

Severn Trent issues from 2017 to 2025

Minutes 20th February 2017.

Severn Trent to impose Road closures between March and June 2017 – Station Road and Birmingham Road to replace mains water pipe.

Minutes 20th March 2017

AMEY REPRESENTATIVE INVITED TO DISCUSS ROAD CLOSURE Councillors explained why the current road closure signs were not adequate. Large HGVs were being forced to reverse along Station Road, others had driven into Hoggrills End Lane and tried to turn round, road closed signage needs to be clear from the Swan to discourage vehicles travelling through Whitacre Heath and using Hoggrills End Lane. Amanda Hales and Simon Williams agreed revised signage for the 4 phases of severn trent works, this included businesses open as usual signage. It was agreed that the road closure at the bridge in Station Road will be maintained and not opened once work had passed Hoggrills End Lane. Amanda agreed to forward revised maps of signage to the clerk.

Minutes 17th April 2017

A lively debate regarding the current road closure due to Severn Trent replacing the mains water pipes. A meeting with Amey, the contractors, is scheduled for the following Wednesday (12th April). Delays have occurred due to a shorter length of pipe being delivered, bad weather, poor signage resulting in Highways stopping the work and issues with finding and avoiding the pipes they need to join into and other utilities in the road. The traffic congestion at furnace end crossroads is adding 45 minutes to regular journeys such as the school run. Residents are frustrated as there are only 2-4 guys working on the project, 5 days a week. HGVs are a problem as they ignore the signs resulting in them reversing back along Station Road. Residents are concerned that the regular use by HGVs damages the infrastructure and will weaken the tarmac used on the road repair on the trench down the middle of the road.

Notes from the meeting with Amey, WCC highways and members of the parish council on Wednesday 12th April 2017 at 9.00am in the Nether Whitacre Village Hall.

Amanda Hales, Simon Williams, Joe Gormley, Warren Simms, John Backfield from Amey, Barbara Hancox and Lindsay from WCC Highways joined Cllrs Woodward, Godwin, Rumble, Hemphill, Starkey and the clerk from the parish council to discuss the current Station Road closure. The chairman explained that residents and businesses are complaining about the road closure, the slow progress to date and the low level of activity of the Amey contractors. Councillors asked for more people on the job to enable the next trench to be opened ready for new piping while the renewal of the previous length is being carried out. Also 7 day week working to move the job along quicker. The operational team from Amey explained ... They work on one trench at a time to minimise the section of road they are working on. This is safer and minimises the access disruption to residents. The initial part of the job has moved slowly as they were unable to trace the other services. They have had to keep stopping and result to finding them by hand. Initially there were problems finding the correct main to connect to at the bridge, the maps supplied by Severn Trent are very old and misleading. Once identified it will be quicker, 300 metres per day will be covered when they can use the top cutter and once past the built-up area the progress will speed up more until they reach the railway cottages. Homes are not to be without water for more than 4 hours which slows them up. In addition to this the pipes

originally being used were in 6 and not 12 metre lengths creating delays with additional welding together of the pipes. They have carried out work on the bridge (near the railway yard) which will mean that a further road closure at the end of the planned period of works will not now be needed. The contractors advised that they are on schedule and Highways confirmed that if they do go over the planned period for the road closure, they will breach a section 74 resulting in a fine. Councillors asked what could be done to speed things up. Contractors explained that they are governed by the work time directive and not allowed to extend their daily working hours. They made the point that residents would not want work to commence on a Saturday and Sunday at 8.00am. Councillors explained that the road closure is frustrating to locals and businesses and didn't think this would be a problem. The contractors agreed to go back to their office and ask for backing to work at weekends. Letters will go out to all residents if this is agreed. Councillors complained that no advance warning signs had been erected and assured Amey this was the case when they appeared to disagree. The diverted traffic from Coleshill through to Furnace End crossroads is increasing a normal school run from 5 to 45mins. Highways were asked if temporary traffic lights could be considered but they advised this would not be possible as it could cause problems. Traffic lights are not used on road diversions. Foreign HGV drivers are missing the signs resulting in them reversing all along Station Road. Highways agreed to produce a universal sign showing a HGV with a cross through it. Drivers are deliberately driving through the road closed signs in case they can get through. Highways said chicanes had been considered but with all the junctions it would be dangerous to move vehicles across to the opposite side of the carriageway. It was agreed to put a date and 'apologies for any inconvenience caused' on the sign on Coton Road close to the A4097 to stop drivers coming down to investigate. Highways also agreed to replace the 'businesses open as usual' sign at the swan pub. **Councillors asked Highways to consider allowing the new footway to be dug up to allow new supplies to those homes affected on Station Road otherwise the road will need closing again in 5 years time for those houses to be connected to the new mains.** The final discussion was around the planned road closure once the works had progressed past Hoggrills End Bridge. The road closure will be removed from the Bridge and reinstated at Hoggrills End Bridge allowing for access to Residents only.

