

Report to Saltash Town Council April 2026

Cllr. Hilary Frank

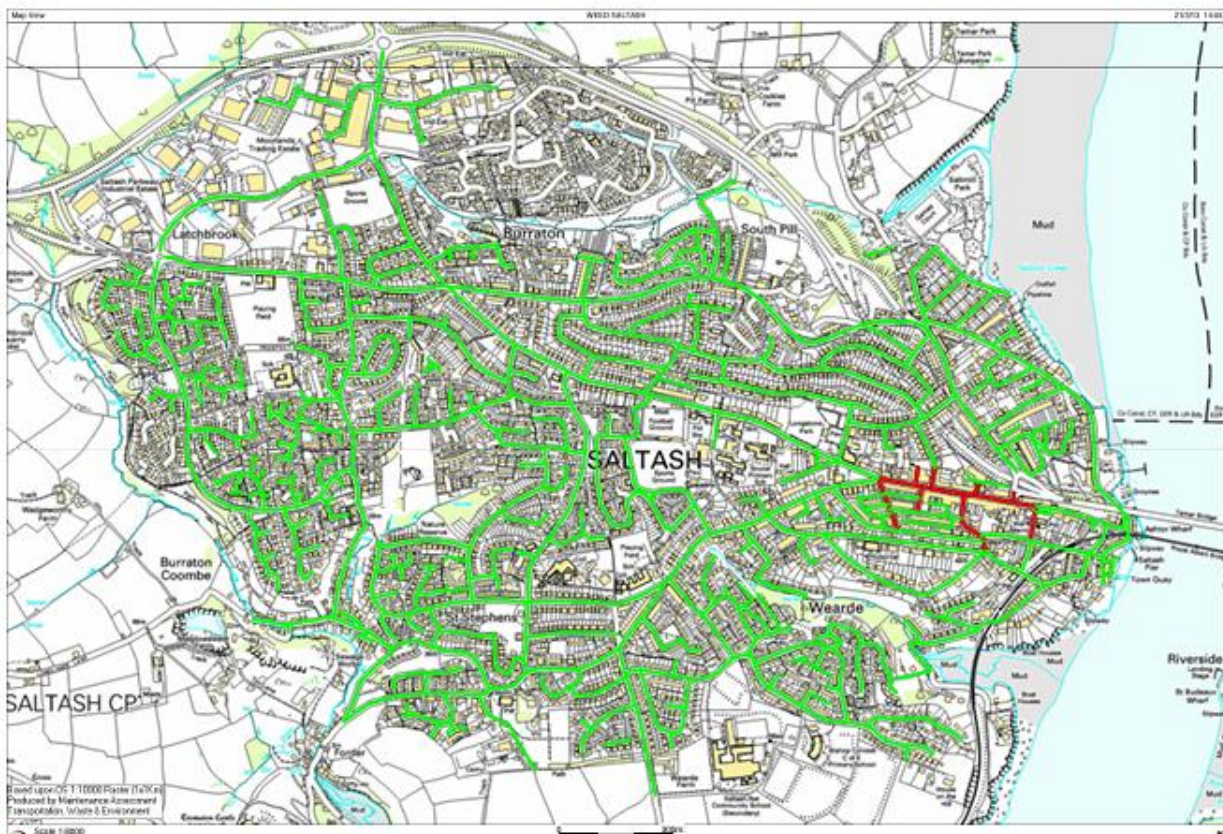


RE-INTRODUCTION OF WEED TREATMENT

With the budget now agreed, the priority is to ensure that resources are translated into visible improvements on the ground, particularly in the everyday services residents rely on most. One area where this will now make a visible difference is public realm maintenance.

Cornwall Council stopped routine treatment of weeds in 2013, but following an increase in complaints about the state of the public realm, the budget incorporates a three-year recovery programme to improve weed control, street cleanliness and grounds maintenance across Cornwall. It includes the reintroduction of targeted weed treatment on urban highways, using controlled low-drift application only where weeds are actually present, alongside manual clearance of the worst-affected areas and enhanced grass cutting in amenity spaces.

Here is a map of Saltash showing the roads (highlighted in green) that will once again be included in Cornwall Council's scheduled weed treatment programme.



Like all town and parish councils, Saltash Town Council can choose to opt out if it would prefer to manage weed treatment locally. Otherwise, the roads shown in green will automatically be included in the Cornwall-wide programme. This is not a return to blanket spraying: treatment will only take place where weeds are actually visible, and the aim is to restore standards over the next three years after more than a decade without routine highway weed control.

TAMAR CROSSINGS: CONSULTATION AND THE CASE FOR FAIRER FUNDING

The consultation on proposals to increase the TamarTag administration fee from 80p to £2 per month closed on 6th April. It attracted more than 4,000 responses, underlining the strength of public concern. The results are now being collated and will be presented to the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee on 26th June.

