

Mary Tavy Parish Council

The Parish Council received numerous complaints concerning the 9-week closure of Brentor Road due to the partial collapse of the cattle grid at Blackdown. The repairs were finally carried out in late August to the great relief of regular users of this route. This prolonged closure was repeatedly raised with DCC Highways by our Clerk, Mrs. Higham. For those who believe that the response to this road closure was inadequate we suggest that you register your complaint on the DCC website www.new.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/report-a-problem or with your County Councillor for this area Mr. Kevin Ball at kevin.ball@devon.gov.uk.

While Councillors are pleased to note the many repairs and improvements taking place to local properties I have been asked to remind parishioners that some works may require planning consent. Therefore, we firmly recommend that anyone contemplating such work takes advantage of the Planning Advice Service provided by the DNPA Authority. Such advice is provided free of charge to householders "where development is within the curtilage of a dwelling." Particular restrictions apply to Conservation Areas which includes work to trees and hedges. It is essential for homeowners to have the necessary consents properly recorded as failure to do so can create difficulties when a property has to be sold. Full information can be found on the DNPA website www.dartmoor.gov.uk. Parishioners who follow local events in both the national and local press will be aware that a major restoration project to a listed building in the parish recently attracted considerable publicity when the DNPA chose to take enforcement action. The resulting criminal prosecution was unsuccessful largely due to inadequate control and response on the part of the Planning Authority. However, the experience must have been very unpleasant for the property owners concerned. This was an exceptional case and the vast majority of applications proceed to a satisfactory conclusion.

Councillors believe it is necessary to remind parishioners that as a country community, we have entered the permissible tree and hedge trimming period of the year. This permissible period is interpreted under current legislation such as the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Hedgerow Act 1997 as being outside the period 1st March ~ 31st August. We hope that landowners and property owners alike are making every effort to arrange for appropriate contractors to carry out such work but remind you that you must be aware of Conservation Area restrictions and trees carrying a Tree Preservation Order. A most important exception to any restrictions is where a tree or hedgerow "overhangs a highway, road or footpath over which there is a public or private right of way and the overhanging tree or hedgerow obstructs the passage or is a danger to vehicles, pedestrians or horse riders." Failure by a landowner or householder to clear such obstructions, which includes the view required by drivers or the obstruction of light from a public lamp, can result in intervention by the local authority. The bill for the cost of such work will, of course, be sent directly to the landowner / householder concerned. We have identified several areas in the Parish where such safety work is required and we urge all parishioners to ensure that they are complying with the law. Councillors are resigned to the attitude of some parishioners who are resentful of our warnings in what they seem to see as a strictly private matter. However, you can't say that you haven't been warned.....

It has been pointed out to us that an increasing number of new parishioners will not appreciate that, as well as the granite memorial beside the A386, Mary Tavy Recreation Ground is also a "living" war memorial. It is more properly known as the Mary Tavy Victory Memorial Recreation Ground (and most certainly **not** the Coronation Field) and was created through local subscriptions in 1946. Today it is a registered charity and its Board of Trustees still closely follows the original principle that it should "be used in perpetuity for the maintenance and improvement of the physical well-being of persons resident in the said parish of Mary Tavy by the provision of facilities for physical training and recreation...." Sadly, it has been brought to our attention that dog fouling remains a major problem on this war memorial despite the provision of bins, warning signs and enforcement measures. We consider such irresponsible and anti-social behaviour to be totally disrespectful to the memory of those whose service and sacrifice during World War II it was designed to commemorate.

You will have noted elsewhere in this newsletter that the redundant garage site opposite the Post Office has recently changed hands. Parishioners are assured that as soon as further information becomes available it will be fully presented to the local community.

Councillor Peter Jarvis ~ Chairman, Mary Tavy Parish Council