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Welcome to this July 2025 edition of our newsletter. It introduces one of our new Joint Chairs, Anne Freeman, who has been serving on the Committee for a year prior to her appointment.

The newsletter also introduces the Crossings' new Chief Officer, Philip Robinson whose prior oversight of the undertaking whilst at Plymouth City Council will ensure that he is able to hit the ground running in his new role.

Philip's arrival next month will mark the end of my time bridging the gap following David List's departure. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to lead this fantastic organisation and to further serve our community of users.

There are also articles on other important new staff, details of complex projects on the bridge structure and within the Saltash Tunnel, an update on work at the Visitor and Learning Centre and a message from Fred Thomas MP.

There is plenty of interest within this newsletter which is very worthy of time spent reading through.

Meet new Joint Chair Anne Freeman

Welcome to Councillor Anne Freeman who is the new Joint Chair representing Plymouth on the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee.

Councillor Freeman was first elected to Plymouth City Council to represent Devonport Ward in 2024. As well as joining the Joint Committee at this time, she was also appointed as a substitute on a number of other Council committees, including Audit and Governance. She is now also Vice Chair of the Taxi Licensing Committee and sits on the Council's Planning and Housing and Communities Scrutiny Committees.

Describing herself as a "Janner through and through", Anne is very proud of her Plymouth roots and works closely with community groups and organisations across the city. These include the North Yard Community Trust, Ballard Youth Activity Trust and the Green Devonport Partnership. She is also a key member of the multi-agency Child Poverty Working Group.

When Anne is not carrying out her Council duties or working in the local community, she works part time as a cleaner at a local pub – a role, she says, which ensures she understands the challenges facing the people and communities she represents and keeps her feet firmly on the ground. She is also the main carer for her 83 year old mother, helps to look after her 103 year old grandmother who still lives independently, and enjoys spending time with her beloved dog Pippa.

Anne is very proud to be nominated as a Joint Chair of the Committee. "Both crossings are incredibly important – both for the people who use them every day and the communities which surround them on both sides of the river" she said.

Anne believes it is vital for everyone on the Committee to work together in a positive way. While she recognises that individual councillors will hold different political views, she would like to see party politics left at the door with decisions made on what is best for the Bridge and the Ferry and the local residents and businesses who rely on them.

"I will do my very best to ensure that everyone's voice is heard during meetings but feel passionately that once a vote has been taken on an issue, the whole Committee should support that decision."

As well as having a number of new members on the Committee, and two new Joint Chairs, the Joint Committee will have a number of key decisions to make in the coming months. These will include the future funding of the crossings, managing maintenance costs at both crossings at the Bridge, and starting the process of looking at options for replacing the ferries. The Joint Committee is also responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Tamar 2050 programme.

"I spent my first 12 months as a member of the Joint Committee listening and learning" she said. "This is a very exciting and important time for Tamar Crossings and the Joint Committee and I am looking forward to working with staff, officers, elected members, partners and local communities to seize the opportunities and address the challenges facing the crossings and securing their future."



Spotlight on new Chief Officer Philip Robinson

Philip Robinson was officially appointed as the new Chief Officer for Tamar Crossings at the end of April.

He is due to take up his new job at the beginning of July but, before this happens, we wanted to find out more about him and his vision for the future of the crossings.

Many people who live and work in Plymouth will recognise Philip as the Service Director for Street Services at Plymouth City Council, a role he has held for the past 10 years. One of the largest departments in the City Council, with more than 500 staff, it is responsible for a wide range of services, including environmental planning, highways maintenance, street scene and waste. His role also includes supporting the Joint Chairs of the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee.

What people may not know, however, is that before joining the City Council Philip spent 37 years in the Royal Artillery, the artillery arm of the British Army, serving in, amongst other places, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Italy and Central America.

