

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 12th JUNE 2008 AT 7.30 p.m. AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

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

In attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)

Apologies

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

1. 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 2009.

2. Election of Vice Chairman of the Highways Committee

RESOLVED: That, Cllr Mr S Granger be elected Vice Chairman of the Highways Committee until the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2009.

3. Membership of the Committee

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

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting of the Highways Committee held on 20th March 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6. Terms of Reference

RECOMMENDED: That, the terms of reference of the Highways Committee be amended, as set out in appendix 1 attached to these minutes.

7. Springcroft

The Committee noted that the Council had been advised that due to staff shortages no significant progress had been made since the public meeting held on 11th January 2008 and that the design of the proposed remedial work had been outsourced to consultants. The Committee examined a report on the Drainage Investigation Initial Assessment prepared by Jacobs Babbie in February 2005.

The Committee noted that a formal complaint had been submitted to Kent Highway Services by a local resident.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

8. Parking at Cherry Trees

The Committee was advised of the following progress:

(1) Kent Highway Services was seeking clarification from the Parking Manager to clarify whether the West Kent Division of Kent Highway Services had adopted a policy preventing right angled and 45 degree parking. To date no response had been received.

(2) No response had been received from Budgens regarding the enquiry to provide a “no parking” sign.

(3) West Kent Housing Association had confirmed that none of the flats above the shops at Cherry Trees were owned or managed by the Association.

(4) The “Grimebuster” team had confirmed they would not be able to remove the graffiti from the staircase at Cherry Trees by means of a high pressure water hose due to concerns about the damage it could cause the surfacing. The Community Warden had confirmed that he was not permitted to remove graffiti as he had not received the appropriate training.

(5) The Committee was satisfied with the “customer parking” sign previously circulated to Members. The Committee was informed that the owner of no 23 Cherry Trees had given his verbal consent to fix the new sign to the rear of his boundary wall.

(6) Information had been requested from Kent Highway Services on the level of safety audit required which had been recommended as part of a feasibility study into the proposal to remove the road traffic island in front of the shop.

The Committee was reminded that the Parish Plan survey had identified the environment around Cherry Trees as one of the areas in Hartley that gave most concerns to residents and briefly considered how the visual amenity of the area could be improved.

RESOLVED: That,

- (1) the landowners be informed that one of the timber bollards had been knocked over and was now causing a hazard,
- (2) the landowners be asked for their views on a proposal to plant two new trees to replace the trees which had been removed sometime ago,
- (3) a letter be written to the Customer Liaison Officer, Kent Highway Services, explaining the Parish Council’s objectives in pursuing the removal of the road traffic island and asking for her assistance in expediting such works to improve the parking in front of the shops, including advice on the level of safety audit required as recommended by the Transportation Engineer, Mr A Jiwaji,
- (4) a letter be written to the shopkeepers at Cherry Trees explaining the efforts undertaken by the Parish Council to improve the parking and environment around the shops, and seeking their views and suggestions on how the surroundings could be further improved,
- (5) arrangements be made to purchase and fix the new “customer parking” sign at the rear of no 23 Cherry Trees,

RECOMMENDED: That, expenditure upto a sum of £150 be approved to purchase paint to cover the graffiti on the side of the staircase at Cherry Trees and anti graffiti paint to provide the surface with future protection against graffiti attacks and to make arrangements for the paint to be applied by the “Grimebuster” Team.

9. Bus Services

The Committee considered an e mail dated 2nd April 2008 from two residents complaining about the start time of 09.30 for the free bus pass available to eligible residents. The residents complained that this would cause inconvenience to residents attending early morning appointments at Darent Valley Hospital. The residents had also complained about the reliability of the 489 bus service to Gravesend.

The Committee noted that Kent County Council had announced funding to allow the free bus pass scheme to start at 09.00 rather than 09.30 effective from 30th June 2008.

RESOLVED: That, the e mail dated 2nd April 2008 from residents be noted.

10. Cycle Route, Ash Road

After examination of the Local Transport Plan for Kent 2006-11 the Committee concluded that it would not be practical to pursue the provision of a shared use cycle and footpath on Ash Road due to the limited width of the existing footpath.

RECOMMENDED: That, no further action be taken to pursue the provision of shared use cycle and footpath on Ash Road.

11. Interactive Speed Sign – Ash Road

The Committee was informed that the interactive speed sign had been commissioned on 8th April 2008.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted and (2) Kent Highway Services be asked to undertake a traffic survey to assess the impact of the interactive speed sign on reducing traffic speeds.

12. Traffic congestion – Ash Road

The Committee considered a letter dated 16th May 2008 from a resident expressing her concerns about traffic congestion on Ash Road, the parking outside the Hartley WI Hall and the effectiveness of the interactive sign.

The Committee shared the residents concerns about the increasing speed and volume of traffic on Ash Road and other roads throughout the parish, but was not sure what other measures could be put in place to reduce speed and congestion. The Committee was reminded that exhaustive discussions had taken place with Kent Highway Services in the past, which had resulted in works to reduce the speed and improve safety on the approach to and on the carriageway of Hoselands Hill and the provision of an interactive speed sign outside Fairby Grange.

