



NEWS RELEASE

28 July 2026

REISSUE: Better Roads: council stepping up action to protect West Sussex roads from extreme weather

Please note this release has been reissued to update the captions in the editors notes.

West Sussex County Council is adapting the way it maintains the highways to reduce the impact of extreme weather on roads, potholes and drainage.

More frequent cold, wet winters followed by hot, dry summers can weaken road surfaces, and the council is working year-round to improve resilience and keep residents moving.

The effect of last winter's exceptionally heavy rainfall was felt across the highway network, with roads closed, in some cases for many days, due to standing flood water, and potholes forming where water had damaged road surfaces.

Since 1 April 2026, the council's highways teams have focused on repairing the damage caused by winter weather, including:

- More than 13,200 potholes repaired
- Over 34,000 drainage assets cleared
- 16,790sqm of carriageway patched
- Targeted works on roads most affected by winter conditions

Cllr Erika Woodhurst-Trueman, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, said: "Residents have told us they want cleaner, better-maintained streets, improved road conditions and visible action in their communities. As a new administration we are determined to listen and act on this and our teams are working throughout the year to actively maintain our roads, predict and prevent problems, innovate our approaches and respond to issues as they arise."

[Better Roads](#)

[Report a pothole online](#)

Tackling summer heat and making the most of opportunities

Prolonged high temperatures this summer and uninterrupted sunshine has caused some road surfaces to soften. As temperatures fall and surfaces re-harden, new weaknesses can develop, increasing the risk of potholes.

To combat this, the council is using gritters to spread granite material that helps protect the surface by reducing the amount of heat the road absorbs.

The gritters will be deployed throughout the summer and the routes fully inspected when temperatures drop, with any defects scheduled for repair.

The council is making the most of favourable weather conditions to accelerate planned maintenance work and has completed **50% (50 miles)** of this year's resurfacing programme. However, works must be paused when temperatures become too high for materials to set properly.

With dry conditions significantly reducing grass growth, teams have been temporarily redeployed to carry out:

- Sign cleaning
- Road marking improvements
- Vegetation clearance

A new countywide Street Scene Trial will soon launch, with dedicated teams carrying out activities including:

- Cutting back overhanging vegetation
- Cleaning road signs
- Clearing debris from drainage assets
- Minor repairs to street furniture

These activities directly respond to issues raised by residents and provide visible improvements in local communities.

Cllr Woodhurst-Trueman added: "Most of our investment is rightly focused on keeping the network safe and operational through inspections, drainage maintenance, winter service activities and highway repairs. However, we know that when signs are dirty, vegetation overhangs, crossings have a build-up of debris, our local streets look and feel unloved. So, we are stepping up our work in this area, delivering visible improvements to local streets."

Preparing now for next winter

The council is already preparing for the challenges of next winter.

New dedicated winter maintenance teams will carry out preventative drainage work at locations that have experienced problems in previous years, including:

- clearing leaves
- unblocking drains
- keeping drainage channels free flowing

Together with contractors, the council is ensuring it has the capacity needed to tackle flooding when severe weather occurs.

The Riparian Drainage Team is working with private landowners, town and parish councils and utility companies to ensure privately owned or riparian ditches, streams and other watercourses on non-council-owned land remain clear and free flowing. This helps prevent the highway drainage system from being overloaded and means water can drain away from roads more effectively.

Cllr Woodhurst-Trueman added: “I am pleased that our teams are taking the opportunity provided by an exceptionally hot and dry summer to reassign resources and tackle issues highlighted by our residents.

“Working with our contractors, we are building the capacity needed to tackle flooding and overall, I am confident we have a solid plan in place to reduce the impact a wet winter has on our roads and keep West Sussex residents moving.”

Notes to Editors:

Please find attached two images that you are welcome to use:

- Highways workers resurfacing a road
- Image of Cllr Erika Woodhurst-Trueman Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport





ENDS

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