During the consultation, Tamar Crossings recorded a webinar led by Chief Officer Philip Robinson, explaining the proposals and financial context, and this remains available on the Tamar Crossings website: [Tamar Tag Admin Fee Consultation - Tamar Crossings](#)

Tamar Crossings also issued detailed background information alongside the consultation, including responses to common concerns raised by residents. This information is available on the same website, and includes the ‘mythbusters’:

MYTHBUSTERS

1. **"Fees are increased just to give bonuses to the higher management and owners"**
All toll income is used solely to operate, maintain and improve the bridge and ferry, as there are no shareholders, dividends or owner bonuses, and the law prevents tolls being used for any other purpose.
2. **"Tamar Crossings do not support vulnerable customers who use the hospital regularly"**
Tamar Crossings supports vulnerable customers through Mobility Passes, which provide up to 100 free crossings per year for people who rely on the bridge and ferry for essential journeys such as healthcare.
3. **"We were promised the tolls would be free once the bridge had been paid for"**
There was never a promise that tolls would end, as the Tamar Bridge Act 1957 includes no time limit on tolling and allows income to be used for ongoing operation and maintenance.
4. **"The ferry and bridge should be separated; the bridge subsidises the ferry"**
The law requires the bridge and ferry to operate as a single system, and elected councillors have repeatedly agreed that a unified approach and pricing structure best serves cross-river travel.
5. **"The decarbonisation of the ferry project is being funded by tolls"**
The ferry decarbonisation feasibility study is funded entirely by external grants, not toll income, and no decision has been made to implement any specific low-carbon solution.
6. **"They should just get rid of the toll booths and have ANPR then there would be no costs"**
ANPR is something we are actively developing a business case for. However removing toll booths and introducing ANPR would not eliminate costs, as evidence from other crossings shows that ANPR systems are often more expensive to install and operate.
7. **"The bridge and ferry are privately owned by a foreign company"**
The bridge and ferry are publicly owned by Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council, not a private or foreign company, and no profits are paid to owners.
8. **"The Learning Centre costs £300,000 per year to run and doesn't deliver any value"**
The Learning Centre costs around £160,000 per year, not £300,000, and delivers clear community value through affordable education, skills development, career awareness and the preservation of the crossings' history.

I attended the Tamar Crossings consultation event that was held in Saltash in the beginning of April, where the strength of public feeling was unmistakable. Residents expressed frustration not only about the proposed increase in the TamarTag administration fee, but also about the continuing unfairness of having to pay simply to cross the river for work, education, healthcare and other everyday needs. I share that frustration.

While I recognise that the Tamar Crossings leadership is showing a greater willingness to engage with communities and reduce costs, local communities have been funding the maintenance of the bridge and ferries since the 1957 Tamar Bridge Act. I continue to believe that this burden has fallen on local people for too long, and that the long-term fair solution is the abolition of Tamar tolls altogether. No community should be charged a daily penalty simply for crossing the river that defines where they live. I will continue pressing for councillors and MPs of all parties to work together towards a fair national funding solution.

ROAD REPAIRS: PROGRESS ON POTHoles AFTER WINTER DAMAGE

Potholes have remained a major concern this winter, following the wettest January ever recorded in Cornwall and a succession of severe storms that have caused exceptional damage across the highway network.

Up to 4th March this financial year, Cornwall Council has repaired 35,115 potholes at an average cost of £85 each, which is just under £3 million in total. At the height of the winter damage, up to 50 repair gangs were deployed daily across Cornwall, and as conditions have improved the repair rate has risen to more than 370 potholes per day. Encouragingly, the overall backlog of reported potholes across Cornwall has now fallen by nearly 20% in two weeks, from 5,296 to 4,326, and the drier spring weather is allowing more durable long-term repairs to replace the temporary fixes that were unavoidable during the wettest periods.

Cornwall Council is responsible for maintaining 7,200 km of roads and carries out regular safety inspections across the entire highway network, but potholes can develop very quickly between inspections, so please continue to report potholes online, as repairs can only be scheduled once defects have been logged: [Report a problem with a road or pavement - Cornwall Council](#)

CIL APPLICATIONS

This year's Cornwall Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Fund attracted exceptional demand, with 401 Expressions of Interest submitted across Cornwall, requesting a combined total of £27.4 million. In response to this unprecedented level of interest, the available fund has been increased from £750,000 to £2 million.

A number of groups in Saltash submitted bids, reflecting the strength of local ambition to improve community infrastructure. CIL funding must meet strict legal criteria linked to the impact of development, and all bids were assessed against detailed eligibility requirements, including how clearly they demonstrate a connection to growth and infrastructure need. Given the scale of demand, additional prioritisation criteria were also applied to produce a shortlist of 40 projects across Cornwall that will now be invited to submit full applications.

Groups whose projects have not progressed will receive feedback, and I will continue to monitor the process closely in relation to Saltash bids.

PARKING UPDATES

At Cabinet in March we reviewed the results of the consultation on proposed parking changes, which had originally included the introduction of charges at Kit Hill. These proposals were brought forward because Cornwall Council is under pressure to make parking services financially sustainable. However, the consultation generated very strong public feedback, with more than 9,000 responses overall, and Kit Hill attracting 1,081 objections. Following that clear local response, and further review of the business case, Cabinet agreed that parking charges should not be introduced at Kit Hill.

For residents who park regularly in Alexandra Square or Belle Vue East, the JustPark Wallet offers a useful way to reduce costs. By loading credit in advance through the JustPark app, drivers can access discounted parking rates in both car parks as well as others across Cornwall. More information here: [Pay for parking with your mobile using JustPark - Cornwall Council](#)

The revised parking order agreed by Cabinet in March also includes an expansion of managed overnight motorhome parking at selected sites elsewhere in Cornwall. These locations were chosen in part where there had been local requests, so if Saltash Town Council has any interest in exploring whether similar provision might be appropriate here, I would be very happy to progress that with Cornwall Council.