

**Devizes Highways Matters Q & A
26 February 2023**

Gullies

Q: In April 2023 an issue was raised with the Bishops Cannings Parish Council in regards to the continued flooding on the cross roads in Coate Village, this was recorded and discussed with Councillor Phillip Whitehead who was present at this meeting, it was agreed that the situation would be investigated and resolved as a matter of urgency due to that fact that residents of the village including small children, mothers with prams and very elderly people are forced to walk in the middle of the road due to the flooding which is prevalent most of the time. We now find ourselves with a confirmed report that the main drain on the cross roads has indeed collapsed and has been in this state for some times and despite previous requests nothing has been done.

1. Does Wiltshire Council/Wiltshire Highways and Senior officers including senior councillors deem it reasonable that people are putting their lives at risk every day to navigate away from the flood water by walking in the middle of the road of which is always subject to speeding traffic at peak times (school and work start times).

2. We have already experienced many near misses at this section of the road and it is only by sheer luck a serious accident has not happened.

3. I and many other residents have complained about this situation and stressed the urgency and safety issue on many occasions over the past 10-12 months and all falls on deaf ears, we are told "it is on the list" we never get to the end of the list.

Can someone explain why people in this village are subject to this risk and when will this situation become a priority to the authorities before someone gets killed or seriously injured.

A: Cleaning of gullies has been undertaken in the village and which has much improved the situation.

Q: Gulley cleaning needs to be done more than twice a year. e.g. I go out and risk the traffic to clear the grid on the one nearest me using a hand trowel to allow water to flow into the drain.

A: Scheduled cleaning of gullies takes place annually for "A" and "B" roads while "C" roads are attended to on a three year program. In rural areas, farming activities can create a situation where the grate becomes "Thatched" over with a mixture of silt and vegetable matter. While these situations are generally attended to by the Parish Steward we are grateful for the intervention of members of the public in clearing grates.

Q: What gutter cleaning machine does a town or parish council have to clear gutters? Or is this a Wiltshire Council Greening Initiative?

A: There is the "Discretionary Gully Service" for Parish and Town councils. this provides an opportunity for gullies that there is a local concern about but are not causing flooding on a High speed road or flooding to property, to be cleansed. Parish Clerks have recently been written to on this process.

Q: Water collects in the Potterne road wheel ruts due to the condition and camber of the road surface. So when vehicles move at their normal speed of 40mph, pedestrians have to use umbrellas held horizontally to protect themselves from spray. The road needs to be resurfaced and re profiled to allow proper drainage of water into the gully to cure this problem and also allow cyclists (those who don't have mountain bikes) to keep to the left hand side. That is from Queens Road (what3words reference) examiner.cello.risk to objecting.pushover.appraised by The Wicket, where road surface material has been thrown onto the pavements for maybe three years.

A: Even with minimal rutting in the wheel tracks, water can accumulate on the road surface, leading to spray generated by passing traffic. Although this factor is considered in road condition assessments, other types of defects typically take precedence when prioritizing road improvement projects.

Q: A lot of the drains in the town are blocked, when will this be dealt with?

A: We are presently reassessing the quantity of gullies documented in our inventory, with plans to finalize this review by the end of May. Subsequently, we will restructure our programming to improve efficiency, aiming to reduce the occurrence of blocked gullies. Furthermore, we have expanded the fleet of Vactor Units responsible for clearing these blockages from one to three.

Potholes

Q: After work at the top and along Nursted Road there are several potholes not filled in by the utility companies, even though they have filled in the trenches right next to them! Does anyone from the council inspect these works and liaise with the utility companies? And if so why is it that they are not filling and 'making good' these holes?

A: Utility companies have a responsibility for their reinstatements for a "maintenance" period following completion of their works. However, they do not have any responsibility for the condition of the surface outside of their reinstatement, which would remain the responsibility of the Council.

