

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 13th JUNE 2007 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr Mr D Brazier (*co-opted*)
Cllr Mr D Graeme
Cllr Mr S Granger
Cllr Mr M Harris (Chairman)
Cllr Mr V Sewell

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

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Mr J Gaywood and Cllr Mr J Minns.

2. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mr M Harris be elected Chairman of the Highways Committee until the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2008.

3. Election of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mr S Granger be elected Vice Chairman of the Highways Committee until the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2008.

4. Membership of the Committee

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mr D Brazier be co opted as a Member of the Highways Committee.

5. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mr S Granger declared a personal interest under minute item 11, Parking Enforcement in Rural Areas, as his private residence was located in The Warrens.

6. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Highways Committee held on 28th March 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

7. Terms of Reference

RESOLVED: That, the terms of reference of the Highways Committee, attached as appendix 1 to these minutes, be noted.

8. Restricted Byways

The Committee considered a letter dated 9th May 2007 from the West Kent Area Manager, KCC, explaining that the installation of the "restricted byway" signs in Manor Drive had been omitted from the recent schedule, but it was hoped the new signs would be installed in the next few weeks.

RESOLVED: That, the letter be noted.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.38 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 7.54 p.m.

9. Fairby Lane

It was reported that Kent Highway Services, (KHS), had confirmed its support for the residents responsible for the alleged private section of Fairby Lane in their determination to close that part of the road to vehicular traffic. Furthermore KHS had confirmed it proposed to issue an informal Notice of intention to close the road, stating that this part of the road had not been established as a public right of way and that KHS supported the closure of the road on safety grounds. Residents would be given the opportunity to submit representations and/or objections within 28 days of the issue of the Notice.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

10. Parking at Cherry Trees

It was reported that an engineer from Kent Highway Services had visited the site, but before making any comments on proposals to remove the traffic island to improve parking, he would require a drawing showing what was intended. Furthermore the engineer confirmed Kent Highway Services would not be able to fund the works. The Committee felt that Kent Highway Services should be made aware of the safety issues relating to the uneven surfaces and broken paving slabs caused by vehicles mounting the kerb and parking on the traffic island and the pavements. The Committee considered the situation could be improved with the reinstatement of the bollards, but it was explained that Sevenoaks District Council had installed the bollards through an environmental improvement grant and that it was not willing to fund the reinstatement.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted and (2) a scheme showing improvements to the parking in front of the shops by the removal of the road traffic island be prepared, costed and submitted to Kent Highway Services for comment.

11. Parking Enforcement in Rural Areas

The Committee considered a letter dated 16th April 2007 from the Head of Environmental and Operational Services at Sevenoaks District Council asking Parish Councils to identify any areas within their parish where there was known to be a problem with illegal parking.

RECOMMENDED: That, the District Council be informed of the following areas where there was a problem with illegal parking:

Cherry Trees, The Warrens, roads surrounding the two local Primary Schools (parking on the pavement), Woodland Avenue (parking on the pavement opposite the recycling centre) and Hartley Green.

12. Bus shelter

(a) It was reported that no response had been received from the Arriva bus company to the Council's enquiry about usage figures for the bus stops at Wellfield and at the Cherry Tree shops.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) The Committee considered an e mail dated 18th April 2007 from a resident of the Brambledown Sheltered Accommodation expressing concerns over the lack of a bus shelter at Wellfield and the timetabling of the bus service serving Wellfield.

RESOLVED: That, the e mail be noted.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.15 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8.16 p.m.

13. The Parade, Ash Road

The Committee considered a letter dated 25th May 2007 from Graham Simpkin Partnership expressing concern about the amount of the litter at The Parade, Ash Road.

RECOMMENDED: That, Sevenoaks District Council be requested to consider the provision of an additional litter bin and to ensure the existing litter bin was emptied more regularly.

14. Ash Road

The Committee considered a suggestion from a Member of Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council to encourage the safer use of bicycles on Ash Road by the introduction of a cycle route on the existing footpath.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.20 p.m.

The meeting resumed at 8.35 p.m.

The Committee was concerned that the existing footpath was not wide enough to permit its use by cyclists, either as a shared use or segregated use, but was informed of a similar scheme that had been introduced in the Parish of Offham. The Committee expressed serious concerns about the vegetation overhanging the footpath, particularly between Tates Orchard and the Black Lion Public House, which further restricted the width of the footpath causing considerable danger for pedestrians from passing vehicles. The Committee was informed that this matter had been included on the monthly spreadsheet returned to Kent Highway Services at the beginning of June, but felt that due to the seriousness of the problem, further representations should be made.

