

## Road Safety Update

At its November '23 meeting the parish council considered report [WPC.23.11.03 – Road Safety Update](#) and agreed (if sufficient volunteers could be recruited) to establish:

**1. A volunteer team focussed on flooding issues reporting to a Cllr to:**

- a) Identify areas prone to flooding by collating existing reports on SCC reporting tool and liaising with an officer with responsibility for flood avoidance at Suffolk County Council/Environment Agency
- b) Walking the length of water courses where flooding has occurred in the vicinity and (with an officer from SCC/EA) identifying any flow restrictions, so that SCC/EA can contact the landowner to instruct them to remove restrictions.
- c) Identify any grips at roadside that require clearing as part of a rolling programme and log on SCC Report a Problem. Liaise with clerk to escalate where no action is taken.
- d) (possibly) commission use of a drone to identify flooding issues.
- e) The group would ideally open up to individual greens, recruiting residents from each.

**2. A Community Speed Watch Group (at least six volunteers).**

The meeting also asked the clerk to look further into setting aside funds in future budgets for a number of "parish days" which could include low level work on highways could be completed by an appointed contractor (in a similar manner to our grounds maintenance days) e.g.

- a) cutting back vegetation around road signs
- b) cleaning road signs and identifying faded or damaged signs for replacement
- c) clearing out grips identified by volunteer team.
- d) The meeting asked the clerk to consider a coffee hub as a recruitment opportunity.

The budget approved for the current financial year includes funds set aside for:

- Highways – Road Safety £1000
- Contributions to upgrade Footpaths £ 500

Further to the upgrades to Footpath 25 which were completed in Autumn '23, the parish council included a budget of £500 towards footpaths improvements for the current year. It is likely that this will be put towards seed funding of a larger grant aided joint project that the Clerk and Roger Medley are working on developing with the Public Rights of Way team at Suffolk County Council.

### **VAS**

Cllr Kevin Grimes is supporting Cllr Couzens with this and has relocated the VAS fortnightly over the summer break – it is currently located by the School at Thorns Corner.

Despite the service of the VAS late last year, there have been ongoing issues with the smaller of the batteries, which is preventing download of the stats collected. The Clerk is following up with Westcotec.

### **Wickham Street, 40mph review.**

The clerk escalated this issue with the support of SC Cllr Bobby Bennett, and although considered again, the request for a reduction in the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph has been refused. The clerk has again asked SC Cllr Bobby Bennett to escalate this issue and

push for the much needed reduction in the speed limit. A letter has been drafted to be sent to the new MP for West Suffolk, copying in the Chief Executive and Leader of Suffolk County Council (Appendix A).

### **Community Speedwatch**

With sustained messaging over the summer we now have a team of seven local residents who have volunteered for Community Speedwatch. Initial contact has been made with all those who have expressed an interest.

A summary of the scheme is attached as **Appendix B**. We are in the process of registering the group through Community Speedwatch Online.

**Powers:** Local Government and Rating Act 1997, s.31 - Power to spend money on crime detection and prevention measures in the council's area.

**Funding:** No cost implications for Community Speedwatch have been identified.

### **Flooding in Wickhambrook**

Works to rod out the drains at Nunnery Green were completed in May '23. No further complaints were received with respect to flooding, until the storms in late October, when once again the drains were overwhelmed. This has been subsequently reported and the most recent update advised:

*The jetting and root cutting works carried out in March identified more serious problems downstream of the manhole near the junction.*

*Nunnery Green has been given the highest priority possible, Engineers have been commissioned to design drainage improvement scheme but drainage schemes take a long time. The investigations, design and works will not be completed before winter.*

*The length of time to deliver the work is not any reflection we don't take this case seriously. I can't stress enough how high priority this site has been given. We would like to deal with all cases of flooding immediately, but in recent years since 2019 we have experienced wet winters and more frequent heavy rainfall events. The last 12 months especially having been some of the wettest on record has swollen the number of flooding cases even more dramatically. We currently have a very long list of known flooding sites which far outstrips our resources. The full list is around 1200 sites, with over 150 of those, at least 18 months to 2 years' worth of works, being in the highest priority band. So we have no choice but to prioritise where to focus most of our efforts based upon the impact of the flood waters.*

There was also considerable flooding elsewhere in the parish, particularly at:

- Stradishall crossroads (restricting access into the village)
- Attleton Green
- Coltsfoot Green
- The Duddery

Much of the flooding seems to have been caused by blocked grips and drains. Suffolk County Council, the main statutory body responsible for flooding on roads, no longer clears grips or drains as part of a programme of maintenance, but prioritises work based on issues raised through its reporting tool. As the flooding in Wickhambrook has been across such a wide area, it is difficult for issues reported to reach the point where action is taken. Advice recently received from Suffolk County Council is inset below:

Hilary Workman  
Clerk and RFO  
September 2024

### **WPC.24.09.03: Road Safety Update**

*In February 2024, Suffolk CC contacted householders and business owners whose properties were directly impacted by internal flooding during Storm Babet (19-25 October 2023) to inform them about their eligibility for the DEFRA Property Flood Resilience Scheme.*

*Property owners may apply for up to £5000 (inc. VAT) per property to install measures that make their property more resilient to flooding. Before applying, they must have a survey conducted by a suitably qualified building surveyor and obtain independent quotes for the works they would like to have done. Up to £800 can be claimed towards survey costs, provided they proceed with some (or all) of the recommended works*

An update will be posted to the council's website and facebook page.