Q: Last year two tyres on my vehicle were damaged due to potholes hidden by water on roads near Devizes. As these tyres were run flat the damage necessitated two new tyres at a cost of over £300 each. Following the first incident on the 5th January on the Worton to Lavington road, I returned next day to photograph and measure the pothole to send the evidence to Wiltshire Council in the hope of receiving some compensation. After several weeks, and a follow up letter from me, they replied saying they would not consider this but I did receive a notice from Wiltshire Highways to say that the pothole had been repaired quite soon after my mishap! I did not bother to claim on the second pothole damage later in the year as I knew I would get the same result. Now, a year later, many more potholes have developed on local roads making driving both hazardous and worrying. One road in particular, from Lydeaway to Foxley Corner, has several large holes on either side and one has to drive a vehicle well out into the road to avoid tyre damage. This is possible when there is no oncoming traffic but if there is I will not proceed until I am able to avoid the potholes and any possible tyre damage. I am a Carer and Driver for my 93 year old husband and the present state of the roads causes me great concern. I am hoping that the extra Government money allocated to the Highways will soon be put to good use in repairing the worst of these potholes.

A The prevailing weather conditions have resulted in a rapidly increasing number of potholes, not just in Wiltshire, but across the country. Investment has been increased to address this situation and additional resources are in place undertaking reactive repairs.

Q: Why does WC need to send someone to inspect potholes to grade it's severity then send someone else to do a temporary repair, then a third person later to do a permanent repair.?Would it not save time and money to send out one vehicle with 2 people on board, one to inspect it and 1 to carry out the temp repair.? Surely this would improve efficiency and speed up the whole process. The person doing the inspection can still grade it and book it in for a permanent repair, but the site would only be visited twice instead of the current 3 occasions.

A: Our approach to handling pothole reports submitted via MyWilts involves inspecting and assessing each report based on our intervention levels outlined in the inspection manual. Upon identification of a defect, it is forwarded to our contractor for repair, who assigns an appropriate team for the task. In the past, we utilized a "Find and Fix" method involving highway inspectors. However, this approach faced challenges as any efficiency gained from reduced travel was offset by the need for suitable equipment and materials to address identified defects on-site.

Q To let you know that the no right turn sign outside Roses in Devizes, to advise drivers not to turn into Sidmouth Street from that angle is ignored regularly, it's not surprising as it's hardly visible amongst all the other signs and traffic lights at that junction, similarly the same happens at Trowbridge Rugby Club daily on my commute to work, despite a sign showing to use the roundabout to get back to the junction and AHEAD ONLY painted on the road! What can be done?

A The prohibition of right turn into Sidmouth Street is signed in accordance with legislation. Motorists ignoring the restriction are therefore in contravention for which the Police are the enforcement authority. In the longer term the Council has applied to the Department for Transport to undertake some enforcement of moving vehicle offences using ANPR cameras. If successful, this may be a location where the Council could take action.

Q Is there a good reason that road safety standards are worsening? Wiltshire Highways Safety Inspection Manual 2018 allows a larger pothole before intervention (P1 A Road >75mm deep and horizontal dimensions greater than 300 x 300mm) than the same standard in 2013 (P1 A Road >75mm deep and maximum dimension greater than 250 mm). I refer to documents available on your website.

A The Highways Inspection was reviewed following the publishing of the New Code of Practice, "Well Managed Highway Infrastructure". this dictates a risk based approach and there were a number of modifications made to reflect this in comparison to the old document.

Q Can you put further traffic calming in place in surrounding villages ? Can you please do something about the drainage? Where I lived in Scotland the farmers cleared ditches regularly but some parts of Coate Road do not have ditches and the potholes appear regularly.

A: The Council has an adopted process for dealing with local concerns, such as requests for traffic calming, and any other suggestions for change that you would wish to raise through the completion of a downloadable online form. The completed form needs to be endorsed by the relevant Town or Parish Council and they will then forward to the LHFIG for processing. Full details of the process followed, and the downloadable forms are available on our website at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council-democracy-area-boards.

