

NEEN SAVAGE HIGHWAYS REPORT 2024

I'm pleased to report that due to a persistent campaign waged by NSPC, continuous & sustained reporting of road issues by Councillors and Parishioners, a formal complaint, and even the involvement of our local MP, the road between Nash Crossroads and Detton Junction will be either overlaid or replaced where necessary in the 2nd week of June, so go a different way between 11th to the 14th. While this is good news as we were told it would not happen until April 25, the drainage issues that have caused the disintegration of the road have not been addressed. Andrew Keyland (Shropshire Council Highways) & Chris Haslam, our local surveyor are aware of the situation as we explained the problem with the Clump Cottage section in some detail at a meeting last July. They did send out their Jetting machine later in the year and there has been mention of a new Gully that may be added later if needed after the road has been repaired, however what exactly the new Gully would be connected to is still a pertinent question. At the July meeting we also discussed Goesland Hollow and again there was recognition that better drainage provision was needed, but vague details on what and when. I am hoping to clear some ditches and debris from Goesland and Reaside hollows with Antony Harman next week.

Meanwhile, although quite a bit of patching and potholes were done last Summer, and the overall state of the small roads was a bit better going into the winter, the flood in October did a lot of damage, so the roads have again taken a battering over the long wet winter, though although there are a lot of rough areas and edge damage, the pot hole machine has done a number of jobs on Catherton Rd, Green Lane, Shunesley Rd and Church Lane as well as just outside the Parish Hall. So, with the exception of Nethercott Rd and Picklebatch, there are fewer bad holes on the smaller roads. The larger roads however, have some dreadful holes in them especially the Six Ashes to Mawley Rd.

Six Ashes unfortunately should now be re-named Four Ashes as Highways have taken down 4 large Ash trees that were showing signs of Dieback. There are plans to replace the lost trees, possibly with Rowans to preserve the place name. Highways also took down a large Sycamore tree on Nethercott Rd which was in a precarious state.

For the last 5 years NSPC has been trying to access £10,700 of CIL money that was raised by taxing Local Development. The project to improve the drainage into and out of the Culvert by the Old School House was approved and although councillors had a brief meeting with Shropshire Council's Highway Consultants, WSP, back in 2020, nothing was heard from Highways or the CIL Programme Manager until July 2023 and only after numerous requests and pressure from senior managers, did we get word that WSP had done a very thorough report back in August 2021.

Although this report had presumably cost a lot of money to produce, somebody sat on it and did nothing for almost 2 years, by which time it's estimates and costings were out of date. The 25-page report proposed 6 possible courses of action including of course "do nothing" and "do the minimum" ranging from £1000 per annum to £30,000, the latter one involving re-profiling the road with a re-surfacing scope all the way to Chilton, installing 27 new Gullies and 8 Leaky Dams including 4 within the existing roadside ditches, though not replacing the

Culvert under the road which is the ACTUAL problem. Option 4 however was less ambitious, and although it also would not solve the main problem, it would facilitate easier maintenance, which in turn should ensure the Culvert worked better and flooding incidents would be reduced to all but the occasional extreme weather event. Parish Councillors met with Jon Eastwood of WSP soon after seeing the plans to support the implementation of Option 4 subject to a few minor adjustments and also obtained landowner consent for the work to go ahead.

Having waited so long for a definitive plan, we all hoped that the work would go ahead, however eventually in April we heard that due to the field access, the ditch could not be de-culverted as this was contrary to CIL Legal requirements. After years of effort and trying to get this project "over the line", to say we are disappointed would be a considerable understatement! We are hoping to find a way to resurrect the project by doing some of the work in-house, so that the rest might be completed as per the original plan. This may be possible, however when other parties refuse to communicate, delay, obstruct or withhold information, and fail to consult, do even basic checks, or obtain necessary permissions, we begin to think that Shirehall may have wasted the money already and there is none left with which to complete the project.

On a more positive note, some good work around the Parish has been done under the Environmental Maintenance Scheme. The pipe in the ditch down to Picklebatch has been installed with a headwall, gullies have been cleared and emptied down Church Lane, Baveney Lane and the Stottesdon Rd and numerous lengths of ditch have been cleared out. A new barrier has been made around the car park at Four Ashes, a new table installed and soon there will be some planters to brighten the area up. I wish to thank the numerous parishioners who have helped with Litter Picks and also others who clear around Gullies.

The Fix my Street App is still the best way of reporting road issues, so I encourage everyone to use it. The App is not perfect, nor Highways management of it, but even if sometimes it seems to reject your report or says it has been fixed, it is still worth posting a correction or update or even posting it again with slightly different wording.

The recent incidents at the Ford have raised awareness locally of an on-gong problem. While the most recent event would appear to be self-inflicted, the previous one could easily have turned into the tragedy of 2004. We have asked Highways to consider putting up signs, but have been put in the so called "Queue" for a response from the Highways (Traffic Engineering Dept). The response from Highways after 2004 was distinctly evasive ie. "We will not indicate anything that implies danger as that would produce a liability situation". NSPC have discussed this briefly, but would welcome any suggestions as to how some sort of "information" may be displayed that encourages appropriate decision-making by road users, to prevent any further incidents or fatalities.

Lastly, I would like to thank all those who have worked or volunteered on parish roads this year and to Simon Harris who has supported our efforts and sometimes has managed to cut a way through the Jungle of Bureaucracy that so hinders us.

MT 5/24