

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 24th JANUARY 2008 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
Cllr Mr V Sewell

In attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
Cllr Mr B Ramsay
10 members 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

Cllr Mr J Minns declared a personal interest under minute item 9, Speedwatch, as he lived on Gorsewood Road.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Highways Committee held on 29th November 2007 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Springcroft

The Committee considered a report on the public meeting held on 11th January 2008, attended by the Programme Delivery Manager at Kent Highway Services, Mr A Burton, and Head of Operations for West Kent, Mr D Aspinall.

The Committee was disappointed that the Cabinet Member responsible for the Environment, Highways and Waste, Mr K Ferrin, had failed to attend the meeting and furthermore he had not contacted the Parish Council to tender his apologies. It was noted that the Chairman of the Parish Council and the local County Councillor were both individually pursuing this matter.

The Committee questioned the accuracy of paragraph 9 of Mr Burton's report, in which he stated that Manor Drive was, "a private street maintainable by no-one". The Committee referred to correspondence from Kent County Council's Public Rights of Way Principal Officer, which confirmed that Manor Drive was a Restricted Byway and that from 2nd May 2006 Restricted Byways had become maintainable at the public expense to a standard suitable for its legal designation. The Committee was reminded that Restricted Byways provide the public with the following rights: (1) a right of way on foot, (2) a right of way on horseback or leading a horse and, (3) a right of way for vehicles, other than mechanically propelled vehicles. The Committee considered the silt running off the un-made section of Manor Drive was a major contributor to the flooding problems at the end of Springcroft, as the silt had blocked the existing soakaways rendering them ineffective. The Committee felt this problem should be addressed before any further improvements were carried out, otherwise the silt would, over time, continue to have a detrimental effect on the drainage system and any works carried out would be wasted in terms of finances and resources.

Cllr Mr J Minns considered the only long term solution to resolve the flooding issue at the end of Springcroft would be to implement the works identified in paragraph 7 of Mr Burton's report.

These works involved running a pipe through land at the end of Springcroft and flooding the area of lower lying land behind.

The Committee noted that Mr Burton had indicated he would be providing the Parish Council with an update on the preferred design for the flooding remedial works and its priority by mid February 2008.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report of the public meeting held on 11th January 2008 be received and noted, (2) the update on the preferred option for remedial works at Springcroft be awaited and, (3) the local County Councillor be asked to raise the issues surrounding the problems of flooding in Springcroft at Kent County Council.

5. Parking at Cherry Trees

(a) The Committee considered concerns expressed by a resident of Carmelite Way at the Members Surgery held on 12th January 2008 on the issues relating to the parking outside the shops at Cherry Trees.

It was reported that an e mail had been received from a resident of Cherry Trees expressing similar concerns.

The Chairman of the Highways Committee outlined the work undertaken by the Parish Council over recent years to address the issues relating to illegal and inconsiderate parking outside the shops and the untidy state of the shops and its surrounding environment.

RESOLVED: That, the reports be noted.

(b) The Committee considered the response from the Transportation Engineer, Mr A Jiwaji, to the Parish Council's proposals regarding improvements to the parking outside the shops at Cherry Trees by removing the centre traffic island.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.20 p.m.

Members of the public were given the opportunity to express their concerns about the parking outside the shops in Cherry Trees.

The meeting resumed at 8.37 p.m.

RESOLVED: That, (1) clarification be sought on whether the West Kent Division of Kent Highway Services had adopted a policy preventing right angled and 45 degree parking, (2) a safety audit be undertaken of the pedestrian and vehicle movement outside the shops at Cherry Trees, (3) the Police and Parking Enforcement Officer be informed of the problems associated with parking outside the Cherry Tree shops and asked to attend site to deal with any obstructions or illegal parking, respectively.

RECOMMENDED: That, arrangements be made for a sign to be installed at the entrance to the car park located at the rear of Cherry Tree shops.

6. Bus Shelter

The Committee was reminded that at the last meeting it was resolved that, (1) a feasibility study be undertaken on the siting of a bus shelter at Wellfield, (2) the Planning Authority be pressed to respond to the enquiry about whether the provision a bus shelter required planning permission and, (3) a response be sent to each of the three residents who had contacted the Council in respect of the siting of a bus shelter at Cherry Trees.

It was reported that the Planning Authority required further information on land ownership and usage before it could determine whether planning permission would be required for the provision of bus shelter. Kent Highways Services had confirmed that the land next to the lay-by in Wellfield forms part of the public highway adopted and maintained at the public expense and that this information had been sent back to the Planning Authority.