Another fact people may not know is that Philip's positive relationship with the Southwest - and with Tamar Crossings - started long before he joined the City Council. As a member of the 29 Commando Regiment (Royal Artillery) he spent 10 years based at the Royal Citadel in Plymouth. It was while he was based in Plymouth that he met his wife Katie.

"Because I spent so much time in the city as a young man and my wife Katie is from Torpoint I have always considered Plymouth as my home city" he said.

With family and friends on both sides of the Tamar, the river - and the crossings - are very important to Philip. "The Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry are part of the glue which joins our two families together."

While Philip is a regular user of the Bridge (mainly due to his love of golf and membership of St Mellion Golf Club), he admits to having a particular "soft spot" for the ferry because of the part it played in his early years and meeting his wife.

"The ferry played an important role in my courting years" he laughed. "I spent a lot of time in Torpoint and it was at one of our regular haunts – the Harbour Lights – that I made the decision to ask Katie to marry me."

Although Philip was not actively looking for a new challenge when the recruitment process for the new Chief Officer of Tamar Crossings began, when he saw the advert he was excited at the opportunity to make a real positive difference both to the crossings and to the community on both sides of the river.

"Rather than think of Cornwall and Plymouth as separate areas, I see a single community based



around the river" he explained. "I am looking forward to taking my love of this area and helping to build a strong and prosperous future for the crossings and this community."

Philip's current role in supporting the work of the Joint Committee means that he is already very aware of the importance of the crossings to the people who rely on them to get to work, school and access health and other services. He also recognises the need to develop a new way forward for funding and operating the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry which delivers improved benefits for local people.

While decisions on tolls and spending are a matter for the parent authorities, and, in the case of tolls, ultimately the Government, Philip is keen to ensure that all local stakeholders, including local residents, businesses and service users as well as councillors, MPs, and the team at Tamar Crossings, have a real say in shaping the future of the crossings.

"The crossings are vital, both for the people who use them on a regular basis and for the community which lives and works around them. The aim of the Tamar 2050 programme is to help deliver the changes that need to take place to make sure that the crossings are fit for purpose and that they are supported and correctly financed."

"Over the past two years the team at Tamar Crossings have worked hard to produce efficiencies and savings of more than £10 million. We need to build on this to secure the long-term future of the crossings and revitalise the relationship with the community."

"To achieve this transformation we all need to work together and I am very proud to have been appointed to lead this process."

Alyn joins operations team at Tamar Bridge

Welcome to Alyn Price who has joined the team at the Tamar Bridge as Bridge Operations and Facilities Manager.

Alyn was working as Director of Commercial Operations at Dartmoor Zoo and had been thinking about a new challenge when he heard about the vacancy at Tamar Crossings.

Having originally trained and worked in the hospitality sector including spending time as a chef in ski resorts in Switzerland, France, Colorado during the winter months, and in hotels and restaurants in the UK during the summer, Alyn decided to hang up his chef's whites when he reached his 30s. After managing a pub and then a restaurant in Plymouth, he joined Dartmoor Zoo as Head of Catering, Retail and Events seven and a half years ago.

"My time at the Zoo had given me experience in managing teams and operations, and I felt the role at the Bridge would provide an opportunity to use this experience in a very different setting" he said. "It is still early days but this is already providing to be the case!"

Since taking up his new role in March, Alyn has been finding out just what it takes to provide a safe, reliable and efficient crossing for the average 45,000 vehicles which cross the Tamar Bridge every day.

Managing traffic flows to keep people moving 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year is a complex and challenging job. A key part of Alyn's role is leading the team of full time and part time Control Room Supervisors and Control Room Assistants who together manage the day-to-day operation of the crossing. He also oversees the operation of the toll booths and, together with Tamar Bridge Manager Coral Jonas and colleague Kelly Hogg, is responsible for managing and responding to incidents on both the bridge and the tunnel.

He works closely with a wide range of partners and key stakeholders, including staff at the Torpoint Ferry, emergency services, National Highways, members of the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee and local councils.

