

**Eastfield Lane construction and road safety
update from Parish Council Chairman, Jim Donahue
03 February 2025**

Hi everyone,

I have provided an update on the situation on Eastfield Lane in the upcoming Winter Bulletin magazine, but this is an evolving situation that I know a number of residents are concerned about, so I am providing this update. You may have seen that Zephyr X, the company building the Cedar Lodge Care Home, tidied up the verges and cleaned the street before the Christmas break making for an improved situation over the holidays, but with heavy rain in the past week or two, street conditions have returned to a muddy, crowded and unsafe situation.

You are likely aware that there have been at least 8 or 9 different construction projects in progress on Eastfield Lane raising serious concerns about the risks to traffic and pedestrian safety, especially for parents and children using the lane. Apart from the Cedar Lodge Care Home work, these projects include a new large home at the end of the lane by the school with regular large construction vehicles coming and going. Unfortunately, no one can control when individual projects can start, and we seem to be in a situation of a perfect storm of an unprecedented number of projects on a small, narrow lane.

One positive note, after more than 10 years of planning discussions and deterioration of this historic village building, there should be light at the end of the tunnel. I have been in communication with the Programme Director of ZephyrX who manages the Cedar Lodge project, and they have provided the following update:

- **By the end of March – in less than two months:** Work on Cedar Lodge work should be largely complete and handed over from site contractor J Guest to ZephyrX. The building work should be visibly complete including front and rear landscaping and driveway and parking – so an end to most of the mud and a great reduction in vehicles.
- **April** – the focus will be on furnishing the building and readying it for residents, so there will still be delivery vehicles but hopefully most will be on site instead of parked in the road. The end of April is the likely time frame for them making the street repairs and verge repairs equivalent to the state it was prior to the start of the work as there should be no more contractor vehicles after this point.
- **May** – is when they expect the Care Home to become operational with the first residents.
- **Roof Gable Planning review** – Zephyr X hopes that the dispute on the roof gable size will be resolved in February, but this is dependent upon the SODC Planning process which ZephyrX is engaged in. The proposed change has been strongly objected to by the Parish Council twice now, and Zephyr X has cordoned off the area with scaffolding and tarp to allow them to complete the rest of the site with this bit outstanding.

As a Parish Council, we have limited control over the situation, but are doing what we can and I have been working in my personal capacity as Chairman with various parties to try to keep the area as safe as possible.

1. **Road surface improvements** - I have been working with OCC Highways to address urgent road surface damage, and they had repaired the 'ditch' on the south side of the lane in November although I see that it seems to have already deteriorated so we have raised this with OCC again. Both OCC and the Cedar Lodge contractor Zephyr X agree that the contractor is responsible for restoring the road and verges to their original state once work is complete, likely by the end of April once work is complete. Zephyr X has also agreed to clear

the drains in the vicinity that are already blocked despite being in November. Once the road is made good, OCC will assess whether a larger resurfacing makes sense.

2. **Contractor car parking** - I have asked Zephyr X if they can look at options to reduce the number of cars on the street. They are aiming to predominantly park only in front of the Cedar Lodge property and will seek to minimise parking on the street as more space becomes available on-site. They say they are trying to park in other locations, but with all the other work going on, it is really hard to know which vehicles belong to which project.

3. **Utilities works disruption** –

- Thankfully, the SGN utilities work that caused traffic delays in December still always allowed residents access as only half the width of the road was dug up at a time. I am told the build now has full gas and electricity connectivity to the mains.

- Whilst additional Thames Water work added to the congestion for a few days in November and January, the good news is that there are now two fully operational pumps at the Eastfield Lane sewage pumping station. In peak flooding periods both primary and back-up pumps can now be used to help keep sewage off the streets. Thank you, Cllr Diana Smith and the Flood Forum Team, for raising this with Thames Water!

4. **Communicating with the school** - I have also been updating the school to the generally dangerous situation and asking them to reinforce the message to parents to avoid driving on Eastfield Lane and taking extra care as pedestrians on the road for the next few months.

5. **Muddy Lane maintenance** - I participated in a Green Team working party to clear the leaves off Muddy Lane in December that will ensure the route to school is as clear as possible and protect the surface for the year to come. I hope you'll agree that the surface is remarkably free of puddles and mud for this time of year. Thanks to Neil Huntington and Jill Bradon for organising!

Kind regards,
Jim