

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGHWAY WORKING GROUP HELD ON
TUESDAY 28th MARCH 2006 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY**

Present: Cllr Mr D Brazier (*County Councillor – co-opted*)
Cllr Mr M Harris (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs M Solman
Cllr Mr C Ward (*arrived at 7.32 p.m.*)

In attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mr B Ramsay.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Cllr Mr C Ward arrived at 7.32 p.m.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Highway Working Group held on 28th February 2006 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Fairby Lane

The Committee considered an e mail dated 28th March 2006 from Mr Fitzgerald, Kent Highway Services (KHS), explaining that in order to close Fairby Lane to vehicular traffic it would be necessary for KHS to issue a Road Traffic Order advertising this proposed course of action and all parties, including the general public, would be given the opportunity to comment. Mr Fitzgerald advised that although the section of Fairby Lane under consideration was a private road, it was now deemed to be dedicated as a public highway by virtue of the fact that it had been used continuously by the public since the 1980's. He explained that he was still investigating the specific legal processes of closing a highway situated on private land.

Mr Fitzgerald explained that there would be no difficulty in physically closing road whilst still maintaining access to the properties in Fairby Lane, including access for service vehicles, but reported it would be unlikely that funding for this work could be met through the Local Transport Plan (LTP), as the scheme did not comply with the LTP's objectives, particularly in relation to road safety, as the crash statistics for the past three years do not record any crashes involving personal injury.

The Working Group expressed its frustration that Kent Highway Services were once again asking why a closure of Fairby Lane was being sought, particularly as these matters had been previously explained to Mr Linfield of Kent Highway Services, who had confirmed in an e mail dated 28th September 2005 to the County Councillor, that engineers had been briefed on the question of closing the private length of Fairby Lane and that they would be looking into a potential scheme to close the road whilst maintaining access for pedestrians and bicycles.

RESOLVED: That, the e mail dated 28th March 2006 from Mr Fitzgerald, Kent Highway Services be noted and the Clerk be asked to respond.

5. Interactive sign

The Working Group examined two tables setting out data recording average traffic speed and numbers of vehicles exceeding the speed limit on the section of Ash Road where traffic calming measures had been introduced last year by KHS. Table one showed data recorded between 21st and 25th October 2005, after the implementation of the traffic calming measures and installation of the safety camera signs. Table two compared traffic speed and total flow data recorded on the same section of Ash Road before the implementation of the traffic calming measures with data taken after completion of the works. Kent Highway Services concluded that there had been a small reduction in vehicle speeds since the implementation of the highway improvement scheme and installation of safety camera signs.

The Working Group examined an analysis of this traffic data prepared by the Chairman of the Working Group. This showed that whilst there had been a reduction in average vehicles speeds, the actual total number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit had increased. The Working Group noted that the survey had been carried out during the half term school holidays and therefore this would account for the reduction in total traffic flows. The Working Group was disappointed to note that data had not been collected on Saturday 22nd October 2005 and Sunday 23rd October 2005 and that KHS could offer no explanation as to why this may have occurred.

The Working Group referred to an e mail dated 24th January 2006 from Mr R Dines, Acting Head of Transportation and Planning at Kent Highway Services, in which he informed the Working Group that moveable signs were not considered permanent signs within the Road Traffic Signs regulations. This being the case, Working Group considered it may be possible to facilitate the purchase of a mobile interactive warning sign, which could be moved from time to time by the Parish Council and therefore the provision of such a sign would not be controlled by the requirements of the Road Traffic Signs regulations. The Working Group was reminded that Parish Councils have powers to provide traffic and warning signs under section 72 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

The Working Group referred to the Road Safety Plan 2005/06 prepared by the London Borough of Bromley and noted with interest that Bromley had installed a number of mobile interactive warning and vehicle activated signs throughout its borough, some of which were similarly to the interactive warning sign that the Parish Council wished to install on Ash Road in the vicinity of St Johns Lane. The Working Group noted that the mobile signs installed by Bromley also had the capability of recording traffic speeds and volume.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the letter dated 15th March 2006 from Mr Fitzgerald, Transportation Engineer at Kent Highway Services enclosing two tables entitled, "Post Camera Traffic Survey Data, Ash Road, Hartley, October 2005" and "Ash Road, Hartley, Traffic Survey Results 2004/05" be received and noted,

(2) an enquiry be made with the London Borough of Bromley to ask if it would be possible for the Parish Council to borrow a mobile interactive warning sign, with a view to setting up the mobile sign on land to north of Chantry Avenue on a temporary basis, in order to assess the effectiveness of such a sign in this location,

(3) Kent Highway Services be informed of the Parish Council's proposed course of action as set out in (2) above and,

(4) Kent Highway Services be asked to forward a copy of the traffic speed and volume data of the survey undertaken earlier in the year on Ash Road in the vicinity of the Black Lion Public House.

