

The background image shows a park scene. In the upper half, there is a dense line of green trees and bushes under a clear blue sky. Below the trees, a grassy field is visible, with a tall, thin black lamppost standing on the right side. The lower half of the image is a solid dark blue rectangle containing white text.

HOLLANDS PARK WALL REPLACEMENT PLAN

June 2023

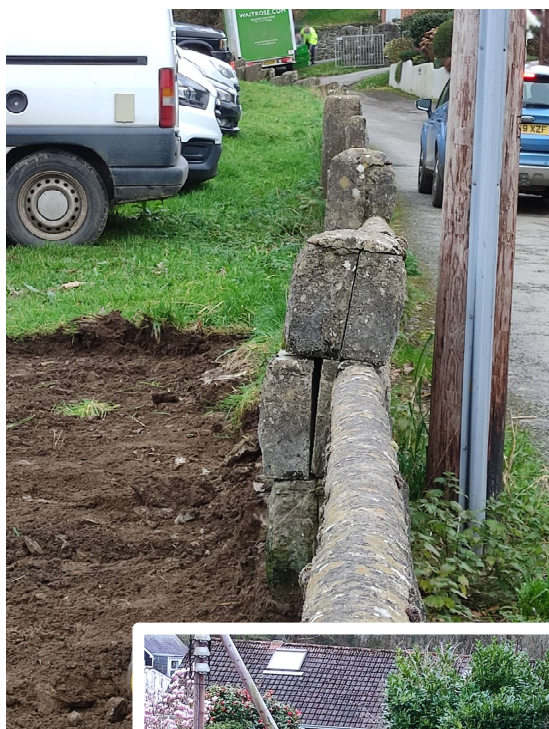
Combe Martin Parish Council

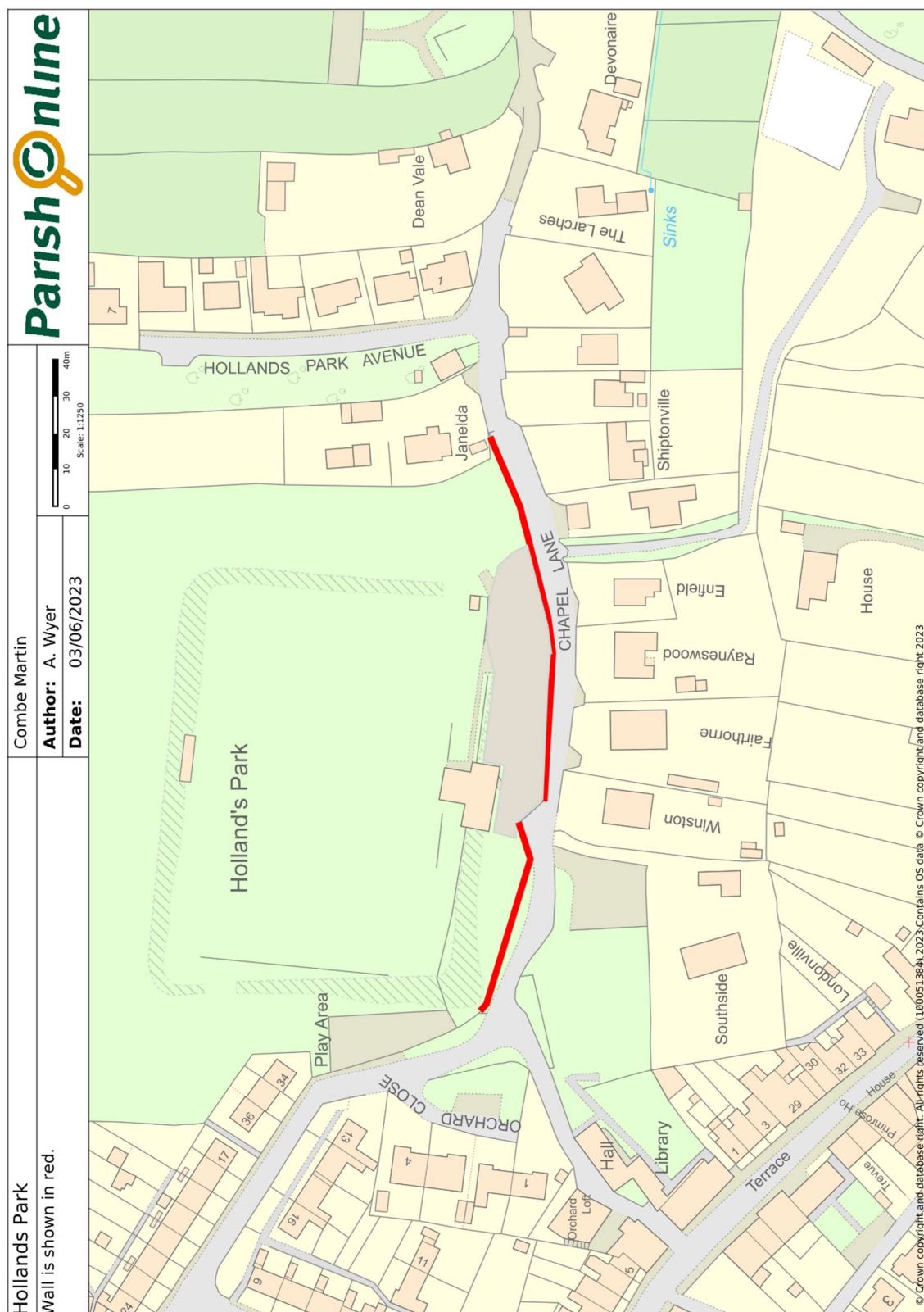
Hollands Park Wall Replacement Plan

When the weeds were cleared away earlier this year it became apparent that the stone perimeter wall at the entrance gateway to Hollands Park was unsafe and unstable. A gentle push brought down a section approximately 4 meters long. Based upon the most recent repair to this wall, rebuilding this section will cost between £2000 and £3000.



A visual inspection of the rest of the wall shows numerous cracks and splits, repairs, and one further section where the wall has come down completely. Most of this damage has probably been caused by vehicles nudging into the wall while trying to park in the car park. Even without a professional survey to tell us how much needs rebuilding immediately, it is clear that the wall will continue to be at risk from further damage - posing a safety risk to users of the car park and Chapel Lane and a financial risk to the Council.





After considering the possibility of rebuilding the wall with a modern retaining wall, the Council felt that knocking the wall down and replacing it with a hedge would be the best approach. As well as being considerably cheaper, it would be better for the environment and be more in keeping with the area. It would also allow the council to address a health and safety concern, namely the lack of a barrier protecting users of the park from the drop down from the car park and park level onto the road level, a fall of around 4 feet in places.

STAGE 1 - WALL REMOVAL

As the name suggests, this stage will involve knocking down the existing wall, leaving the bottom row(s) of blocks as a curb. Given the state of the wall, this should not be particularly difficult or time-consuming. The waste material will make a suitable hardcore base layer in the sections of the car park that are still grass/mud. The soil behind the current wall will be pushed back at a 45 degree angle to create a slope between the existing car park surface level and the road level.

Note: Although the wall runs all the way along the perimeter of the park and Chapel Lane, it may be beneficial to stop the wall removal at the small pedestrian entrance near the most eastern end of the wall. This would leave a short section of wall, which supports the wildflower bank and the neighbouring property border, undisturbed. The pedestrian access could also be improved with proper steps and potentially a handrail.

