

**Minutes of Heatherside Ward Residents Meeting
14th November 2023 - Haven House**

Present

Committee members - Kirsty North, Ben Leyton, Caroline Hibberd, Katherine Sargent

Heatherside Borough Councillor - Bob Raikes

Heatherside County Councillor - Edward Hawkins

Approximately 20 local residents

Apologies received from Kim Leyton - HWRA Events officer, John Skipper - Borough Councillor, Louise Ashbery - Borough Councillor, Graham Tapper - ex Borough Councillor, Linda Tapper, Phil Green - Heatherside Tree Warden

Agenda Items

1) Welcome and Introductions

Kirsty welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Committee and the Councillors. She mentioned that it was the first time we had used the meeting room at Haven House and said that she felt it was a much more suitable venue for our meetings than either the twin rooms or the hall at Heatherside Community Centre. This was widely agreed.

2) Planned HWRA and Heatherside Events

Our next planned event is the lighting up of the Heatherside Christmas tree. Normally we hold an event for this on the last Sunday in November. This year however we have been notified that work is planned by Surrey County Council to lift and re-lay the uneven and broken paving slabs across the arcade area. This work is planned to start on the 20th November and our tree is normally delivered during the week. Members of the tree committee (Caroline Hibberd, Phil Green, Katherine Sargent) met with Edward Hawkins and staff from Surrey County Council (SCC) to discuss the feasibility of us being able to have a tree up in this area this year. The scope of the work was also discussed as we were concerned that the area would be unsafe to hold a gathering if the works to lift slabs had commenced. The SCC staff were able to reassure us that the tree can be accommodated. They also suggested that the way the works are being planned means the arcade will be open and safe for us to use for the light switch on event. At the moment we are finalising the details but hopefully the lights will be switched on on the 26th November. Members of Heatherside church, including Heather Valletta, the new minister, offered to support the event and provide PA equipment.

This year's Christmas tree was mostly funded by donations from local residents to HWRA via Just Giving and also from a collection among parents at the Heather Ridge Infant School

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Christmas plays last year. Heather Ridge have indicated that they will kindly do the same for us this year.

Kirsty mentioned that we have not held many events recently and that in the past we have held some quiz evenings which were good fundraisers. We had to cancel the last one due to lack of interest but may try this again in future.

One event which was popular this year was the Pumpkin Path which Ben and Kim Leyton organised with help from other volunteers on Halloween. Pumpkins and lanterns were placed along the Wellingtonia Avenue for families to enjoy during the evening.

The North Pole Post is also hopefully making a return this year. Started in lockdown when Santa visits weren't possible, this is a way for children to write to Santa and receive a personalised reply to their home. Ben and Kim Leyton are also the leads on this and along with a team of volunteers they bring a bit of magic to children across Heatherside in the run up to Christmas. More info to follow on this.

The Bookshed at the entrance to Heather Ridge School continues to thrive. We are grateful to the volunteers who look after this.

We are always interested to hear from anyone who has any ideas for other events they would like to see organised and we would be willing to support groups of volunteers who want to come together to arrange community events. We know that a big event on the field would be welcomed but we need people to come forward to volunteer and organise this.

Residents at the meeting mentioned that they feel we are not very well known about. When HWRA was first formed in 2015 we did try and leaflet houses but this wasn't very far reaching and is obviously a long time ago now. To do this again would require significant resources in terms of both money for printing and time to deliver leaflets. Our current main methods of reaching people are via Facebook, our website and our mailing list. However we are aware that not everyone uses these.

It was suggested that perhaps we could advertise ourselves at the Pop Up Coffee shop which runs on the third Saturday of the month and raises money for various charities. We could also advertise in the window of the bookshed.

Previously we had HWRA banners but one of these was damaged and we need to look to replace them and then find suitable locations to display them.

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A resident at the meeting also offered to put up posters for us to advertise the association. We are very grateful for this offer and will look to investigate possible sites for posters.

The Lib Dem team also explained that they deliver leaflets to new residents to the area and offered to include the HWRA contact details on these under the section for local amenities.