"I have certainly learnt a lot about bridges in the past few weeks" said Alyn.

"Previously, like most other people, I had just travelled across the Bridge and never really thought about what it takes to keep the traffic flowing. I have been particularly impressed by the control room team who deal with all kinds of situations with amazing calmness and professionalism.

"There is a great team of people at the Bridge and I am looking forward to playing my part in ensuring that the crossing continues to run smoothly!"



Spotlight on Kate Frampton

Meet Kate Frampton, Finance Team Leader at Tamar Crossings.

Part of the wider Customer Services team at the Tamar Bridge office, Kate joined Tamar Crossings as a customer services assistant 15 years ago.

"I was working in a bank and had been looking for a new challenge when a friend told me about a job she had seen advertised while travelling on the ferry" explained Kate. "I decided to apply and was delighted when I was told I had got the job."

This is a very busy office, with the 8 strong customer services team dealing with everything from responding to basic customer queries, compliments and complaints, to managing the 55,000 plus toll accounts and 90,000 tags.

In March the team received 464 new applications for tags, sent out 1,651 tags to new and existing tag account holders and dealt with 18,081 phone calls (an average 780 calls a day) from people wanting to top up their tag accounts.

Kate was appointed as one of two new Finance Team Leaders in 2023 – Kate's role involves overseeing the day-to-day financial transactions carried out at the Bridge and one which she thoroughly enjoys.

"I had always enjoyed the financial side of the customer services adviser role and was looking forward to taking up my new job so it was a bit of a shock when I discovered I was pregnant the month after the interview" she laughed.

Kate returned from maternity leave earlier this year and is enjoying being back working with her colleagues.

As well as managing the work of the finance team, Kate also takes her turn in dealing with the hundreds of daily phone calls and visits to the office from people with a range of issues and queries. These can vary from those wanting to top up their tag accounts and add new vehicles to existing accounts, to setting up new toll accounts, or changing direct debit details.

The team also help the 20 – 30 people a day who are issued with a debit note because they were unable to pay the toll when they arrived at the toll booths.

"I am known as a bit of a problem solver and so often get asked to help when there are issues which need resolving" she said. "Recently I have been working with the team who are looking at the introduction of new systems to improve operations at the crossings."

For Kate, like other members of staff, one of the things she likes most about working at Tamar Crossings, is the positive family ethos. "This is a great place to work with colleagues who support each other as well as doing their very best to provide the best possible service to all our customers."



From School Careers Co-ordinator to Visitor Experience Manager

When Coombe Dean School Careers Co-ordinator and Transition Lead Jane Cooper visited the Tamar Bridge earlier this year to organise a work experience visit for some students, she little thought she would be returning two months later as the newly appointed Visitor Experience Manager for the Bridging the Tamar Visitor and Learning Centre.



Jane took up her new role on 12 May and, with a background in education and community engagement, and a passion for history and heritage, is looking forward to working with her colleagues and volunteers to spread the word about the brilliant things people can see and do at the VLC.

Originally opened in 2019 with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and support from the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee, the Visitor and Learning Centre provides an interactive exhibition space where visitors can discover and celebrate the engineering history of the iconic Tamar Bridge and Brunel's Royal Albert Bridge. Guided talks, tours, workshops and family friendly events, led Heritage Officer Mark Tebbs and a team of volunteer Bridge Ambassadors from the local community, are also provided to schools, local organisations and members of the public.

"Although the Centre is visited by thousands of people every year, we know there are many local people who still don't know it is here and I want to change that" said Jane.

As well as spending the past eight and a half years at Coombe Dean School, where she developed strong links with local employers, training providers and businesses as part of her Careers co-ordinator role, Jane also worked with the Play Association in Plymouth, developing play and volunteer projects in some of the most disadvantaged communities in the city.

