

## **The History of the Lower Waites Lane Road Maintenance Association.**

The Lower Waites Lane Road Maintenance Association was formed in the year 2000. Up to that time, the road was a rough track with enormous potholes in places, making driving along it a slow and hazardous business. During the 1990s, there was an increasing feeling among the residents that the surface should be improved. Those at the start of Rockmead Road took the initiative and clubbed together to have the section tarmacked. Lower Waites Lane followed this example, and in the year 2000, much of the track was properly surfaced, and the Association formed with the intention of keeping the road "in the best condition possible." The cost was raised by voluntary contributions from each householder, and it is thought it exceeded £30,000 in total.

By 2008, Primrose Hill and Briar Close had also been tarmacked at the expense of the residents, and in 2009, thought was given to the very top and bottom of Lower Waites Lane, Cliff Way, Sea Road (west), Clinton Way and The Avenue. There was a realisation that not all of the proposed improvements could be carried out, but by 2010, those which were possible had been done.

A few residents still remember the state of the road before it was tarmacked, and their comments can be found below.

One resident has "lived in Fairlight for over 30 years, initially in a property off a spine road of Lower Waites Lane, and all that time none of the roads were made up. Whilst living there, Lower Waites Lane was made up properly, and the improvement was great. Fairlight is a special place and while I do not want street lights I do think a decent road surface is an advantage."

Sally Watson, who has lived in Briar Close for 44 years, remembers viewing the property in 1976. She drove into Lower Waites Lane in her MG Midget car, her "pride and joy", and immediately found the potholes so bad that she had to park up in a layby just past Clinton Way, and walk down to Briar Close. Over time, she believes the road surface was responsible for a number of exhaust and suspension problems on her vehicles. Gill Golding also remembers seeing cars with mechanical faults – exhausts, tyres, etc. – not to mention the mud in the winter, and the dust flying around in the summer.

Leslie Kosmin has strong memories of what the road was like when he and his wife, Ruth, first came to Fairlight in 1983. He recalls that the lane was little more than a rough farm track, and none of the annual repairs carried out by volunteers ever lasted for very long. When they came to view their house, the road looked so worrying that they parked their car in Broadway, and like Gill Golding, they remember the many punctures caused by the potholes. So bumpy was the road that their young boys, who invariably fell asleep in the back of the car on long journeys, would wake up as soon as the car turned into Lower Waites Lane.

It was, therefore, a great relief to them when the Association was formed. In Leslie's words, "The Association has been a tremendous success for more than twenty years and there is no doubt in my mind that everyone should be grateful for what we have achieved on a voluntary basis. As an occasional cyclist the surface now resembles that of a Wilton carpet compared with the horrors we experienced before the Association was established."

It is interesting to note that in the 1980s concern about the state of Lower Waites Lane had grown to such an extent that the Council even had plans to adopt the road and charge householders for the privilege. One particular matter for concern was the problem faced by ambulances in reaching houses along the Lane and the spur roads. The Council in fact imposed a charge of £500 on each new property built in that period, which sum was retained by the Council on account of the proposed adoption. As part of this proposal the road was to be widened, taking in part of the front gardens of many properties, and street lights were to be inserted. This idea was strongly opposed by local residents and was a further spur to the establishment of the Association.

Lower Waites Lane now has to deal with a great deal more traffic, not least with deliveries from supermarkets and online businesses. It is hard to believe that they would agree to negotiate the road if it were in a ruined or unsurfaced state.



**If the road is not maintained  
It will quickly deteriorate.**

Those of us who have more recently moved into the area will find it hard to visualise the track as it once was. It now requires constant maintenance to keep it in a good condition, and we hope you will agree that it is in everyone's interest to do so.

### **The Association now.**

As of April 2021 the Association continues to carry on maintaining the roads with a volunteer Committee at the reins. In early April a letter was sent out to all householders in Lower Waites Lane, Sea Road, Briar Close, Cliff Way, Primrose Hill, Clinton Way, Rockmead Road and The Avenue asking for the annual subscription of £30. The Committee had decided unanimously to increase the subscription from £25 to try and raise funds for the future as the lanes although in remarkably good condition considering the recent very wet winters will need some attention this summer. We are also very aware that in the fairly near future the lanes will require top dressing which will cost above £36,000 and we need to have a healthy bank balance.

Sadly in some recent years only about 50% of households have contributed to the Fund despite the fact that every household relies on the good standard of the lanes to drive or walk over, and

also for all delivery vans, the post and rubbish collection and , on occasion, the emergency services to get to our properties.

Fortunately this year commonsense has prevailed and there are many more people who have shown public spirit and have paid their annual contribution. That is a welcome change and bodes well for the future.

Can we please persuade you to contribute to our fund if you are a householder and have not contributed so far - so that we can continue to maintain the roads to their high standard?

We really need everyone who relies on the roads to contribute and share the expense.

If you would like to contact any of the Committee or even join us to monitor the state of the roads and decide how to allocate the Fund please contact [lowerwaiteslane@gmail.com](mailto:lowerwaiteslane@gmail.com) for more information.

Chairman: Chris Bunch  
Treasurer: Lyn Cooke  
Secretary: Sally Watson

**Committee members:**

Ian Barlow  
Sharon Jackson  
Leslie Kosmin  
David Thatcher  
Kevin LeGrand