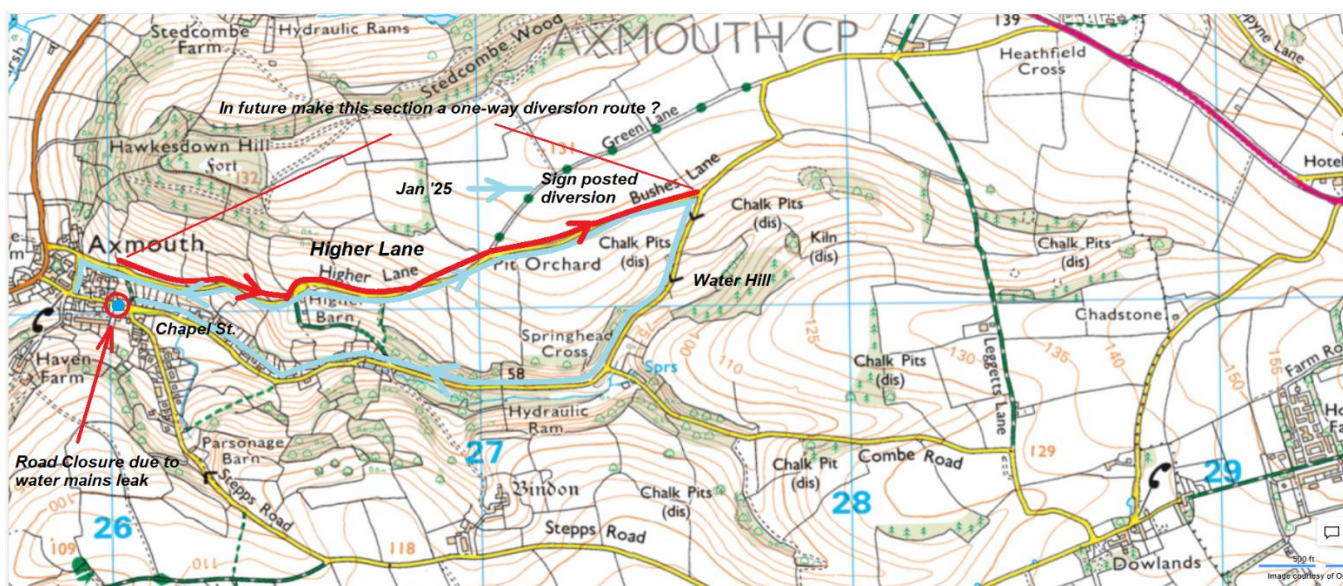


# Axmouth

## Recent road closure issues

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January South West Water commenced operations to repair a water main leak in Chapel Street adjacent to South Coombe Farm. This required a road closure and the setting up of diversionary routes. The closure affected approximately two thirds of the village residents and associated recycling, refuse, post, farm, general services deliveries (oil deliveries are not infrequent as Axmouth has no gas) and emergency services. Another important service disrupted, was the home care nursing needs of a number of village residents.

The route designated involved using the single-track Higher Lane – see map below:-



This required all residents to the east of the closure to travel up to Springhead, Water Hill then turn into Higher Lane to return down to the village centre and/or gain access to the main road network. The other option was to continue up Bushes Lane to the A3052 at Heathfield Cross.

Higher Lane is a narrow single-track with few passing places. Its use as a diversionary route caused many delays due to lack of passing places and the general poor state of the lane.

Equally, all diverted traffic had to use the steep Water Hill (Bushes Lane) above Springhead. Again, this is a single-track lane, although somewhat wider than Higher Lane, it suffers similarly from a lack of designated passing places.

**Water Hill – unofficial passing places – under the wet conditions they became dangerous**



During the period of closure vehicles were required to move off the made-up surface of Water Hill onto the soft verge which quickly became torn up, having coincided with a period of heavy rain. This became a safety issue due to the steepness of the hill and slipperiness of the 'off road conditions' as vehicles tried to pass one another.

### **Future Contingencies**

Road closures of Chapel Street have not been infrequent, the following proposals should be considered by DCC Highways:-

1. In the event of a road closure in Chapel Street, where Higher Lane is deemed to be the diversionary route, it should be **one-way** only and sign posted accordingly. The one-way status should be designated from the last residential property on Higher Lane eastwards to the junction with Bushes Lane above Water Hill. For traffic wishing to access the village from the east side of a Chapel Street closure it would require travelling up to Heathfield Cross on the A3052.
2. Repair Higher Lane - potholes have been reported.
3. Request that DCC Highways consider making three made up passing places on Water Hill.
4. Additional road closure signs to be posted at the junction of Chapel Street with Church Street and the junction of Bushes Lane with the A3052. This would help reduce 'through traffic' unaware of the road closure. In this instance, road closure signs were placed only some 50 metres from the site.
5. Improved communications with Axmouth Parish Council from which ever utility/services has closed Chapel Street – South West Water failed to communicate with APC, even after a visit from DCC Enforcement Officer requesting them to do so.

***Higher Lane, the diversionary single track, two-way route – heavily potholed.***

