

'Our village is being left behind by roads bosses'

Officials say each area is treated the same

By George Ware

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COUNCIL bosses claim their village is being neglected after seeing no progress on nearly 20 highways problems.

Wakes Colne Parish Council says the village has been waiting years for some issues to be addressed by Essex Highways.

Chairman Dr Monica Taylor fears the village is being left behind as a number of pressing maintenance issues still need attention.

Issues along the A1124 through the village include overgrown pavements which the council claims haven't been tended to in nearly two and a half years.

Residents have also been asking for a zebra crossing across the busy road for 20 years.

Dr Taylor said: "Wakes Colne has nearly 20 long-term, ongoing highways issues, including signage, footway and general maintenance.

"Some reported issues, such as the overgrown and debris-strewn pavement along the busy A1124, have gone as long as two and a half years without attention.

"In order to increase public safety, there is a need for a zebra crossing over the A1124, and for traffic calming in Station Road which has become a rat run.

"Residents have been trying for this for 20 years, but there seems to be a lack of political and professional will and ability to work with us in the community, who know the issues, to make improvements.

"Often it feels as if, being rural



SIGN OF TIMES: The junction sign post at Inworth Lane has been left dilapidated

and on the county boundary, we miss out on attention to safety and repairs which would not be permitted or tolerated in urban areas."

Essex Highways denied the claims. A spokesman said: "Essex Highways deals with road repairs in Wakes Colne in exactly the same way we do elsewhere, whether urban or rural - we prioritise the issues with highest safety risk to the travelling public.

"All roads are regularly inspected and more serious issues are fixed. The Highway Rangers service has also done a lot of work to keep pavements clear in the area in recent years. Work to cut back some hedges near the road is pending.

"The request for a zebra crossing on the A1124 near Station

Road was assessed after we carried out a survey of traffic and pedestrian use there. The analysis showed results did not meet the level to justify replacing the current centre island with a zebra crossing.

"Traffic calming proposals in Station Road failed partly because not all residents were willing to offer land to provide a pavement and because expensive major work to the sloping banks would be needed."

Council infrastructure boss Kevin Bentley has met residents onsite to discuss their concerns.

The County Hall spokesman said: "Improvements to the 'gateway' entrance to the area were made and a vehicle-activated sign has been provided and set to lower speed as the average speed here was found to be 31.4mph."