

Highways, Infrastructure Development & Waste

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Date: 4th June 2018

Ms Wendy Sweet
Parish Clerk
Knowstone Parish Council

Dear Ms Sweet,

I write to inform you of the proposal by Devon County Council to decommission and remove six emergency 'SOS' telephones located along the A361 North Devon Link Road, from Uplowman to Rackenford Moor.

The phones are located in the following places (see attached schematic maps):

- 2 x at Uplowman (Northbound and Southbound), EX16 7DQ
- Bolham Roundabout Southbound, Tiverton, EX16 7RA
- Loxbeare Southbound, EX16 6SL
- Stoneland Farm Southbound, Tiverton, EX16 8BS
- Rackenford Moor Northbound, Rackenford, EX16 8EP

We have arrived at this proposal for various reasons. Firstly, the matter was discussed at the Environment, Economy and Culture Place Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 17th January 2007. The relevant sections of minutes are as follows:

"Members asked questions and made comments in relation to:

- *Concern about the removal of phones on the NDL, would like to know the precise details of use;*
- *Is it a statutory duty to provide the phones on the NDL and would Parish Councils be interested in contributing toward the cost of retaining them?*

*It was **MOVED** by Councillor S Hughes and **SECONDED** by Councillor Berry and **RESOLVED** that the draft budget proposals for 2007/08 as detailed in the report be approved for submission to the Executive, subject to the recommendations below:*

(e) that in respect of the proposed removal of emergency telephones on the North Devon Link Road the Director of Environment, Economy and Culture explore with the District and Parish Councils whether, if they want the service to remain, they are prepared to provide the necessary funding."

Following preliminary discussions at the time it was decided that further consultation on the removal of the emergency phones would be postponed. This would enable further monitoring of

their usage to take place over a number of variable seasons to confirm whether, in different weather scenarios, the telephones are more or less frequently utilised.

In January 2018, we approached British Telecoms, who operate the lines, to request duplicate bills and usage data for 2017. Upon reviewing the information provided, I can advise the following:

- It cost Devon County Council a total of £1,557.22 to maintain all six telephone lines (date range from 1st January 2017 to 31st December 2017, four separate quarters) – an average of £259.54 per telephone line.
- Call charge usage was very low at £7.61 across all the telephones for all the year, with many telephones not having call charges for the majority of their quarters.
 - Uplozman x2 – respectively £0.12p (from 1st October – 31st December) and £0.62p (from 1st January to 31st March) – all other quarters, no call charges
 - Bolham Roundabout - £0.59p of call charges (from 1st July to 30th September), all other quarters, no call charges
 - Loxbeare – zero call charges in 2017
 - Stoneland Farm – £2.36p and £2.60p (from 1st July to 30th September, and 1st October – 31st December respectively), all other quarters, no call charges
 - Rackenford Moor – £1.32p (from 1st January to 31st March), all other quarters, no call charges

In addition, the telephones are in a deteriorated condition and we believe the system offers no surety of the facility in an SOS situation. Fortunately, there is excellent mobile phone signal along the length of the North Devon Link Road providing a more reliable communication medium for motorists during problem situations.

We now seek your views on this proposal and welcome your comments and feedback.

If you disagree with the potential removal of these telephones, please consider whether you would be prepared to support the maintenance and ultimate upgrading and or replacement of the telephones situated within your area / parish. Although no formal quotations on the cost of upgrading and maintaining the SOS telephones has been established to assist you in your response it would not be unreasonable to assume the cost of upgrading / replacing each telephone will be in the region of £2,000 per unit (installation, cabinet and apparatus) plus ongoing annual maintenance, line rental and call charges at a total approximate cost of £300 per annum per telephone.

Please send me your preference by return by the end of July. If I do not receive a response, I will assume you are in agreement with our proposal.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details overleaf.

Yours sincerely,



Miss Naomi Alway
Assistant Highway Asset Technician

Enc: Schematic maps indicating approximate locations of the SOS telephones.