

Newton Abbot Open Community Meeting – Roadworks

Date: Thursday 12 February 2026

Time: 6:00pm – 7:00pm

Location: Newton Abbot Rugby Club

Chair: Mike Saxton

Organised by: Anna Lofthouse – The Teignbridge Community Project

Minute Taker: Amy Castleton

Councillors in attendance:

- Devon County Council - Jacqueline Fry
- Devon County Council – Michael Fife Cooke
- Newton Abbot Town Council - Laura Wood
- Newton Abbot Town Council - Richard Buscombe
- Newton Abbot Town Council - Paul Parker
- Newton Abbot Town Council - Philip Bullivant
- Nigel Canham – Newton Abbot Town Council Communications Advisor
- Martin Wrigley MP – Member of Parliament for Newton Abbot

Devon County Council Highways Officers: Invited but not in attendance

Attendance: Approximately 80 residents, business owners and road users

Purpose of the Meeting

To provide a respectful, community-led space for residents, businesses and road users affected by the current roadworks to:

- Share experiences
- Raise concerns
- Suggest practical solutions
- Understand planned works
- Hear about next steps

The meeting was not politically led and was focused on constructive discussion and ensuring community concerns are formally relayed to Devon County Council.

Meeting Minutes

Welcome & Introduction – Mike Saxton

- The Chair confirmed the meeting was not politically led and aimed to be productive and solution focused.
- Devon County Council Highways officers had been invited but did not attend.
- Martin Wrigley MP confirmed he would relay all concerns raised to Devon County Council, with whom he meets regularly.
- Cllr Jacqueline Fry asked attendees whether they believed the roadworks had been properly planned; the response was no.
- Cllr Fry stated that concerns would be heard, documented and formally raised.
- Recognition was given to the severe impact on local businesses.

Open Floor – Community Experiences & Concerns

Residents and business representatives shared the following:

Diversion Routes & Traffic Planning

- Concerns that diversion routes were not made safe or suitable prior to closure of the A382.
- Roads are not appropriate for increased traffic volumes.
- Cllr Fry confirmed she would raise this with Devon County Council (DCC).
- A proposal for a one-way system around Newton Abbot was raised.
 - Cllr Paul Parker had previously suggested a system.
 - It was reportedly explored but not implemented.
 - Cllr Fry will raise this again with Highways officers at her upcoming meeting.

Business Impact

Bridget – Bickley Mill (wedding venue)

- Two direct access routes have been closed simultaneously.
- The only alternative route requires diversion via Totnes and Ipplepen.
- Heavy quarry traffic is using this route.
- Customers travelling from across the UK are struggling to access the venue.
- Road closures expected for approximately two months.
- Question raised: Why were both access routes closed at the same time?

Sarah – Burnham Nurseries (A382)

- Concern about Phase 2 works affecting businesses for up to two years.
- Requested that works be staggered or reconsidered to reduce impact.
- Raised the issue of financial compensation for businesses severely affected by long-term closures.
- Stated that many businesses may not survive two years of disruption.
- Cllr Fry confirmed she will feed this back to DCC.

Trago Mills representative (A382)

- Asked about the proposed roundabout near Humpback Bridge / Claypits Road.
- Confirmed it is in proposal stage but unfunded and not scheduled.
- Indicated works could potentially take only two days.
- Cllr Fry will seek clarification on timeline and funding.

Mobile Cleaner (Torbay-based business)

- Business reliant on travel across the area.
- Vehicle tracking system replaced three times in one year due to pothole damage and road quality issues.

Healthcare Professional (Newton Abbot resident)

- Has one hour response time to reach critically ill patients.
- Recent Kingsteignton related works caused 45-minute delay.
- Patients have nearly given birth at Penn Inn roundabout.

- Families have missed final moments with dying relatives due to delays.
- Stated no professional notification had been received regarding traffic management arrangements.
- Question asked: Why aren't contractors working extended hours to get this work done quicker?

Cllr Fry confirmed:

- DCC state extended contractor working hours (8:30am–6:30pm and Saturdays) are permitted and used when critical.
- Emergency vehicles are reportedly briefed and trained to manage queuing traffic.
- Cllr Fry will raise concerns regarding lack of communication to healthcare professionals and care workers.

