

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGHWAY WORKING GROUP HELD ON THURSDAY  
15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2005 AT 7.30 p.m. AT THE PAVILION, MANOR FIELD**

Present: Cllr Mr D Brazier (County Councillor – co-opted)  
Cllr Mr M Harris (Chairman)  
Cllr Mr V Sewell  
Cllr Mrs M Solman  
Cllr Mr C Ward

In attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)  
16 members of the public  
Mr R Dines (Transport Manager, West Kent )  
Mr J Cook (Assistant Engineer, Kent Highway Services)

**1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mr B Ramsay.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Mr V Sewell declared a personal interest in respect of the matters relating to Hartley Primary School as he serves on the School's Governing Body as a Community Governor.

**3. Minutes**

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Highway Working Group held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**4. Castle Hill**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Dines and Mr Cook to the meeting.

The Chairman explained that 29 responses had been received to the Council's letter sent to all residents of Castle Hill seeking their views on the speed of vehicles and congestion on Castle Hill.

The Chairman invited members of the public present at the meeting to express their views, but they suggested the Members of the Working Group and representatives from Kent Highways may like to discuss the matter in the first instance and following these discussions residents may then wish to express their views.

The Chairman summarised the main problems associated with traffic movement and speed of vehicles in Castle Hill and reported the possible solutions put forward by residents in their letters to the Council. The possible solutions included the provision of speed humps, reduction in the speed limit from 30 to 20 mph, cutting back of shrubs/ hedges overhanging the carriageway particularly in the vicinity of Old Downs, provision of a footpath near Old Downs, provision of barrier at Old Downs preventing any through traffic, opening up of a closed section of road through Old Downs, provision of width restriction signs, improvements to sight lines at the junction of Castle Hill and Fawkham Road, provision of mirrors and improvements to signage.

The Chairman invited members of the Working Group to express their views.

Mr Dines expressed his initial views on the content of the letters, but stressed he was not in a position to give an instant answer. However, he agreed to analyse the points raised in the letters and, where possible, come back with some suggestions to alleviate the problems. Mr Dines confirmed he would be willing to attend a site meeting and it was suggested that the meeting should take place between the hours of 8.00 and 9.00 a.m. or 3.30 and 4.30 p.m. The Council will write to summarise the issues raised by residents and to arrange a date.

Mr Cook agreed to investigate reports of overhanging hedges encroaching onto the carriageway. He was pleased to see that most residents did not favour the introduction of a one way system which he considered would increase traffic speed. Mr Cook explained that

Kent County Council had limited resources and therefore had to allocate those resources very carefully and in doing so, relied on accident statistics to prioritise projects. He informed those present that the total budget last year for the rural roads in the Sevenoaks District was £50,000. In response to the residents request for speed humps, he explained that the provision of speed humps would not be viable as the approximate cost of one speed hump would be £2,000 and that a series of 6 or 7 humps would be required along Castle Hill in order to have any effect. In addition, street lighting would be required, the cost of which would be prohibitive.

The Chairman explained that Parish Councils have powers to install traffic signs and that the Parish Council may wish to consider this at some time in the future.

*The meeting was adjourned at 8.02 p.m. to allow members of the public present at the meeting to express their views.*

*One resident expressed his concern over proposals to cut back the hedge adjacent to Old Downs, which could spoil the appearance of the road.*

*A resident of Sandshaw Court explained the difficulties associated with exiting Old Downs due to poor sight lines.*

*A resident stated she could see no gain in cutting back the hedge adjacent to Old Downs to create a footpath as there would be no benefit for car drivers.*

*The meeting resumed at 8.08 p.m.*

## **5. Interactive Sign**

The Chairman explained that funding for the interactive sign had been secured last year through the Kent Members' Community Grant, supported by a contribution from the Parish Council. He explained interactive speed signs had to be positioned between 60 and 200 metres of a change in road speed and this being the case, the sign would have to be positioned 200 metres to the north of the roundabout at Milestone School, which it was agreed would be ineffective, as traffic speeds coming off the roundabout would already be relatively low.

Mr Dines explained that the KCC Central Team had investigated the feasibility of siting a speed sign indicating a staggered junction warning sign and the message "slow down", at the end of the straight section of Ash Road before the bend and junction of St Johns Lane. The view of the Central Team was that whilst the siting of the proposed sign was clearly visible by oncoming traffic, the position of the sign could not be justified by accident statistics. The Central Team was not able to support the siting of interactive signs where they were not needed or appropriate, or where there was no known hazard. Mr Dines expressed his disappointment and explained they were struggling to find an alternative that would be acceptable to the Central Team. The Chairman also expressed his frustration and explained that whilst there may be few accidents involving personal injury there were, at this location, a proliferation of accidents resulting in crash damage.

Mr Dines expressed his intention to go back to the Central Team and ask them for suggestions as to how this problem may be overcome.

## **6. Local Transport Plan 2006/11**

The Chairman expressed his disappointment that every suggestion put forward by the Working Group for inclusion in the 2006/11 Local Transport Plan had been rejected and made particular reference to the extension of street lighting along Ash Road, which had generally been supported in the returned Parish Plan questionnaires, the proposals to improve parking at the Cherry Trees shops, and the introduction of a 20 mph speed zone in the vicinity of Hartley Primary School.

