

**Highways, Infrastructure Development &  
Waste**

FAO: Parish / Town Council Clerk

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Tel: 01392 383000  
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Dear Parish / Town Council

**Drainage Maintenance Responsibilities**

At our recent Town and Parish Conferences, a great deal of interest was shown in a display identifying who is responsible for maintaining and clearing drainage systems on and around the highway.

The driver for having the display was a recognition that, for a number of years, we had been investing significant funds undertaking a programme of ditch clearance works to drain the water from the highway. In the majority of cases, the responsibility for ditch maintenance rests with the adjacent landowner, even if the ditches take water from the highway and local authority funding is being used to undertake works which are, in part, the responsibility of the landowners, reducing the funding available to undertake the works which are our responsibility.

In order to support landowners, and local communities, we are undertaking a programme of communication and education with key stakeholders. Hopefully, as a follow up to the recent display at the Parish and Town Conference you will find the following information and resources useful.

- A factsheet titled Roads and farmers is produced by Devon County Council and is available [here](https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/factsheet/roads-and-farmers/) (https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/factsheet/roads-and-farmers/)

Equally, Landowners and occupiers are required, by law, to trim any hedge next to the public highway where the growth is preventing the passage, or affecting the safety, of the highway user.

- Information regarding overgrown vegetation is available on our website [here](https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/maintaining-roads/trees-and-vegetation/overgrown-vegetation/) (https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/maintaining-roads/trees-and-vegetation/overgrown-vegetation/)

You will also find enclosed a diagram giving an indication of responsibility for the maintenance of drainage and vegetation on and around the highway. We have certainly found this a useful diagram when trying to explain the various issues of responsibility.

I hope you find this information helpful and are able to use it within your communities to support us as we continue to maintain the drainage systems within the highway.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Richards', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Robert Richards**  
Highways and Traffic Management Group Manager

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# Who is responsible for what?

