

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 20th MARCH 2008 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr Mr D Graeme
Cllr Mr S Granger
Cllr Mr M Harris (Chairman)
Cllr Mr V Sewell

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

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Mr D Brazier, Mr J Gaywood and Mr J Minns.

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 24th January 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Springcroft

It was reported that Hartley Parish Council had written to Kent Highway Services to enquire whether any progress had been made on assessing the preferred remedial works to resolve the flooding problems in Springcroft. It was noted that Kent Highway Services intended to provide the Parish Council with a copy of the consultant's report, but as yet no report had been forthcoming.

The Committee was advised that due to staff shortages the design of the proposed remedial works at Springcroft had been outsourced to consultants.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.40 p.m. to allow a member of the public to address the committee.

The meeting was resumed at 8.00 p.m.

RESOLVED: That, Kent Highway Services be pursued for a response to an enquiry about the design remedial work and for receipt of a copy of the consultants' report pertaining to the flooding at Springcroft.

5. Parking at Cherry Trees

At the last meeting of the Highways Committee it was 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.

It was reported that no response had been received from Kent Highway Services in respect of (1) above.

The Committee was advised that a safety audit would have to be carried out by a suitably qualified consultant.

It was reported that the Senior Parking and Amenities Officer at Sevenoaks District Council had confirmed that patrols in the Hartley area had been more regular this year and that six penalty charge notices had been issued since the beginning of the year, three of which had been in Cherry Trees. During the same period last year only three penalty charge notices had been issued, none of which were issued in Cherry Trees.

The Committee was reminded that the Council had approved at a meeting held on 11th February 2008 a sign be installed at the entrance to the car park. The Committee was shown a standard sign available from Kent County Supplies but felt that it would be better to provide a sign with a directional arrow including the words “customer parking”, and that said sign should be reflective. The Clerk reported that the resident of no 23 Cherry Trees had verbally confirmed he had no objection to the sign being installed on his boundary wall.

The Committee considered the general condition of the area surrounding the shops and noted that vehicles continued to park on the road traffic island and the pavement, particularly in front of the DIY shop and next to the flank wall of Budgens. The Committee felt that such parking was hazardous to pedestrians and caused damage to the paving slabs. The Committee expressed concerns about difficulties faced by residents of the flats above the shops in disposing of their rubbish and felt that the provision of an external bin storage area could be helpful. It was noted that the graffiti on the staircase had been reported to Sevenoaks District Council and that it had had been included on the works list for removal.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) Kent Highway Services be pursued for a response to the Parish Council's enquiry about its parking policy regarding right angled and 45 degree parking,
- (2) a letter be written to Budgens enquiring whether they would be willing to provide a “no parking” sign on the end flank wall next to the pavement near the recently installed dropped kerb,
- (3) enquiries be made to establish whether any of the flats above the shops were owned and managed by the West Kent Housing Association Ltd and if so, the arrangements by which their tenants dispose of their rubbish,
- (4) enquiries be made with Sevenoaks District Council to establish when the graffiti on the staircase would be removed and whether it would be possible to apply anti graffiti paint immediately its removal,
- (5) further investigation be undertaken into a suitable “customer parking” sign and that designs be circulated to Members of the Committee for comment and,
- (6) investigations be undertaken to establish the cost of employing the services of a suitably qualified consultant to undertake a safety audit of the Parish Council's proposed scheme to improve parking in front of the shops by the removal of the traffic island.

6. Bus Shelter

The Committee was informed of advice received from the Planning Authority, which had confirmed that providing the bus shelter was constructed on land owned or maintained by the Parish Council or the Highways Authority, and the bus shelter did not exceed 4 metres in height or 200 cubic metres in capacity, then planning permission would not be required. It was reported that the Highways Authority had confirmed that the site of the proposed bus shelter in the lay-by at Wellfield was located on land owned by the Highways Authority.

