

April 2024 County Councillor Report

ROAD SIGN REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT

A total of 23 faded, damaged or missing road signs have been identified in the two Trimley villages. These will all be repaired or replaced. The signs are :

Two Give Way signs at the St Martins Green / High Road junction.

Two 30 mph signs at the western approach to Trimley St Martin on the High Road.

Two End of Weight Restriction signs on the single track road from Levington, plus a new End of Weight Restriction sign.

12 passing place signs in 7 lay bys on the single track road from Levington.

Two Cycle Route signs, one on High Road opposite Faulkeners Way, and one on Faulkeners Way opposite Punchard Way.

No Through Road sign at entrance to Thurmans Lane.

Vulnerable Pedestrians sign on High Road at St Martin / St Mary boundary.

4 of the signs will be funded by County Highways. The other 19 will be funded by me from a dedicated £3000 fund made available to each Councillor, plus £2487.58 from my Local Highways budget (total £5487.58).

ROAD AND FOOTPATH REPAIRS

Suffolk County Council have provided a £24.8 million fund for additional footpath repairs and resurfacing 100 roads within Suffolk. In my Division there will be resurfacing of Ascot Drive, the area around the Maidstone Road/ Hamilton Street junction, and sections of Kemsley Road, all in Walton.

4 sections of footpath will be repaired by a process called "slurry seal". This seals surface cracks and holes with aggregate and bitumen emulsion. The paths to be repaired are the full length of Faulkeners Way, Trimley High Road between Howlett Way roundabout and the first Faulkeners Way roundabout, the High Road / Faulkeners Way mini roundabout itself, and Walton High Road from Garrison Lane to Beatrice Avenue.

I have been negotiating for some time to get the overgrown footpath in Howlett Way (leading from the brick bus shelter) cut back and repaired. I have worked with Cabinet Members to explore possible funding from Highways, or the Local Transport Fund. However, the cost of this work, involving skirting back overgrown grass and repairing and reinstating a new footpath surface, could be into tens of thousands of pounds, and there is no available funds for this. I am extremely disappointed that this work has not been possible. However, Highways have assured me that this work would be included as a section 278 condition as part of any reserved matters planning application for housing on Howlett Way. This would require the developer to pay for this work as part of a permission.

COUNTY HIGHWAYS 2023 / 24

- 1 In the last financial year Highways have received 82% more referrals of defects or damage. That is an extra 18,000 referrals.
- 2 February 2024 was the fifth wettest February since 1836, flooding issues are up by 364% in the 5 months to February.
- 3 2117 emergency flooding issues have been dealt with (a 64% increase on last year).
- 4 15,000 potholes have been repaired in this financial year (a 34% increase year on year).
- 5 Dragon Patcher vehicles will be introduced, which repair potholes 5 times quicker. The number of crews doing pothole repairs has been increased by 70%.

SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

In January 2024 an Ofsted report expressed concerns over the County Council services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The County Council Cabinet has provided £4.4 million for 60 new staff for this area (£3.4 million for 46 full time Officers and £1 million for 14 temporary staff). This represents a 15% increase in staffing. A priority action plan has been sent to Ofsted and the CQC on 07 March.

SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES

On 01 March 2024 offers were made in response to 7867 applications for secondary school places in Suffolk for September 2024 entry. 93% (7312) received their first choice. 98% (7691) received one of their three choices. Parents have a right of appeal against these placements.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR STUART BIRD B.A.(HONS)

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