6. Parking Restrictions

The Chairman of the Working Group reported on a meeting with the Senior Engineer for Traffic and Parking at Sevenoaks District Council which had taken place earlier in the day. The

Engineer confirmed that the lines outside the entrances at the Hartley Primary School could not be enforced by the Local Authority, but explained they could be enforced by the Police.

The Chairman of the Working Group and the Clerk had taken the opportunity to show the Engineer the problems associated with the parking outside the two local primary schools at school start and finish times. The Chairman expressed concerns about the parking on the slip road at the main entrance to Hartley Primary School and the parking on the pavement opposite the entrance in Fairby Lane, both of which presented a hazard to the safety of the children. It was agreed that no parking restriction could be implemented in Stack Lane at the entrance to Our Lady of Hartley RC Primary School, but the Engineer acknowledged that sight lines were severely impaired by parking on Church Road outside the Church. It was noted that buses would have difficulty exiting Woodland Avenue into Church Road, if vehicles were parked outside the Church. The Engineer had agreed that the areas outside both Primary Schools could benefit from the introduction of waiting restrictions.

In addition, the Engineer was shown the parking area at the front of the Cherry Tree shops. He commented on the lack of any signs indicating the presence of a car park behind the shops and on the two signs giving details of the waiting restriction, which showed conflicting information.

The Engineer advised that he was looking at the introduction of parking restrictions in Quakers Close to prevent commuter parking. He explained that if Hartley had a number of areas where parking restrictions were in place, it would be more likely that resources could be deployed into Hartley to ensure their enforcement. He warned that any measures put in place to restrict parking would have a knock on effect on the surrounding areas and that any proposals should bear this in mind. He confirmed he would be willing to look at a number of areas in Hartley that could benefit from the introduction of parking restrictions, with a view to putting forward a package of measures for consideration by the Joint Transportation Board. He agreed to prepare a plan showing his proposals for consideration by the Parish Council.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

7. Flooding at Springcroft

The Working Group considered a letter dated 24th February 2006 from the Divisional Manager of Kent Highway Services (West Kent Division) to District Councillor Mr B Ramsay explaining that the work undertaken by the Highway Authority to cleanse the soakaways and provide additional interceptor gullies had not solved the problem of flooding at Springcroft, as the area had once again been flooded during February 2006. The Divisional Manager confirmed the Highway Authority would be looking at the instigation of more substantial works during the forthcoming year, subject to budgetary constraints. The Working Group noted that details of these proposed works had been sought on 10th March 2006 and that to date no response had been received.

The County Councillor reported that the flooding at Springcroft had been prioritised as number 4 on a list of 23 flooding issues being investigated in the Sevenoaks District. However, at the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board meeting held on 14th March 2006, the engineer could not confirm when funding would become available for the necessary remedial works at Springcroft.

RESOLVED: That, a further letter be written to Kent Highway Services asking for information on what remedial work is to be undertaken and when this work is likely to be carried out.

8. Church Road

The Committee considered an e mail dated 3rd March 2006 from the Senior Design Engineer at Kent Highway Services confirming that the section of Church Road from Grange Lane and Caling Croft is in a poor state of dis-repair. The Engineer confirmed that the road will be inspected to repair any dangerous defects and that this section of Church Road will be put forward for surface dressing in 2007/08.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the e mail dated 3rd March 2006 from Kent Highway Services be noted and (2) the resident who raised the matter at the last meeting of the Working Group be advised of the Highway Authorities intended course of action.

