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Paving project leaves residents fuming

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A PAVING project, which was supposed to have been completed in just three months but has so far taken more than six months, has once again left residents in Karee Road in Floors, Kimberley, hot under the collar.

The residents are angry that the project has disrupted their lives and they have been left in the dark with regard to when it will be completed.

The irate residents marched to the provincial offices of the Department of Roads and Public Works this week in search of answers as to when they can "return to their normal lives".

The march on September 27 follows several protests and other marches the residents staged this year to demonstrate their frustration with the incomplete project.

The residents have accused the department of not prioritising the project and they feel that they have been "neglected".

"We protested in March this year for the road to be repaired. The Department of Roads and Public Works scrapped the road in March. We were happy as we were under the impression that they were addressing the state of the road. However, that joy turned to sorrow as their promise never materialised," said the residents.

"They had promised to appoint 30 youngsters from the area to the project as Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers. The appointment process did take place, however, the youngsters appointed to the project then had to fight for their money to be paid as they were not getting paid. We supported the youngsters as we wished for the project to be completed, but also understood that nobody will want to work without any compensation. That matter was resolved.

"After the payment problem was resolved, the project again came to a halt as there was no material being delivered. The EPWP workers would report for duty but then have to sit idle as there was no material or even tools for them to work with. Some of the appointed youngsters did not return as there was no material. When we marched to the Public Works offices, we were told that a new contractor will be appointed, but that the material cannot be delivered as it might be stolen."

The residents said the incomplete project has caused a number



Residents living in Karee Road in Floors are fed up with a local paving project. Picture: Soraya Crowie

of challenges.

"When this project was started, we were promised that the entire project will take just three months to be completed. That was in March and we are now heading to the month of October. There were several paving projects started after the one in Karee Road and those projects were completed. Here we are still stuck with a road that is in disarray and dusty.

"We cannot open the windows of our homes as our homes get filled with dust within minutes after we open the door and windows. There is also a resident who is making use of an oxygen tank to breathe as he suffers from severe asthma. The dust from the road has made him severely ill and he has to now remain connected to the oxygen machine," they said.

A few hours after the residents marched to the department's offices this week, pallets of paving stones were delivered.

A spokesperson for the department, Zandisile Luphahla, said the delay was caused by the challenge of getting material and sufficient manpower to work on the project.

"There was a material shortage challenge the department experienced. This was with interlock paving bricks. Those bricks are sourced from Bloemfontein. The manufacturer in Bloemfontein had a backlog, which resulted in the delay in the completion of the project.

"We also had a problem with

workmanship as some of the appointed EPWP workers did not pitch up for work. We will appoint workers from our EPWP programme to the project. We must complete the project as soon as possible," said Luphahla.

He urged the community members to safeguard the materials.

"The residents in this street need to keep an eye on the material. The project will restart this week. It is unfortunate that so much time had lapsed and that the project was never completed within the three months as promised. For that we apologise to this community," Luphahla said.



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