

Street Light Column Outside 3, Duloe

Staploe Parish Council own and maintain 21 street lights in the parish. 20 of these are mounted on brackets on telegraph poles but one is a cast iron street light column located outside 3, Duloe.



In the past our street lights were inspected visually on a monthly basis for faults by a local street light engineer. Since replacing the lights with LED's in February 2019 we had understood that they only needed to be inspected every 6 years so we did no further inspections. In February Bedford Borough Council sent us a letter explaining that they were assessing the safety of all non-Borough Council owned lights, and they requested a list of the lights for which our council is responsible and confirmation of how we inspect and maintain them, including provision of the most recent structural and electrical testing reports for them.

They also noted a number of pole- and wall-mounted lights that were causing them safety concerns, both in terms of their ongoing maintenance and for passing highway users. In particular, they raised the potential for electrical hazards, structural fixing concerns and / or asbestos related to these assets.

They asked us to advise them how we intend to manage their future safe operation and what actions we will take to ensure this.

The Parish Council have never obtained formal structural or electrical reports and we were quoted £1297 ex VAT to do these inspections by a certified company to the required standard (Electrical Testing Limited – who are recommended by the Borough Council). However, they advised that they could not inspect the old cast iron column outside number 3, Duloe because it is not possible to get a camera down the pole. We invited our street light inspector to come and do an interim visual inspection on all our lights and he did this on Friday 4th September. He found two cracked brackets which need to be replaced and he has labelled all lights with asbestos seals in their control boxes.

He did a visual inspection of the street light column outside 3, Duloe and said that it looks sound at the moment but there are two issues with these columns.

1. The cast iron can become brittle and shatter if hit by a car which can do a lot of damage to the car and its occupants (but as he said if someone hits a cast iron lamp post they will probably be damaged anyway).
2. The joint where the swan neck meets the cast iron post can be weakened in the wind and crack in which case the swan neck part might fall and could potentially hit the edge of the house. There is no way to reliably inspect the joint to assess this risk.

His informal opinion is that the column is fine and will last many more years. He says these columns are highly sought after and Woburn Parish have kept all of theirs despite pressure from Bedford Borough Council to change them for the past 10 years – and they are all still fine 10 years later.

He has quoted £150-£200 to remove it – and then we would need to pay around £518 to UK Power Networks for the disconnection.

In general nearby residents do not want it removed but if it has to be removed there are differing views from residents about whether it should be replaced with a steel column or not.

Sadly we can't move it to a nearby telegraph pole because UK Power Networks will no longer accept other people's equipment on their poles so any replacement would need to be a steel column. Moving it would be extremely expensive in view of the need to pay for the disconnection fee of £518 for the old column and a new connection to the new one (possibly around £1200 for the new connection – I am seeking quotes).

Installation of a new steel column is around £600 plus the connection fee.