

Joint Statement on the Closure of Wilderness Lane by Norfolk County Council Member for East Depwade Division, Cllr Joseph Kerrison and Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

On 15th July 2026, a meeting took place between Cllr Joseph Kerrison, Redenhall with Harleston Town Council, and representatives from utility company Cadent, TMO Highways (responsible for traffic management, including the provision of temporary traffic lights and signage), and Norfolk County Council (overseeing and co-ordinating all road works), regarding the closure of Wilderness Lane in Harleston from 27th July to 21st August 2026.

Gas pipes were installed in Harleston around forty or fifty years ago, and as you'd expect some of the pipes are suffering wear and tear and need to be updated in-line with the Health & Safety Executive's regulations, particularly where piping is close to properties. You may not know if the piping in your area is old, but you'll have noticed an increase in the number of gas leaks in the town as a result of the old pipes. Wilderness Lane is one such area where there has been a number of leaks both outside and inside properties.

To prevent future leaks, Cadent must replace the pipework on Wilderness Lane, in the section from the London Road junction, to Cranes Meadow.

The gas pipes are situated in the middle of the road meaning that traffic signals / partial closure is not possible, hence the need for a full closure to ensure the safety of both the workers and the public.

It should be noted that users of the Recreation Ground and Leisure Centre and residents who live in or off Titlow Road and Cranes Meadow will maintain unrestricted access to those services and their properties. Residents living in Wilderness Close will be able to come and go from their properties via Access Only. Harleston Sancroft Academy will also be reachable via Access Only and the works have importantly been scheduled during school holidays to minimise disruption to school traffic. Access will also be granted to the emergency services.

The aim of the meeting was to properly discuss the information around the road closure and to look at any way of mitigating the impact of the closure on the local economy and resident's livelihoods.

Whilst multiple diversion routes were looked at and scrutinised, it was found that out of two viable options, the proposed Advisory diversion via Starston Lane is the least harmful option to the town, road users and the businesses. Alternative solutions were not legally possible due to road weight or width restrictions / pinch points or crossing of private property. Road users who wish to cut through to Norwich or drivers of larger, heavier vehicles are encouraged to use the A143 and A140.

Cllr Kerrison is currently liaising with Transport Department at Norfolk County Council to ensure a suitable and convenient alternative bus route is created while the buses are unable to travel up Wilderness Lane. We will share updates as soon as a replacement route has been confirmed.

Cadent has assured us they have spoken to residents affected immediately by the closure. They are hosting a public information forum on Friday 24th July at 10am – 12pm on Car Park of Harleston Sancroft Academy to listen to the concerns of residents and businesses, and reassure them with the full information of these works.

Town Councillors will also be hosting their Drop-in surgery at Harleston Car Boot Sale on the Recreation Ground on Sunday 19th July 10am-12pm and will also be happy to answer any questions. All of those involved with the meeting on the 15th July agreed the importance of communicating with residents and businesses.

If anyone would like to raise further concern or seek clarification, please do not hesitate to contact either [Cllr Joseph Kerrison](#) or [Redenhall with Harleston Town Council](#) who are working closely together on matters relating to roadworks and surrounding subjects.

If you want to learn more about gas pipe replacement, please visit <https://cadentgas.com/upgrading-your-gas-pipes> Or call Cadent on 0800 151 2404.