

Paul Gadd County Councillor Update

Saffron Walden Town Council – Planning and Transport Committee

8/8/24

[Note, items in italics are repeats from last month, still unresolved]

1. Flooding and drainage issues:

- a. *[South Road broken drain – slow progress unfortunately. Essex Highways finally closed the road so that their jetting crew could access the pipe. That discovered a blockage which they couldn't remove. Unhelpfully it is at a deep point and so they need to use a specialist contractor to dig out the road and access the pipe; I've chased a number of times and am told that the contractor should now be coming on 9 May. I'll report again once that visit has happened;] [The contractors did visit, but it seems that there are a mass of utility pipes around the drain pipe, and they managed to drill through a Virgin Media cable! They are trying to work out what to do next. On a vaguely positive note, the jetting seems to have made some difference and the flooding isn't as bad as it was]; Essex Highways are trying to think of a solution, but this is not going to be an easy one;*
- b. *Radwinter Rd / Thaxted Rd junction flooding - blocked gully cleared 25 July!*

2. LHP schemes:

- a. *we had another LHP meeting on 20/6/24, which was as dismal as the previous ones*
- b. *In terms of the LHP schemes that were due for delivery by 31/3/23 but weren't delivered:*
 - i. *the TRO for the market square regularisation – this should have been advertised but hasn't. I can't find out why not. As you know, Essex Highways have got it wrong twice already, and we are still waiting for a correct draft;*
 - ii. *On market square pedestrianisation, I am told that things are happening behind the scenes, and that David Sprunt is chasing, and in theory it is being revisited but despite repeated chasing I can't get any update.*
 - iii. *Great Chesterford to SW cycle path – the revised scheme has supposedly been prepared but no-one can explain why it hasn't been published yet. I chased again at the June LHP meeting and have chased again but still can't get it – this is the update I got on 1/7/24: "I have asked Sustrans to send the design again this morning, the person who carried out the Design work has since left Sustrans but I have emailed someone else over there. I understand we have paid them for the work they did."!*
 - iv. *Street clutter – the 2023/24 budget for removal of the signs seems to have been spent just on a plan to remove them (!). At the June LHP we agreed to re-fund it, and it is set for delivery in Q4 of this financial year, but it was also set for delivery in Q4 of the last financial year, so all I can do is hope for more success;*
- c. *[There has been no progress at all on the other scheme validations, which have now been awaited since October 2021, particularly the pedestrian crossings. We were told in March that a new system was being put in place to clear the backlog of validations, but so far officers still have been given no information as to what is proposed] [July 2024 update - I have chased again repeatedly, and there still seems to be no change.]*

- d. *Ross Close measures – as you know, the request for a zebra crossing was refused. I therefore instead applied for some traffic calming / chicane measures (on 14/11/23), but still no progress;*
 - e. [August 2024 update – I'm afraid I've made no progress on any of the above, despite another round of chasing – still no progress on validations or news from Sustrans]
 - f. *Borough Lane / Debden Rd junction – there have been repeated accidents here, although not necessarily with any common cause. I have asked the LHP to look at what can be done to improve the junction – it is “in validation”. I chase regularly. I'm also asking the Debden Rd residents to cut back their trees, as at least one of the accidents seems to be from drivers not spotting the red light; [August 2024 – some of the residents have done some cutting back, which has improved the situation. There has however been another crash, and some residents think there is an issue with the phasing of the lights so I've asked Essex Highways to check and see if there is an issue. David Sprunt has suggested that additional warning signs would be helpful, and that has been passed onto the LHP design team]*
3. Highways generally:
- a. *I put forward various potholes and loose drain covers for remedy in the Member Led Pothole Scheme, and in theory work should be starting, but I haven't seen any progress yet. [August 2024 – some have been done, but some are still outstanding, particularly the drain covers]*
4. ECC matters:
- a. Nothing to report