

Update: Ethelburt Avenue Road Improvement Group, Sept 2023

Activity over the last 12 Months:

Three working parties took place during the year as planned:

19th November, 18th February and 20th May.

The turnout was sufficient for all sessions, although there is still a need to identify new volunteers to provide refreshments. Repeated requests in communications notes sent round in advance of working parties hasn't resulted in anything more than a temporary solution. Suggestions welcome of how this can be resolved – the drinks are really an essential part of making the sessions work.

The verges at the bottom of Ethelburt Avenue are not maintained by the residents in the houses that face Stoneham Lane. Works are carried out by RIG to trim these verges. Brambles and shrubs have been cut back and treated to improve this area.

RIG were asked by the wider Residents Association to consider modifications to the road to allow tree planting. This would have narrowed the road and potentially caused friction between residents about parking. The RIG declined to progress the suggested works due to concerns that any such conflict could compromise its ability to maintain volunteer support for road repairs if the RIG were seen to be making such decisions.

Condition of Ethelburt Avenue

The road surface condition depends largely on the amount of intense rainfall that occurs. Over the last twelve months there was a lot of rain in late autumn that resulted in rapid deterioration, with a lot of work needed at the session in February.

A very dry spring resulted in minimal deterioration in advance of the May session and that meant the focus then was adding loose material to try to reduce the speed of surface water and therefore the rate of deterioration. That does appear to be effective, although a loose surface gives problems for two wheeled users and disabled access, which is a tricky balance to get right.

For all sessions the preferred repair material – red binding path gravel – has not been available locally in quantity, due to the quarry being restricted. Alternative materials do not have the same colour and if this situation remains, the character of the road would change. Material was partially available at one of the sessions. Availability for the forthcoming sessions is unclear.

Plans for Road Maintenance in 23/24

The usual three maintenance sessions are planned again for November, February and May.

There are options to add more drainage gullies which may help the condition of the road to hold up better. More effort needs to be put into getting a clear view of the RIG and the residents about this.

Dan Hopgood