



Safer, Cleaner, Greener: Falmouth Town Council offers advice about highways and hedgerows

With its 4,530 miles or 7,200 kilometres of public roads and pavements, Cornwall has a Herculean task when it comes to the repair and maintenance of its highways and hedgerows.

This latest instalment of Falmouth Town Council's year-long **Safer, Cleaner, Greener** public information campaign highlights how to deal with highway or hedgerow-related hazards in and around Falmouth.

Who is responsible for highways and hedgerows?

With the exception of major trunk roads, Cornwall Council is responsible for repairing and maintaining the county's public highway, roads and pavements. It deals with issues as diverse as drainage and flooding; manhole and drain covers; excessive mud and potholes, and a wide range of street furniture – from benches, cycle racks and street lighting to bollards, planters and bus shelters.

In the case of street lighting, Cornwall Council passes faults for repair action on the same day that a report is received. Repairs to defective street lighting are normally undertaken within five working days but emergency repairs should be completed within 24 hours where there is a risk of danger. Western Power Distribution aims to repair underground cable faults that may take longer to locate within 25 working days.

With regard to potholes – the unavoidable result of an ageing highway surface being subjected to traffic and adverse weather conditions – Cornwall Council endeavours to inspect and prioritise their repair as soon as practicable. If a pothole is considered a significant risk, it will be treated by the end of the next working day. Those potholes that are not deemed dangerous are added to Cornwall Council's list of programmed work for repair within six months.

Hedgerows are a complex matter given the need to balance safety with biodiversity.

Overgrown vegetation can endanger the safety of highway users by obstructing visibility at junctions; forcing cyclists and pedestrians into the road; becoming a trip hazard, or affecting surface water drainage and causing localised flooding. Conversely, it can also protect wildlife and support habitats that are of ecological importance.

Cornwall Council is responsible for dealing with overgrown vegetation from highway verges, whether it has been intentionally planted or not.

Overgrowth into the highway from Cornish hedges or from trees within property boundaries is usually the responsibility of the landowner.

If overgrowth from private land is causing an obstruction or a safety concern, Cornwall Council has the power to serve notice on the land or property owner to take action. Where overgrowth presents an immediate problem, Cornwall Council has the right to remove it without notice and recover costs from the landowner.

Who to contact:

If you experience an issue relating to highways and hedgerows, please report it to Cornwall Council's Highway Maintenance team by:

- Email: roadtransportandparking@cornwall.gov.uk
- Phone: 0300 1234 222
- Online: www.cornwall.gov.uk/report-it

When reporting defective street lighting, please include the street light's number (i.e. the yellow letter and three numbers on a black background) as well as its location.

For further information, visit Cornwall.gov.uk, type 'highway maintenance' in the search box and then click 'go'.