Teignbridge for the shambolic waste collection service in recent weeks. It transpires that problems arose because of holidays, sickness, some staff leaving to work for delivery firms: and also complications arising from the sloppy way the County Council programmed its long-overdue highway maintenance. At the same time, there were problems with internal communications.

In response, TDC has contracted more staff, borrowed extra vans from South Hams DC to clear the backlog and appointed one executive councillor to focus on waste collection. We are assured that this service is now running properly again.

The situation was aggravated by the fact that many senior councillors and officers were having simultaneously to give time to the government's proposals for local government reorganisation. I was pleased to hear that this has now been postponed (or possibly even cancelled completely). Work on this so far has cost Devon taxpayers some £30,000,000 and I was pleased to see that one of our Teignbridge MPs asked a question in Parliament about this. The minister, Angela Rayner was sympathetic about giving us financial support, but obviously was unable to commit the government.

One interesting nugget emerged from the waste collection saga. Apparently, what always happened when the van was full was that they would take it back to base to empty it, and then return to carry on with the route. How many of us realised that? What they are doing now is that, when the van is getting full, they contact the base and another driver comes out with an empty van and takes the full one back to base. I would not be surprised to hear that this improvement was suggested by the binmen themselves, rather than one of the bosses.

The problem of the dilapidated listed building in the centre of Moretonhampstead drags on. I did table a question about this at the last full meeting of the council, and got a very full reply, but.... Normally, when one asks a question, council staff get their skates on and the answer comes back, to say that the problem has been resolved. Not this time. Fortunately, there is another council meeting later this month.....