New Housing

Q: What considerations will be looked at for the proposed 200 houses being built in the area. I would not like to think this would result in more traffic through a small village like Coate endangering life and causing further deterioration on the roads surrounding Coate village.

A: The site at Coate Road was granted planning permission at appeal in 2023. The inspector considered the site in detail and granted permission subject to a number of conditions. These include improvements to the canal towpath, improvements at the Hopton/London Road roundabout and highway works to secure the closure of a section of Coate Road and the provision of a Coate Road diversion.

Q: Are the roads in Devizes able to cope with all the new housing that is now being determined? About 600-700 currently going through approval or approved

A: All new housing and employment developments are currently considered in the context of the adopted Core Strategy and the supporting Devizes Transport Strategy. Within this context, each relevant development will need to consider its transport impact in the form of a Transport Assessment or Statement, depending upon scale, and in turn this will highlight the necessary mitigation. Wherever possible, development will be asked to contribute to infrastructure works identified in the Devizes Transport Strategy, which are designed to accommodate the wider strategic impacts of development growth in and around Devizes.

Q: Will additional parking be provided in Devizes to cope with the additional housing?

A: The council is reviewing its Parking Strategy as part of the development of its fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4). LTP4 Parking Strategy will support the Local Plan Review and will establish the parking needs in Devizes (and all of Wiltshire's towns) arising from the proposed development growth.

MyWilts

Q: Is there a good reason that Wiltshire Council are in the minority (2%) of councils that don't accept reports from third party reporting sites such as FixMyStreet? Such sites provide convenience and transparency to the public.

A: The Council has its own defect reporting system called My Wilts. This is available online and as a downloadable app.

Q: Why not encourage the use of Wha3Words to pinpoint a road issue location on the MyWilts App?

A: It is possible to add a "What Three Words" reference into the location description, The use of a "pin" on the MyWilts Mapping can provide an accurate location. It is acknowledged that the base mapping in MyWilts could be better and this is being considered for improvement to a more detailed product.

Q: I reported a pothole recently using MyWilts and did not have an ack that it had been done, only a Closed message. HOWEVER it was done very promptly.

A: We recognize that the current MyWilts platform lacks sufficient feedback mechanisms. Although there have been some improvements, we are actively planning significant changes later this year to address this issue comprehensively.

Q: Is there any chance of a mini roundabout at the junction of London Road and Quakers Road as it can be very difficult to get out of Quakers Road, particularly when London Road is busy but flowing quickly.

A: The existing at grade T junction is provided with a ghost island right turn lane and was installed as part of the housing development. The form of junction would have been derived after assessment as part of the Transport Assessment supporting the Planning Application. Conversion to a mini roundabout is not supported as the volume of flows would be unbalanced. This is likely to lead to an increase in collisions as southbound A361 traffic will only occasionally be required to give way to traffic emerging from Quakers Road.

Q: I would like to know if there is an appetite at Wiltshire Council to explore the concept of shared space instead of continuing with the traditional highway layout for roads that have substandard footways and lend themselves to designs that reduce the dominance of the motor vehicle.?The reason I am asking this now is that proposals are moving forward to redevelop the old community hospital in Devizes and with that redevelopment, an inevitable greater level of vehicle movements than hitherto. This is coupled with a continued prevalence of “rat - running” from New Park Street through Couch Lane and Commercial Road easterly to the A361 Sainsbury’s roundabout.

A: “Shared space’ describes an approach to the design of streets and public spaces, and is typified by street layouts that put people and vehicles in the same space. In 2018, the then Ministers for Planning and Transport wrote to all local authorities asking for shared space schemes to be ‘paused’ until further notice (largely due to concerns over inclusion). That advice has not been withdrawn, however creating places and spaces that are more pleasant to be in and to walk and cycle remains an ambition for the Council. We are anticipating the issue of Department for Transport’s revised “Manual for Streets” in the near future which we anticipate will give additional guidance around this issue.”

