

Paul Gadd County Councillor Update

Saffron Walden Town Council –Planning and Transport Committee 10/7/25 and Council 14/7/25

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

1. Flooding and drainage issues:
 - a. Thaxted Rd – I believe that the main outstanding is for UDC to clear the drainage ditch, and I'm aware that UDC councillors are following up on this;
 - b. No other issues outstanding that I'm aware of;
2. LHP schemes. LHP matters:
 - a. As I reported before, we were told in mid June that the LHPs were required to meet before the end of June. I asked for this to be postponed as I was on holiday for the last 2 weeks of June and was told that this wasn't possible;
 - b. The LHP met on 25/6/25 while I was away. Prior to going on holiday, I put forward the schemes that I want prioritised but I am due to have a conversation on 8/7/25 to find out what was actually approved in relation to Saffron Walden;
 - c. It is not clear whether any further schemes will be permitted to be initiated now – I will try to find out but the papers for the 25/6/25 meeting say that the LHPs will not be performing any further validations, and that only validated schemes can be put forward;
 - d. While I was away (and indeed just 2 days before the LHP meeting), I was sent the results of a number of previous validation requests (mainly those submitted in late 2021) and updates on some other requests:
 - i. The street clutter review – as you know the Saffron Walden Initiative put forward an LHP request, I think in 2019, but certainly before my election, to remove redundant street furniture in Saffron Walden. I hate to think how much money Essex Highways have now wasted on this proposal. It was due to have been implemented last financial year, but they again failed to do so. The 25/6/25 LHP papers show a current estimated cost of £82,800 to remove approximately 30 redundant poles. Given the cost and the waste of money so far, and my lack of confidence in Essex Highways achieving anything, I've asked the LHP to drop the scheme;
 - ii. The Debden Rd / Borough Lane junction – the initial validation has suggested the need for a detailed study, which the LHP isn't allowed to fund this year;
 - iii. Newport Road crossing – a number of Beeches Close residents have requested a better crossing on Newport Road. A zebra crossing wouldn't come anywhere near to meeting the Essex Highways criteria, but Essex Highways have now suggested improvements to the dropped kerbs and crossing point. I'll hopefully discover more on my 8/7/25 call;
 - iv. Landscape View zebra crossing – Essex Highways have finally completed their validation and rejected it;
 - v. Thaxted Rd and Ashdon Rd zebra crossings – Essex Highways have finally completed their validations and rejected both, and proposed improved non-signalised crossings at both points. From the detailed objections, it is clear that Essex Highways have a fundamental objection to zebra crossings, and apparently to money being spent on pedestrian improvements generally – it's a depressing

reflection on Essex Highways' "car first" policy that of the £324,000 budget identified for the Uttlesford LHP this year, £324,000 is designated for traffic management schemes and £0 for each of cycling, pedestrian, passenger transport or public rights of way schemes. I will chase on both, but it may be better to accept the non-signalised proposals rather than continue to get nothing at all;

- vi. On the proposed pedestrian island in Borough Lane, Essex Highways say that Borough Lane improvements are in the UDC Local Plan Transport Study, and are using that as a reason to do nothing;
- vii. there is no mention anywhere of Ross Close or the proposed "pinch point". I've chased but suspect it will be rejected as the other requested pedestrian enhancements have been;

3. Highways generally:

a. I've forwarded to Georgia notifications from Essex Highways of:

- i. The introduction of the proposed 20mph limits on the Gladman housing development on Little Walden Rd (Home Pasture, Flatfield Road and Maylen Close);
- ii. The proposal "To temporarily close Byway 3, Saffron Walden, in the District of Uttlesford, for its entire length, from Butlers Lane, north to its junction with Byway 47, approximately 1650 metres. The closure is scheduled to commence on 28 July 2025 to 28 October 2025 or where appropriate signs are showing and weather permitting. The closure is required for the safety of the public and workforce while drainage and surfacing works are undertaken."

b. I have chased again on the Saffron Walden / Littlebury / Windmill Hill crumbling path, and been told that Essex Highways aren't proposing to do anything about footpaths in need of major repair, so I can't see that I can achieve anything on this for the foreseeable future

4. ECC matters: Local Government Reorganisation – we are due to have more updates later in July and I will update you if anything significant emerges.