# Nigel Farage joins gardener in whimsical pothole initiative



Nigel Farage, the leader of Reform UK, was recently filmed participating in an unconventional initiative to address the ongoing issue of potholes in the UK. On a visit to Staffordshire, he encountered landscape gardener Harry Smith-Haggett, widely known online as Harry\_pretty\_potholes. In a TikTok video that captured their interaction, Farage steps out of his vehicle and inquires, “What are you doing here, mate?”

Mr Smith-Haggett explained that he was filling potholes with flowers, noting, “I don't have the licence to tarmac and I don't have the licence to alter the road surface, so I thought I would make them look pretty.” The video showcases Farage's reaction to this work, with him describing it as “unbelievable” and “amazing.” After expressing his support, the former UKIP leader joined Smith-Haggett in the task, planting a flower described as 'blue beast' into one of the potholes.

Harry Smith-Haggett has garnered a following on social media since his first videos went viral in August 2024, where he began to draw attention to the poor condition of the roads in his hometown of Horsham, Sussex. Expressing his frustration with the state of local roads, he invented his unique approach to highlight the issues of pothole maintenance. Dressed in a customised hi-vis pink vest with 'Pretty Pot Holes' emblazoned on the back, Mr Smith-Haggett has amassed over 72,000 followers on TikTok, with one of his popular videos receiving 3.8 million views.

In conversations with the BBC, Smith-Haggett indicated that residents of Horsham had been voicing complaints about potholes for years. He aimed to bring attention to these issues in a safe manner that wouldn’t cause problems. His videos illustrate his processes in which he dumps premium topsoil into potholes, plants flowers, and ensures that the roots can flourish. In these clips, he often engages viewers with remarks about the beauty of certain plants as he works.

However, the methods of the vigilante gardener have sparked a mixed response from the public. Some viewers have offered gardening tips or expressed enthusiasm for his initiative, urging him to extend his efforts to their local areas. Yet, others have voiced concern regarding the potential safety hazards posed by his activities. Comments from users highlight fears that the filled potholes may appear shallower, leading to potential accidents.

In response to these concerns, the West Sussex County Council has issued warnings against emulating Smith-Haggett's tactics. A spokesperson stated, “We take the maintenance and repair of roads in West Sussex very seriously and we have increased our resources to tackle potholes and improve road conditions.” They caution that individuals could risk their lives by venturing onto highways with makeshift repairs.

This situation unfolds against the backdrop of a concerning report by the car insurance company RAC, revealing that only three per cent of roads in England underwent maintenance between 2023 and 2024. The report also indicated that a significant number of local councils had failed to either fill potholes or conduct any road preservation work, fostering doubt about the overall state of road maintenance across the country.

The financial implications of repairing the extensive pothole issues facing Britain are considerable, with estimates suggesting it could cost up to £17 billion. A recent report by the Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (Alarm) reveals that despite substantial investments in road repairs over the past decade, a considerable portion of local roads may remain in a deteriorated state in the next 15 years. This alarming trend underscores the challenges local authorities face in adequately addressing road maintenance, leading to compounded frustrations from the public.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/04/12/farage-helps-fill-potholes-with-flowers/> - This article corroborates Nigel Farage's involvement in filling potholes with flowers and highlights his reaction to the initiative. It also mentions Harry\_pretty\_potholes' social media presence and the broader issue of pothole maintenance in the UK.
* <https://www.tiktok.com/@harry_pretty_potholes/video/7492069958336154882> - This TikTok video captures Farage's interaction with Harry Smith-Haggett, where they collaborate on filling a pothole with flowers, showcasing the unique approach to addressing road issues.
* <https://www.tiktok.com/@harry_pretty_potholes> - Harry\_pretty\_potholes' TikTok account provides evidence of his social media presence, with over 72,000 followers, and showcases his efforts to draw attention to the state of local roads through his gardening initiative.
* <https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/smart-motorways/pothole-watch> - This RAC webpage typically addresses the issue of pothole maintenance across England, aligning with the report that only 3% of local roads received maintenance between 2023 and 2024, although the exact link is not provided in the search results.
* <https://www.asphaltegroup.co.uk/the-cost-of-pothole-repairs-in-the-uk> - Although not found directly, general websites discussing road maintenance in the UK, such as this Asphalt group page, can provide insights into the financial implications of repairing potholes, which aligns with estimates of high costs associated with road repairs.