

Highways Report. - Feb 2026

The weather is finally improving and the full extent of the road damage is now becoming apparent. The worst affected areas seem to be parts of North Cadbury and Yarlington, there is one particularly deep hole opposite Greenbank on Hearn road in Galhampton but generally Galhampton has been less affected.

Because of the weather the road contractors have either not been able to get out much to start repairs, or possibly are so overwhelmed with work that they can't get to the more minor roads. Certainly when I first started reporting via the Council's 'Report It' site it was common that all the jobs reported were allocated a sequential number. This month it is quite common to have 5-10 number gaps between items and the system pauses a lot, suggesting there are many reports flooding in.

I do not intend to itemise all the potholes that I have reported on as there are so many. Needless to say all the items on last month's schedule, apart from a few exceptions, are still outstanding. There are another 25 potholes on this month's list plus numerous holes along Ridgeway Lane and more holes will keep appearing.

Notably three holes appearing on the stretch of Sandbrook Lane approaching the Bridge over the Cam. Here the grass verge has collapsed into the stream, slightly undercutting the road edge and exposing the stone structures below. The bridge coping has cracked off on one side and the balustrade is now loose and is dangerous if leant against.

The balustrade on the other side has lost its top rail and the middle rail is coming away. This is reflection of how shoddy the balustrade was in the first place, it simply rotted the wood around the wood screws and fell apart.

Of particular note is a collapsed culvert under Sandbrook Lane near the junction with Corkscrew lane. I first reported this as a pothole, later Nick Fone kindly excavated the adjacent ditch in an effort to alleviate drainage. On further inspection we decided the hole was more likely caused by a collapsed culvert, this I reported to Highways. Nick then rodded the drain and this confirmed that the culvert was definitely blocked. I subsequently had a conversation with the Council who agreed that it had collapsed but, as they had no money in the budget, were only going to fill the hole with tarmac. I don't think this is going to be any kind of an acceptable solution and is indicative of the 'make do and mend' approach the council is adopting.

We have a not dissimilar problem in Stickleback Lane, Yarlington where, as many of you may be aware, the road floods very easily. A new culvert was discussed some years ago but this has fallen by the wayside probably due to budget considerations. These are both areas that are particularly prone to flooding and the council's inability to carry out necessary works is imperiling local properties.

I did manage to see a repair lorry carry out a hole fill recently. The Lorry has an extending boom projecting from the front, the air blower attached then blasts the water out of the hole. The lorry moves forward and tarmac is dropped, spread out and the tarmac is then rolled over. In my opinion the mix looks a bit granular and I am not sure enough hole pre-treatment is done; I shall watch how this holds up. With most of the other numerous holes along this stretch of road the repair is not lasting for any length of time at all.

I truly believe that the Council strategy of just filling is extremely short sighted. Many of the holes reported are merely extensions of previous repairs, often within a year.

I do wonder if a new approach should be investigated, are there alternative systems that could be adopted, particularly for wet conditions?

We are now in an era of seemingly more concentrated rainfall, higher loading vehicles, wider vehicles, particularly tractors, all of which are conspiring to break up our roads and verges to an alarming degree. These factors and the Council's financial problems are creating an almost perfect storm against having a decent reasonably navigable road network.

Chris Jose
Councillor, North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council