Hougham-Without Parish Council

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To: Roger Gough

KCC leader of the Council

Leaders Office

County Hall

Maidstone

Kent

Thursday, 21st December 2023

**Re: The perilous state of road maintenance in and around West Hougham Dover**

Dear Mr Gough

 It is with some disappointment, anger and indeed frustration that the Hougham Without Parish Council write to you after suffering nearly 2 months of inaccessible roads in and out of West Hougham Village. We are aware of the enormous demands and restrictions on funds (albeit the Govt have recently announced extra funding for Councils in this respect) that have led to the chronically slow response to road repair and maintenance around Kent. But our village has been virtually cut off since storm Ciaran hit on the 4th of November by a series of potholes, floods, fallen tress and debris strewn roads.

Some of the main routes in and out of village, which incidentally are travelled by local parishioners going to and from work, school transportation, medical appts, food deliveries and vital home care for the elderly, have been virtually inaccessible since 4th Nov.

For example, Satmar Lane has been flooded with a large pool of water since 4th Nov due to a blocked drain, Eight Acres Road, has had repairs to some potholes that merely crumbled in less than 2 weeks (I’m not sure if this is poor workmanship from your officers?) and remains rubble strewn. Crooks Court Lane and Gravel Hill have a series of large potholes some so big that vehicles must drive on a grass embankment to simply pass. Lowslip rd has had several trees, branches and general vegetation strewn along both sides of the road making driving hazardous. Hogbrook Hill leading to Alkham has part of the road collapsed and subsided, which incidentally one of your highway officers (Kieran Greenaway) left a message on my phone on 30th Nov stating that the road was due to be repaired, but alas we are nearly a month later and no sign of repairs. On top of this Broadsole lane has a combination of both flooding and multiple potholes.

I am sure you have your hands full with these types of complaints currently but put simply we have no safe route in and out of village without encountering either flooding, rubble on the roads, multiple potholes and fallen vegetation and trees. We speak on behalf of our beleaguered parishioners in urging and encouraging you to seek some quick and satisfactory remedy to these dangerous road safety issues, otherwise I fear a more serious accident will occur. We know of several villagers who have already damaged vehicles in trying to navigate the above problems since 4th Nov.

We have cordial relationships with both the DDC Cllr Martin Hibbert (con)and your colleague KCC Cllr David Beeney (con), but despite our previous representations to Cllr Beeney he has not attended our Parish Council mtgs to discuss the above or been able to satisfactorily resolve any of the issues in a permanent fashion, thus our letter to yourself.

Many thanks for your time and attention in this matter, I am aware that in Kent major roads and highways will take priority, but parishioners in this village also need to go work, collect grocery shopping, drop off their children at school, attend medical appts and the like. The road maintenance in and out of village has really become quite intolerable for us all, so any help or assistance you can provide would be most welcome, thank you.

Best wishes

Hougham Without Parish Council

c/o Cathy Finnis