She is planning to use her experience of community education, outreach, and careers, and the strong partnerships she has built up over the past few years, to reach out to and encourage more people to come along and see what the Learning and Visitor Centre has to offer.

"I am really excited by my new role" she said. "I was not actually looking for a change when I went to the Bridge to confirm details for a work experience visit for some students. I was reminded about how amazing a facility the Learning Centre is, having taken my own children there when they were younger, but not having visited for several years."

"I was talking about my visit to a friend when she mentioned they were looking for a new Visitor Centre Manager. I looked at the advert and thought I could do that, filled out an application form and was thrilled when I was offered the job."

"Although I have not worked in the heritage sector before, I have a degree in English and Classical Studies and have a real passion for history. The Centre has an amazing archive and I am already looking at ways of sharing its treasures more widely."

As well as continuing to offer the current programme at the Centre, Jane will be working with Mark and the amazing team of volunteers to develop other events and activities, as well as making greater use of the Bridging the Tamar website and social media channels to raise public awareness of what is on offer at the Centre.

"At the moment Bridging the Tamar is one of the hidden gems of this area" said Jane. "It is a fantastic resource which we need to shine a spotlight on and I will be doing my best to ensure that as many people as possible know about it and come to see its treasures."

Swapping cruise ships, buses and trains for ferries – Kellyann begins new role as Ferry Manager

From cruise ships and buses, to trains and now ferries – Kellyann Newcombe is looking forward to bringing all her experience in managing different kinds of transport operations to her new role as Ferry Manager at Tamar Crossings.

Kellyann's involvement with transportation began when she joined a cruise ship after completing a degree in Hospitality and Cruise Ship Operations at Plymouth University. After "five fun years at sea", working for the operations team at the Carnival Cruise Line (including stints on US managed Princess Cruises and British managed P&O ships), she went to the Carnival head office for a year where she was responsible for managing a range of HR related projects.

Deciding to swap the ocean waves for dry land, she then joined National Express, managing operations at their Bournemouth and Southampton coach stations, before returning to the sea – this time on the Marella cruise line (which includes TUI) as a project manager.

After coming back to Plymouth, Kellyann spent a short period in customer services at The Range before joining GWR where she worked as a guard on the Paddington to Penzance mainline for five years as well as on some of the branch line routes. "This was actually my first time dealing face to face with customers on the frontline rather than working behind the scenes managing people and operations - and I loved it" she said.

Having spent five years working as a train guard (crossing the iconic Brunel rail bridge on a daily basis) Kellyann decided it was time for a change and moved into a new role. The job, which involved working closely with operation teams across the network, led to an offer to help set up a new 'Operational Excellence' department coaching managers at First Bus.

Kellyann was enjoying the job when a friend saw the advert for a new Ferry Manager at Tamar Crossings. "I was not looking to change jobs as I was very happy at First Bus" she explained. "I initially joked to my friend that I had not done ferries yet but was actually not seriously looking to move. However, having looked at the role profile, I realised that my varied career and experience meant that I met every essential and desired requirement and so decided to send in an application."

"I didn't think it would lead to anything but was then offered the job. While it has been a little bittersweet leaving First Bus, this is such a unique opportunity which will enable me to use all the skills and experience I have gained in my career so I have no regrets."

Kellyann joined Tamar Crossings on 19 May and so is still learning about the ferries and her role, but she is already brimming with enthusiasm.

"There is a great team of people here who have made me feel so welcome. I live in Devonport so am using the ferry every day to get to work. While there are certainly some operational challenges ahead, there are also lots of opportunities. I am looking forward to working with and supporting all my colleagues so that we continue to provide an efficient high-quality service which enables people to cross the river 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."