THE PROPERTIES MENTIONED IN STATION ROAD HAVE NEVER BEEN CONNECTED.

Minutes 15th May 2017

Simon Williams and Amanda Hales from Amey updated the council on the progress of the contractors replacing the water pipe on Station Road. They confirmed that a gas main had been hit and agreed that progress had been slow. They advised that a trenching machine will be on site from Wednesday to work up to Hoggrills End Lane. At this point they will stop to pressure test and chlorinate. They will continue trenching and welding the pipe up to the village hall expecting to be there by 9th June. At this point they intend to stop the current work, leave the site and are proposing to reschedule the remainder of the works to start on 21st August, Birmingham Road and Station Road to Middle Lane. This is expected to take about 12 weeks and be finished before Christmas. This will need to be agreed with WCC highways. Councillors stressed that Hoggrills End Lane needs to be closed once the bridge is reopened to stop through traffic using the lanes. NO HGV signs need to be before the station road bridge as if they do come into the village there is nowhere for them to turn round. Contractors need to continue to leave a vehicle at the road closure to stop the barriers being moved for vehicles to go through. Large sign with a cross through it requested again to warn foreign drivers. Councillors reported damage to grass and drives, 234 and 236 Station Road from a Kango being dropped and vehicles

left running resulting in the exhausts burning the grass and a new tarmac drive has been deformed. Amanda took the details and asked to be made aware of any problems so they can arrange for repairs. Amey are to send a letter to all residents advising of the new schedule.

19th June 2017

Amey will be returning at the end of August to complete the renewal of the water main. We need to agree with Highways a way to protect our local lanes from vehicles using them to bypass the Station Road closure from the Village Hall to the Swan Bridge. Clerk to forward video evidence of 4 near misses on Dingle Lane, one including a bus and request highways to re-instate the physical barrier on Station Road at Watery Lane with road closed signs on Blythe Road junction, access to residents only. It was agreed that a physical barrier on Hoggrills End Bridge would cause issues with HGVs not being able to turn round if they are allowed into the village. Copy the email to all councillors, county councillor, Jane Pritchard and Craig Tracey.

Minutes 10th July 2017

Barbara Hancox of Highways wrote - Amey need to give us 3 months' notice of when they wish to return but they have as yet not done this, so cannot start in August. They are coming to our office 26th July to discuss their proposals. Once we have met with them, we will arrange a joint meeting with yourselves and their traffic management company so that we can discuss the details of what they are proposing before they are given permission to proceed. Severn Trent apologised for the way the project has been handled but did not respond to our question on the 10" pipe and no connection of houses –the clerk has asked again, suggest we ask Amey at the meeting if Severn Trent do not respond to a further request made by the clerk. Clerk to ask Highways for a date asap to ensure we have time to give 3 months' notice to close Hoggrills End Lane from through traffic.

