

A361 Moortown Cross Layby

Sidemoor Picnic Area – An Update: 17th May 2016

In early/mid 2015, the two Moortown Cross Diners and picnic areas were faced with the prospect of closure as a part of Devon County Council plans to cut costs.

During August and September 2015, however, a coalition of County, District and Parish councillors, with the help of North Devon MP Peter Heaton-Jones, succeeded in persuading Devon County Council to change course and instead offer new contracts to the owners of the two Diners, thus ensuring that the picnic areas would stay open and the two businesses could stay in operation for the foreseeable future.

Through October to December 2015 the two Diners suffered a set back as a result of the permanent lane closures and diversions on the Link Road, hopefully, however, the completion of the road works in late December, and the resumption of normal traffic and business in the New Year, should allow both businesses to carry on successfully through 2016 and beyond.

Certainly, the owner of the Sidemoor Café/Diner, Mrs Maureen Jenkins, is determined to stay open and is hopeful that the picnic areas will be commercially successful.

The Sidemoor Picnic Area is a relatively large site able to accommodate the Diner, toilet facilities, and plenty of parking; moreover, the site has potential for additional and/or complementary business activities.

Should anyone in Knowstone (or surrounding parishes) have ideas or plans for small business activities, suitable for operation on the picnic site, **along side the existing Café/Diner**, they should contact **Mrs Maureen Jenkins** **Tel: 01884 881428** in the first instance to discuss how those plans might be put into operation.

In addition, it might be useful to contact Devon County Council Planning & Highways Departments to check out (informally) if the new business ideas might require planning permission or highways approval.

Knowstone Parish Council fully supports all efforts to keep the Picnic Sites open, and is willing to cooperate in any way possible to assist the existing business operations and any potential new business ventures.

John Smith
Chairman
Knowstone Parish Council
17th May 2016.