

Between a solar eclipse and a sizable portion of the countryside catching fire, it's been a quiet and completely non-apocalyptic few weeks. As a result, I'll start by commending the work of our local fire crews, who have been out and about across East Anglia recently and who have done an unsurprisingly excellent job.

Sadly, I get the sense that these weather related events may well become more commonplace in the years ahead, so the time could be fast approaching for us to change some of our natural inclinations when we have extended periods of heat and dryness. All of which means that it might be time to cut back on some of the barbecues when summers are as hot and dry as this one has been. Sad times.

While a Harleston issue at heart, the recent closure of Wilderness Lane obviously affected anyone coming into the town from the surrounding villages too. That Norfolk County Council officers and the workmen at Cadent managed to get work completed a week earlier than expected was therefore an excellent outcome in the circumstances. Of course, the disruption caused by these works was huge and wide-ranging and there was a lot of work that went on behind the scenes to make sure that the disruption was minimised for people in and around Harleston.

For this reason, I must offer my personal thanks to South Norfolk Council's Waste Senior Operation Manager. This officer, when approached with the issue of failed bin collections on Wilderness Lane, immediately arranged for an additional collection the next day, which cleared the road and dealt with the issue quickly and efficiently. While there are examples of local government taking far too long to deal with a variety of residents problems, in this case, the officer, and his team did an excellent job.

For all these reasons it is unfortunate to report that the road closures in and around Harleston also won't be coming to an end just yet. Between the closure of Mendham Lane and Harleston's Thoroughfare in the coming weeks and months, I suspect there will be a lot more behind the scenes discussions and hopefully solutions will be provided that can minimise the disruption again for the people in our ward.

I have to say that, up to now, there has been a commendable spirit and generally positive reaction from the people of Harleston and the local villages in dealing with these long running, though unavoidable, disruptions. I'm not in any way surprised by this although it is always nice to have your positive assumptions reinforced particularly when they relate to people in your community. I can only hope that this will continue.

Hopefully, next month I can provide a more positive commentary. Until then, if you want my help with anything then please feel free to contact me at james.eddy@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk or visit me at my next councillor surgery at Harleston Information Plus on Saturday 26th September between 10am and 12. My hope, unsurprisingly is that it won't have anything to do with even more road closures, but I guess we'll have to wait and see about that!

All the best,
James