18th September 2017

Barbara Hancox, Saskia Wearden and Lindsay from WCC. Mike Heelas and Brian Smith from Severn Trent and Terry Maley and Mat Mayling from Amey attended the meeting to discuss the closing of Station Road to enable the final phase of water mains upgrade. They are to start from the village hall on 30th October and hope to finish by 22nd December (8 weeks). They will be working a 6 day week. The upgrade to Birmingham Road will commence on 8th January 2018 latest, ideally, they will also have this part finished by 22nd December. A final piece of work will take place over a couple of days down by Station Stores where vehicles will be controlled by traffic lights. They plan to progress at 70 metres per week and cover a total of 550 metres. Letters will be written to all residents 4 weeks before the work starts, and road closure warning signs will be in place by 28th September. Particular attention to be paid to Coton Road and Blythe Road to stop motorists and HGVs entering the village. A request to close Hoggrills End Lane was denied as Highways explained it would be against the highway's regulations, the councillors explained that road users will undoubtedly use Hoggrills End Lane, Dingle Lane and Bakehouse Lane as a by-pass which will pose huge dangers to all road users. Water filled butts and harris fencing are to be used to create chicanes. It was proposed that a static welfare van be positioned on the village hall car park for residents to visit with any concerns. The chairman of the village hall committee to be approached for his agreement, in return Severn Trent offered a donation towards a community benefit and it was suggested that they may help towards a new gate for the village hall car park. Andy Jenns asked the clerk for the contact details of Mike

Heelas and Terry Maley, also Mike Heelas asked for the email address of the village hall chair, Clerk to contact Dave Williams to make him aware of all the plans

Minutes 16th October 2017

Clerk to meet with contractors on the first morning to discuss how to operate the residents parking within the village hall car park.

Minutes 20th November 2017

The contractors had said that railway cottage residents could park on Station Road on the area they had completed, therefore no car park access would be needed for residents. This put on hold our plans to find a chain for the gate with a combination lock in addition to the normal lock so either could release the chain. The roadway was not finished to plan and the contractors allowed parking leaving some residents locked in. A neighbour has keys as he is often turning off lights and helping out generally, he said he would let people out. The chairman of the village hall committee had said to Cllr Hemphill that he could see the mess Station Road was in and would allow parking, however the clerk received an email from him the following day saying he was annoyed that unauthorised parking had been allowed on the car park. Further problems arose from the caravans who had been told to access from Hoggrills End Lane, the clerk knew this was wrong as she had spoken to the contractors, so it was arranged for the bookings secretary to meet at the village hall car park and talk to the contractors. While they were there Cllr Hemphill joined us and said he was annoyed with the attitude of the village hall committee. The railway and the Tin Hut were allowing parking during this period; the village hall committee were being very unhelpful. The bookings secretary took offence and became upset, she later reported Cllr Hemphill to the Parish Council chairman and asked for an apology. The clerk said that Cllr Hemphill was not abusive or rude, didn't swear, just said it as it was, annoyed that the chairman and other members of the village hall committee had been so unhelpful during this difficult time. An apology was not forthcoming and not necessary. Numerous other problems have been reported on the road closure diversion, including the damaged gas and sewer pipes on the drive of The Dingle. The clerk is to write to Amey, Severn Trent and WCC Highways to ask for support in repairing the damage.

Minutes 11th December 2017

The drive of The Dingle, Dingle Lane is to be repaired by Severn Trent after hundreds of cars avoiding the road closure and driving over their drive had damaged the gas and sewer pipes. Road is now closed by the Swan, incorporating Birmingham Road. Station Road should be completely open by 22nd Dec. Maxine from the Railway was visited by Amey on Saturday but remained unhappy by the road closure. They promised to put signs down by Hoggrills End confirming that access is open to frontages and businesses as usual. Depends on which way customers are coming in to understand the effect the closure will have. Clerk to write to Amey and Severn Trent asking for their support in expediting a compensation payment. Councillors suggested we write to Amey once the contract is finished to thank this gang of guys who have been extremely helpful.

Wed 20th June 2018

Burst pipe in Station Road – water bubbling up for 6 days. Road being eaten away with water. Insecure road closures have meant thousands of cars have continued splashing through water making holes larger. Residents and businesses frustrated after suffering from the extended

road closure last year to have an improved pipeline. It became apparent the pressure in the pipe was too high and they needed to find a solution before they could repair. Took 7 days to repair.

Tues 7th February 2019

Complaint ref 2004037569 (junction with Hoggrills End Bridge) and 2004037587 (outside the Tin Hut) - 2 leaks on Station Road. Took a week to mend the leak outside the tin hut, Hoggrills End Bridge still waiting reinstatement. Advised the road would need to remain closed until Saturday 16th February. An hour later the road was fully reopened, however a team needed to come back to continue with an urgent repair, thankfully they introduced traffic lights. A small leak remained outside the Tin Hut. Frustrating to residents and businesses trying to organise their staff and make a living. Request for future traffic lights are used. Road closures are a nightmare as thousands of drivers' rat run through single track country lanes.

