

Sovereign Harbour Residents Association

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Letters

- We welcome your views and will publish them without fear or favour.
- We reserve a right of reply, and we welcome others' responses.
- We will not publish abusive, discriminatory or anonymous letters.
- Opinions expressed are those of the letter writer and may not reflect the opinions of SHRA. SHRA accepts no responsibility for them.

Please [click here to email us your letters](#) or post them or telephone us (see [Contacts page](#)). Note: Letters will not normally be published on the web site without us first confirming with you that this was your intention.

- [Gritting Pacific Drive - Response from ESCC Principal Highway Engineer](#)
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- [Harbour Heroes article in Waterlines, follow up and photo.](#)

17 Jan - Gritting Pacific Drive- letter from Richard Stevens, Principal Highway Engineer, East Sussex County Council - [click here to read it...](#)

11 Jan - Gritting Pacific Drive response to Robert Stanborough's letter from ESCC Cllr. David Elkin

Hi Robert,

Many thanks for your e-mail, I can only agree with your thoughts on the driving conditions on Pacific Drive. However, they are replicated many many times both across Eastbourne and the Country as a whole.

That said this issue was raised with me by Ian Weeks a very active member of SHRA between Christmas and New Year. I have done my best since to get some clarification of the situation.

Firstly you are probably aware that Pacific Drive has not been adopted by ESCC as currently it does not come up to the standard required for adoption; to do so would simply bring unnecessary cost to rate payers. Therefore the responsibility for the road lies with the developers. Sounds like I'm passing the buck but please be assured I'm not. Once Pacific is adopted it will be put on the Snow Route and will be gritted by ESCC.

On the adoption, during the last few days I have been assured by Eastbourne Borough Council that the remaining works have been carried out and that, subject



Photo from Bing Maps ©



to satisfactory inspection, adoption of Pacific is imminent. Once this has happened I will ensure that it's put on the Snow Route at EBC.

I'm very aware this does not help the situation today, but it is where we are currently at. And should prevent this being an ongoing problem.

Very Best Regards

Cllr David Elkin

Response from SHRA Chairman Jan Weeks

Although I'm sure Cllr. Elkin has done his best to help, the system has let us down and will continue to do so.

Eastbourne Borough Council and East Sussex County Council have consistently given in to the demands of the developers at Sovereign Harbour, and allowed them to dominate the agenda. Carillion should have been obliged to complete the remedial work on Pacific Drive almost two years ago, but it dragged its heels and was allowed to do so.

As Carillion still has responsibility for the road, surely the Highways Department should have required it to grit the road. If it wasn't done, the council should have done the work and recharged it, or taken the cost from the bond money it holds.

Cllr Elkin assures us that the remedial work has now been completed and adoption will take place, subject to inspection. However, in the current conditions, with the road covered in snow and ice, who knows when that will be.

Suffice to say, if the councils had done their jobs, Pacific Drive would have been adopted months ago and would already have been included in the Snow Route, Consequently, none of this would have been necessary.

Jan Weeks
Chairman, SHRA

10 Jan - email to SHRA from North Harbour resident Gordon Watson about the failure to grit Pacific Drive

Subject: Spinal Highways

I have noticed that Atlantic Drive seems to have been gritted and the buses are running (we saw 3 in the space of 10 minutes on Sunday morning - 10th Jan).

What do we in the North Harbour have to do to acquire equal status?? We certainly pay enough council tax.

There have been a number of incidents with cars sliding on the ice at the Jones Homes roundabout into the kerb and doing (on one occasion) substantial damage. The police had to attend and put up warning signs/cones.

What does it take? A serious accident?

Regards

Gordon Weston

09 Jan - Letter to SHRA about icy Pacific Drive from North Harbour resident Terry Langman

Dear Sir,

In support of Mr. R. Stanborough's letter dated 8th January, 2010, the dangerous condition of Pacific Drive is unacceptable. As residents of Sovereign Harbour North, we are totally reliant on this one road for access to shops, schools and medical facilities.

