

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 18th OCTOBER 2007 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr Mr D Brazier (co-opted)
Cllr Mr S Granger
Cllr Mr M Harris (Chairman)
Cllr Mr J Minns

In attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
1 member of the public

1. Apologies

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

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Highways Committee held on 6th September 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Springcroft

The Committee was reminded that at the previous meeting concerns had been expressed about the kerb alterations and road re-profiling works undertaken by Kent Highway Services at the junction of Manor Drive and Manor Lane. The intended purpose of the aforementioned works had been to divert the flow of surface water down Manor Lane rather than down Manor Drive. The Committee had considered that the works undertaken would not be effective and resolved to contact the Programme Delivery Manager expressing these concerns.

It was reported that a level survey of the area had subsequently been undertaken, which confirmed it would be extremely unlikely that the works could divert the flow of surface water down Manor Lane. Whilst conducting the survey a blocked gully was located approximately 150 metres from the road junction. In the correspondence to the Programme Delivery Manager it was suggested that a site meeting be arranged.

The Committee considered the Programme Delivery Manager's response in a letter dated 1st October 2007, who confirmed that arrangements would be made to clear the blocked gully. The Programme Delivery Manager disagreed with the Committee's opinion over the effectiveness of the works undertaken at the junction of Manor Lane and Manor Drive. He considered that moderate rain water run off would flow into Manor Lane rather than Manor Drive, but agreed that during periods of heavy rainfall or when the channel had been covered with leaves, water would flow over the top of the new kerb and down into Manor Drive. He suggested that local residents may wish to sweep this kerb in attempts to keep it free of leaves, as Sevenoaks District Council only gully swept Manor Lane once a month, which would be insufficient during periods of leaf fall.

The Programme Delivery Manager disputed that the surface water run off from Manor Lane was significant in terms of the causes of flooding in Springcroft. He explained the main contributing factors to the highway drainage were due to:

- silt in the surface water run off from Manor Drive, which blocks the soakaways in Springcroft. He explained that any new soakaways would also become blocked unless large silt traps were installed at the top of Springcroft,

- most of the driveways in Manor Drive and Springcroft drain onto the highway, more than doubling the impermeable area and,
- leaves from the trees in Manor Drive which blocks the drainage grilles in Springcroft. He explained that Sevenoaks District Council was scheduled to gully sweep the road once a month, but have been asked to sweep weekly during periods of leaf fall.

Furthermore the Programme Delivery Manager explained that it was the County Council's policy that proposed drainage works only attained a high priority if flooding damaged habitable rooms or occurred where traffic speeds were high. As flooding in Springcroft did not meet either of these two criterias, no further works had been scheduled for the time being, contrary to previous assurances that the work would be undertaken this year.

RECOMMENDED: That, Kent County Council's Cabinet Member responsible for the Environment, Highways and Waste, Mr K Ferrin, be invited to attend a public meeting to discuss the flooding problems associated with Springcroft.

5. Parking at Cherry Trees

At the previous meeting of the Highways Committee it was reported that a scheme showing improvements to the parking in front of the shops by the removal of a traffic island, together with a supporting statement including photographs to demonstrate the problems associated with the current parking arrangements outside the shops, had been submitted to Kent Highway Services on 20th August 2007 for comment. It was reported that an e mail had been received from Kent Highway Services on 3rd October 2007 forwarding the engineer's original comments as contained in his e mail of 9th May 2007, which had requested a scheme be prepared for Kent Highway Services to undertake a safety check.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted and the matter be pursued with Kent Highway Services.

6. Stack Lane

At the previous meeting of the Highways Committee it was reported that, (1) the County Councillor had been informed of complaints received from residents about the condition of the surface in Stack Lane and that he hoped to report further on the matter at the October meeting, (2) the Public Rights of Way Officer would be inspecting the Restricted Byway to assess whether the condition of the surface was suitable for its purpose and, (3) the Head Teacher had been informed of the residents concerns about the condition of surface in Stack Lane.

The County Councillor reported that he had received an e mail from the Education Department, more particularly the Acting Area Planning & Development Manager for West Kent, Mr R Colyer, who reported that he had inspected the site and confirmed that the road was in poor condition with some deep potholes. Mr Colyer confirmed that the headteacher felt that the relations with local residents were good, apart from when parents blocked the drives, but she confirmed that regular reminders were sent to parents reminding them not to park across the drives.

In his e mail, Mr Colyer had referred to a similar situation which had arisen in Sandwich, where a private road was levelled and consolidated, and finished with tarmac, which provided an acceptable standard of finish albeit not to the demanding standards of an adopted road, which would require drainage and lighting. Mr Colyer confirmed that he had discussed the matter with the Archdiocese of Southwark who were considering allocating some funding for the project next year. Furthermore he confirmed that the Our Lady of Hartley RCP School was also considering a modest contribution. Mr Colyer explained that he would discuss the matter with Kent Highway Services and would investigate whether any funding could be forthcoming from County due its designation as a Restricted Byway. He confirmed that residents would be required to make a contribution and if all parties agreed the works could go ahead during the 2008 school summer holidays. He reported that the School would be willing to work positively with neighbours, and to distribute any letters or arrange a meeting.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

7. Bus Shelter and Services

(a) It was reported that the Kent County Council's External Funding Officer had undertaken a search of potential funding sources for bus shelters, but had been unable to find any suitable sources. He suggested contacting Kent Highway Services. The Committee was unsure as to whether the provision of bus shelters would require the benefit of planning permission. Furthermore the Committee felt that a consultation process should be undertaken with local residents who would be directly affected by the siting of proposed bus shelters at Cherry Trees and Wellfield.