The Committee noted that there was no other land available in the immediate vicinity of the Hartley WI Hall to provide any additional car parking and felt that cars parked on the roadside would, by their physical presence, have a positive effect on reducing traffic speeds.

The Committee would welcome any suggestions to reduce traffic speeds and congestion.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 16th May 2008 from a resident about traffic congestion on Ash Road be noted.

13. Gorsewood Road – Tunnel

The Committee was informed that Kent County Council had raised an order to investigate repairs to the defective light in the subway under the railway line at the end of Gorsewood Road.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

14. Parking restrictions

The Committee was informed that the Senior Traffic and Parking Engineer at Sevenoaks District Council had failed to respond to the Parish Council's requests for a progress report on the scheme to implement waiting restrictions in Hartley, as set out in a letter dated 23rd November 2006.

The Committee considered two e mails dated 3rd April 2008 and 17th April 2008 from local residents complaining about a number of issues relating to parking and traffic speeds in Church Road.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the Senior Traffic and Parking Engineer from Sevenoaks District Council be pursued for a response and (2) the e mails dated 3rd April 2008 and 17th April 2008 from local residents be noted.

15. Highway Matters

The Committee was informed that Kent Highway Services had carried out an intensive campaign to fill potholes during the month of April and that the Council had received a pothole pack. Parish Councils and the public were being encouraged to report any potholes to Kent Highway Services. The Committee examined an information sheet from Kent Highway Services explaining work undertaken as part of the pothole campaign.

RESOLVED: That, the report on potholes repairs be noted.

16. Stack Lane

(a) At the last meeting of the Highways Committee it was resolved to enquire whether a Residents Society existed in Stack Lane in response to a request for the provision of footpath along the narrow section of Stack Lane. The Committee considered a letter dated 16th April 2008 from a local resident advising that there was no residents society operating in Stack Lane as there appeared to be no interest amongst local residents.

RESOLVED: That, advice be sought from the Public Rights of Way Officer at Kent County Council on the proposal to form a footpath along the narrow section of Stack Lane.

(b) The Committee considered an e mail dated 29th May 2008, forwarded by Cllr Mr Brazier, from the Area Planning & Development Manager (West Kent), explaining that discussions had taken place with the Highway Authority on the specification to upgrade the surface of Stack Lane and that the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark had allocated funding to the project. Kent County Council had given assurances that local residents would be consulted on the proposed works and that the works would be undertaken during the summer holidays.

The Committee considered a letter from a local residents setting out her concerns over planned building works at Our Lady of Hartley RCP School in respect of the provision of new classroom.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the e mail dated 29th May 2008 updating the Council on plans to improve the road surface of Stack Lane be noted and (2) clarification be sought from the Planning Authority as to whether any limitations would be imposed on working hours during the construction of a new classroom at the school.

17. Dartford River crossing tolls

The Committee considered a letter dated 3rd April 2008 from the local Member of Parliament in response to the Council's enquiry about the criteria for eligibility of the discount scheme in respect of the new pricing regime at the Dartford crossing.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 3rd April 2008 from the local Member of Parliament in respect of the discount scheme at the Dartford crossing be noted

18. Speed Limit Review

The Committee was informed that of a review to be undertaken by all Highway Authorities to check that "A" and "B" networks complied with new guidelines issued by the Government on speed limits entitled "Circular Roads 1/2600 – Setting local speed limits".

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

19. Parish spreadsheet

The Committee examined the parish spreadsheet received by the Council on 2nd June 2008.

RESOLVED: That, the parish spreadsheet be noted.

20. Kent Highway Services – Community Liaison Officers

The Committee considered a letter dated 19th May 2008 from Jacqui Norwood advising of changes to reporting procedures at Kent Highway Services in respect highway problems and issues. In future all routine highway maintenance issues, such as potholes and blocked gullies, should be reported by telephone through the Contact Centre on 08458 247 800. Each reported issue would be given a unique reference number which would enable all parish issues to be tracked. Jacqui Norwood would continue to be the Community Liaison Officer responsible for Hartley and she planned to visit the parish during the course of the next few weeks to explain in more detail the new scheme.

RESOLVED: That, the letter dated 19th May 2008 from the Community Liaison Officer be noted.

21. PACT Panel

The Committee was informed of plans to establish a PACT (Partners and Communities Together) Panel, which would involve monthly meetings of key members of the community in Hartley to discuss problems and solutions.

RESOLVED: That, the matter be pursued with Sevenoaks District Council

22. Bus Passenger Representation

The Committee was reminded that the Council had recently responded to a consultation document entitled, "Options for strengthening bus passenger representation". It was reported that the Government had announced on 8th April 2008 that the remit of Passenger Focus would be extended to include the representation of bus passengers.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

23. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 28th August 2008 at 7.30p.m. at Hartley Library, Ash Road.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman

Date:.....

Note:

Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting of the Highways Committee was subsequently rearranged and will be held on Thursday 4th September 2008.

Highways Committee

Terms of Reference

1. To determine the problems and assess the priorities associated with ~~the volume and speed~~ of traffic ***issues*** 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.

* ***proposed additions shown in bold italics***