It was reported that Kent Highway Services had inspected the proposed site and commented that the bus shelter should be sited on the grass verge in front of the brick wall, with a cantilevered roof to at least 0.5 metre from the face of the kerb on the tarmac footway.

The Committee was informed that twenty-four consultation letters had been sent to residents likely to be most effected by the proposed bus shelter in the lay-by at Wellfield. The Committee considered letters received from five residents of Wellfield objecting to the provision of a bus

shelter. Residents were concerned that the proposed bus shelter could encourage youths to loiter in the area and feared this would lead to an increase in vandalism and other antisocial behaviour. It was reported that no letters of support had been received from residents.

RECOMMENDED: That, no further action be taken to provide a bus shelter at Wellfield or Cherry Trees and that residents be informed accordingly.

7. Bus Services

The Committee examined a letter dated 15th February 2008 from the local Member of Parliament in respect of the provision of Real Time Passenger Information (R.T.P.I.) in Hartley, confirming that he had raised the matter with Kent County Council following a number of complaints about the bus service from residents in Hartley. Dr Stoate confirmed that Kent County Council was committed to increasing the availability of R.T.P.I., but villages such as Hartley would be a lower priority to larger urban areas and therefore would be the last recipients of this technology. Dr Stoate explained that he did not agree with the County Council's views and believed this technology would be more beneficial to those using less well served rural bus routes. Furthermore he felt that such technology could encourage more people to use public transport.

The Committee was advised that Kent County Council was currently trialling a virtual passenger information point and that such information would, in time, be available through mobile telephones. It was reported that this service was not yet available to the general public, but information of what it could look like was available at <http://kent.acislive.com/>.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) a letter be written to the local Member of Parliament expressing concerns that Hartley would be a low priority in respect of the rollout of Real Time Passenger Information throughout the County and,

(2) the provision of Real Time Passenger Information in Hartley be pursued with Kent County Council and the local Member for Kent County Council be advised of the Parish Council's views on the matter.

8. Cycle Route, Ash Road

The Committee considered advice received from the Cyclist Touring Club (C.T.C.) in respect of shared use cycle and pavement routes. The C.T.C. advised that shared use should only be provided for cyclists as a last resort and that the C.T.C. recommended consideration be given to making the road a better environment for cyclists, if possible. The C.T.C. suggested the Council may wish to view the Cycling for England website for further information on the principles of planning and designing for cyclists.

The Committee briefly examined Appendix 9 of the Local Transport Plan for Kent 2006-11 setting out the County Council's cycling strategy for Kent. The Committee questioned previous advice from Kent Highway Services in which it was stated that such shared use routes were required to be a minimum of 3 metres in width.

RESOLVED: That, further investigation be undertaken on width requirements for shared use cycle and footpath routes, as defined in the Local Transport Plan for Kent 2006-11.

9. Interactive Speed Sign – Ash Road

The Committee was informed that the commissioning of the interactive speed sign had been delayed to the end of March 2008.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

10. Gorsewood Road

At the last meeting of the Committee complaints about the condition of the subway under the railway line at the end of Gorsewood Road were considered. The main areas of concerns

were; (1) the lack and/or efficiency of the lighting, (2) lack handrails next to the steps, (3) new kissing gate regularly left open, (4) approach path covered in mud and (5) general condition of the tunnel.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the issues surrounding the condition of the subway under the railway line at the end of Gorsewood Road be referred to the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee and, (2) arrangements be made with the authority responsible for the defective light in the subway to be replaced.

11. Parking restrictions

At the last meeting of the Highways Committee it was resolved that a progress report be obtained on the implementation of 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. It was reported that no response had been received.

RESOLVED: That, the progress report requested from the Senior Traffic and Parking Engineer on the proposed introduction of parking restrictions in Hartley be pursued.

12. Highway Matters

There were no reports from Councillors on issues affecting the highways.