It was reported that Kent Highway Services, West Kent Housing Association and Arriva had been invited to comment on the proposal to provide a bus shelter adjacent to the lay-by in Wellfield. The West Kent Neighbourhood Housing Officer, in collaboration with the Manager of

the sheltered housing stock, had confirmed they could see no reason why the siting of a bus shelter at Wellfield would present a problem. Responses from Kent Highway Services and Arriva were awaited.

The Committee felt that further consultation should be undertaken by the Parish Council with residents immediately effected by the proposal to site a bus shelter in the lay-by at Wellfield. Cllr Mr B Ramsay confirmed that his contacts through Age Concern supported the provision of a bus shelter at Wellfield.

RESOLVED: That, (1) residents in the immediate vicinity of the lay-by at Wellfield be invited to comment on the proposal to site a bus shelter at this location and, (2) designs and costings of various styles of bus shelter be circulated to Members of the Highways Committee for comment.

7. Bus Services

(a) At the last meeting of the Highways Committee it was resolved that enquiries be made with Arriva in respect of (1) the provision off through-ticketing on the 423, 433 and 489 bus routes and beyond onto the Fast Track service, (2) the feasibility of introducing electronic signage at the bus stops in Hartley, (3) the replacement of the missing bus stop at Cherry Trees and, (4) the reduction of the bus service on Ash Road between Wellfield and St Johns Lane to a 1½ hourly service.

The Committee considered the response from Arriva in a letter dated 20th December 2007 to various issues raised by the Parish Council, as set out below:

- The new 433 bus service would require an appropriate increase in patronage and revenue for it to be sustainable in the long term.
- The 489 bus service was grossly under used, especially during off peak periods, and the service was reduced to improve its financial performance.
- The through ticketing issue had been passed to Arriva's Commercial Manager for comment.
- The issue over the missing bus stops had been passed to the relevant department for action.
- There were no plans to re-route the 423 or 433 to improve the bus service on Ash Road between Wellfield and St Johns Lane.
- Arriva confirmed it was not responsible for the introduction of electronic signage, (RTPI – real time passenger information), at bus stops. Such provision was at the discretion of Kent County Council and the Committee was informed that the local Member of Parliament was pursuing the provision of electronic signage in Hartley with the County Council.

RESOLVED: That, the local Member of Parliament be contacted to enquire over progress to install electronic signage at the bus stops in Hartley.

(b) The Committee considered a consultation document entitled, "Options for strengthening bus passenger representation", published by the Department for Transport. The aim of the Department would be to establish a formal bus passenger representative body to (1) champion improvements in bus and scheduled coach service provision, (2) work with passengers, operators, government, local authorities and other key stakeholders to ensure that the passenger voice was heard when making key decisions and, (3) make suggestions about the future direction of bus provision.

RECOMMENDED: That, this Council believes that option 1, as set out in the consultation document entitled, "Options for strengthening bus passenger representation", should be adopted, as this would involve working with existing bus passenger bodies, such as Bus Users UK, and therefore not require the creation of an additional tier of bureaucracy or require further legislation.

8. Cycle Route, Ash Road

The Committee considered an e mail dated 9th January 2008 from the Kent Highway Services Transportation Engineer in response to the Parish Council's enquiry about the feasibility of providing a shared cycle/footpath on Ash Road. The Engineer had previously advised that width of the shared route should be a minimum of 3 metre, (as defined in the Local Transport Plan 2006 -11, Appendix 9: Cycling Strategy for Kent, page 16), but the Parish Council had referred to a cycle/footpath route in Offham which had been considerably less than the County standard. The Engineer advised that the Offham scheme was installed as part of the first Quiet Land National Demonstration Project in 2002 and would not be permitted if installed today.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the advice from Kent Highway Services be noted, (2) further advice on shared cycle/footpath routes be sought from Sustran and the Cyclist Touring Club and, (3) Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council be advised of the outcome of such enquiries to provide a shared cycle/footpath route on Ash Road.

9. Speedwatch

The Committee considered an analysis of responses to a letter delivered to every house in Woodland Avenue and Gorsewood Road, enquiring whether residents would be interesting in establishing a Speedwatch scheme. A number of residents had expressed concern about acts of reprisal from angry car drivers.

Woodland Avenue

Total number of letters sent - 57

Total responses received - 12

Residents in favour - 9

Residents against - 3

Residents expressing an interest in establishing a Speedwatch scheme - 5

Gorsewood Road

Total number of letters sent - 95

Total responses received - 10

Residents in favour - 6

Residents against - 4

Residents expressing an interest in establishing a Speedwatch scheme – 2

RECOMMENDED: That, due to insufficient numbers of residents expressing an interest, no further action be taken to establish a Speedwatch scheme in Hartley at this stage.