Utility Companies & National Oversight

- Question raised regarding coordination of multiple roadworks across Devon.
- Martin Wrigley MP confirmed:
 - He raised the issue in the House of Commons that morning.
 - Highways must grant licences to private utility companies.
 - There is no overarching legal duty coordinating works nationally.
 - Fines have recently been doubled but remain low.
 - Dawlish and Teignmouth are also affected.
 - This is a national issue.

Daniel – MT Tums

- Questioned why utilities in the UK are placed under roads rather than pavements (as in other countries).
- Asked whether this could be addressed nationally in future housing developments.
- Martin Wrigley agreed to raise this at national level.

A382 Scheme Planning

- Concerns raised that A382 closure has caused the gridlock.
- Questions regarding consultation and long-term planning.
- Comparison made with Kingskerswell bypass delivery only taking 1 year.
- Concerns that works could take up to two years or longer.

It was noted:

- Scheme was originally planned two years ago but delayed.
- Phase 3 (Stover to Drumbridges) has been altered and will now use the old bridge.
- Traffic light option would have significantly extended timeline and cost.

Safety Concerns

- Calls to reduce speed limit from 60mph to 40mph on A383 due to increased traffic.
- Specific concern raised near Dartmoor Halfway Inn.

- Mark (Kingsteignton resident) highlighted safety risks near Claypits and Ten Tors areas, particularly ahead of summer traffic increases.

Infrastructure & Development

- Question raised about linking Plants Galore to Buttercombe Close.
- Reported response from developers: funding constraints and road not ready.
- Concern about lack of joined-up thinking regarding Stover School, Trago Mills and Stover Golf Course development.
- Question raised about potential works stopping mid-scheme (as seen previously between Stover Roundabout and Drumbridges).
- Cllr Fry will seek clarification on safeguards and contingency planning.
- Laura (Newton Abbot resident) asked:
 - What is the contingency if works exceed 18 months?
 - What if funding runs out?
 - How is public money being safeguarded?
 - Cllr Fry will raise these questions.

Communication & Transparency

- Strong theme of poor communication between:
 - Devon Highways
 - Utility companies
 - Businesses
 - Residents
- Concern that residents feel “knocked back” when contacting DCC.
- Request for public access to formal answers from Highways.
- Request for better monthly updates on A382 scheme.

A sign-up sheet was circulated for residents wishing to receive updates from Cllr Fry.

Devon County Councillor Michael Fife Cooke – Closing Remarks

- Expressed disappointment that Highways officers were not present.
- Stated the A382 scheme is not related to utility works.
- Recognised the wider issue of development and traffic systems becoming impassable.
- Confirmed councillors present have direct access to:
 - CEO, Devon County Council
 - Head of Highways
- Encouraged residents to email concerns directly.
- Reassured attendees that the evening was not wasted and concerns will be escalated.

Key Themes Identified

- Lack of coordinated planning and oversight
- Severe impact on local businesses
- Emergency access and healthcare delays
- Road safety concerns
- Poor communication and transparency

- Lack of consultation with affected stakeholders
- Concerns over timescales and funding security

Ideas & Suggestions to Reduce Impact

- Introduce temporary one-way system around Newton Abbot
- Reduce speed limit on A383
- Stagger Phase 2 works to protect businesses
- Improve emergency and healthcare communication
- Publish monthly public updates
- Explore compensation mechanisms for severely affected businesses
- Improve coordination between DCC and utility companies

Next Steps & Process

Action 1: Compile full list of concerns raised

Responsible: Cllr Jacqueline Fry & Martin Wrigley MP

Timescale: Immediate

Action 2: Raise diversion safety, emergency access, contingency planning and business impact with Devon County Highways

Responsible: Cllr Jacqueline Fry

Timescale: Ongoing

Action 3: Raise national coordination and utilities legislation issue

Responsible: Martin Wrigley MP

Timescale: Ongoing

Further Engagement Planned

- Direct engagement with Devon Highways
- Email updates to attendees who registered

How Updates Will Be Communicated

- Direct email updates via Cllr Fry
- Monthly A382 scheme updates (subscription)
- Communication through councillors
- Potential future community meeting

Close & What Happens Next

The Chair thanked attendees for contributing constructively.

The meeting concluded with confirmation that:

- All concerns will be formally documented.
- Councillors will escalate issues to Devon County Council.
- Residents will receive updates where contact details were provided.

The meeting closed at 7:00pm.