RESOLVED: That, (1) enquiries be made with the Planning Authority to establish whether the provision of a bus shelter constitutes development requiring the benefit of planning permission and, (2) the views of local residents most directly affected by proposals to site a bus shelter at the Cherry Trees shops and at Wellfield be sought.

(b) The Committee was reminded that at the previous meeting of the Highways Committee, Members commented on the time tabling of Arriva's early morning operations. A letter was sent to Arriva on 18th September 2007 asking whether it would be feasible to alter the route of the 423 bus, departing from New Ash Green's North Square at 07.54, to call into the Darent Valley Hospital before continuing its route through the Fleet estate and onward to Dartford Town centre. It was reported that no response had been received.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted and Arriva be pursued for a response.

(c) The Committee was reminded that at the September Council meeting a member of the public had advised of a three hour gap from 07.30 to 10.30 in the bus service from Hartley to New Ash Green, which could inconvenience residents wishing to attend the Doctor's surgery. It was reported that the Chairman of the Highways Committee had informed the resident that the matter would be taken up with either the local Member of Parliament or Arriva.

RESOLVED: That, a letter be written to Arriva informing the bus company of the inconvenience caused to residents as a result of the three hour gap in the morning bus service from Hartley to New Ash Green and the local Member of Parliament be informed of the Council's concerns.

8. Cycle Route, Ash Road

The Committee was reminded that the Council had approved at its meeting held on 10th September 2007, the following recommendation:

"That,

(1) this Council supports, in principle, the provision of a shared cycle and pedestrian route on the existing footpath on Ash Road to improve the safety of children cycling from New Ash Green to attend the local Primary Schools and,

(2) subject to (1) above, enquiries be made with Kent County Council to establish the processes involved in providing a shared use footpath and in doing so, seek the support from Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council."

It was reported that Kent Highway Services had been contacted to establish the processes involved in providing a shared use footpath, although to date no response had been received and that Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council would be considering the matter at its meeting to be held on 18th October 2007.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted and Kent Highway Services be pursued for a response.

9. Speedwatch

(a) At the previous meeting of the Highways Committee it was reported that West Kingsdown Parish Council would be contacting Hartley, Ash-cum-Ridley and Fawkham Parish Council to enquire whether they would be interested in collectively implementing a Speedwatch scheme.

It was reported that to date no response had been received.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

(b) At the previous meeting of the Highways Committee it was resolved that enquiries be made with Teston Parish Council and the Kent Police on the possibility of observing a demonstration of the Speedwatch equipment and that members of the public, who had recently expressed concerns about the speed of traffic, be invited to attend the demonstration. The Committee noted that the most recent concerns about traffic speed had been raised by residents of Woodland Avenue and Gorsewood Road.

It was reported that no Speedwatch had recently been undertaken in Teston due to major traffic calming works, but that the scheme was shortly to be resumed and the Teston Speedwatch Co-ordinator would be willing to demonstrate how the system operates and answer any questions.

RESOLVED: That, a letter be circulated to the residents of Woodland Avenue and Gorsewood Road to assess the level of interest from residents to implement a local Speedwatch scheme and that the findings be reported back to the Committee for further consideration.

10. Interactive Speed Sign – Ash Road

It was reported that an e mail dated 2nd October 2007 from the Transportation Engineer, Kent Highway Services had been received in response to any enquiry from the Parish Council about the activation of the interactive speed sign on Ash Road. The Engineer stated that to the best of his knowledge the interactive speed sign had been commissioned at the end of June with no report of any difficulties and suggested the reason for the sign not working could be as the result of a blown fuse. He confirmed that a representative from the street lighting team would be investigating the matter.

The Committee questioned the accuracy of this report and considered that the interactive speed sign had never been commissioned.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted and Kent Highway Services be informed of the current status of the interactive speed sign.

11. Parish Issue Spreadsheet

The Committee considered the Parish Issue Spreadsheet received by the Council on 2nd October 2007. It was noted that a report of a pothole at the junction of Conifer Avenue and Fairby Lane had been added to the spreadsheet and that further complaints had been received about the potholes in Manor Lane

RESOLVED: That, (1) Parish Issue Spreadsheet received by the Council on 2nd October 2007 be noted and (2) Kent Highway Services be informed, in writing, about the poor condition of the road surface in Castle Hill and Manor Lane.

12. Highway Matters

Concerns were expressed about the number and depth of potholes in the narrow section of Stack Lane.

RESOLVED: That, the Public Rights of Way Officer be asked to report on the outcome of her inspection of the restricted byway in Stack Lane.

13. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 29th November 2007 at 7.30p.m. at Hartley Library, Ash Road.

The meeting closed at 8.55 p.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman

Date:.....

Public Question Time

Mrs Allen, a resident of Stack Lane, (refer to minute item 6) complained about the condition of the road surface particularly when the ruts in the road became flooded which made it difficult for her to get out of her property.

