

## **Mary Tavy Parish Council**

In early June MTPC received enquiries concerning a printed questionnaire that had been delivered to all households titled "Housing Need Survey for the parishes of Mary Tavy, Peter Tavy and Brentor." A statement explaining the position of your Parish Council was posted on our website, our official noticeboard and in the pages of The Blackdown News. For those who missed our response I have been asked to repeat that the document and the company who sent it out have no connection to MTPC. At no time were Councillors or Clerk contacted by Chris Broughton Associates and we have no knowledge of the identity of the developer who commissioned the survey. I must also stress to all parishioners that, as far as we are aware, no additional sites have been identified for housing development and the redundant garage and bus depot sites remain the only areas subject to planning proposals and ongoing negotiations for redevelopment. We also made it clear that parishioners should feel free to respond to the survey or not as they judge to be appropriate. We also advised parishioners to be aware of the need to protect confidential information and to think very carefully before parting with personal details particularly when cash incentives, small or otherwise, are offered. Our investigations into possible housing development also revealed that there has been an increase in second home ownership. Statistics on such matters are difficult to come by but figures from the 2011 census have revealed that in that year there were 26 second homes out of a total of 387 dwellings in Mary Tavy. We can all only speculate as to how much that figure has increased in the last 5 years.

The ongoing closure of Brentor Road has also generated a considerable amount of comment and speculation. This closure has been caused by the partial collapse of the cattle grid which separates the Blackdown part of Mary Tavy from open moorland. Many road users, rather than face a lengthy and inconvenient detour have been making use of the main bypass gate to the side of the road grid but sadly there have been reports of this gate being left open after use. In such circumstance the straying of farm stock into the village and onto other roads is a very real possibility. As there are no signs of the necessary major repairs being carried out in the immediate future we must ask all who use the bypass gate to negotiate it carefully to avoid further damage ~ a new gate post had to be installed this week ~ and to ensure that it is left closed as a matter of good country practice.

When local residents encounter damage to the highway or blocked road drains in the parish we must remind you that the first point of contact to register such problems should be Mrs. Higham, our Parish Clerk. She will know who to contact and this ensures an efficient recording of such problems and hopefully as speedy a response as possible. As much of our drain cleaning service is programmed by the relevant authority to specific times in the year, keeping our Clerk informed of blockages ensures that they are brought to the attention of those undertaking such work. Mrs. Higham cannot be available all day every day but she can promptly deal with problems recorded on her answerphone. She may be contacted on 01822 810786

Representatives of MTPC were delighted to attend, on 29<sup>th</sup> June, the 180<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the founding of Mary Tavy & Brentor Community Primary School. The positive and happy atmosphere routinely generated by pupils and staff was very much on display and helped visitors to appreciate why Ofsted inspectors have rated the school so highly. Successive generations of local families, including my own, received their basic education here. Treasured photographs from family archives, some dating back to the 1890s are emerging showing our ancestors being solemnly paraded as the roll of Mary Tavy Board School. These were the days of Forster's Elementary Education Act of 1870 and its successors when children attended school until they were 10 (11 in 1893 and 12 in 1899) and parents contributed towards the cost by paying 1d per week per child ~ the so-called "school pence."

Elderly school premises on narrow village roads produce obvious road safety problems. MTPC is determined to support the on-going popularity of our Primary School by improving road safety and parking in its vicinity. Our initial approach to DCC has met with what can only be described as a lukewarm to negative response. Therefore, we are restructuring our approach by assessing the views of all parties with an immediate interest. In the next few days we are expecting a formal written response from the Board of Governors which we anticipate will be fully in favour of progressing this important project. The greater the catalogue of support the less easy it will be for our local authority to deny Mary Tavy its proper allocation of safety measures.

Councillor Peter Jarvis ~ Chairman, Mary Tavy Parish Council