On Friday I tried to make my way - by car - to my doctor's surgery. This was impossible. The road surface was just a sheet of ice. The vehicle in front of me, sliding sideways towards the parked vans, just managed to stop. The oncoming traffic, also sliding sideways towards us, just managed to stop. Time to turn around and go home - phone the doctors and let them know that I was unable to get there.

We were told that the council were going to adopt the road last year - we had to put up with weeks of dreadful road works - and many residents felt - it made the road worse than it was before. Then came the road markings - the double yellow lines that are placed in the most dangerous position, and people taking no notice of. No Wonder.

If the road still belongs to Carillion, surely they will have to take full responsibility for any accidents that are caused by the bad icy conditions of the road; perhaps Health and Safety could come in somewhere - no due care to people on their property. They have no grit/sand boxes anywhere for motorists or pedestrians use.

We are still stuck in our home. Unable to get out by car because of icy roads, unable to walk due to disability and ill health.

Hope the road is gritted soon and we will be able to get out.

Regards

Terry Langman

08 Jan - Letter sent to EBC about road gritting by North Harbour resident Robert Stanborough

The Highway Manager
Eastbourne Borough Council
1 Grove Road
Eastbourne
BN214TW

08 January 2010

Dear Sir or Madam,

Ref: Gritting; Pacific Drive, Sovereign Harbour North

Whilst I truly do believe I understand the pressure put upon Eastbourne Council Highways department during the recent snow and ice conditions and also the apparent lack of grit/salt available nationally in order to deal with this issue, it has also been apparent that even prior to the grit shortages and from day one of the spell of adverse weather conditions, that Pacific Drive, on Sovereign Harbour North, is NOT one of the roads deemed as a priority for Eastbourne Council highways department, as it has never been gritted at any time.

I must express my serious concerns regarding this situation and ask that you consider making Pacific Drive, one of the 'priority' roads in the area. I appreciate that 'residential' roads will always be considered low priority, however, given that Pacific Drive IS the ONLY road in and out of North Harbour for all residents, this must give cause for your further consideration for reclassification as a priority in future.

The problem is compounded by the number of roundabouts and chicanes along Pacific Drive, which even when driven with extreme care, (which unfortunately many people don't), are almost impossible to negotiate, without sliding into the kerb and onto the footpath, under current 'sheet ice' conditions.

A local police patrol car was recently stationed at one of the roundabouts due to the number of cars that were sliding off the roundabout and across the adjacent pavement. My concern and motivation for writing to you is, as always, that of 'Health and safety'.

I would be grateful to hear your thoughts on this issue.

Many thanks in advance for your kind attention in this matter.

Yours Sincerely

Robert A Stanborough

08 Jan - email sent to ESCC Councillor David Elkin about gritting Pacific Drive by North Harbour resident Robert Stanborough

Dear Councillor Elkin,

I'm sure that I am not the first, nor will I be the last person, to contact you recently about the atrocious condition of Pacific Drive, on Sovereign Harbour North.

Whilst I appreciate that adverse weather conditions appear to have caught local authorities out (Yet Again !) and whilst I also acknowledge the apparent reported national shortages of Salt/Grit, it would however appear that the 'responsible parties' , have failed to grit Pacific Drive at all, since the beginning of the recent foul weather conditions and this is frankly unacceptable.

Pacific Drive is (as you well know), the ONLY route in and out of Sovereign Harbour North for all residents and I can tell you from my own personal experiences, that it is currently impossible to drive along it, without sliding all over the place no matter how careful one is, especially with the chicanes and roundabouts and unfortunately, there appear to be far too many stupid people, who are by no means careful enough.

As you possibly know, a police patrol car recently manned a roundabout on Pacific Drive, after several cars became uncontrollable on the roundabouts and were skidding into the kerb and indeed onto the footpath.

I am sure that you are in a position to use your influences on behalf of harbour residents, to ensure that action is taken as a matter of urgency to rectify the situation and get some salt/grit, applied to Pacific Drive, before there is a serious accident, or 'God Forbid' even a fatality due to these failings.

I would appreciate your acknowledgment and comments regarding this correspondence.

