

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGHWAY WORKING GROUP HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 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 (arrived at 7.35 p.m.)

In attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
16 members of the public

1. Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mr V Sewell declared a personal interest in respect of 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 15th September 2005 be approved and signed as a correct record.

4. Castle Hill

The Chairman invited views and comments from members of the public present at the meeting on matters relating to Castle Hill.

Mr Crowe expressed some concern that members of the Working Group did not fully appreciate the problems associated with the narrow section of Castle Hill where it enters Hartley Green. Mr Crowe referred to instances where cars had damaged fences and driven onto private drives to allow traffic to pass. He also referred to a recent incident involving vehicles delivering building materials to a property known as Greenacres driving over Hartley Green causing damage to the grass adjacent to the war memorial in order to access the property and suggested the existing bollards were not adequate.

A resident of Old Downs complained that they did not know about tonight's meeting and that they had not been consulted over matters affecting Old Downs. He did not support the re opening of the end of Old Downs where it enters the residential home. The Chairman explained that the Council had consulted with residents of Castle Hill in response to a letter of complaint about congestion on Castle Hill and that the reopening of the end of Old Downs had been one of many suggestions that had come forward from residents. Kent County Council Highway Engineers had inspected the site during a recent meeting with representatives from the Working Group and had discounted the suggestion to reopen the end of Old Downs on the grounds that it would be too expensive to purchase the section of privately owned drive leading to the residential home.

The Chairman reported on a meeting held on 20th October 2005 with Kent County Council's Highway Engineers and representatives from the Working Group, the County Councillor and representatives from Fawkham Parish Council. The party had walked the top section of Castle Hill from Hartley Green down to a property known as Glenelm to examine the problems more closely. The Highway Engineers agreed to ask their consultations to look at the issues in more detail and come forward with some suggestions as to how they may be alleviated. Some suggestions that came forward from the meeting included the provision of two width restrictions positioned at the bottom and mid way down the hill with priority being given to traffic going up the hill, improved signage and cutting back overgrown hedges encroaching onto the highway. The Highway Engineers warned that the total budgetary provision for this

type of work to rural roads throughout the District was rather small and that any proposals would be constrained by these budget restrictions. The Highway Engineers confirmed they would be willing to attend a public meeting to discuss with residents any proposals.

5. Fairby Lane

The Working Group considered the response from the Highway Manager, Mr M Linfield and was pleased to note that he had asked his engineers to look at a potential scheme to close the road to vehicular traffic whilst still allowing access for pedestrians and bicycles. The Working Group noted that a resident of Fairby Lane had provided an up date of the history of the road as far as he was aware. The Working Group noted the reports contained in the local and national newspapers of a court case held in 1974 between 14 residents of Fairby Lane and Kent County Council which determined at the Court of Appeal (Kent County Council v Loughton and Others) that this section of Fairby Lane was a “private street”.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

6. Interactive sign

The Chairman reported that the provision of an interactive warning sign was still proving to be problematic as Kent County Council’s Central Team was unwilling to support the siting of the sign to the south of the Ash Road at the junction with St Johns Lane. As reported at the previous meeting, the proposed position of the sign could not be justified by the accidents statistics and Kent County Council did not wish to see a proliferation of inappropriately sited interactive signs. Kent County Council’s Transport Manager reported at the meeting on 20th October 2005 that he was continuing to discuss the matter with the Central Team and would report back to the Parish Council.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

7. Resurfacing on Hartley Road, Longfield

The Working Group expressed its concern that a diversion had been set up via Ash Road, Castle Hill, Fawkham Road and Main Road as a result of the road closure on Hartley Road between the hours of 19:00 and 01:00 on the 19th October 2005. The diversion had caused considerable congestion on Castle Hill as the width of the carriageway was totally unsuitable for two way traffic. The situation could have been improved with the use of temporary traffic lights controlling traffic along Castle Hill, but the engineers on duty that night had explained they had no access to traffic lights. Members of the Working Group present at the meeting held on 20th October 2005 with Kent County Council’s Highway Engineers had expressed their total dis-satisfaction in the strongest terms with the diversionary arrangements and requested in future the Parish Council be given more notice of such works.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

8. Ash Road

The Chairman reported that Kent County Council had at the meeting held on 20th October 2005 informed those present that it intended to erect ten speed camera warning signs on Ash Road between the junctions of Station Road and Old Downs and provided a map showing the position of the signs. The Working Group noted that the signs had been installed on 28th October 2005 and that the mobile speed unit had visited the site during the morning of 1st November 2005.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

9. Milestone School

The Chairman reported that the Council had been consulted over a planning application to increase the parking facilities at the Milestone School, which is required as a result of plans to extend the size of the school. Whilst the Council’s Planning Committee had no objection to extending the school it did express concerns over the volume of traffic that would be generated by the extension of the school and the means of access on and off the site which is inadequate to cope with the current volume of traffic. The Chairman informed the Working Group that the headteacher intends to stagger the start times at the school in an attempt to alleviate some of

the congestion problems. Kent County Council's Planning Applications Committee has arranged a site meeting to be held on 8th November 2005 and representatives from the Parish Council have been invited to attend.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

10. Date of the next meeting

Wednesday 7th December 2005 at 7.30 p.m. at Hartley Library.

The meeting closed at 8.12 p.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman

Date:.....