10. Interactive Speed Sign – Ash Road

The Committee considered an e mail dated 18th December 2007 from Kent Highway Services explaining why the interactive speed sign was not yet operational and confirming that its installation would be completed by the end of January 2008.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

11. Litter picking

At a previous meeting the Committee had considered a complaint about the amount of litter on The Parade on Ash Road and it was resolved to pursue the matter with Sevenoaks District Council.

It was reported that the District Council had confirmed the litter bin was emptied and the litter picked, both on the privately owned frontage and the highway outside the shops, on a daily basis, Monday to Friday. The District Council was prepared to supply the litter bin and arrange

for its daily emptying, provided the Parish Council obtained the written permission from the shop frontage owners in the vicinity of no 1 The Parade and agreed to meet the cost of its installation, estimated to be £65.

RECOMMENDED: That, no further action be taken to provide additional litter bin at The Parade on Ash Road as the Council believes the current arrangements to be adequate.

12. Gorsewood Road

The Committee considered concerns expressed by a resident at a Members Surgery held on 12th January 2008 about the condition of the tunnel under the railway line at the bottom of Gorsewood Road. The main issues highlighted were, (1) lighting not working, or so dirty that it did not give off adequate light, (2) the lack of handrails alongside the steps on the Hartley side of the railway, (3) the new gate on the Longfield side was often left open, (4) the approach path was covered in mud and required cleaning and (5) the tunnel was in a dirty condition and appeared not to have been cleaned for a number of years.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be deferred to enable members of the Committee to visit the subway.

13. Parking restrictions

The Committee considered concerns expressed by a resident at a Members Surgery held on 12th January 2008, about the safety of pedestrians using the Fairby Lane gate into the Hartley Primary School. The concerns relate to the parking of cars on the “keep clear” lines outside the school entrance, which was made more hazardous by cars parked in Chantry Avenue and top of Fairby Lane thus reducing sight lines. The situation was further exacerbated by cars reversing at the Chantry Avenue/Fairby Lane junction by drivers wishing to return down Chantry Avenue and often resulted in cars mounting the pavement.

It was confirmed that the Police had attended the site and that as a result, the situation had improved for the time being.

RESOLVED: That, a progress report on implementing parking restrictions in Hartley, as set out in a letter dated 23rd November 2006 from the Senior Traffic and Parking Engineer at Sevenoaks District Council, be obtained.

14. Ash Road

The Committee considered concerns expressed by a resident at a Members Surgery held on 12th January 2008 about the condition of Ash Road from the roundabout at the Milestone School to the junction with Chantry Avenue. The resident was particularly concerned about the condition of the edge of the carriageway on the opposite side of the road to the footpath, which was breaking away and was extremely hazardous for cyclists.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be included on the monthly Parish spreadsheet.

15. Highway Matters

The Committee considered reports from Councillors on issues affecting the highways.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the following matters be included on the monthly Parish spreadsheet:

- 15 Dickens Close – road breaking up at kerb line
- 69 Cherry Trees – pothole

(2) enquiries be made with the landowner of the access road off Church Road leading to The Parade to find out if there were any plans to fill the pothole in front of the “Bottle and Basket”.

16. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 20th March 2008 at 7.30p.m. at Hartley Library, Ash Road.

The meeting closed at 10.05 p.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman

Date:.....

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8.20 p.m.

Mr Southerton, 21 Carmelite Way was of the opinion that a uniformed presence would only be effective for a short period of time and the problem would very quickly return. Mrs Southerton questioned whether the double yellow lines were enforceable.

Dr Cramp, 27 Cherry Trees referred to the planning permission for the shops which conditioned that the car park should be made available at all times when the premises were in use. It was believed a sign advertising the presence of a car park at the rear of the shops would be helpful. Dr Cramp reminded the Committee about the location of a private sewer under the lay-by.

Mr Sutton, 2 Cherry Trees supported the provision of a sign. He asked whether CCTV could be used in any parking enforcement action.

Mr Brooks, 59 Cherry Trees considered that if the parking restrictions were enforced in front the shops, the problem would spread itself further into Cherry Trees and therefore the use of the car park should be encouraged.

Dr Cramp suggested that residents may wish to take photographs of offending vehicles and that this information could be passed onto the Police. He questioned whether emergency vehicles could be obstructed.

Mrs Sharp, Blue Firs, Church Road informed the Committee that she had been challenged by residents from the flats above the shops when she recently used the car park. They claimed she had no right to use the car park.

Cllr Sewell felt that the provision of rubbish bins may be helpful for residents of the flats above the shops.

Mr Parker 23 Cherry Trees claimed the Police could take action and referred to a recent bye-law introduced by Kingston Council against parking on the pavement for which there was now a £60 fine.

It was felt that the PCSO could patrol the area and place notices on vehicles asking drivers to park considerately when using the shops.

The meeting resumed at 8.37 p.m.

