

## **Report to: Helmdon Parish Council**

**Tabled on: 27 March 2024**

**Report author: Danny Moody**

**Report title: Highways Representative Report 2023/24**

1. This report covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. As the Parish Highways Representative, I and my trusty assistant (Pixie the dog) inspect most of the highway network and Rights of Way (RoW) network within the parish on a weekly basis. Every part of the network is inspected monthly.
2. In the report period I have made 20 FixMyStreet reports within the parish. Several others have been made outside the parish, mainly related to the B4525 and the wider RoW network, but these are not included in this report.
3. The 20 reports fit into five categories: Signs (4), Drains (9), Highway Defects (2), Trees (3), and Footpaths (2). A report register with the details of each report is attached.
4. Despite rumour to the contrary, FixMyStreet is an effective and responsive system. The average time from logging a report to it being investigated by West Northamptonshire Highways (WNH) was 3 days. Once a report has been investigated it is either deemed worthy of "No action" or it is given a "Work scheduled in" date, typically 28 days or 26 weeks.
5. The average time between logging a report and it being marked "Fixed" was 28 days. For those reports scheduled for action within 26 weeks, the average time from logging a report to it being marked "Fixed" was 57 days (just over 8 weeks).
6. Whilst the system has been responsive, there are issues with it. One blocked drain was inspected and marked "No action required" because the inspector had inspected the wrong drain (despite very clear identification in the report). A tree report was marked "Fixed" when no work had been done at all. The chevron sign by Station Road Bridge was reinstalled after it was knocked down by a vehicle (great) but facing the wrong way (not great). And the potholes and broken road surface under the Grange Lane Tunnel was marked "No action" with WNH saying "*We can confirm that there are no immediate safety concerns relating to this issue that warrant repair however we will continue to monitor any further deterioration via routine safety inspections.*"
7. Overall, the condition of the highways in the parish is good. There are some places where there are minor highway defects, but they have not yet reached the reporting threshold (Category 1 – 3 intervention). These will continue to be monitored in 2024/25. The main concern within the parish is the drainage system, which frequently blocks. Two critical drains (the one at the bottom of Grange Lane and the one between Jeffs Bridge and the War Memorial) have been reported twice each within the report period. The main concern outside the parish is the B4525 which has deteriorated significantly in recent months. I invited Sam Simons, Highways Service Manager at West Northamptonshire Council to attend the Annual Village Meeting on 24 April 2024 where he will provide information on the management of the B4525 and outline what, if any, improvement plans there are.
8. The council is invited to ask any questions and to note the report.