

PRESS RELEASE

Dethick Lea and Holloway Parish Council; September 19th 2023

Road closures near fourth anniversary at Holloway, Lea & Dethick

Dethick Lea and Holloway is a parish of three linked villages of around 450 households which sits on the ridge of millstone on the eastern bank of the Derwent south of Cromford and In the past four years it has been very badly affected by two separate landslips which have required the closure of two of the the three roads that enter the villages.

During that period the last pub has closed and has recently been put up for sale; the village shop has closed and its associated sub-Post Office is being kept running by volunteers; the two remaining businesses, a family butchers and bakers and a cafe have suffered reduced footfall. The bus services have had to be diverted and commuter and farm traffic has been disrupted. In short, Dethick, Lea and Holloway has been slowly strangled.

The first closure came in January 2020 when the western route into the village, a part of Lea Road between Lea Bridge and Cromford, subsided into the River Derwent.* It took three years for the road to be re-opened after the initial design collapsed and a new one prepared. Within a week of re-opening, there was a second landslip on Leashaw on the eastern approach to the village leading from Crich. This landslip threatened to damage the Derwent Valley Aqueduct, part of which ran under the road. This threatened the water supply to Derby, Leicester and Nottingham. Derbyshire County Council had to work within the parameters set by Severn Trent whose Edwardian pipeline was clearly a major priority. DCC's explanation of events is below. **

At a public meeting in April 2023, residents were assured that this second major impact on the community would likely be repaired and restored by late autumn this year and that by the time of the first anniversary of the landslip, there would be a design initiated by Severn Trent and approved by them that secured the water supply and enabled DCC as Highways Authority to get on and fulfil their responsibility in getting the road re-opened.

In July, Severn Trent, the third most indebted of the national water companies at £7.2bn, abruptly and unexpectedly, announced to DCC that they no longer had any intention of commissioning and contracting for a restoration of the landslip and promptly passed the buck back to DCC. We have tried to get to the bottom of why and when this decision was taken through Freedom of Information request to DCC, but our request has just recently been rejected on grounds of: *"unreasonable and manifestly oppressive burden on the authority in terms of cost and diversion of resources"*.

DCC have progressed very slowly, if at all, since Severn Trent's announcement. In September, the Parish Council was informed that, following feasibility studies, it *may* be possible to reopen the road to one-way traffic. But there is still no design for a restoration of the landslip, nor any indication at all of when such a design might appear, when it might be tendered, when work may begin, when the road might finally open to two-way traffic.

The village is coming close to the **fourth anniversary** of road closures and all the lengthy detours, shrinkage of passing trade and long term loss of regular customers that householders and the remaining businesses have had to endure. Chair of the Parish Council, Pat Ward, said: ***"The Parish Council is seeking answers as to why this unpardonable delay in attending to basic infrastructure repairs is taking so very long. It has sought an urgent meeting with the responsible DCC Cabinet Member. Whilst we await that meeting and its outcome we would welcome any on-site visit and discussions from interested media outlets so that the village can describe the situation and publicise it to all those other communities in Derbyshire who are also languishing under DCC's seeming inability to get their roads repaired."***

CONTACT

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* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-63827290#:~:text=Lea%20Road%20in%20Cromford%2C%20near,deemed%20safe%20for%20road%20users>.

** <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport-roads/roads-traffic/landslips/landslips.aspx>

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Current state of Leashaw road closure: removal of collapsed wall from the landslip.