The Clerk reported on new arrangements for the reporting of potholes in the parish. An information pack and reporting cards would be provided to the Parish Council during week commencing 24th March 2008.

RESOLVED: That, the report on new arrangements for reporting potholes be noted and an article be included in the next edition of the Council's newsletter.

13. Condition of the pavements

The Committee considered a letter of complaint from a resident of Cherry Trees about the condition of the pavements in Hartley.

RESOLVED: That, the resident complaining about the condition of the pavements be asked to complete a pothole reporting card identifying the location of damaged/defective paving and to return the completed card to the Highway Authority.

14. Stack Lane

The Committee considered a suggestion from the Council's footpath representative that the Council should give consideration to the creation of a footpath through the centre of Stack Lane, from Ash Road to the properties known as High Gables and Chantry Cottage.

The Committee was informed of advice received from a Community Governor of Our Lady of Hartley RCP School confirming that the width of Stack Lane was 8 foot from the boundary wall of the properties located opposite the school.

RESOLVED: That, enquiries be made to establish whether a Residents Society was in existence for the residents of Stack Lane between Ash Road and High Gables.

15. Satellite navigation systems

The Committee noted that satellite navigation systems directed traffic along Castle Hill, which was not suitable for large vehicles or high volumes of traffic. The Committee noted that the issues relating to satellite navigation systems had been raised at a meeting of the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board held on 12th December 2007, (minute item 463).

RESOLVED: That, concerns expressed by the Committee about satellite navigation systems directing traffic along Castle Hill be brought to the attention of the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board.

16. Kent County Council Draft Permit Scheme

The Committee considered Kent County Council's Draft Permit Scheme. It was reported that the Permit Scheme would provide a new way to manage activities in the public highway and improve the Highways Authorities ability to minimise disruption from street and highway works. Furthermore the Permit Scheme would provide an alternative to the current "notification system", so instead of informing a street authority about its intention to carry out works in the area, a utility company would be required need to book time on the highway through a permit. The Permit Scheme would extend to Kent County Council, its partners and agents, for its own works.

RECOMMENDED: That, Hartley Parish Council support, in principle, Kent County Council's Draft Permit Scheme and request that the Parish Council be informed of any permits in advance of their issue and be given the opportunity to comment on the standard of reinstatement works undertaken by permit holders.

17. Dartford River crossing tolls

The Committee considered information on the new pricing regime to be implemented on the Dartford Crossing and was disappointed to note that Hartley residents were not eligible to apply for the discount scheme despite the fact that Hartley properties had a Dartford postcode.

RESOLVED: That, the local Member of Parliament be asked to explain how the criteria for eligibility of the discount scheme in respect of the new pricing regime for the Dartford River crossing toll had been determined.

18. Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting of the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board held on 12th December 2007.

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board held on 12th December 2007 be noted.

19. Kent County Council's repair allocations for highway assets

The Committee examined Kent County Council's proposed 08/09 repair allocations for highways assets. The Committee was disappointed to note that the 2008/09 repair allocation for drainage had been reduced by £50,000.

RESOLVED: That, the Kent County Council's proposed 08/09 repair allocation for highways assets be noted and enquiries be made on what effect the reduction in the drainage budget would have on the proposed flooding remedial works at Springcroft.

20. Parish spreadsheet

The Committee examined the parish spreadsheet returned to Kent Highways Services on 10th March 2008.

RESOLVED: That, the parish spreadsheet returned to Kent Highways Services on 10th March 2008 be noted.

21. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 24th April 2008 at 7.30p.m. at Hartley Library, Ash Road.

The meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman

Date:.....

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7.40 p.m.

Mr Allen reported on his recent communications with Kent Highway Services in respect of the proposed remedial works to alleviate the flooding at Springcroft. Mr Allen agreed to pursue the matter with the Highways Authority and to continue with his efforts to obtain a copy of the consultant's report.

The meeting resumed at 8.00 p.m.