Note: There is a bench built into the existing wall (opposite the entrance to Linden Rise). This could be removed (if not used) or retained (with the fence and hedge planted around it).

STAGE 2 - SAFETY BARRIER

At the top of the 45 degree slope we will need to install a wooden fence to act as a safety barrier. This will stop pedestrians from falling down the slope. It will also act as protection to the newly laid hedge until it becomes established (stage 3).

STAGE 3 - HEDGE

The hedge will be planted between 12" and 18" away from the road so that it can develop into a 2-3-foot-thick hedge but not encroach or overhang the roadway.

In time it should grow to a point where the STAGE 2 wooden fence is no longer needed and will not need to be replaced when it rots/fails. The local residents have been consulted and have suggested that Beech or Hornbeam would be their choice of hedge species. Both are particularly suitable for this location as they do not drop their leaves in autumn, so will not contribute to any material which might block the surface drains in winter. (Both species have leaves which turn a copper/gold colour over winter, rather than leaving a “bare” hedge.)

STAGE 4 - CAR PARK

The wall debris will make an excellent base layer of hardcore for the areas of the car park currently still grass/mud. The addition of a finishing layer of smaller hardcore will leave the Hollands Park car park with a level, durable and practical surface, while still allowing rain and surface water to drain through it rather than run over it.

STAGE 5 - THE SWEET CHESTNUT TREE

To protect the Sweet Chestnut tree in the car park, the hardcore car park surface will finish approximately 4 meters away from the trunk of the tree. The intention will be to stop vehicles from parking in this area - protecting the soil around the base of the tree from being compacted. (It may be necessary to add some form of curb to define the edge of the parking spaces and the start of the tree protection area.) Once the hardcore in the car park has been compacted, the area around the tree will be aerated and then protected by a layer of wood chip mulch.

POWERS TO ACT

The Council can only act where it has a power or a duty to do so. Therefore, whenever the Council commits to an action or expenditure, it should be sure it is allowed to, by law. In May 2023 the Council assumed the Power of General Competency allowing it to do these works.

North Devon Council has confirmed that the removal of this wall and its replacement by a hedge will fall under “Permitted Development” so will not require specific planning permission.