Hard work and ingenuity of engineering team saves millions of pounds and reduces potential disruption for bridge users

A huge well done to our Bridge engineering team for devising and successfully completing a complex and high-risk project to replace the rocker pin and re-bore the rocker arm at the Saltash tower. Rather than going ahead with the original plan to replace the whole rocker arm which would have cost up to £10m, the team investigated and trialled a technique which has enabled them to refurbish the rocker arm and pin. This has saved more than £9 million from the costs of the scheme and minimised disruption for bridge users.

Suspension bridge structures are designed to move with traffic and environmental conditions. The Tamar Bridge has steel rocker bearings at the ends of the bridge decks which allow a range of movement as the bridge expands / contracts and moves with differing traffic loadings and environmental conditions. The rocker arms connect the bridge truss to the bridge towers, supporting the structure of the bridge, controlling movements on the deck and protecting the expansion joints in the carriageway.

The condition of the rocker bearings is closely monitored by the engineering team as part of the bridge's routine inspection programme. This includes inspections of the 1,340 metres of main suspension cables, vertical hanger cables, the maintenance gantries, the 76 metre high concrete towers and the main deck and cantilevers.

Initial signs of wear on the rocker bearings were first identified in 2007, with the team, led by Engineering Manager Richard Cole, subsequently carrying out regular targeted inspections to monitor the condition of the rockers. In 2016, when it became clear that the rockers would need to be replaced within the next few years, the team began work on developing a scheme to carry out this work.

Initial research showed that a full replacement scheme would result in very high costs and significant risks to the structure of the bridge. It would also be very disruptive to bridge users because of the lane restrictions and bridge loading restrictions required to carry out the works. To prevent this, it was agreed to investigate viable alternative options.

In 2020 the team began working with engineering consultants to develop a localised repair scheme that would enable the original rocker arm to be retained, with just the worn rocker pin and bearing surfaces repaired and replaced using a technique known as in-line boring. Normally used to re-work industrial metal components in plant and machinery that have rotating parts, shafts, or pinned connections, the team adapted this technique to meet their requirements with the help of industry specialists.

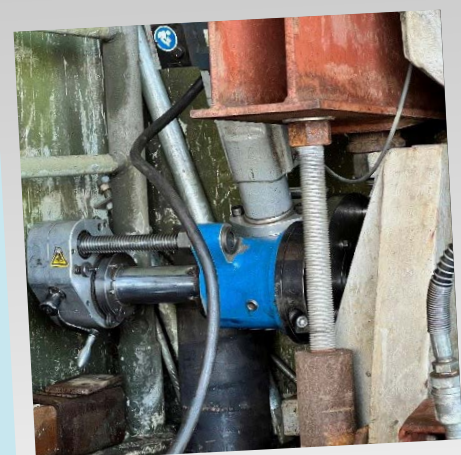
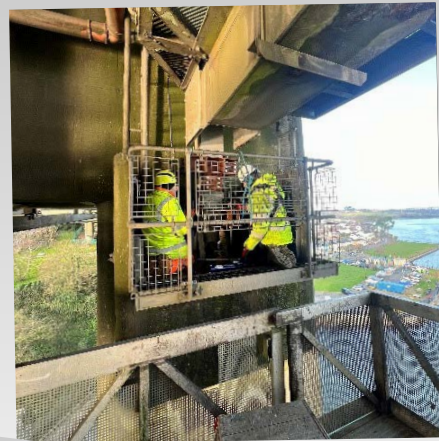
One of the critical steps in the process involved identifying a way of locking down the rocker arm to prevent movement between the rocker arm and the bridge during the repairs.

Following a number of trials, heavy duty temporary works were added to the structure at the rocker location, enabling the bridge to be consistently and reliably locked down during a range of temperatures, weather, and traffic loading conditions. This allowed the large worn-out solid steel rocker pin to be removed from the rocker arm in a staged and controlled process, re-bored and a new, larger replacement pin to be installed as a permanent repair. The working conditions and environment were particularly challenging at this location, with limited working space and the rocker pin weighing 60kg.