Yours Sincerely

Robert Stanborough

09 Jan - Response from North Harbour resident and SHRA representative Ian Weeks

I totally agree with Bob on the situation in Pacific Drive, the failure to keep this vital route in and out of the North Harbour clear is totally unacceptable. However, as the road is not yet adopted, the responsibility for gritting remains with Carillion and, if it ever gets adopted, the responsibility will pass to East Sussex County Council.

That being said, I know that the Police were very concerned about the condition of the road and contacted the Highways Department. Despite their assurance that the situation was very dangerous, the Highways people absolutely refused to take action. Without the presence of a PCSO at the roundabout warning drivers of the danger, I'm sure there could have been a serious accident.

Late in **2007** we were assured that the road would be adopted 'before the end of the year', but the continued failure of the County Council to put pressure on Carillion to complete the necessary remedial work has been a major contributor to this unfortunate situation.

I have taken this matter up with our County Councillor, Cllr. David Elkin, who promised to intervene on our behalf. Unfortunately, it seems he has not been able to make progress with this issue. We should not be surprised; if they don't provide

services for the harbour in good times, what chance do we have when things get bad.

Ian Weeks

09 December -Letter to SHRA from South Harbour resident Anton de Biracli Levy about corrosion on balcony steelwork.

I have recently purchased a flat at Anguilla Close and was concerned at the degree of corrosion to the steelwork that supports each balcony.

On checking the Lease it would seem that the management company was responsible for the upkeep of the exterior and was to be painted every seven years, that deadline coming up shortly. However it is blindingly obvious that some of the steelwork needed repainting much earlier than this but has been left to decay to a point that simple repainting will not solve the problem.

What I would like to know is, has anyone else reported the corrosion to the management company, in my case Hazelvine and roughly at what date?

Anton de Biracli Levy

07 November -Letter to SHRA from North Harbour resident Jennifer Moss about Southern Water's surface water drainage charges.

Dear Sirs,

Thank you so much for using the October issue of Waterlines to draw our attention to the surface water drainage charges being levied in error.

I asked Southern Water for a rebate, which they are giving to me without argument, dated back to July 2007 when I purchased my flat.

I must confess that I had allowed my membership of SHRA to lapse this year, but I have now signed up with PayPal to pay annually so that I will not forget again. You are doing a great service to the community. Keep up the good work!

Gratefully yours,

Jenny Moss

Response from SHRA Chairman Jan Weeks

Dear Jenny,

Thanks for your letter, I'm pleased that you've managed to get your surface water drainage charges refunded. It's been a long battle, but it seems Southern Water has finally realised that we're not going to give up.

Thanks too for renewing your membership of SHRA, and thanks too for the kind words. Without the support of residents we would not have the resources to publish Waterlines and to fight our campaigns.

Regards

Jan Weeks

Chairman SHRA

16 October -Letter to SHRA from North Harbour resident Alan Edey about Harbour management charges

Dear Sirs

I am not sure why there is so much fuss about the charges, we all bought knowing they exist. I believe it was approximately £240.00 in 2003 and is now £211.21, a small reduction and heading in the right direction. The Marina usually looks well maintained and we haven't been flooded.

I live in Caroline Way and had to become a member of Marina Village (Eastbourne) Management Company Limited, set up to maintain the Caroline Way estate. In 2003 the charges were £180.00 and increased with inflation until 2006/7 when control of the company passed to the residents and became demands for £460.00.

Under the current management, total charges have increased from less than £30,000.00 per year to over £67,500.00 with line items appearing like 'Estate Manager - £30,000.00' or 'Plants - £6,000.00', and when I request access to accounts (allowed for under company rules) they refuse me. The services provided have not improved, in fact parts of the Estate are often neglected.

If you manage to get access to the information that is not your due please let me know how you did it as I cannot get access to information that is mine. As you say in your article "it might well be that everything is above board, but the reluctance to provide details is bound to arouse suspicion."

Alan Edey

15 September -Letter to SHRA from North Harbour resident Alison Attwood about Sovereign Harbour Trust charges.

Dear Sirs,

I read with interest the email regarding Sovereign Harbour Trust pursuing non-payment of marina charges. The marina estate charge is a totally unjustified additional tax on harbour residents (are we the only people in the country who pay for sea defences?), however that's a separate debate. The fact is that, rightly or wrongly, the estate charge exists and the vast majority of people would have been told about it when they bought their properties. I do not condone any heavy-handed or unreasonable demands on residents who have never received invoices in the past, but I am pleased to hear that Sovereign Harbour Trust (SHT) is at last getting to grips with what has been an unfair and badly managed system for far too long.

