

From: Alan Newman <alannewmancouncillor@btinternet.com>
Date: 2 February 2024 at 19:48:43 GMT
To: Paul West (SCC Councillor)
Subject: Re: Aldham road closure CR 436245

Dear Paul

Thank you for your update yesterday. Paul, I'm not sure that you do really appreciate the level of frustration and distress that this closure is causing our villagers because as I carefully read the points you make I conclude there is little fresh information of any substance or certainty.

You say that due to the severity of the collapse at The Street, a simple repair won't suffice and a full investigation, design and plan for delivery needs to be undertaken to ensure the road can safely open to all highway users....You comment further that the site is complex and requires work to understand ground conditions, what retaining structure is required, which is likely to be substantial given the level difference between the road and watercourse, and how it can be constructed.

The Collapse became apparent on the 23 November 2023 and I first wrote to you the 9th December to escalate the essential repairs. In that letter I told you that unfortunately, this is not a simple road repair as the foundations for the C class road have been washed away, meaning that a retaining structure will have to be designed and constructed to support the reconstructed highway. That was 8 weeks ago and you are now telling me what I told you then. This again is frustrating.

On the 8th January I asked if we could please have an urgent update on the progress with the repair? I also posed the following questions, has the collapsed road been the subject of engineering surveys, both geometric and soil condition? has the retaining structure been designed? has the construction method been agreed? and most importantly, has a date for commencement of the works been agreed? We are aware that these matters take time, but you have had time now. Please can we have answers?

There is no doubt in my mind that the vast majority of residents in Elmsett and Aldham have lost all confidence in the Highways service. For my part I am pleased to have your reassurance that the road will be repaired and opened as soon as possible but it would be extremely helpful to receive a copy of the works program with firm dates for each stage of the design and repair, surely you must have that now, bearing in mind the collapse was a full ten weeks ago.

I am sorry to have gone over some old ground again but we don't consider that our reasonable questions have been properly answered and it does demonstrate the feelings in the village

I look forward to an early reply
Alan Newman
Chairman Elmsett Parish Council.

On 1 Feb 2024, at 09:58, **Paul West (SCC Councillor)** wrote:

Dear Robert, Jonathan and Alan

I am writing to provide you with an update on the current road closure along The Street, Aldham following the recent verge and road collapse due to Storm Babet.

As you are aware, Suffolk Highways continues to progress these repairs as a priority and whilst I am unable to provide you a firm date on when these works are due to be delivered, I can provide you with some indicative timescales. It is hoped these repairs can be progressed and completed during early summer following investigative and design works. We understand the inconvenience being caused by the closure and will continue to look for opportunities to complete the works sooner.

Due to the severity of the collapse at The Street, a simple repair won't suffice and a full investigation, design and plan for delivery needs to be undertaken to ensure the road can safely open to all highway users.

The site is complex and requires work to understand ground conditions, what retaining structure is required, which is likely to be substantial given the level difference between the road and

watercourse, and how it can be constructed. Other considerations include working in or adjacent to a watercourse which will require environmental consents (for both the construction and the retaining structure) as well as the potential requirement for permissions for the use of private land during the construction of the retaining structure which will need to be negotiated and agreed with the landowner.

The road is at risk of further deterioration; therefore, a closure will need to remain in place until the works are completed to ensure the safety of road users. Other traffic management methods such as traffic lights were considered; however, due to the size of the collapse and the width of the road this isn't possible.

I appreciate this delay is causing frustration to the local community, which we apologise for, but I have been assured that this site is being actioned as a priority in order to reopen the road as soon as possible.

Additional signage was put up on 16 January.

Please be assured I am raising this issue at every meeting I am having with the relevant Director and the Head of Operational Highways to reflect its priority.

Paul West

Cabinet Member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding
Suffolk County Council