9. Ash Road

The Working Group considered a report on the obstruction of the Beletia beacon at the pedestrian crossing on Ash Road. It was reported that the overhanging vegetation had now been cut back.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

10. County Lengthsmen Scheme

The Working Group examined the work schedule request forms relating to a number of faults reported at the following locations:

2 Hartley Wood Corner, Manor Drive – Utility trench repair

The trench had been reinstated by a statutory undertaker 4-5 years ago. The inspector could find no serious problem. No further action to be taken.

Blue Firs, Church Road – Pothole

The engineer could not find the pothole. No further action to be taken.

Old Downs – Ash Road – Pothole

Work complete

Grosvenor, Church Road – Pothole

The engineer could not find the pothole. No further action to be taken.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the requests for remedial work to be undertaken through the County Lengthsmen Scheme be confirmed and (2) members of the Working Group will investigate any highway faults reported to the Clerk before being forwarded to the County Lengthsmen for action.

11. Kent Highways

The Working Group considered a report on items referred to Kent Highway Services since the last meeting and the responses received. The Working Group was updated on the current position regarding a number of the issues.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted, as set out in appendix 1 attached to these minutes.

12. Councillors reports

The Working Group was updated on a number of matters relating to issues raised by Councillors at the last meeting, as set below.

Cherry Trees

The Working Group was advised of a letter dated 21st March 2006 from the Chief Executive of Sevenoaks District Council informing the Parish Council that although the work to improve the area in front of the shops was funded by Sevenoaks District Council through an environmental enhancement scheme, the programme was abandoned in 2000 and any responsibility for ongoing maintenance lies with the Highway Authority or the landowner. He confirmed the District Council was not responsible for any repairs and recommended contact be made with Kent County Council and the local landowners.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 21st March 2006 from Sevenoaks District Council be noted.

Castle Hill

The Working Group was advised of an e mail dated 13th March informing the Working Group that Kent Highway Services was not aware of any traffic survey being carried out on Castle Hill, but that an engineer from Jacobs Babbie had attended site to carry out an inspection as part of the commission to investigate the feasibility of introducing traffic calming measures on Castle Hill.

RESOLVED: That, the e mail dated 13th March 2006 from Kent Highway Services be noted.

13. Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 2nd May 2006 at 7.30 p.m. at the Pavilion.

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman

Date:.....

Outstanding Highway Issues

Date of original letter/email	Details	Response Received
October 2004	Letter sent to Kent Highways re provision of interactive sign.	1) Letter recd 06/05/05 confirming that the specialist team that investigate the siting of interactive signs will visit in May 2005. 2) Chaser letter sent 09/06/05. 3) Letter recd 25/07/05 awaiting location report from safety engineer. 4) Chaser letter sent 22/09/05. 5) 20/10/05 verbally informed that discussions ongoing. 6) 09/11/05 chaser letter sent. 7) 21/11/05 e mail received informing the Council that feedback from a meeting with other Highway Authorities in the South East still awaited. 8) 09/01/06 chaser e mail sent by David Brazier to Kent Highways. 9) 09/01/06 email recd from Kent Highways awaiting speed survey results. 10) 11/01/06 e mail sent by Cllr Harris to Kent Highways. 11) 24/01/06 e mail recd from Kent Highways advising awaiting speed survey results. 12) Speed results received 21/03/06.
9th June 2005	Letter sent to Julian Cook re the siting of the bus stop on Ash Road to the north of Parkfield. A resident has reported that anyone waiting at the bus stop obstructs the line of view of vehicles exiting the unmade section of Ash Road to the north of the bus stop.	1) 15/07/05 letter received from Julian Cook confirming that he would check visibility. 2) 22/09/05 chaser letter sent to Julian Cook asking whether visibility has been checked. 3) 09/11/05 chaser letter sent to Bryan Fitzgerald. 4) 20/02/06 chaser email sent to Bryan Fitzgerald. No response received to date.
19th July 2005	Letter sent to Kent Highways requesting that consideration be given to residents request to close off Fairby Lane to vehicular access.	1) 19/12/05 Chaser letter sent to Mike Linfield. 2) 03/01/06 email received advising that Julian Cook now dealing with. 3) 01/02/06 email received from Julian Cook advising that Bryan Fitzgerald now dealing. 4) 10/01/06 chaser letter sent to Bryan Fitzgerald on. No response received to date. 5) 08/03/06 chaser letter sent to Bryan Fitzgerald. No response received to date.
9th August 2005	Letter sent to Julian Cook re outstanding work on the traffic calming measures on Ash Road.	1) 09/11/05 chaser letter sent to Bryan Fitzgerald. 2) 12/12/05 letter received from Bryan Fitzgerald confirming that Julian Cook looking into & will advise of outcome. 3) 13/12/05 letter received from J Cook