3) Heatherside Pillar Memorial Plaque

HWRA were approached by local groups including the Scouts and Girl Guides organisations to ask if it would be possible for some kind of memorial to those who fought and died in conflicts around the world to be placed on or close to the Heatherside Pillar. In previous years members of these groups have gathered and placed poppy wreaths at the base of the pillar on Remembrance Sunday but they feel it would be nice to have something specific to mark the sacrifices made.

Discussions at previous meetings had indicated support for this idea and Katherine Sargent agreed to investigate further to see what was needed.

Katherine explained that she had approached Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) to ask for permission to install a plaque on the pillar. While the pillar belongs to the community and is looked after by HWRA, it stands on SHBC land. SHBC replied that they did not think there would be any issue with doing this but wanted to know what the wording would be.

Katherine liaised with Emma, the lady who had initially approached us about the plaque. She indicated that she would like it to have the crests of the three services - the Army, Navy and RAF. She also suggested that names of those lost in war might be included.

Katherine discussed this with the other committee members, Len Williams - who instigated the erection of the pillar and also some of the members of the Christmas tree committee. The committee felt that military crests would be inappropriate for something which is not a war memorial. As a focal point of community remembrance the committee felt that it should be more inclusive and recognise the losses suffered across all communities as well as the military. Most of Heatherside was built after the two world wars and is not a military area. Therefore we feel it is important that everyone who wishes to remember someone here should feel that they are included. It was agreed that we would discuss the proposed wording with attendees at the next meeting to see what they felt about the proposal. Having discussed this, those attending were in agreement with the proposal for a non military memorial.

Unfortunately this meeting fell after Remembrance Sunday. We had hoped that we would be able to have the plaque installed on the pillar in 2023 but this was not to be. Heather, the

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minister at Heatherside Church reported that there was a well attended church service on Remembrance Sunday where members of the Guides and Scouts had paraded down Martindale Avenue from the junction with Cumberland Road to the Community centre.

It is proposed that the wording shall be something along the lines of

Lest we forget

The people of Heatherside remember all those who have given their lives in service to this country.

We welcome feedback on the proposed wording. Please let us have any comments in writing to heathersidewra@gmail.com by 31st Dec.

4) Heather Ridge Arcade and Planters

As mentioned earlier in the minutes, works to repair the uneven and broken paving slabs at Heather Ridge Arcade have finally been given the go ahead by Surrey County Council. Thanks to our County and Borough Councillors for their persistence in trying to make this happen for a number of years now. Hopefully the work will mean the arcade will soon be a safe place for residents to walk without fear of tripping or slipping. The trees in planters, which had caused issues due to their roots lifting the paving, have also been removed and replaced with shrubs. This also reduces the potential for slippery leaves in the autumn and has made the arcade more open and light.

The works team explained that the first phase of the work will be to clean the slabs and then they will be lifted and replaced in squares around 3m wide. Access to the shops, pub, pharmacy and the car park will be maintained at all times. The work is due to conclude at the end of the first week in January.

A local resident asked us to raise the issue of the closed off path by the pub. Barriers were erected here some time ago closing off the path to the public. The resident asked if the Cllrs could find out how much longer this closure will be in place. Although this path is on land belonging to the pub the resident believes that the barriers put in place are not health and safety compliant. They also believe that the path has been open to the public for so long (around 50 years) that it would now qualify as a Public Right of Way. This would mean the pub owners do not have the right to close it. Cllr Raikes said he knew Graham Tapper had been involved in discussions with the pub regarding this pathway prior to stepping down as a councillor. He said he would find out from Graham what the situation was. Andy Ward also explained that there is a new landlord at the pub and said he would ask him what was planned with regard to the path.

8) Anti Social Behaviour on Heatherside

HWRA had previously been contacted by residents complaining of anti-social behaviour around the estate in the evenings. At the last meeting, Cllr John Skipper explained that he had been talking to the Community Safety and Enforcement teams at SHBC to see if they could help reduce the number of incidents. The Police had also been involved. John intended to hold a meeting where residents could meet with local police officers, SHBC officers etc to try and better understand the issues and see if an action plan could be made to start improving the situation. Unfortunately this meeting had to be put on hold due to the election. One of the affected residents has contacted us again to ask if this meeting will be going ahead soon? As John was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting, Cllr Bob Raikes said he would talk to him and ask for an update on this. Once we have more information we will publicise this to residents.