Q: I see that there is a proposal to reduce the speed limit on Horton Road from 50 mph to 40 mph along the stretch from Ferozashah Road past Marlborough Close. Is there any chance that this could be changed to 30 mph? I live in Wellington Drive and the speed of traffic passing our close is quite frightening. From Cannings Hill Garage towards Horton the road is straight (even though there is a roundabout) and some vehicles take advantage of this at all times of day and night .The pathway from Wellington Drive to the Swindon bus stop is very narrow and you take your life in your hands to reach the stop. It really is quite dangerous and now that Marlborough Close is soon to be occupied plus the estate opposite with children possibly attending Bishops Cannings School, it seems sensible to reduce the speed limit to 30 mph.

A:The proposed 40mph limit has been brought forward following a full assessment against DfT criteria. The criteria for a 30mph limit are not met. The requestor is encouraged to make comment through the formal TRO consultation page available on the website. The consultation on this proposal runs to the 18th March.

Q: One of your slides this evening mentioned enforcement for fly tipping but what about enforcement for wilful obstruction of public rights of way? There seems to be little will to do anything about this by WC. Some rights of way have been blocked for years. Prosecuting land owners just seems to be on the ‘too hard pile’, yet if a few were prosecuted I am sure word would soon get around the farming community and in the long run it would save your access officers a lot of work as landowners would be less inclined to deliberately obstruct them.

A: The council actively addresses instances where landowners obstruct public rights of way. Often, these issues are resolved through informal engagement with the landowner before resorting to legal measures. However, the council recognizes that formal actions can serve as a deterrent. Currently,

there is a review underway to assess the enforcement strategies across various services, including rights of way management. **Resurfacing**

Q: Who decides which roads get resurfaced when? If a road comes up on the maintenance schedule does someone actually check that work is actually required? Several roads including my own in Rowde have been resurfaced over the last few weeks, but there was nothing wrong with them in the first place and this exercise has been a total waste of money when there are other roads in the area in a far worse state where the time and money could have been better spent eg. London Road by the Crammer and Conscience Lane bth London Road and Rowde. Residents have experienced noise and inconvenience for no appreciable benefit, as the resulting surface (as bought up in the meeting by Chris Greenwood) is very poor indeed. Only half our close (Chestnut Close) has actually been resurfaced, the give way lines at the junction of Sands lane and Cock Road have not been reinstated creating a safety hazard and for the last 3 days we have had to endure considerable noise and mess whilst workmen remove the new tarmac and concrete around the drain covers. Does someone from WC actually inspect the works before paying the bill?

A: Our maintenance program is shaped by several factors. Technical surveys like the "Scanner" and "SCRIM" surveys lay the foundation, but on-site inspections are also conducted. Whenever feasible, we prioritize early interventions to prevent deterioration of the road surface. These interventions often involve techniques such as surface dressing or microasphalt application. Even if the current surface seems to be in good condition, such treatments are employed to preserve it, thus averting the need for more costly repairs in the future.

Q: What Criteria is used to determine which roads are resurfaced and what is the timescale?

A: The council employs various tools to evaluate and prioritize our maintenance program. These tools include the "Scanner" survey, which offers insights into the structural condition of roads, and "SCRIM" surveys, which assess skid resistance. However, engineers review this data to ensure its accuracy. The timeframe for this process largely hinges on the current surface condition. Presently, we have a maintenance program mapped out for the next seven years..

Q: I have a question about Victoria Road, where Needham House is located. When Needham House was built by Wiltshire Council a few years ago, local residents were told that after the building had been completed, Victoria Road would be resurfaced. This has never happened and the road is in a very poor state. Is it possible to confirm if this pledge to resurface the road is still active and if there are any plans to do so?

A: Victoria Road is in the 2024/25 surfacing programme for action.