Someone I know lives in a development at the northern edge of North Harbour and proudly boasted that she and half her neighbours have never received a bill from SHT since their homes were built some seven years ago.

Should I be pleased? For every household that is not invoiced, the rest of us are paying more than we should. My last bill shows the total estate charge divided by 2960 "relevant properties", making my contribution £211. I don't know how many homes are actually owned here but let's make an estimate of 3400. That would mean 87% households are overpaying by some £27 per year because other neighbours are paying nought.

It is worrying that hundreds of thousands of pounds are going to an organisation that is clearly incompetent. I hope that those households who are now receiving invoices are given reasonable time and fair terms to catch up. I also sincerely hope that, as SHT recovers the missing money, they give a refund to all the households who have been overcharged for the last seven years.

I am not holding my breath!

Regards,

Alison Attwood

Follow-up from Ian Weeks, North Harbour (16 Sept)

Alison makes some very valid points. Yes, this is an unfair tax on harbour residents, but we all entered into the contract with our eyes open and must expect to pay the charges. However, the manner in which the Trust has gone about rectifying its own administrative errors is absolutely typical and totally outrageous.

Alison says the Trustees are incompetent and she is absolutely correct. The SHRA has consistently advised the Trust that the number of declared occupied properties

is incorrect, but it has consistently responded that its numbers are correct. I believe this shows not only incompetence, but arrogant neglect of duty.

Alison expresses a forlorn hope that we will get a refund of our overpayments. I believe that to do anything else with monies recovered from those who have not previously been invoiced would be unlawful. The invoices we received were based on the expenditure for the period of the charge divided by the number of occupied properties; non payment is recorded as a debt. Money recovered from those who have never been invoiced has never been accounted for, and cannot therefore be recorded as debts. There can be no valid argument for that money going into the general fund, nor can it be used to reduce next year's charges, because not all current occupiers will have contributed to it. It must be returned to those who have been overcharged.

The sad thing is that, based on past experience, sorting out the problem will undoubtedly cost more than the money recovered, so we will all be the losers. Nothing changes.

Ian Weeks

26 August - Letter to SHRA from South Harbour resident Tony Smith about Harbour Heroes article.

I enjoyed reading the piece in the [August edition of Waterlines](#) about the unsung heroes of Sovereign Harbour – the residents who make the Harbour a better place to live either by cleaning and tidying, or by helping their neighbours.

You asked for other examples. There are two groups of people I'd like to mention – unfortunately I don't have their names, and I don't know whether they are always the same individuals every time.

The first group are those who take the trouble to retrieve the lifebelts and replace them in their holders when they have been strewn about the beach or prom. The second group are those who return Asda trolleys; and I'd particularly like to mention the couple I spotted recently wheeling trolleys back from where they had been dumped at the far end of the outer harbour prom. I salute these anonymous residents who are prepared to do something rather than just walk by. Had these residents not taken action the articles would have probably ended up in the sea.

I would also like to praise those residents who add and tend to plants on the landings and the outside of some of the blocks of flats. It makes all the difference to our environment and I am grateful for their effort.

Tony Smith

Follow-up from Ian Weeks, North Harbour (16 Sept)

Driving home along Pacific Drive on Sunday morning, I noticed a man with two children picking up litter from the undeveloped land known as 'Site 7'. The three, North Harbour residents, Mark Hamilton, son Jessie and daughter Charlie had been collecting for about an hour and had already filled a bin liner.

Mark said the rubbish was unsightly and spoilt the wonderful environment in which we live. He said he was fed up with seeing it and decided that he would do something about it.

He also said he felt it was very important that children should be encouraged to take responsibility for their neighbourhood and their litter picking had become a regular activity.

It was very obvious that the children were enjoying their task and getting some real satisfaction from it.



Why not look out for our three unsung heroes? Why not lend them a hand?

Ian Weeks

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