Antisocial behaviour associated with Halloween was discussed. This year there were some incidents of youths damaging the pumpkins on Pumpkin Path. There were also reports of large groups hanging around the arcade and causing trouble in Sainsbury's. Sainsbury's were forced to close early because of the trouble.

Historically the Halloween Howler funfair was instigated as something to provide an alternative to mischief making on Halloween for local people. However the advertising for this means people now come from areas outside Heatherside to attend it. The prices at the fair have gone up enormously and it was suggested that the Howler is now actually responsible for more bored youngsters hanging around the area as they can only afford a few rides. HWRA asked Cllr Raikes to feed this back to SHBC. It was suggested that a more affordable alternative be found or that something like a wristband scheme could be explored which would keep people busy all evening.

The issue of persistent litter, especially smashed glass, on the field was raised. People feel that the litter is not being cleared as efficiently as it once was and Cllr Raikes said that there were issues with the contractor responsible. He explained that SHBC is aware of the issue and trying to get the contractor to fulfil their responsibilities more effectively.

Once again it was noted that the Police presence on Heatherside is virtually non-existent, people feel that more obvious patrols might help reduce the levels of antisocial behaviour.

9) Councillor Updates

Borough Councillor - Bob Raikes

Bob gave an update on behalf of all the Borough Councillors on a range of issues

Electric Vehicle Charging points

Four bays in the car park next to Sainsbury's have been marked out as electric vehicle charging bays but the date that the chargers will be installed is still not certain. The contractor working for Connected Kerb (which is in charge of the project and will run the chargers) have a shortage of staff that are qualified to connect to the grid. This is causing a delay with the project all over the borough. Following feedback to the council regarding concerns about local parking pressures only two of the EV bays will be for EVs only. The other two will be, for now, open to other cars. Blocks have been installed in the four bays to prevent collisions with the chargers but these have been installed incorrectly and will soon be replaced with bollards.

There was a discussion about the suitability of this car park for chargers of this type. The chargers will only be slow trickle feed chargers which would require a car to be parked in the space for several hours to receive a decent charge. Many residents feel that this isn't appropriate for what is mostly a short stay car park and that taking two or four spaces out of action for charging vehicles will cause even greater pressure than at present on local roads etc. Bob explained that the chargers are being installed to provide a charging place for residents who may not be able to install a charger at home due to lack of proximity to the car parks, houses on alleyways etc. Bob explained that unfortunately the contract for these works was all agreed under the previous council administration and cannot now be cancelled.

When the charger work is complete, the council will re-mark the car park, and mark the two spaces at the south end of the Community Centre car park for disabled use. New signs for the car park will be installed. The correct use of the disabled bays will be enforced. When that is all done, then parking enforcement will be started on the car park. Notice will be given to residents before enforcement and precise regulations will be discussed with councillors. Concerns were also raised as to whether there would be time limits on how long cars could park for and the potential impact on the residents of the flats, shop workers and preschool staff etc if only short stay use was permitted.

Football Pitches

The Councillors have been talking to SHBC about trying to improve the quality of the football pitches on the field. This issue is complicated by the timing of the end of the football season,

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the heavy use of the pitches for informal practice on non-match days, even during the summer, and by the complication of the pitches being in a public park.

In the longer term, there may be two new 3G pitches in the Borough if the development at Camberley Town FC goes ahead, and at a new sports centre that is planned for Mindenhurst.

Claire Funnell raised concerns regarding the way the pitches are maintained by the council contractors. She highlighted a recent incident where the pitches had been mown in November, after extremely heavy rain, resulting in rutting to the pitch from heavy machinery. This has left the pitches potentially unplayable. She asked Bob to raise this with SHBC.

There was also a brief discussion about outdoor leisure facilities in Surrey Heath in comparison with neighbouring areas.

