

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 16th APRIL 2009 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 (Chairman)
Cllr Mr V Sewell

In attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
Cllr Mr B Ramsay
1 member 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 S Granger be elected Chairman of the Highways Committee until the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2009.

3. Election of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED: That, the election of Vice Chairman be deferred until after the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2009.

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 26th February 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

6. Northfield

The Committee considered legal advice received from NALC on the responsibilities of various parties in respect of surface water run-off from Northfield. Overall the legal advice suggested that the landowner and the Northfield Management Committee was not liable for the consequences of water naturally escaping from the land. In light of this legal advice the Committee felt that the matter should be referred back to Kent Highway Services to progress a resolution to the problem.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.50 p.m. to allow the owner of "The Poplars" to address the Committee.

The meeting resumed at 7.52 p.m.

RECOMMENDED: That, subject to the agreement of Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council, a copy of the legal advice from NALC in respect of the surface water run-off from Northfield be forwarded to Kent Highway Services and a meeting be arranged with all the relevant parties to discuss a way forward.

7. Springcroft

At the previous meeting of the Highways Committee it was resolved that enquiries be made with Kent Highway Services to establish whether the following options, as set out below, had been considered.

- Deep boring through or adjacent to the existing two soakaways at the end of Springcroft, including the provision of catchpits and additional soakaways beneath the carriageway as necessary upstream.
- Over digging existing soakaways by 1 to 2 metres in depth or laterally.
- Provision of tank storage within Springcroft.
- A combination of any of the above.

The Committee considered the response from Kent Highway Services, as contained in an e mail dated 13th March 2009. Kent Highway Services were of the opinion that none of the options suggested by the Highways Committee appeared to offer an acceptable solution.

It was reported that a design engineer had been appointed to the team to deal with high priority schemes such as Springcroft and that a site visit would be taking place on 17th April 2009. Furthermore a Parish Connection Officer, who would have an in depth knowledge of drainage, had been appointed to work alongside the Parish Liaison Officers.

It was reported that a resident had lodged a complaint with the Local Government Ombudsmen against Kent Highway Services in respect of its dealings over the problem associated with flooding in Springcroft.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the response from Kent Highway Services contained in e mails dated 13th March 2009 and 16th April 2009 be noted and,

(2) enquiries be made with the newly appointed design engineer on his/her initial views on the problem associated with the flooding at Springcroft, including a summary of the investigations undertaken to date and to seek his/her proposals on how the matter will be progressed.

8. Parking at Cherry Trees

It was reported that a written response to the enquiry over the level of safety audit was still awaited from Kent Highway Services.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the report be noted and (2) Kent Highway Services be pursued for a response on the level of safety audit required.

9. Speedwatch

The Committee considered a letter dated 19th March 2009 from the Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership explaining the rationale behind the deployment of safety cameras to established safety camera sites.

The Partnership explained that the frequency of visits was determined by the number of reported crashes at each site. Accident data showed that the number of accidents resulting in slight injuries had fallen since the Partnership started operating on Ash Road in 2005 and therefore it would be unlikely that additional resources would be deployed for any additional visits. The Partnership confirmed that a speed survey undertaken during the autumn of 2008 had shown an average speed of 32 mph.

Furthermore the Partnership reported that since the acquisition of larger vans in 2007 it had become difficult to find a suitable location in Hartley for parking the van; drivers must have a clear view of the van and the speedmeter device must have a clear view of approaching vehicles. As a result the Police Camera Team would be revisiting the site to look for a more suitable location to park the van.

It was reported that a West Kent Police motorcyclist had attended Ash Road for one hour on 24th March 2009 and issued four endorsable fixed penalty tickets and three verbal warnings. The Police had confirmed they would be attending the site again.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the letter dated 19th March 2009 from the Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership be noted,

(2) the report on Police attendance on Ash Road on 24th March 2009 be noted and further reports on the outcome of Police attendance on Ash Road be awaited.