19th September 2019

Leak opposite 87 Station Road – still bubbling away on 27th November 2019. On checking one of the larger isolation valves is leaking and another road closure is required to excavate and repair the leak. Complaint ref. 2004469754 was raised.

8th December 2022

Water leak junction with Hoggrills End Lane needed fixing again and road was closed. Road closure signs were moved and cars continued to travel through. Advised repair was scheduled for 18th December – Disaster for the busiest time for local pubs! If drivers can pass on one carriageway can we have traffic lights. 16th December road remained closed. Plea from local businesses – Christmas parties being cancelled – 10 yard piece of work been a problem for nearly 2 weeks with hardly anyone working on it. They need the trade.

22nd-23rd February 2024 - Junction Hoggrills End Lane - An external flood in the road due to a crack in the main sewerage pipe, hole exposed for a week traffic lights in place while the dig took place.

24th February 2024

Email to Clare Flavel STW - I've been given your name by Sophie Wynne of WCC Flood Group. She tells me you are the STW contact for our area, so I hope we have the right person.

We are experiencing some considerable issues with the four transfer pumps which remove foul water from the area during storm and flood conditions which result in the pumps losing control of the waste removal or failing altogether. The most recent problem occurred on the 22nd February where all four units may have malfunctioned together (described as a power outage) causing serious sanitation issues and other discharge problems.

We need to understand the problems and are proposing to get a meeting together to discuss with yourselves how this situation arises and what are the options. Some initial thoughts are:

- Is this an overload issue connected to the high volumes of surface water present when these outages happen or is there another / additional root cause?
- Is the current design criteria adequate to ensure continued reliability with the increasing demands being placed on the system?

- What normal maintenance exercises are routinely carried out to reduce the risk of failures?
- Coton Road south also experienced flooding with sewerage almost entering the house.

29th February 2024

We had a visit earlier by a lady from STW about the recent sewer issues. I believe she had already been to the south end of the village.

We've described the problem and are going to send some video evidence of what happens here during these storm events. She has said that STW are going to conduct an investigation on the pipes and pumps looking for blockages and restraints and the overall condition of the system. We have told her we need to understand why these pump outages are happening and that we suspect there is more to it than simple power cuts (the EA pumps on the same network ran throughout the last event). She has promised to get back to us with a plan of what is going to happen.

7th March 2024

Since our last communication we have had a visit from Golghoty Walizida (STWA Coventry) last week and one of your operatives last Sunday 3rd March. We showed Golghoty the issue and provided video evidence - the guy who arrived on the Sunday said he had been told to examine the pumps and, I think, do a report on what is happening. We would like to discuss this.

Golghoty said that the pumps are a two-stage system where there is a main pump and a secondary assist unit if the level continues to rise. We have found with our surface water pumps that the point at which the secondary engages is critical in making sure the installation does not lose control of the rising water. Is this the case with the sewer pump?

If the level continues to rise, is it possible to contain the sewage in the pipes with an NRV system so it does not flow out into the road or surroundings?

I believe you were looking at Stand Alone back up power supply if the pumps cut out and we would like to know if this is available and whether it would help to solve the issue.

11th March 2024

Coton Road, Nether Whitacre will be closed between 10h of June 2024 and 14th of June 2024. 'Utility repair and maintenance' near the pump, Severn Trent.

25th May 2024 – Email to WCC

To Sophie Lynes WCC - I think you have seen the video of the sewage drain issues. On Wednesday there seemed to be distinct surges in the way this happened. The first was at 3:30am when we had a cloudburst, this flooded the road and there was water discharged from the manhole cover. As the rain subsided until about 8:00 am the discharge ceased but the rain then resumed heavily and within an hour the discharge started again, this continued into the afternoon when the rain diminished and slowly the sewage discharge ceased, and the road cleared.

- Are all or some of the pumps now under-performing and the system is becoming overwhelmed for some hours until the rain decreases, and the reduced capacity pumps can regain control. Or is the current design capacity now totally inadequate for these rain events anyway?
- Are there issues with the underground infrastructure (blockages or damage) which are contributing to this?
- STWA said they were investigating other causes beyond these issues, but we don't know their findings.
- Is there something else we haven't considered - you said the discharge at the manhole is unusual?