Thanks to the hard work and commitment of the whole team a successful project outcome was achieved. Designers, contractors, and our in-house engineering team provided a safe, cost effective and reliable repair solution. The work on the Saltash rocker was completed during a 10 day continuous period without the need for lane closure or weight restrictions.

The engineering team are now developing plans to repair the worn-out rocker pin on a second rocker arm using the same in-line boring principles.

Both rocker arms will be repaired for approximately £500,000 in total – a significant cost saving against the original capital budget of £10million and without any disruption to service.



Update on LYNHER refit

Work on the refit of the LYNHER is continuing, with work currently taking place to integrate the new Rolls Royce control system with the ferry's existing mechanical and electrical equipment by the manufacturer with support from the Tamar Crossings' technical team.

The first phase of the refit took place in drydock when work was carried out on replacing systems and equipment on the prows and hull which have become obsolete or reached the end of their lives. The vessel was also repainted both above and below the waterline. Following completion of these works, initial works took were undertaken by Rolls Royce to replace the outdated computer control system.

The next stage of the refit has to be carried out with the vessel in water and so, at the end of last month, the ferry was "flooded up" and moved to a berth alongside the dock which will allow Rolls Royce to progress integrating its control system with operating motors.

Once work alongside has been completed, Harbour Acceptance Testing (HAT) will be carried out before the ferry returns to Torpoint. This will ensure that the works meet the required standards of Lloyds' Register to assure the long-term performance and reliability of the vessel.

Providing the remaining work goes smoothly, we are currently expecting LYNHER to arrive back at Torpoint in the middle of this month. However, this is reliant on there being favourable weather and sea conditions soon after testing at Falmouth is completed.

Following LYNHER's return to Torpoint, the towing gear will be removed and our team will then work with A&P to prepare the vessel for service. This will involve reconnecting the ferry to the chains, restoring the lifesaving & firefighting equipment and seating, and carrying out Sea Acceptance Trials (SAT), including in service crew training and familiarisation with the new control system.

The trials, which are carried out with Lloyd's Register in attendance, are required to verify the vessel's readiness and compliance with safety and performance standards, and ensure that all systems are operating as intended.

This is expected to take up to five days to complete. Following this, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and Lloyds Register will carry out their inspections to certify the ferry for service.



Update on A38 Saltash Tunnel works

National Highways are currently carrying out an extensive programme of work to upgrade the technology in and around the tunnel, including the lane control system on the Tamar Bridge. The aim is to future-proof the structure for many years to come.

Following recent faults with the specialised technology which operates the lane control system at Saltash Tunnel and keeps drivers safe, National Highways have implemented their pre-planned response by fixing the lane direction using traffic management.

The layout, which has been designed with partners including the emergency services, means that:

- Westbound into Cornwall - Two lanes are running on the bridge and through the tunnel
- Eastbound into Devon - Traffic is using one lane through the tunnel and on the bridge. This is as well as the bridge cantilever lane for local traffic and Tamar TAG holders.

These fixed lanes will now remain in place for the remaining duration of the scheme.

As an additional safety measure, traffic signals have been installed at Tamar Bridge, the eastbound approach to the tunnel and at the tunnel entrances. These lights are not in use day-to-day but will allow the bridge control room to close the tunnel / bridge in the event of a breakdown or incident. If red traffic signal lights are showing, this indicates the tunnel / bridge is temporarily closed due to a breakdown / incident. Drivers must not proceed past the signals until directed.

