



2012 WURA WINTER NEWSLETTER

WELCOMES AND UPLANDS ROAD ASSOCIATION

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Message from the Chairman

Clearly the main cause of current concern for residents and committee alike is the unfinished work to seal the surface of Welcomes Road having made a substantial investment in repairs to stabilise the road in 2010. It is unfortunate that the weather delayed work in the late Spring/early Summer and thus had to be rescheduled to September 2012 when, coincidentally, the contractor took delivery of a new seal and chip machine from its factory in France. There were some teething problems with the vehicle and allied to unfamiliarity with its operation led to the hasty reversal of the original plan to work down Welcomes Road from the Hayes Lane end. This threw the schedule advised to residents into chaos leading to some heated confrontations with several unsympathetic drivers. Also the window of necessary dry weather was too short which has led to the postponement of the work until next spring when the supplier (Colas) of the bitumastic seal used resumes delivery after the winter period when it is unsuitable for use.

It will not have escaped your notice that the new seal is failing in many places and almost certainly will continue to fail over the current winter. Thankfully we have a signed and verbal agreement with the contractor (as well as a 30% retention) that he will return in the spring complete the contract properly plus carry out repairs in the vicinity of Morven House in Uplands Road when the building work there is completed.

In the contractor's defence he was working under difficult circumstances together with an unexpectedly small window of favourable weather in unfamiliar circumstances and I would ask one and all to bear with us whilst we investigate the reasons for the current failure of the surface in many areas. The Engineer who wrote the report on the road has been asked back to investigate why so much of the road is failing now and whether the seal used was defective in terms of quality and/or application. We continue to liaise with the contractor on these issues in an effort to make sure the final result is acceptable.

Aside from all these problems we now have a contract with the Council's contractor Veolia to sweep the road three times a year with two taking place during the 'leaf fall' season. I was surprised to see that a resident at the lower end of Welcomes had blown the leaves from his/her driveway onto the road after the sweeper had passed—a rather senseless act I would suggest? Apart from inconveniencing road users, leaves also block drains with the inevitable consequences

It remains for me to thank the committee for their fortitude and support during a difficult 2012 and to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a less problematic 2013.

From the Treasurer's desk

WURA assets stand at £35,000 though about £23,000 of this is due to the contractor assuming the road is completed to our satisfaction.

The Chairman recently delivered 20 final demands for levy arrears but only one of these has so far borne fruit so there are still 19 residents in arrears. Only two of these are more than one year in arrears. Five of the total live in Kearton Close where residents have a contractual liability to pay only one guinea (£1.05 for the post decimalisation generation) although the majority pay £20.



Welcomes Road September 2012- seal and chip just down



Moments before the very first seal and chip

From the Secretary's desk

Since the last newsletter much of my time has been consumed dealing with the contractor we selected to seal and chip Welcomes Road as well as the many residents who emailed me about the road. Thank you for the feedback. I have included some of these emails in this Newsletter along with pictures of the road when it was first treated in September to what we have now. The latest pictures of the road show areas where the seal and chip has failed. These failures have been exacerbated by the damp conditions and severe flooding experienced since September when as one picture shows conditions were dry. This dry window did not last long as indicated in the Chairman's message.

The Engineer who did the report has emphasised to me that the chip and seal system requires quite a long period (3 months) of favourable weather and SLOW driving for the best result to emerge. Unfortunately speeding delivery vans, heavy lorries, and one or two drivers who have deliberately ripped off the surface have never given the road a chance to consolidate.

For those who expected a high quality tarmac to be laid given the area concerned of about 8800 square metres, at £35 per square metre, this would have cost about £300,000. Without a hefty increase in the road levy the chip and seal route is the only affordable one at about £7 per square metre before VAT. I have printed below the concluding paragraph from the Engineer's report. The current rate of failure of the seal suggests that further investigation is needed before it can be safely concluded that the resealing will be a long term success. Clearly the incessant rain is not helping.

One of the main points of the seal and chip process is the sealing of the road surface as over time tarmac dries out and crumbles allowing the ingress of water which in turn undermines the foundations of the road. The seal is there to slow down this process whilst the stone dressing is there to give traction and allow the road to come back into use with the minimum delay.

Sweeping off surplus stone is part of the normal process for seal and chip.

There is a divergence of opinion on whether or not to mark speed ramps. The Committee is trying to mark them as a temporary measure until they can be done properly in 2013. Ramps on 20mph roads do not appear to have to be marked under the Highways Act and if drivers stick to the speed limit the ramps are unlikely to cause any problems for drivers.

Extract from the Engineer's report

5 CONCLUSIONS

1. Surface dressing is an appropriate treatment which should extend the life of Welcomes Road by many years.
2. The market was tested by tender and a reasonable price arrived at.
3. Although the project endured many difficulties as a result of the constrained site, difficult traffic management and bad weather, it appears that the surface dressing applied to date is stable and should prove to be a long term success. It would have been preferable that the work had completed earlier in the season allowing the stone chippings to have penetrated and been anchored more deeply in the bitumen. Consequently, a very severe winter in 2012 could lead to more damage to the surface than should normally be expected.
4. The Contractor has given verbal assurances that it will return to site in May 2013 for approx 1 week to complete the project. This should be converted into a formal statement of the outstanding work and a commercial understanding reached as soon as possible. It is understood that the Contractor seeks an additional interim payment at this time – and this may be justified as it has completed a very large portion of the work.

25 October 2012

R.P.Jeffcoate. C.Eng. FICE FIMechE

Policy Guidelines for developments in the area

Whilst the draft document was approved at the 2012 AGM further feed back from residents afterwards suggested it might be wise to review the document again before putting it up on the web site.

At the AGM it was suggested by one resident that the issue of the Guidelines might have some legal implications for residents as well as people thinking of purchasing in the area but it is emphasised that the document will not be legally binding on any resident who can, within the planning laws, do what they wish with their property.

The intention of such a document was to try to maintain a wooded semi rural look to the area by minimising hard landscaping especially along the roadside.

GRIT BINS for location around 40-60 Welcomes Road

No location has been found for an extra grit bin. If you live in this zone and could offer a suitable location for a grit bin please contact the Chairman. He will then see if he can get one installed.



Day one—the first loads of 10mm basalt stone arrive and block Uplands Road- the new chip and seal lorry costing £150k in the background. The French trainer operator says lorry works best going up hill!



Seal and chip opposite Zig Zag Road September 2012

Erik Haar, Committee Member, inspects the new surface

So far so good!



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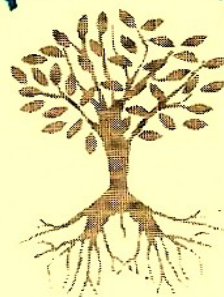
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Arnold Tarmac will be coming back in 2013 with a rubber tyred roller 3 times the weight of the one in this picture



Whoops- too much traction applied too soon

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WURA RESIDENTS DATA BASE: Please email your phone number and email address, if you have not given it to us, to weluplandsroads@aol.com. This helps us to keep you informed of developments and road works via group emails.

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