

TEWIN PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Chairman's Report – April 2025

This year, I am writing about our local roads. Basically there are too many rural roads, there is too much to do and there is never going to be enough money to do it.

When they metaled the old cart tracks, labour was cheap, traffic was light, and they did not realise the scale of the problem they would leave for today, when costs are higher, and traffic is heavier.

Hertfordshire Highways is part of Hertfordshire County Council, but nowadays, most of the work is done by outside contractors, under contract to Highways. The trouble with contracts is that contractors stick to them. So that if time or money run out, they may not complete the work until a new contract is agreed. And if you ask "why did they not do this while they were here doing that", then the answer is that it was not in the contract.

There is an ongoing contract on the repair of potholes, but they only do the ones that have been reported, so please help by reporting them. But be aware that if it is not at least 50 mm deep, then it may not be classed as a pothole, even if it feels deeper when you drive over it. Some roads have a top layer of tarmac which is under 50 mm deep. If this should start to lift off then you might get a very rough road, but they do not qualify as potholes.

Pothole repairs have a reputation for being temporary, but proper works, such as the recent resurfacing of the Churchfield Road bridge, are done to a high standard.

Our County Councillor Ken Crofton has a Highways Locality Budget, which he can use to pay for specific works, or to pump-prime works funded by Highways. We have been lucky enough to get his help on several projects in Tewin in recent years. In addition, Tewin Parish Council paid for the warning signs either side of the Churchfield Road bridge and for an extra Give Way sign to improve safety at Hollybushes. Friends of Tewin paid for the new "Welcome to Tewin" signs.

Projects such as the cycle highway over the bridge in to Welwyn Garden City and the raised platforms at bus stops, are usually funded externally, so they do not come from the Highways budget, even though ultimately it is still your money being spent.

Highways gulleys are cleared out every year or so, but that only clears the silt from the gulleys. Clearing blockages in any pipework between gulleys is of low priority, so be prepared for more water on the road surface in wet weather.

Emergency works can close a road at very short notice, but the work to reinstate and re-open the road is not part of the emergency, and may not proceed with the same urgency.

Highways have been assessing over 500 potential 20 mph zones, but none in Tewin as far as we know. In general, 20 mph zones are only installed where the road conditions already constrain the majority of traffic to that speed.

The 2025/26 Parish Precept is £43,500. The household charge is circa £50 pa Band D (£101 pa Band H).

My thanks go to the other members of the Parish Council, and the Parish Clerk for their help and support.

Thanks also go to our County Councillor Ken Crofton, our District Councillor Bob Deering, and to volunteers who help the Parish Council throughout the year. All Parish Councillors are unpaid volunteers and all Council business is decided by a majority vote. Parish Council documentation is on the Tewin Village website.

Keith St Pier, Chairman of Tewin Parish Council