RESOLVED: That, (1) further investigations be undertaken to establish whether it would be feasible to provide a cycle route on the existing footpath and (2) Kent Highway Services be informed of the overhanging vegetation between Tates Orchard and the Black Lion Public House.

15. Parish Issue Spreadsheet

The Committee considered the Parish Issue Spreadsheet received by the Council on 31st May 2007.

The County Councillor reported that Kent Highway Services had been unable to progress work to alleviate the flooding issues in Springcroft, as staff resources had been diverted to deal with problems associated with flooding on high speed roads, which was expected to continue until at least September. Whilst the hydrological survey for Springcroft had now been completed, there had been no staff resources available to verify the data or prepare a computer based model of the drainage network. It was hoped this would be undertaken towards the end of the year. In the meantime Kent Highway Services intended to undertake works, as an interim measure, involving the installation of a line of kerbs in Manor Lane at its junction with Manor Drive in an attempt to direct the surface water run off into the existing road gullies. It was hoped this work would be completed during the summer.

RESOLVED: That, Parish Issue Spreadsheet received on 31st May 2007 be noted.

16. Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting of the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board held on 13th March 2007.

RESOLVED: That, the minutes be noted.

17. Highway Matters

The Committee briefly considered problems associated with speeding traffic in Woodland Avenue which had been brought to the Council's attention at a recent meeting of the Youth Committee.

The Committee considered a request for a road directional sign, "Local Shops", to be located at the junction of Church Road and Ash Road.

The Committee expressed concern about the amount of litter throughout the parish.

RESOLVED: That, the issues relating to speeding traffic on Woodlands Avenue and litter be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the Highways Committee.

18. Date of the next meeting

Date to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 9.02 p.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman

Date:.....

Highways Committee

Terms of Reference

1. To determine the problems and assess the priorities associated with the volume and speed of traffic within the Parish.
2. To meet from time to time as deemed necessary by members of the committee.
3. To co opt, for such time as is necessary, members of the public to the committee.
4. To examine and make proposals to the Council on issues affecting highways and byways within the Parish and to negotiate with the relevant authorities.

Adjournment 1

The meeting was adjourned at 7.38 p.m.

Mrs Waterson explained that the parking issues around Hartley Primary School had recently improved and that the rear gate was now locked during the school day. The Chairman explained that representatives from the Parish Council had met with the Headteacher to discuss the parking problems.

Mrs Jordan explained that there was a county wide initiative to encourage school children to walk or cycle to school. There appeared to be a significant increase in the number of children walking or cycling to school, and felt that this may be the reason why the parking around the School at dropping off and picking up times had improved.

The Chairman referred to a letter from Sevenoaks District Council to update residents over proposals that had been put forward to introduce waiting restrictions around the School. The Chairman explained that Sevenoaks District Council had appeared to reluctantly accept the argument against the introduction of timed waiting restrictions in Round Ash Way, Fairby Lane, Conifer Avenue, Oast Way and Chantry Avenue, but favoured proposals to introduce no waiting restrictions outside the school entrances and on the corners of the road junctions on the grounds of safety. Sevenoaks District Council would consult with residents before the works were implemented.

Mr Hills complained about parking on the pavement in Fairby Lane, which had caused damage to the pavement and services outside his property. The Chairman explained that the PCSO, when appointed, could be directed to tackle these types of issues.

Mrs Waterson explained that the deeds of her property gave her rights of access over Fairby Lane.

The meeting was resumed at 7.54

Adjournment 2

The meeting was adjourned at 8.15 p.m.

Mr Carr asked for clarification on the proposed road closure of Fairby Lane by residents who were responsible for the alleged private section of the road. The Chairman understood that notices had been displayed by the residents in question.

The meeting was resumed at 8.16 p.m.

Adjournment 3

The meeting was adjourned at 8.20

Cllr Mr S Glover, (Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council), addressed the Committee to explain his concerns about the safety of cyclist on Ash Road, particularly school children from New Ash Green who attended Hartley Primary School and came forward with a suggestion to improve safety of cyclists by the introduction of a cycle route on the existing footpath. He explained that he had been in discussion with the Headteacher of Hartley Primary School to obtain statistics in relation to the numbers of children who walked or cycled to school and reported there had been a dramatic increase in the numbers either walking or cycling to school. He reported that during week commencing 23rd May 2007, 65 % of the children attending school that week had either walked or cycled to school. Furthermore he had approached Kent County Council in support of this initiative.

The meeting resumed at 8.35 p.m.

Public Question Time

Mrs Goss expressed a number of concerns including the speed of the traffic on Ash Road, particularly at the bend in the road opposite St Johns Lane, the condition of the footpaths, litter, parking on the pavement and vegetation overhanging footpaths. She was also concerned about the potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists if a cycle route was permitted on the footpath on Ash Road.

