

APPENDIX 2 – GUESTLING PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 8th MARCH 2021

Thank you for your email and video. I am aware of the condition of the lanes around Three Oaks as Councillor Maynard has alerted me to the condition of these particular lanes as well as others in his Division on several occasions, and I have taken a look for myself. There can be no doubt they are not in good condition, and I have explained in my previous email of 24 February that we will carry out repairs to these lanes in the new financial year.

With regard to your comments about the local Highway Steward, I suggested James met with you as an exception and in response to your earlier email. I have utmost confidence in James and with all of our Highway Stewards; they have to operate in difficult circumstances knowing that the Council does not have the resources to repair everything they report. That said, the performance of our Stewards would be an operational matter between ESCC and our maintenance contractor Costain, and I am satisfied that if necessary Costain would take appropriate corrective action. James carries out his role professionally and has done what I would have expected of him by inspecting the lanes around Three Oaks, and across the rest of his patch, marking up those potholes and defects that meet the Council's intervention criteria. As such James has my full support.

I have explained that the County Council is not required by the Highways Act to repair every defect, to do so would be prohibitively expensive. But as well as marking up those potholes and defects that meet the Council's intervention criteria, James has also reported on many occasions the overall condition of these lanes and others. His reports, along with similar reports from all of our Stewards, are collated in our Asset Plan and prioritised by our highway engineers alongside all of the other roads across the county that are in similar condition. Unfortunately, the Council does not have the resources to repair every road, and can only afford to carry out maintenance to a small proportion of the 2000 miles of road in the county.

With regard to your comments about your site visit with James, I have acknowledged that the lanes in question are in need of substantive maintenance and I have explained what we are proposing in the new financial year. Clearly the condition of these roads has resulted in numerous potholes and it is fair to assume that some of the roads are deteriorating at such a rate that I suspect the 'new' potholes you and James discovered during your visit most probably weren't at intervention level when James last inspected them. James can only identify those defects that meet the Council's intervention criteria at the time he sees them. Thank you for your invitation to join the Parish Council meeting tonight. With over 100 parishes I don't normally attend a parish council meeting unless specifically requested to do by the Clerk or Chair of the Parish Council. Officers attend regular Strengthening Local Relationship meetings with parish councils and those would be the time for the Parish Council to raise any highway concerns. I am of course always available by email or telephone if the Parish Council has further concerns. So whilst I will not attend the Parish Council meeting tonight, I would be happy for the Clerk to read out my email at the Parish Council meeting if that is appropriate.

Kind regards,

Karl Taylor

Assistant Director Operations

Communities, Economy & Transport