

HIGHWAYS REPORT 2025

It has been another difficult year for Brightling's roads. Further deterioration has left the Parish Council battling – along with similarly afflicted local parishes – for the scarce maintenance resources of East Sussex Council's Highways Department.

THE PARISH COUNCIL AND EAST SUSSEX HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT

Members of the Parish Council, along with County Councillor Eleanor Kirby-Green, meet representatives from the Highways Department at least once every six months to flag up new issues and to chase progress on previously reported trouble spots. We also have occasional site meetings to examine areas of particular concern. We had hopes that ES Highways' new contract with Balfour Beatty would lead to some improvement in performance and standards, but in general, this year's problems remain pretty much the same as those reported at last year's meeting:

DRAINS

The Head of Drainage at Highways tells us work in ongoing to optimise the drain cleaning cycles – meaning the drains under greatest pressure will be cleaned more frequently. Brightling has yet to see any benefit. It is a constant battle to get the drains throughout the village kept clear (most

are on a 2-year cycle). The problem, again, is largely down to resources, although we are persistent in reporting missed and inadequately cleared drains. Particularly troublesome are those at Darwell junction, Deer Park Road, Rectory Hill and stretches of Brightling Road.

Last June, we finally managed to get the Cackle Street drains between the Twelve Oaks triangle and Darwell Woods car park surveyed and jetted. This revealed damaged catch-pits, collapsed pipework and tree root blockages. The ensuing works that began in February, over-ran by two weeks on account of broken machinery, pipes buried deeper than anticipated – and the contractors having to limit working hours in order to allow the school buses through. Although the work was welcome, we all know how very inconvenient the road closure was. The good-and-bad news is that the next stretch up between the Twelve Oaks triangle and the junction with the Brightling Road is scheduled for the same treatment in the near future. We are investigating ways in which school buses can drop children without curtailing the contractors' working day.

One other achievement has been the new drains at the bottom of Penhurst Lane which has helped reduce surface water at the Darwell crossroads. We have Cllr Eleanor Kirby-Green to thank for her intervention in both these matters.

POTHOLES

The general state of the roads is worse than ever. The Parish Council is constantly reporting potholes, eroded carriageway edges, sunken drains - with varying degrees of success. The Highways Department specifies intervention criteria in relation to area and depth before making a repair. The local Highways Steward visits the reported pothole to assess, marking with white spray paint if the area is deemed bad enough. More often than not, the resulting repair is seen as a safety measure and is deemed temporary. But as we all know, the repairs are often shoddily done, last only a few weeks and all too frequently it is just one hole in a group of similar-sized ones that gets filled.

These quick-fix repairs are funded from the Highways Department's **Reactive Maintenance** revenue (money from council tax, business rates and government grants). The larger, more substantial surface repairs are funded from the Department's **Capital Funding** revenue. Capital investment is money borrowed by the Council or from government grants to invest in longer term strategic road maintenance with the aim of preventing deterioration. We will see how much of the Government's recently announced £1.6 billion road maintenance fund (to include £500 million for potholes) filters down to East Sussex and with what effect.

FINGER POSTS

We are fortunate in having traditional finger posts throughout the village. But they are expensive! Although the Parish Council gets some grant funding towards replacement, they require serious budgetary consideration, so it is worth doing all we can to keep them in good order. The cost of replacing the Twelve Oaks finger post has just come in at £1688.60 + vat. Cllr Croft recently announced an 'Adopt a Finger Post' initiative in The Messenger. The aim is for each finger post to acquire a 'guardian' – someone prepared to take a bucket and sponge out for an occasional spruce-up and to check whether there are signs of rot or damage. Do please consider adopting one near you! Contact cllr.caroline.croft@brightling-pc.gov.uk

WHITE LINES

We have been able to get some of our road markings renewed this year. The 'SLOW' markings on entry to the village at the end of Long Reach are particularly important for safety on the bends.

ROADWORK NOTIFICATION

Roadworks can be very frustrating but Sam, our Clerk, does a very good job at posting notices of forthcoming road works and closures on the village website. Sign up for alerts if you have not already done so on

<https://www.brightling.community>. You can also find out information yourself by subscribing to <https://one.network> where all manner of roadworks and transport notifications are available for both the present day and into the future.

FLY TIPPING

Fly tipping is becoming more frequent. The Parish Council does report problems when aware, but you can do this yourself by logging on to <https://www.rother.gov.uk> , clicking on the tab 'Report it' and following the on-line procedure.

OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP

The more often a problem is reported, the more likely it is to be fixed. The most effective way to report most highways problems is through East Sussex Highways website at <https://live.eastsussexhighways.com/report-problem> Just click on the relevant links and follow the procedure. Alternatively you can speak to a Customer Services Advisor on 0345 60 80 193. And of course, you can always raise any other highways problems by emailing cllr.judy.petty@brightling-pc.gov.uk