Heather Ridge Arcade

John Skipper has been trying to get the ceiling of the Arcade sorted in the passageway area near Sainsbury's. Stage 1 was remedial work to the top surface to stop leakage, with Stage 2 being the repair of the ceiling. However, the stage 1 work has not stopped the leaks. John is trying to get action from the landlord but is getting no response from a newly appointed landlord's agent.

Amber Hill Play Area

Since the last meeting, the new playground in Amber Hill has been completed. (at a cost of £30,000).

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Fund Money

SHBC councillors have been collecting ideas for use of money from the CIL fund (which comes from developers such as Mindenhurst). One idea that had been suggested was for new benches for the Arcade. As this is a SCC Highways area, Cllr Edward Hawkins suggested that he could fund benches here if they were wanted. Some meeting attendees opposed this idea as they believe that this would encourage groups to gather here and the arcade would become a focal point for antisocial behaviour. This was cited as the reason why seating in this area had been removed in the past.

Heather Ridge School Screens

Bob Raikes has been working with the school to try to release a councillor grant to cover the repair of the sight-blocking screens on the fence of Heather Ridge School. The school advised that it had been unable to get funds from SCC. Cllr Edward Hawkins said that he may be able to take action on this. In the longer term, John and Bob have had meetings with the SHBC

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Greenspaces team and residents and it is possible that the hedges can be realigned to reduce the depth in places, while extending the bushes along the fence. That would mean no change to the green space, but solve the problem for the school. It may also provide some space for a basketball hoop area, but funding sources for that have not yet been identified.

County Councillor - Edward Hawkins

Edward gave an update on a range of Borough and County issues. He has provided a full report which can be seen at **APPENDIX A** at the end of the minutes.

Update on completed works

Edward has worked with Surrey County Council officers to get the following projects completed across Heatherside:

- Ravenscote School Crossing on Upper Chobham Road
- Ravenscote School – Feet First Walking Programme
- Borrowdale Gardens – Road Repairs
- Kendal Grove - Defect patching.
- Maultway (junction with Old Bisley Road) Carriageway Repairs
- Copped Hall Way – Re-supply Grit Bin for next 4 years
- Pendragon Way – Re-supply Grit Bin for next 4 years
- Martindale Avenue – Pre-patching for Pavement Works (to follow)
- Copped Hall Drive – Resurfaced
- Edgemoor Road – Resurfaced
- Martindale Avenue / Cumberland Road – Resurfaced
- Sight for Surrey – Financial Grant
- Mustard Seed Autism Hub – Financial Grant

Cumberland Road Bus Stop

Edward has heard back from the shelter contractor and they anticipate that the shelter in Cumberland Road will be replaced towards the end of November.

Surrey Connect: On Demand Bus Service

Edward explained about a new on on demand bus service which is provided by Surrey County Council, known as a Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) It is already up and running in other parts of Surrey and has proved to be very popular. He is pushing for Surrey Heath to be connected early in the next financial year.

He explained that the connect service uses accessible minibuses, with journey bookings made on a first come first served basis. The software groups customer demands together in real time.

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When the booking is made with the "leave at" feature, the software takes your requested time and compares it with other customer requests in the area.

It then links them up to create single journeys that are convenient for a group of users at once, scheduling the pickup time within a window of 10 minutes before or 10 minutes after the preferred booking time.

Alternatively, if you need to be at your destination for a specific time, such as a train departure, you can use the "arrive at" feature. It will then dynamically generate options for you that will get you there and ensure you are never late.

Fostering

Edward gave an update on the situation with fostering in Surrey. SCC is responsible for about 1,000 "Looked After Children" but has only about 400 Foster Families. Some of the remaining children are based outside the county and SCC are building accommodation for the older ones to give them a greater degree of independence and support as well as bring them back into the county. Surrey urgently needs more Foster Families. There is funding in place to help families support the children and give them a secure future. Edward encourages anyone who would like to get involved with fostering to get in touch with him for further information.

Heatherside Community Centre

Edward spoke about the Your Fund Surrey Large Community Projects fund. This is for large capital projects designed to provide wide community benefit. The process to obtain money is protracted with a staged application process often needing specialist input. Alongside the larger fund, there is Small Community Projects Fund. Each Surrey County Councillor has been given £50,000 to allocate in their local areas and they can decide which projects that can range from £1,000 to £50,000 are supported.