The silence from the water authority is deafening.

Many attempts to engage with STW have been made with no response. Flood risk manager from WCC is also trying to engage with them

28th April 2025 Junction Hoggrills End Lane - An external flood in the road due to a crack in the main sewerage pipe, hole exposed traffic lights in place while the dig took place.

21st May 2025

Sewerage leaks on Station Road. Tanker had been stationed outside the village hall for 2 weeks protected by traffic lights. Traffic chaos. No response to several emails to Catherine Berry, our catchment leader. A series of failed repairs meant the Tanker needed to pump out 24/7, local children were woken up at 2 and 4am. Operations stated the work would be finished by 28th May. 29th May, the tanker remains on site and continued until 6th June.

9th July 2025.

AND FINALLY With no warning Station Road was closed at approx. 4pm, just as rush hour comes into full flow. We are a busy commuter route, and it caused havoc in the locality with people rat running through single track country lanes, double trailer lorries reversing up the road, major accident with a transit and a parked flatbed truck. Operations inform us it is a supply issue on Station Road. Comm repair which is the branch of the main that requires a dig, this will be completed by 8pm with 2 way traffic introduced until 11th July.

11th July 2025

We are still here with a huge hole in the road, road closed and no traffic lights! WCC website saying water problem with traffic lights?? Latest email from WCC state An Inspection has taken place and further defects have been raised by the Inspector on site.

On speaking to STW, I am informed that their traffic Management Provider is on way to site to rectify the defect and separate team have also been sent to site to remove a kerbstone, which is claimed to have been fly tipped in the excavation.

I have received further assurances that this excavation will be fully reinstated, and the highway returned to normal use today. I am due to receive further feedback from STW at around 3pm. If there is any change in their plans, I will endeavour to communicate these to you.

It became clear by 4.00 pm that the road is going to remain closed despite assurances. We were left to chase for news and Severn Trent operations team confirmed that the permit had been extended until the end of the weekend, bearing in mind, the permit is for traffic lights. Due to a lack of resource in the area from a burst main (I have heard this before) the engineer was called away (he never arrived).

The road was finally opened on Tuesday 15th July following further intervention from WCC who issued a further 2hr defect to STW regarding the dangerous condition of their site, followed by revocation of the permit. The permit revocation does allow STW 24hr to make site safe and return the highway to normal use.

Monday 14th July, Severn Trent turned up again and installed traffic lights on the junction Middle Lane/Station Road. The leak in this spot has been repaired several times. WCC confirmed This particular permit had already been revoked due to the over running works on Station Road, Whitacre Heath. So, they do not have a permit for these temporary signals. I will contact STW now and direct them to remove their TM. They are still on-site 16th July.

11th July 2025 5.17pm

This problem is ongoing along with the constant smell of sewerage on Station Road South. A camera survey of all the system was carried out 12 months ago towards Station Stores, no report of the findings was shared with residents.

Whitacre Heath has been suffering for years now with Severn Trent issues and we would like to meet with management to improve services going forward.

The maintenance team report - The problems on Coton Road North are caused by Hydraulic overload when too much rain goes into the system and the sewers are unable to cope, they are unable do anything without changing the system, it is thought the problem is with the Victorian pipework and the amount of household water flushing into the drains. We have queried if the increase in numbers at The Cedars brings the level in the sewers higher and more ready to overflow during periods of prolonged rain. Coton Road North had sewage pipes in the 1970's which may be plastic or clay and Middle Lane the same - before that septic tanks. It sounds like the rest is a great deal older and wonder how it was connected.

I was advised by Severn Trent to take our concerns to the Consumer Council for Water. In our opinion residents should not suffer from sewage flooding their drives and being unable to flush toilets when we have prolonged periods of rain. Warwickshire County Council have also supported our complaint and forwarded details to the current catchment lead in STW, they confirmed water companies have a legal obligation to treat sewage in an area wherever it comes from and it is clearly their issue if they don't plan their infrastructure to support it. On another note, it is clear from our very recent dealings with the road closure, communication within Severn Trent and with WCC is extremely poor resulting in mixed messages causing further frustrations all round.