		<p>advising that following a reassessment certain elements of original scheme were omitted.</p> <p>4) 09/01/06 letter sent to B Fitzgerald advising that approval was for the full scheme. Request for copies of the signing/lining work to be forwarded to the Parish Office and breakdown of what spent so far. No response received to date.</p>
18 th November 2005	Beletia beacon on pedestrian crossing – illuminated column not working	Advised in e mail dated 24 th March 2006 still awaiting action from street lighting contractor.
8th December 2005	Request for the illuminated bollard and lighting column located on the road traffic island at the junction of Ash Road and Church Road to be repaired.	<p>1) 09/12/05 email received on advising that the Street Lighting Officer would be dealing with the matter.</p> <p>2) 18/01/06 Chaser e mail sent. No response received to date.</p> <p>3) Advised in e mails dated 21st and 24th March there is no power supply to road traffic island and new non lit reflective bollards have been ordered.</p>
9th December 2005	Request for the salt bin at Bramblefields to be refilled.	<p>12/12/05 – Passed on to the Operations Team for their attention. No response received to date.</p> <p>Advised verbally on 27th March 2006 that salt bin is privately owned and not the responsibility of the Highway Authority</p>
16th December 2005	Request for Wellfield & Woodlands Avenue to be included in Hartley's gritting schedule (confirmation requested that this has been done).	Chaser e mail sent 18/01/06. No response received to date.
19th December 2005	Request for a salt bin to be placed at the top of Parkfield where it meets Ash Road.	Chaser e mail sent 18/01/06. No response received to date.
3rd January 2006	Complaint received re the condition of a road side verge to the west of Ash Road between Bramblefield Close and the railway line – Email sent asking whether KCC intend to manage this verge and if so whether they intend to follow the management plan produced by the Kent Wildlife Trust. (N.B The verge is designated as a Roadside Nature Reserve)	<p>1) Chaser e mail sent 18/01/06. No response received to date.</p> <p>2) Advised verbally on 27th March 2006 that a land search will be undertaken on the verge to establish ownership, although it is suspected it may be privately owned. Chairman of the Working Group confirmed he had seen a number of people clearing the verge recently, but did not believe they were KCC operatives.</p>
6th January 2006	Broken and empty grit bins on Ash Road at the top of Hoselands Hill and on Ash Road on the junction with Bramblefield Close.	<p>1) Chaser e mail sent 18/01/06. No response received to date.</p> <p>2) Advised verbally on 27th March 2006 that the lid was cracked but otherwise the bin was serviceable. Confirmed bin contained salt.</p>

8th February 2006	Letter sent to Kent Highways requesting that parking restrictions be introduced at the two entrances to Hartley Primary School in Round Ash Way and Fairby Lane.	1) No response received to date. 2) Meeting with Andy Bracey from SDC took place on 28 th March 2006 (see minute item 6)
9th February 2006	Letter sent to Brian Fitzgerald at Kent Highways asking when Church Road will be resurfaced.	Email recd 13/02/06 advising that letter has been passed on to the Operations Department. Email received 03/03/06 advising that the road will be inspected and any dangerous defects repaired & that Church Road will be put forward for surface dressing in 2007/08.
24th February 2006	Email sent to Kent Highways asking for a holly tree at Longfield Hill (identified as being a high risk item in a recent RoSPA report) to be cut back.	24/02/06 email received confirming request has been passed on to Highway Inspector. 01/03/06 Email received from Kent Highways confirming that holly tree has been cut back. 07/03/06 email sent to Kent Highways advising that tree has not been cut back and asking for this to be done urgently. Following a site visit with the Clerk & Andy Whitmore from Kent Highways an email was recd 14/03/06 advising that tree will be cut back Work complete
10th March 2006	Letter sent to Kent Highways following the recent flooding at Springcroft asking what action will be taken.	No response received to date.
24th March 2006	Email sent to Kent Highways asking for the hedge outside 1 St Johns Lane to be cut back.	