Edward has been liaising with the Management and Fund Raising Committees at the Heatherside Community Centre over their plans to improve the Centre. They are putting together a schedule of works which can be costed and presented to the overall committee as soon as possible. However no work can be carried out until the new lease has been agreed with Surrey Heath Borough Council and that may take some time to come about.

Heatherside Precinct

Edward feels that the area is much improved with the removal of the trees. The flats have also benefited from improved natural light. He explained that the replacement planters were only a first phase and that the works discussed earlier in the minutes would be starting on the 20th November with the work anticipated to take about 4 weeks. Working hours will be 08.00 to 16.00 weekdays and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturdays.

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Edward supports the call from Cllr John Skipper for resident's suggestions. Seats have always been a popular request and he will work with John to get the necessary approvals from SCC Highways if this is what residents want. He may also be able to help with this using the Small Community Projects Fund.

Works planned for 2024 / 2025

Edward has had a series of meetings and discussions with Surrey County Officers over works to his Division in the financial year 2024 / 2025. The following items for Heatherside have a budget allocated and some of the approvals are already in place. In a number of instances, advance notification has been given. At this stage he does not have timescales.

Old Bisley Road - Works in addition to the previously completed pedestrian crossing on Upper Chobham Road have been agreed. These include 20 mph/traffic calming/zebra crossing improvements on Old Bisley Road near to the school. These will go forward for design and scoping in 2024/25, with the plan for delivery in the 2024/25 financial year. He understands that the funding is in place.

This work is the third part of Edward's campaign for safety in and around schools of which the Grove School / Portsmouth Road Crossing is part two. This is scheduled to be delivered this financial year.

Maultway –Edward has been able to get agreement that resurfacing of the section from the new area before Red Road Roundabout to the back of No.34 Buttermere Drive will be carried out. This is the worst section on the road.

Upper Chobham Road - Surface Dressing to carriageway

Yockley Close - Surface Dressing to footpaths

Edward is grateful to his SCC colleagues for arranging funding for the works outlined above and to the various SCC Officers who have given him detailed support.

7) Next Meeting Date

Not discussed due to time pressure at the end of the meeting. The next meeting is likely to be in March though, date TBC.

11) AOB

Community Centre and Scout Hut Lease

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The Community Centre and Scout Hut leases with SHBC have now run out and due to an anomaly in renewing SHBC have indicated that the new leases will need to be negotiated with them with rent set at market rates. The previous contracts had very small rent rates and the new proposed levels could be extremely difficult for the Community Centre and Scouts to cover. Edward explained that he had found a lawyer who is helping with this and trying to get SHBC to lease them again at more reasonable rates. This may take some time to resolve.

Farnborough Airport Planning Application

Caroline Hibberd informed residents that a planning application has been made by the operators of Farnborough Airport to increase the number of flights permitted, especially at weekends. They are also trying to increase the size of planes allowed. While this isn't within Surrey Heath it may affect residents. More information on this and details of how to comment on the application can be found here [Farnborough airport planning application - Rushmoor Borough Council](#)

Goldney Road

A resident at the meeting asked Edward if a mirror might be installed at the top of Goldney Road to improve visibility for vehicles turning out of the road. At present it is very difficult to see if something is coming from the left and this makes it dangerous to turn out. Edward asked them to email him at SCC with further details.

Wellingtonia Avenue

Phil Green asked that the issue of the missing trees from Wellingtonia Avenue be raised again. For several years we have been promised a number of replacements for trees which have had to be removed but these have not yet been planted. Bob said he would ask John to chase this up again with SHBC.