The Working Group understood that Ash Road did not meet the criteria for a fixed safety camera inasmuch as there had not been at least 4 serious or fatal injuries over a kilometre section of carriageway.

The Chairman pointed out that the bus stop sign located on Ash Road near Parkfield is obstructed by vegetation and that there are still two bus stop signs on Hoseland Greens opposite Parkfield. Mr Cook agreed to investigate the matter.

Mr Cook explained a speed survey will be undertaken shortly to assess the success of the traffic calming works undertaken last year. He explained a period of at least 6 months is allowed to elapse after the completion of a highway improvement scheme before a speed survey is undertaken.

## **7. Fairby Lane**

The County Councillor reported on discussions with the Highway Manager, Mr M Linfield, in respect of the residents request for the private section of the Fairby Lane to be closed to vehicular traffic and explained that the legal department of Kent County Council was investigating the legality of this request, at no cost to the residents.

*The meeting was adjourned at 8.40 p.m. to allow members of the public present at the meeting to express their views.*

*Mr Ede commented on the volume of school traffic using the private section of road and explained that on one day he had counted 200 cars using this section of road.*

*A resident explained the dangers posed to pedestrians by cars using this narrow section of road.*

*The meeting resumed at 8.45 p.m.*

## **8. Flooding at Springcroft**

The Chairman referred to a letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> August 2005 from Mr I Bailey, Head of Policy and Environment at SDC to Mr N Batemen, Divisional Director of West Kent Division Kent Highway Services.

The County Councillor reported that Jacob Babbie had recommended a course of action to alleviate the flooding problem at the end of Springcroft, which will involve the provision of a linear channel laid each side of Springcroft and positioned between existing road gullies. The new channel will be piped into these gullies in an effort to trap and force water into the intermediate gullies and soakaways, as they are considered to be under utilised because of the steep gradient of the road which causes the surface water to flow over the gullies rather than drain into them. The work is due to start in October.

The Chairman interrupted the meeting to explain to residents the new County Lengthsmen scheme. Minor highway works such as potholes, cleaning of gully tops, cutting back vegetation, cleaning road signs, highway tree trimming, ditch clearance, repairs to paved areas and painting railings can be undertaken through the scheme and residents are encouraged to contact the Parish Office to report any areas within the parish that would benefit from such remedial action.

## **9. Speedwatch and Kent County Council Member Community Scheme#**

The Working Group considered papers explaining the new scheme being promoted by KCC, Medway Council, KAPC and the Police to help reduce road traffic speed. The Chairman appealed for volunteers to come forward and it was suggested an article be included in the next edition of the Council's newsletter.

In response to a concern raised by a member of the public over the use of Ash Road by large haulage lorries early in the morning, Mr Cook explained there were no controls on the time large haulage lorries could use the public highway, unless they were controlled by a width restriction. The County Councillor referred to two local haulers and stated that even if the lorries travelled within the speed limit they would still cause considerable noise due to design of the lorries and condition of the road.

## **10. Correspondence**

The Working Group considered a letter from a local resident questioning the lack of speed signs on Hawthorns, Brambledown and Pitfield and complaining about the groups of youth congregating opposite the recycling centre in Woodland Avenue. Mr Cook advised the

Working Group that current regulations prevent the provision of speed signs on highways illuminated with street lighting.

The complaint about youths congregating at the recycling centre will be referred to the Youth Committee.

**11. Disabled parking bay at Wellfield**

The Working Group considered a complaint from the resident of 45 Brambledown in respect of a disabled parking bay located at the rear of her property. The resident has reason to use the said disabled parking bay, but access along Brambledown is obstructed if vehicles are parked immediately opposite and has asked whether there are any parking restrictions on the highway immediately opposite the disabled parking bay. It has been confirmed with Sevenoaks District Council that there are no parking restrictions. Mr Cook confirmed that under such circumstances parking restrictions could not be imposed opposite the parking bay and suggested it may be possible to ask neighbours not park opposite the disabled bay. It was suggested the Community Warden may be able to assist.

**12. Prohibition of Driving Temporary Order**

The Working Group considered the following Prohibition of Driving Temporary Orders.

(1) On C269 Valley Road, Hartley, between its junction with D116 Castle Hill and its junction with D109 Scudders Hill. It is anticipated the works will take three nights between 21.00 hrs and 05.00 hrs. The Order is to allow Lux on behalf of BT to gain safe access to the carriageway box.

(2) On C269 Fawkham Road between its junction with D116 Castle Hill and its junction with D114 Kent Road. It is anticipated the works will take on night between the hours of 21.00 and 06.00 to complete. The Order is to allow Lux on behalf of BT to gain access to the carriageway box to restore services.

(3) On U1146 Hodsoll Street, Ash-cum-Ridley between its junction with U12911 Oak Farm Lane and its junction with A227 Gravesend Road. It is anticipated the works will take one week to complete. The Order is to allow Ringway on behalf of Kent Highway Services to undertake carriageway patching works.

(4) On U1145 New Street, Ash-cum-Ridley between its junction with U1149 Rectory Road and its junction with U1150 Bunkers Hill. It is anticipated the works will take one week to complete. The Order is to allow Ringway on behalf of Kent Highway Services to undertake carriageway patching works.

**13. Date of the next meeting**

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2005 at 7.30 p.m. at Hartley Library.

The meeting closed at 9.13 p.m.

Signed:.....  
Chairman

Date:.....