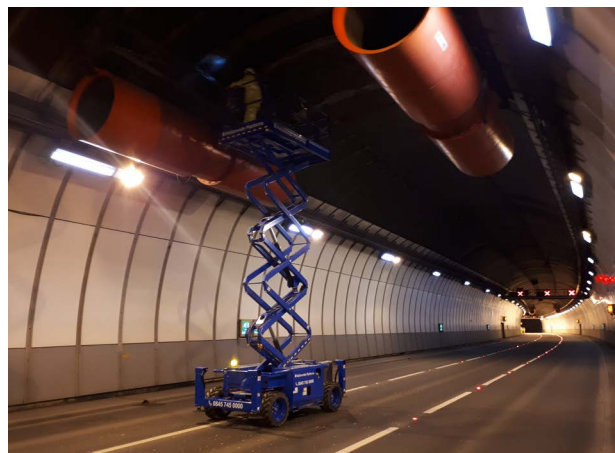
All partners are working together to minimise disruption for users of the tunnel and Tamar Bridge. Drivers are asked to plan ahead and allow extra time for journeys, especially eastbound into Devon, and follow signage indicating lane direction and stay in the lane assigned for their direction of travel. Please do not attempt to overtake.

For full information on the Tunnel upgrade scheme to read what works are being carried out, please visit the National Highways website:

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/south-west/a38-saltash-tunnel-technology-upgrade/>

For queries or comments you can contact National Highways Customer Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000 or by email: info@nationalhighways.co.uk

For up-to-date travel information, please check National Highways travel alerts page or visit Traffic England.



Update on toll booths upgrade

With the six toll booths approaching 20 years old and experiencing significant problems such as leaking roofs, leaking and damaged windows / doors and obsolete mechanical and electrical equipment, members of the Joint Committee decided last summer to refurbish the existing booths rather than replace them with new ones to deliver greater value for money.

To minimise potential disruption to bridge users it was agreed to order one new booth to replace the booth in the worst condition, with the remaining booths then being refurbished in rotation, one at a time.

One new booth and two refurbished booths have now been installed. The most recent refurbishment works have been carried out on toll booth 5. Works to upgrade the power, communication cables, electronics, CCTV and air conditioning ducts were completed and the refurbished toll booth 5 was exchanged over the weekend beginning Friday 6 June.

Following the rush hour peak on Friday evening the old booth was lifted from the toll plaza and the newly refurbished booth installed in its place. Work continued throughout Saturday and Sunday to reinstall the toll system, reconnect cables, CCTV and air conditioning, with the booth being successfully returned to service on Sunday afternoon.

Work will immediately begin to refurbish the next booth and we expect it to be ready for exchange during August 2025.



Busy time for Bridging the Tamar Centre

Our Visitor and Learning Centre continues to be extremely busy, with visits from local schools and community groups, workshops, weekly introductory talks and tours of the bridge.

Recent school visits have included groups from Torpoint, Polperro, Sherford Vale, St Georges Primary, North Cornwall Academy, Plympton St Maurice, Goosewell Wembury, Mount Wise, Ernesettle, Tor Bridge, Liskeard Community College, Coombeshead Academy, Otterham, Oreston and Probus schools. The LC team have also hosted visits from cub groups, students from the University of Plymouth and home educators.

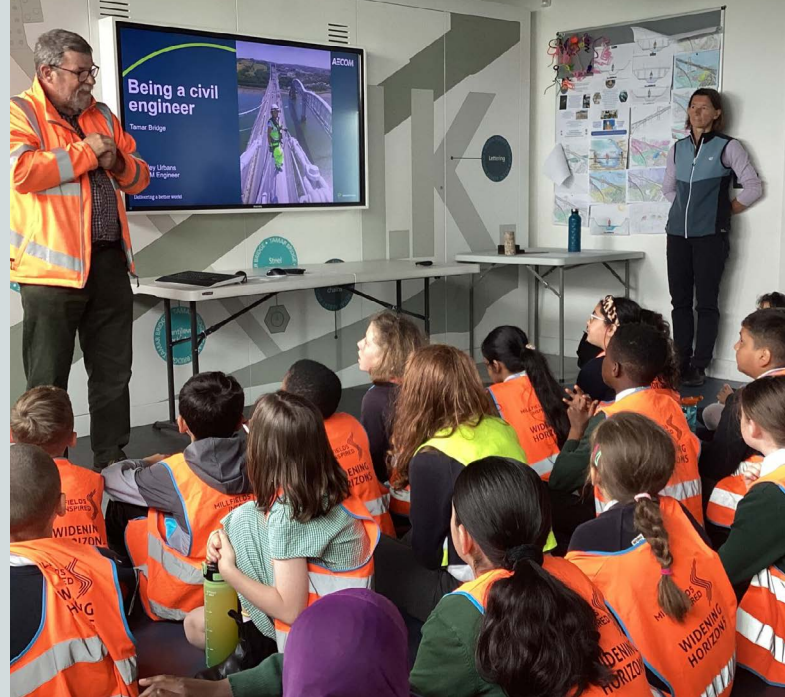
The Centre has also successfully recruited an additional 8 volunteers over the past few months - bringing the total number to 39. Our volunteers play a key role in supporting the VLC and we are very grateful for their help.

