

Road Wardens Schedule

The road wardens (RWS) feel that the PC has adopted a largely ‘hands off’ approach, leaving the running and decision making to the road wardens (and Nick Gillon in particular). However, they feel that the PC should undertake a strategic overview of the RWS and decide on priorities for the type of work they should undertake. This would help to future-proof the scheme as existing members leave and new ones are recruited.

The scope of their work is wide-ranging and includes, but is not limited to:

- Pothole repair or reporting to DCC
- Clearance of road drains and ditches
- Hedge trimming
- Footpath maintenance including clearance of vegetation to reduce the risk of slips and trips
- Road sign cleaning and repair

Much of the work the RWS carries out is reactive to issues raised by members of the local community, but a proactive rather than reactive approach is preferred where this is practicable. For example:

- Routine flood prevention activity in January and February
- Summer weed clearance of footpaths in the village

The focus should be on public health and safety and compliance with environmental standards with a planned maintenance schedule wherever possible. We would be very pleased to learn of any other areas of work that should be considered. Obviously, much of this work should fall to the county council to undertake, but the realities of a cash strapped council means that for much of the work, if the RWS do not do it, it is likely it will never be done. Here is a proposed schedule of work that the PC might wish to consider.

Potholes. The hot topic of the moment and the cause of most concern by road users in the parish. Many are simply a nuisance, but larger and deeper ones can cause damage to passing vehicles and are a danger to cyclists (particularly the area by Winscott Barton). The RWS are able to repair smaller potholes along the parish’s minor roads, but large areas of road damage, and potholes on the A377 should be reported to the county council via their [on-line portal](#). Reporting of potholes on minor roads can be made using the [PC system](#). These will be passed on to the RWS who will assess the area and either effect a repair or report to county council highways. Most new potholes appear during spells of prolonged wet weather particularly in winter.

Flood prevention. This is a vital work of the RWS. Much of the road damage that we see is a consequence of standing water on the roads and major floods can make some roads impassable. Regular checks and clearance of the road drains, gulleys and ditches

will help to prevent this, focussing on known areas of concern such as Camps Bridge, Langford Bridge and New Bridge. This work may be best undertaken by inspection starting in the early autumn and monitoring periodically through the winter.

Vegetation clearance. We cannot use herbicides to kill unwanted growth (although local landowners have done this) because of the environmental impact of these chemicals. So, clearance would have to be done by strimming, digging or manually pulling up weeds. It is unnecessary to clear all vegetation on footpaths, unless it poses a significant slip or trip risk. We may need to rely on residents to report issues of concern.

Sign cleaning and repairing. Road signs may become obscured because of overgrowth of surrounding vegetation or accumulation of dirt, and this work can be carried out by the RWS when safe to do so. The RWS have also carried out repairs to broken signposts.

Hedge trimming. It is the responsibility of landowners to cut back hedgerows that cause an obstruction to the highways or obscure the line of sight of vehicles emerging from side roads. In theory it should rarely be necessary for the RWS to carry out such work, but they may be called upon to remind landowners of their duty if county fail to do so. Work is best carried out in September to protect nesting birds in the hedgerows, unless there is a clear safety issue.

Parishioner reporting. We encourage the input of residents in highlighting issues of concern that the RWS might be able to help with. All matters should be reported via the PC on-line reporting system. Those who informally approach members of the RWS or parish councillors should be asked to use the formal reporting system.

Other work. The RWS have undertaken work on private land in the past when invited to do so (for example the road to Newton House). This can provide a useful source of income to the PC and would be carried out following an agreement between the PC and the RWS. There may also be works on public property where local residents are willing to make a financial contribution (e.g., Newcombes Lane).

Schedule of priorities

Winter (Dec-Feb)

1. Respond to emergency/urgent problems raised by residents
2. Road drain/gulley clearance, flood prevention
3. Pothole repairs

Spring (March-May)

1. Respond to emergency/urgent problems raised by residents
2. Clearance of vegetation overgrowth and debris, road sign cleaning/clearance
3. Road drain/gulley clearance, flood prevention
4. Pothole repairs

Summer (June -Aug)

1. Respond to emergency/urgent problems raised by residents
2. Clearance of vegetation overgrowth, road sign cleaning/clearance
3. Road drain/gulley inspection
4. Pothole repairs

Autumn (Sept – Nov)

1. Respond to emergency/urgent problems raised by residents
2. Clearance of vegetation overgrowth, hedge trimming
3. Road drain/gulley inspection and clearance, flood prevention
4. Pothole repairs

John Dean August 2025