Appendix A - Update from County Councillor Edward Hawkins

HWRA Meeting: 14th November 2023

Working with Surrey County Officers I am delighted to have been able to instigate the following activity in Heatherside over the past year

- Ravenscote School Crossing on Upper Chobham Road
- Ravenscote School – Feet First Walking Programme
- Borrowdale Gardens – Road Repairs
- Kendal Grove - Defect patching.
- Maultway (junction with Old Bisley Road) Carriageway Repairs
- Copped Hall Way – Re-supply Grit Bin for next 4 years
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- Sight for Surrey – Financial Grant
- Mustard Seed Autism Hub – Financial Grant

Cumberland Road Bus Stop – I have heard back from the shelter contractor and they anticipate that the shelter in Cumberland Road will be replaced towards the end of November.

Surrey Connect: On Demand Bus Service - This is an on demand bus service provided by Surrey County Council, known as a **Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT)**. – Catchy!! It is up and running in other parts of Surrey and has proved to be very popular. I am pushing for Surrey Heath to be connected early in the next financial year.

The connect service uses accessible minibuses, with journey bookings made on a first come first served basis. The software groups customer demands together in real time.

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Fostering: Surrey is responsible for about 1,000 "Looked After Children" but has only about 400 Foster Families. Some of the remaining children are based outside the county and we are building accommodation for the older ones to give them a greater degree of independence and support as well as bring them back into the county. We urgently need more Foster Families. There is funding in place to help families support the children and give them a secure future.

Heatherside Community Centre: Your Fund Surrey Large Community Projects is for large capital projects designed to provide wide community benefit. The process to obtain money is protracted (we are talking about public money) with a staged application process often needing specialist input. Alongside the larger fund, there is **Small Community Projects Fund**. Each Surrey County Councillor has been given £50,000 to allocate in their local areas and they can decide which projects that can range from £1,000 to £50,000 are supported.

I have for some time been liaising with the Management and Fund Raising Committees at the Heatherside Community Centre over their plans to improve the Centre. We are putting together a schedule of works which can be costed and presented to the overall committee as soon as possible. However no work can be carried out until the new lease has been agreed with Surrey Heath Borough Council and that may take some time to come about.

Heatherside Precinct: The area is much improved with the removal of the trees. The flats have also benefited from improved natural light. I always maintained that the planters were only a first phase.

Work to lift and relay the slabs and blocks in the pedestrian area and replace any broken ones is scheduled to start on 20th November with the work anticipated to take about 4 weeks. They will not be doing the slabs directly outside the shops as part of the demise of the shops which will benefit both the shops and provide pedestrian access. Working hours will be 08.00 to 16.00 weekdays and 08.00 to 13.00 on Saturdays.

There is an obvious clash with the placing of the Heatherside Christmas Tree and switching on the lights. On 14th November I met with the SCC Engineer and Contractor plus representatives of HWRA and agreed how the work can be progressed with the minimal amount of interruption to all.

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I support the call from Cllr John Skipper for resident's suggestions. Seats have always been a popular request and I will work with John to get the necessary approvals from SCC Highways. Also happy to help using the **Small Community Projects Fund**.

Works planned for 2024 / 2025

I have had a series of meetings and discussions with Surrey County Officers over works to my Division in the financial year 2024 / 2025. The following items for Heatherside have a budget allocated and some of the approvals are already in place. In a number of instances, advance notification has been given. At this stage I do not have timescales.

Old Bisley Road; I previously said when I was successful in getting the Ravenscote Junior School pedestrian crossing on the Upper Chobham Road installed, that this was just the first phase of what I wanted to achieve.

I was delighted that the Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience agreed that my proposal for 20mph/traffic calming/zebra crossing improvements on Old Bisley Road by the school will go forward for design and scoping in 2024/25, with the plan for delivery in the 2024/25 financial year. I understand that the funding is in place.

There is much work to be carried out over the next year and I will try to keep all informed as matters progress.

This work is the third part of my campaign for safety in and around schools of which the Grove School / Portsmouth Road Crossing is part two. This is scheduled to be delivered this financial year.

Maultway – I have been able to get agreement that resurfacing of the section from the new area before Red Road Roundabout to the back of No.34 Buttermere Drive will be carried out. This is the worst section on the road.

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In all instances I am very grateful to my County colleagues for arranging funding for the works outlined above and to the various SCC Officers who have given me detailed support.

Edward Hawkins (edward.hawkins@surreycc.gov.uk)