We have recently been assessed for a Sandford Award which is awarded to celebrate heritage education excellence. We will know if we have been successful in September - fingers crossed.

The team have also been working with partners on a range of exciting projects. These include the 'Crossing Lives' project led by Fotonow which is looking into the history of the bridge toll collectors.

Work is also progressing on the project to create a virtual reality tour of the bridge. Partner Audio Nation is developing an interactive tour which will enable people to either abseil down one of the hangers, walk the cable, take a boat trip under the bridges, visit a booth, visit the anchorage or have a look around the control room. There will also be a game where people can conduct a maintenance task at the top of the tower. The tour is currently being trialled with staff, with the aim of having the headsets completed for public use later this month.

Work is continuing to archive the huge number of images we have been given. These include over 120 photos recently discovered by the engineering team



which show the construction of the ferry slip between 1930 and 1932.

The Centre is also looking at research into the A38 and the Cornwall Railway and would love to hear from anyone who has any interesting stories or photos for this project or any artefacts relating to either the bridge or the ferry.



Message from MP Fred Thomas

I'm proud to represent a constituency that borders the River Tamar – we must protect it.

As a Member of Parliament in one of the most beautiful corners of the country, I'm really proud to represent communities that border the River Tamar.

For centuries, the Tamar has been more than a body of water. It has been a living artery—dividing and uniting Devon and Cornwall; supporting the naval strength of Devonport; feeding our farmland and offering a place of recreation for our communities.

The face of the landscape around the Tamar's banks has changed significantly in the last century. Where it once flowed past exclusively rural communities, it now passes a number of more urban communities that I represent in my patch. The Tamar is really valued by people Plymouth – folk in Ernesettle benefit from being able to sit and look out on the Tamar from Ernesettle Creek and residents of Tamerton Foliot and Southway have the stunning Warleigh Point Nature reserve on their doorstep.

These are both beautiful places, where people can just escape into nature for a short while. So, it is no wonder that the Tamar Valley is rightly celebrated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and if you walk its trails in Plymouth you will see

exactly why. Wildflowers sit alongside ancient hedgerows; you can see Redshanks, Tawny Owls, Egrets and Grey Herons; and it's home to some of Europe's most threatened marine species and habitats.

The nature and wildlife that we are lucky enough to be able to access right on our doorstep relies on the river, and that means we all need the Tamar to continue to thrive. That is why I believe it is our duty, both locally and nationally, to safeguard rivers like the Tamar. As an MP, I am absolutely committed to doing that, and I am glad that this government is too.

We have already introduced landmark legislation that gives the regulator more powers to take tough action against water companies and bosses who pollute our waterways. It includes criminal charges for law-breaking bosses; more severe fines; and a ban on bonuses for water bosses unless they meet the highest standards.

There is more work to do but I am proud that we are tackling this issue, just as I am proud to represent communities that lie on the banks of the Tamar.



To get in touch contact visit@tamarcrossings.org.uk <https://www.bridgingthetamar.org.uk>

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