

Agenda item 245 – CORRESPONDENCE

a. Argos Hill closure

A267 Road Closure

As many will be aware Scotia Gas Networks Ltd (SGN) will be closing the A267 from the Bicycle Arms junction to the Yew Tree Lane Junction for 24 hours a day from Friday 13th February to 8th April for urgent repairs to the gas main. This is required because the gas main flooded after it was damaged and, although the water has been removed, the integrity of the main, which dates from the 1930s, can no longer be guaranteed. Nearly a mile of new main needs to be laid.

A representative of SGN came to our full council meeting on 9th February. The chair of Rotherfield Parish Council also attended as they too are worried about this. SGN listened to our concerns but, after a further meeting the following day, it does not appear that there is any viable option other than the road closure. SGN have assured us they will have the maximum number of people on site and will bring the latest most efficient equipment to get the work done as quickly as possible.

A diversion will be put in place, but it is more than 40 miles long and it is inevitable and some of the thousands of daily users of that road will try to use Rotherfield or Mayfield High Streets as alternative routes. We have asked for clear signage to deter HGVs from using our villages as short cuts, but it is unlikely to be completely will not be 100% effective.

Fletching Street (although restricted to 1 lane) and Coggins Mill Lane should be reopened by 13th February which should ease some issues and we, and Rotherfield Parish Council, will meet SGN weekly for updates, and to highlight issues and try to minimise the disruption.

We are under no illusion that, whatever mitigations we try to put in, this will cause significant inconvenience and frustration. We have seen recently what the stress of being stuck in traffic can do to people and I ask you all to try to be patient with other road users.

I appreciate that not everyone is on Facebook we will be asking the newsletter to publish updates but please share this info.

b. Wilderness Lane ditches

Email from resident

Dear Michael,

A few months ago I contacted East Sussex Highways to ask them to improve the ditches on Wilderness Lane (as they used to do on a fairly regular basis) in order to save further erosion to a rapidly declining road surface. They replied saying that this was not urgent and “would be dealt with in due course”. The current deluge of rain has made matters worse. To exacerbate the issue, a van or lorry has driven over the bank of a ditch outside our property resulting in the currently large volume of water being diverted from its usual course through our land into the stream below and now down the lane causing more even more damage.

We don't ask for country lanes to be pristine, but we do expect them to be serviceable and protected from erosion as much as possible. Neighbours are exasperated and I am fed up with digging their ditches out myself once they are dry enough to respond. Can you please bring pressure to bear on East Sussex to act sooner rather than later?

Response from Cllr Lunn

I will certainly ensure that the Parish Council raises this, however, I must inform you that any action by ESCC is likely to be slow on non-existent. We as a Parish Council have been raising multiple issues and to take the service has been poor, delayed or non-existent. This is partly due to the cutbacks from Central Government on local councils and where ESCC are having to borrow money to balance the budget. In effect they do not receive enough to manage current statutory services such as children services or adult social care.

I appreciate that is no excuse, but we are stuck as a lower tier authority, but we will certainly press them. You never know a miracle may occur.

Vicki – could you add to correspondence to Highways please.

Regards,

Michael Lunn
Chair
Hadlow Down Parish Council