

Wonersh Parish Council

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Chris Weston, CEO Thames Water
Clearwater Court
Vastern Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG1 8DB

CC: Sir Jeremy Hunt, Member of Parliament for Godalming and Ash
Kevin Deanus, Surrey County Council
Jane Austin, Waverley Borough Council
Michael Goodridge, Waverley Borough Council

16 July 2026

Dear Chris Weston

**RE: EMERGENCY WORKS ON A248, DORKING ROAD, CHILWORTH AND
SUBSEQUENT LACK OF WATER SUPPLY TO WONERSH & SHAMLEY GREEN
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

We feel compelled to write following the recent emergency works on the A248, Dorking Road Chilworth under permit MU70501216404-0001 which required a full road closure for several days.

Unsuitable diversions and traffic disruption

The initial diversion route used was via Sample Oak Lane and Blackheath Lane which are both single-track, rural roads and thus unsuitable for the volume and weight of traffic from an A-road. The subsequent disruption for residents of our Parish, particularly those that live or work along the diversion route, was significant as traffic was often at a standstill when vehicles could not pass each other in the allocated passing places. The verges and banks alongside the roads have been damaged by vehicles forced to move off the road to pass. Residents have also had issues accessing bus and rail services, and we understand that initially bus services were not aware of the road closure which led to residents being stranded, including children waiting for their school buses.

Whilst we note that, on occasion, an initial unsuitable diversion route might need to be briefly used whilst your workers attend to the immediate problem, it took over 48 hours for road signs to be adjusted to the correct diversion route via Guildford. Signs diverting down Sample Oak Lane and Blackheath Lane were still in place on Thursday 4 June 2026, despite the fact that Surrey County Council's roadworks map was showing the new diversionary route. There were no signs at the entrances to Sample Oak Lane and Blackheath Lane signifying that they were unsuitable for diversion, and in particular for heavy goods vehicles. Subsequently, the police had to resort to placing their own 'road closed' sign at the entrance of Blackheath Lane to reduce gridlocked traffic.

Following shortly after this initial emergency closure, a further unplanned 10-day closure was put in place between Chilworth and Albury, we understand under permit MU113SA-3386035-01. Again, with no appropriate diversion, the result was large vehicles routing themselves leading to totally blocked lanes between Chilworth and Guildford (Blacksmith Lane / White Lane) and between Albury and Shamley Green (Farley Heath Road). Both route are unsuitable for heavy goods vehicles. Thames Water were already working on the same stretch of road using traffic lights in the two weeks up to this closure, so it seems unlikely that it could be classified as an emergency. Can Thames Water look into this and provide an explanation as to why this complete closure was unearned and unplanned?

The disruption to residents within our Parish is not isolated to these incidents, with roadworks linked to Thames Water causing issues at:

- B2128 / Guildford Road in Rowly, where the long-term roadworks have caused traffic to back up as far as Shamley Green and there have been several reports of the temporary traffic lights showing as either green or red both ways
- B2128 / Guildford Road in Shamley Green, with works to water infrastructure between Norley Lane and village centre causing multiple road closures and the subsequent unsuitable diversion down Norley Lane damaging rural roads and causing gridlock. In particular, this diversion was used during the closure in December 2025 despite instructions within the Surrey County Council system to the contrary.
- B2128 / The Street in Wonersh (February 2026) where the works permit expired on 22 February and therefore residents expected to be able to travel as normal on Monday 23 February 2026. However, the barriers were still in place on the Monday and buses once again had to divert at short notice leaving residents stranded.

Communications

We recognise that due to the nature of emergency works it is not always possible to give residents or businesses notice of closures. However, throughout these incidents there has been a notable lack of communication from Thames Water to residents. Where communication has been made, it has often been conflicting and caused further disruption as residents choose their travel routes based on false information. There has appeared to be a repeated lack of communication to the bus companies, with bus drivers unaware of road closures leading to passengers being stranded in rural locations with no means of onward travel.

In addition, Wonersh and Shamley Green Primary School was closed on 6 November 2023, 7 November 2023, 22 January 2024, 15 May 2024 and 2 June 2026 due to lack of water supply. The most recent closure, on Tuesday 2 June 2026, is understood to have been linked to the emergency works on the water main leak in Chilworth referred to above. This is now five school closure days in less than three years, and the resulting disruption to pupils' education and to parents' and carers'

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work schedules has been significant. Due to the nature of the school's closed water system, water cannot be pumped in via tanker, which makes timely and reliable communication from Thames Water vital. School leaders need early, accurate information in order to assess whether the school can safely remain open, make safeguarding and operational decisions, and communicate clearly with parents and staff.

We ask Thames Water to confirm what arrangements will now be put in place to ensure the school is treated as a sensitive site during any future water supply incidents. In particular, the school needs a named emergency contact or escalation route, timely updates on the likely duration of any outage, and clear communication early enough for school leaders to make informed decisions. We also ask Thames Water to provide a written action plan setting out how it will reduce the likelihood of further supply interruptions and improve coordination with the school, Surrey County Council and local transport providers.

We would be grateful if you could consider and address all the issues outlined in this letter and look forward to your reply explaining the actions you will be taking going forward to reduce the frequency and level of disruption our residents, organisations and businesses face.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Davison
Clerk to the Council
On behalf of Wonersh Parish Council

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