



“A Statement from St Margaret’s At Cliffe Parish Council

We wish to express the community’s disappointment regarding delays in communication from KCC Highways, specifically the Highways Manager, concerning the multiple closures approved for every utility company – gas, water and electricity suppliers, which will impact Bay Hill in St Margaret’s Bay from January 13th to April 4th, 2025. Despite requesting details as early as September—when the works were originally planned to commence on November 4th—the necessary information was only provided by Cllr Baker on November 26th, and only after escalations that ultimately involved the office of the leader at KCC.

This delay significantly limited our ability to engage constructively on the impact of these works on residents and businesses. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned that additional works have been approved, extending the closures into April 2025 and compounding the disruption during a critical period for the local hospitality industry: the Easter season.

We must emphasise the proposed diversion for some of the daytime works is entirely impassable for four-wheeled vehicles, creating severe accessibility concerns. Additionally, much of the work is scheduled to take place overnight, just metres from residents' front doors, raising serious concerns about noise and disturbance.

This issue highlights a recurring problem: a lack of coordination and proactive communication that hampers effective disruption management. While KCC advises liaising directly with undertakers, as the overseeing authority, KCC surely must ensure timely communications to enable this and more importantly diversions on their network are practical.

Further, our inquiries have often gone unanswered, contrasting sharply with past experiences of straightforward and reliable communication with previous post holders in the role of Highways Manager. This lack of responsiveness undermines trust and cooperation.

In the spirit of collaboration, the Parish Council extended an invitation to Cllr Baker to join us for lunch in St Margaret’s Bay ahead of the planned works. This meeting would provide an opportunity to discuss the proposed diversion, explore practical solutions, and offer Cllr Baker a firsthand perspective on the unique challenges faced by a community like ours, with only two access roads to the wider community. Regrettably, despite the invitation being extended on December 3rd, it has yet to receive a response.

Our hope is this meeting could serve as a step towards re-establishing effective communication and ensuring such issues are better managed in the future.

We urge KCC Highways to address these concerns with the seriousness they deserve and take immediate steps to improve communication, coordination, and practical planning. Our community relies on effective collaboration to manage the challenges of our unique location, and we remain committed to working constructively towards solutions that prioritize the safety and accessibility of all residents and businesses in St Margaret’s. Thank you.”