Q: When will Longcroft Avenue be resurfaced?

A: Currently Longcroft Avenue does not feature on our forward program, however, the program is subject to review and can be modified to reflect changing road conditions.

Q:The issue of speed is of concern to Potterne Road dwellers, pedestrians and cyclists. Does the recent installation of a pair of cables close to Potterne Road/The Breach junction indicate that speed monitoring has taken place? If so can we see the time of day profile of speed and direction. Bearing in mind that the traffic lights in place will have an effect on results.

A: A traffic survey has been carried out recently on behalf of the Town Council from the 19th February for 7 days. The results of the survey will be available through the Town Council. There were no recorded roadworks in the vicinity of the survey.

Q: How much is spent on the roads in Devizes and how does this compare with other areas?"

The table below shows the major maintenance spend for Devizes Area Board along with three other Area Boards for comparison.

Area Board	Total Spend 23/24
Devizes	£ 777,566.29
Chippenham	£ 515,534.74
Melksham	£ 602,000.27
Trowbridge	£ 484,845.91
	£ 1,810,784.31

Q: Is Devizes ever likely to get a bypass?

A: Wiltshire Council's adopted planning policy, in the form of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, is silent on the provision of a bypass for Devizes, however it does set out the requirement and delivery of a Devizes Transport Strategy (hereafter 'The Strategy'). 'The Strategy', available on-line and published in September 2012, considered the deliverability of 'New Road Construction' and with costs calculated at the time amounting to £16.5 million, a bypass would require an equivalent delivery of circa. 5000+ dwellings in the town to fund its provision; this far exceeds the housing demand for the town. Notwithstanding this, given the date of completion of 'The Strategy', Wiltshire Council will consider all options to resolve congestion within Devizes, both against subsequent data collection and policy development. Such consideration will be made through the development and adoption of the emerging Local Transport Plan.

Q: The villages need better walking and cycling access to Devizes. What are the plans for this?

A: The council has produced a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Devizes which sets out the infrastructure that is needed to promote walking and cycling in Devizes. The scope of the Devizes LCWIP includes potential links to nearby villages. The council has also developed a Wiltshire wide LCWIP which identifies interurban walking and cycling routes in the county.

Q: What will be done to make black dog crossroads safer?

A: Proposals for Black Dog Crossroads have been developed and extensively discussed with the Parish Councils and Wiltshire Councillors for the area.

Q: Will Brickley lane be made one way? Also, a wider one way system through the town?

A: There are no plans to make Brickley Lane one way in operation. Suggestions for changes to other roads should be raised with the Town Council in the first instance who if supportive will then raise with the LHFIG for consideration.

Q: Can we have a mini roundabout at the junction of quakers road and London road please?

The existing at grade T junction is provided with a ghost island right turn lane and was installed as part of the housing development. The form of junction would have been derived after assessment as part of the Transport Assessment supporting the Planning Application. Conversion to a mini roundabout is not supported as the volume of flows would be unbalanced. This is likely to lead to an increase in collisions as southbound A361 traffic will only occasionally be required to give way to traffic emerging from Quakers Road.

Q: Is there ever any liaison between council grass cutting contractors and litter picking teams? When cutting of grass verges takes place, it is not uncommon to see the remains of litter shredded by the mowers, left along the verges. Is it not possible to coordinate the two sets of contractors, so that the litter is picked up just prior to mowing? As well as preventing the spreading and shredding of the litter, it would also reduce the risk of mowers being damaged and/or solid litter items, such as bottles, being thrown onto the carriageway by the machines.

A: We strive to synchronize these two procedures, but the difficulty lies in identifying all litter along untrimmed verges before mowing, as some litter may be concealed by vegetation. Furthermore, it's unfortunate that despite pre-mowing litter collection efforts, substantial amounts can accumulate between mowing and collection. Should litter issues persist after mowing, we will promptly address them by revisiting and collecting any remaining debris.