

Briefing Report: Northamptonshire Highways

1. Background

1.1 Northants County Council took the decision to outsource provision of highway maintenance a number of years ago. When NNC was dissolved the highways contract was with Kier WSP and remained functioning as it had done under NCC as a county wide service.

1.2 The contract has now been re-tendered and the highways function is being split between the two unitary areas. These new arrangements are now coming into effect. Kier WSP has the new contract.

2. Impact of this change on the Parish Council

2.1 There will be a re-organisation of staff at Highways whilst the restructure takes place.

2.2 Changes in personnel may mean previously agreed works may get 'lost' or items may no longer get funded as previously agreed.

2.3 Email 21/07/22 from SB: "at present work is still progressing slowly, as there is a backlog from lockdown, plus we have the change of highway contract in September. Therefore unfortunately new works will not be progressed until after the new contract, and I can't say how quickly thereafter."

2.4 Potential for changing costs.

3. Outstanding issues

3.1 The following are works or issues raised with Northants Highways over the past 24 months that are not yet resolved or concluded:

- a. Belisha haloes (to improve visibility of zebra crossing) – (SB comment) I have a growing list of places for them. I'll ask for costs under the new contract and will have to take things from there.
- b. Village name plates/please drive slowly signs on Chelveston Road & Higham Road - (SB comment) will also go on the list for progress after September. I can't remember - was this something the parish council wanted to consider funding? If so then once we have costs it's in your hands. (JH) You quoted us £700.00 which we have said we would pay.
- c. Arris Lane – (SB Comment) it's difficult to know what to do here. I think the PC didn't want larger directional signs which is fair enough, and ideally they would be placed directly opposite the junction which isn't possible due to the car park entrance. Are the issues mainly with traffic from the right of drivers coming out of Arris Lane? It is difficult in either direction as you can't see what is coming at you. FYI the bowls club is seeking a meeting with the MP about this. I can see old Streetview shows there used to be a junction warning sign on a lamp column there. When the column was moved, the sign was not replaced - they assessed each sign and this one will have failed on two counts:
 1. Arris Lane is not adopted and signs should generally only indicate adopted roads
 2. it is in a 30mph speed limit, and we don't generally warn of junctions in 30s as speeds should be adequate - imagine how many warning signs there would be if we signed them all. I realise this one is in a bad place, but as it isn't an adopted road we are limited in what we can do.

Note: This indicates that the signs will not be going back up

Note, previous email suggested "Concealed entrance signs are only meant to be used temporarily for a construction site or something like that, in which case the builder would provide them. They are not a sign we are supposed to use

I wondered about putting up directional signs for the recreation ground/bowls club etc, and/or a warning sign about the junction. *Looking on Streetview they are already in situ, although going towards Raunds the junction warning sign has been removed.*

I can get that put back up at some point, it will at least warn drivers there is a side road. Again, it is not entirely correct because the side road is not adopted, but I think there is probably sufficient use to justify it.

I also wonder whether it might help if the finger posts to the recreation ground etc were made larger so drivers are more likely to see them. Warning signs prior to the zebra do disappear periodically behind the vegetation, but those signs are in a better position from that point of view.”

- d. Reinstatement of county verge on west bound carriageway on West Street – dealing with area maintenance manager (BW) on this issue. Looks like the verge has been revealed.
- e. Bollards on High Street – waiting on grant application. SB Comment: I have asked for the bollards to be installed and I was happy to pay for them. With the backlog and contract change I can't guess at when this might actually be done and I am sorry it has dragged on for so long. if you get a positive reply from OPFCC then all well and good.
- f. Query as to whether the path from Spencer Parade to Mansfield Street could be adopted into the highway register (Query raised 21/07/22)

4. Other issues of note

4.1 There is a need to monitor how the public rights of way are being maintained. JH was advised that path PH11 was cut on 30th June and when challenged via street doctor, was informed that it hadn't been done due to a 'computer error'. Work now complete.

4.2 Double yellow lines and white lines are more likely to be re-instated when the Parish Council request works. (This may change under the new contract.)

5. Action required by Parish Council

5.1 Request a schedule of when seasonal functions are likely to take place, e.g. frequency of weed spraying, grass cutting outside of the 30mph zone

5.2 Consider what action can be taken to press for a satisfactory resolution to the Arris Lane/Raunds Rd sight line problem.

5.3 Identify any other actions