10. Bus Services

(a) The Committee examined a list of bus stops prepared by Arriva Southern Counties detailing the position and condition of the posts, and timetable casings.

RESOLVED: That, a survey be undertaken of the bus stops to confirm their position and condition in relation to the information provided by Arriva Southern Counties.

(b) The Committee noted that representatives from the Parish Council had been invited to attend a meeting of the District Council's Environment Select Committee held on 14th April 2009. Arriva Southern Counties and an officer from Kent County Council was in attendance at the meeting to discuss bus services in the District. The Committee was informed that Councillor Abraham served on the Environment Select Committee and had attended the meeting.

It was reported that Southfleet Parish Council had invited two representatives from the Parish Council to a meeting with Arriva Southern Counties on 15th May 2009 at 2.00 p.m. at Southfleet Village Hall. Longfield and New Barn Parish Council and Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council had received similar invitations. The Clerk would be attending.

RESOLVED: That, the reports be noted.

11. Request for a salt bin

(a) At the meeting of the Council held on 9th March 2009 it had been resolved that Kent Highway Services be requested to provide a salt bin at Quakers Close and Parkfield.

The Committee was informed of Kent County Council's protocol in respect of the provision of salt bins requested by parish councils. Subject to the agreement of the Community Operations Team Leader, parish councils would be required to fund the purchase of salt bins and the first fill of salt. Thereafter responsibility for their maintenance and subsequent fills of salt would revert to the County Council. However it was reported that Kent County Council's Winter Service Policy was to be reviewed and that any requests for the provision of salt bins would, at this stage, be declined. The County Councillor reported that he was making enquiries into whether the review would be completed before next winter.

RESOLVED: That, the reports be noted and further information on the programme for the Winter Service Policy review be awaited.

(b) The Committee was informed of a letter dated 17th March 2009 signed by 24 residents of Quakers Close requesting the provision of a salt bin.

RESOLVED: That,

(1) the letter dated 17th March 2009 signed by 24 residents of Quakers Close requesting a salt bin be noted and,

(2) the residents be informed of the moratorium on the provision of salts bins as a result of the County Council's review of its Winter Service Policy.

12. Church Road

The Committee considered an e mail dated 20th March 2009 from a resident regarding two incidents of dangerous driving in Church Road. The Committee considered a number of suggestions put forward by the resident, which had included:

- More visible signage

- Participation in the Quiet Lanes Scheme
- Encouragement/publicity of car sharing schemes

The Committee felt that reports of dangerous driving should be reported to the Police and was not a matter over which the Parish Council had any powers to act. The Committee welcomed the suggestion of additional signage; the County Councillor reported that this should be matter which could be funded through the County Councillors Member Fund, but would not be actioned until after the County Council elections in June.

The Committee was unsure as to whether Kent County Council still operated the Quiet Lane scheme. Notwithstanding the Committee felt that this section of Church Road would be unlikely to meet the criteria of the Quiet Lane Scheme and doubted whether the implementation of the said scheme would have any significant impact to reduce the incidence of dangerous driving.

The Committee considered that the opening up of the car park at Manor Field on a Sunday morning could improve the parking outside All Saints Church during the Sunday morning service.

RESOLVED: That, the e mail dated 20th March 2009 from a resident expressing concern about dangerous driving on Church Road be noted and the resident be informed of the Committee's views.

13. Monthly CSM Report

The Committee considered the monthly CSM report received from Kent Highway Services on 25th February 2009.

RESOLVED: That, February CSM report be noted.

14. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 25th June 2009 at 7.30 p.m. at Hartley Library, Ash Road.

The meeting closed at 9.02 p.m.

Signed:.....
Chairman

Date:.....

Public Question Time

The owner of "The Poplars" asked whether DEFRA had been informed of the surface water run-off from Northfield. The Clerk reported that she had contacted DEFRA by telephone. DEFRA had shown a distinct lack of interest in the matter and suggested that the Environment Agency could be interested.