

Skelmanthorpe Community Action Group.

Tough Times ahead?

In the January edition of Connect we predicted that the recession would lead to government cuts that were likely to have a negative impact on communities like ours, which lie on the fringes of Kirklees.

It would seem that our predictions were correct and that irrespective of which party forms the next government, cuts in government spending will be the order of the day.

What does this mean for us?

At SCAG we don't claim to have a crystal ball, but some things seem all too obvious, any cut back in central government spending will have a knock on effect on Kirklees. As we have said before, if it was hard to get the local council to do things when times were good, it's going to be even more difficult in future.

Crumbling road structures.

Anyone who has driven between Skelmanthorpe and Upper Cumberworth or between Skelmanthorpe and Emley will be only too aware of the hundreds of potholes along these roads. Many of the worst ones have been patched, but already some of the patches are breaking up, and the winter hasn't started yet. We have been promised that these roads will be resurfaced several times, but we are still waiting for action.

Many of the manhole covers have sunk below the road surface, some by as much as 4 or 5 inches. Hitting one of these is likely to cause damage to vehicles, while the consequences for motorcyclists could be far more serious. Nothing has been done to repair this damage and it's likely nothing will, unless real pressure is put on Kirklees to take action.

The only way to get action is to complain. The more people complain the more likely we are to get something done. So if you are concerned at the state of local roads complain to highways.ross@kirklees.gov.uk or telephone 0800 731 8765.

Lack of a school crossing.

Two years ago we were promised a new school crossing point to improve the safety of Skelmanthorpe children walking to and from school. Despite repeated requests to the council, to keep its promise, nothing has happened, and local children are still at risk, every time they walk to school. To make matters worse there isn't even a crossing warden to help them cross the road.

SCAG is pushing hard to get this done because as the cuts get deeper our chances of getting the crossing will decline. You can help us by contacting Highways Ross at the E-mail address or telephone number given above. Elizabeth Twitchett is the person who has been handling this issue for Kirklees.

No flood prevention.

The summer floods, two years ago, affected a number of homes in Skelmanthorpe, Scisset and Clayton West. Some of this flooding was the result of drains and culverts being blocked by silt, a consequence of cut backs in clearing work by Kirklees. Council representatives have already admitted that budget cuts mean even less will be spent on flood prevention in future, leaving all those households and businesses at risk. This is despite the fact that central government has suggested that more should be spent on flood prevention in preparation for the impact of climate change.

If you believe you are at risk of flooding in future now is the time to push Highways Ross for action. If you don't complain nothing is likely to happen.

Cuts in other services.

The three areas mentioned above are just some of the easily identified problems resulting from a lack of investment by Kirklees. Over the coming months other areas are likely to suffer. SCAG exists to try to help improve the quality of life in our village. We are a non-political organisation ready to help bring pressure to bear on Kirklees to deliver the services needed by the people of Skelmanthorpe. We need the help of all the community if Skelmanthorpe is to get a fair share of the reduced budgets that are inevitable in the years ahead.

If we don't speak up we will be ignored, and the money will continue to be spent in the larger and more central parts of Kirklees, and the small villages on the fringes of Kirklees will continue to be neglected.