

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 12th NOVEMBER 2009 AT 7.30 p.m.
AT HARTLEY LIBRARY, ASH ROAD**

Present: Cllr D Brazier (co-opted)
Cllr D Graeme
Cllr S Granger (Chairman)
Cllr J Minns
Cllr Mrs A Oxtoby
Cllr V Sewell

In attendance: Mrs J Hoad (Clerk)
Cllr B Ramsay
2 members of the public

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Gaywood.

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 3rd September 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Northfield

The Highways Committee considered the Jacobs Soakaway Design Report on the flooding at Church Road (August 2009 – B1288600 (28/09)) and noted the views of Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council and the Northfield Management Committee on the proposal to install a soakaway on Northfield.

Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council had reversed its previous decision and now had no objection to a soakaway being sited on Northfield on the understanding that there was a legal agreement stating that the Parish Councils would not be responsible for any installation costs or future maintenance.

The Northfield Management Committee had expressed concern about the preservation and reinstatement of trees and hedgerows. The Northfield Management Committee considered that the proposed works should be constructed in such a manner so as not to cause any danger to the public or horse riders and that a site meeting should be held with Kent Highway Services prior to finalising any agreement. Furthermore the Northfield Management Committee felt that consideration should be given to the siting of the EDF sub-station.

The Highways Committee considered that the Parish Councils should not be held responsible for meeting any of the installation and maintenance costs on the new soakaway, nor should they be held responsible for meeting any costs in relation to legal fees. The Highways Committee noted in a letter dated 8th September 2009 Kent Highway Services had given assurances that the Highway Authority would meet all legal costs. The Highways Committee expressed

concern about the liabilities of the Parish Councils if, at some time in the future, the design failed and caused problems to neighbouring property owners.

The Highways Committee examined the technical detail contained within the Jacobs report and expressed concern about some of the design aspects of the scheme. It was felt that the soakaway and the cut off trench drain would, over time, be adversely affected by a build up of silt and that this situation would be accelerated without regular maintenance of the system.

RECOMMENDED: That, Hartley Parish Council approves, in principle, the installation of a soakaway on Northfield and associated works, provided that,

- (1) the Council shall not be liable for any installation, approval or professional costs,
- (2) Kent Highways Services provide full public and professional indemnity against any accident associated with the construction works, future maintenance and the presence/design of the facility itself,
- (3) Kent Highway Services give an undertaking to pay legal/professional costs associated with all parts of the works, including the installation and any ongoing legal agreements.

Furthermore Hartley Parish Council has no comments on the report other than the following items, as set out in appendix 1 attached to these minutes.

5. Springcroft

The Highways Committee was advised that Kent Highway Services was in the process of ordering the rings for the soakaway and programming a suitable workforce.

RESOLVED: That, the report be received and noted.

6. Parking at Cherry Trees

At the last meeting of the Highways Committee it had been reported that the Clerk had provided the Highways Engineer with copies of the original planning consent relating to the shops at Cherry Trees and the land registry details. There was no further progress to report.

Concerns were expressed about the condition of the bollards some of which had been partially knocked over causing damage to the paving slabs.

RESOLVED: That, (1) the matter be taken up Highways Manager, Mr A Ash, and (2) the owners of the Cherry Tree shops be informed of the damage to the bollards and the paving slabs.

7. Kent County Council Member Highway Fund

At a meeting held on 14th September 2009 the Council approved a recommendation that funds be sought through the Kent County Council Member Highway Fund for the provision of a safety barrier on the edge of the footpath outside the entrance to the Post Office. The County Councillor reported that the Post Office intended to install a disability ramp at the entrance to the premises and that any decision on the provision of a safety barrier should be deferred until the detail of the ramp became known

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

8. Parish Portal

The Committee a considered report on the new online service through “My Kent Highways Online”, which enables Parish Councils to (1) download information about Kent Highway Services such as grass cutting and weed spraying schedules, (2) report highway faults and track logged enquiries, (3) download reports providing information about all enquiries relating to the parish and (4) access contact details for the Community Liaison Officer.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

9. Kent Highway Services online survey 2009

The Committee was informed that Kent Highway Services was undertaking a series of consultations with residents, County Members and Parish and Town Councils with regard to local highways issues, including perceptions of roads and pavements, congestion issues, communication with KHS, and local public transport services. Hartley Parish Council had been invited to respond to a questionnaire taking into account what the views of the local community would be in relation to the aforementioned matters. The Committee was reminded that the closing date for completion of the questionnaire was 30th November 2009.

RESOLVED: That, in view of the deadline for completion of the questionnaire of 30th November 2009, the Chairman of the Highways Committee be authorised to complete the online survey in line with the views expressed by Members of the Committee and taking into account what he considered to be likely views of the local community.

10. Bus shelters

The Committee considered the guidance notes for Parish Councils wishing to apply to Kent County Council for funding for parish bus shelters.

RESOLVED: That, the guidance notes be received and noted.

11. Bus services

The Committee considered a report on a meeting with Arriva Southern Counties held on 16th October 2009 and neighbouring parish councils.

RESOLVED: That, the report be noted.

12. Date of the next meeting

Thursday 14th January 2009 at 7.30 p.m. at Hartley Library, Ash Road.

The meeting closed at 8.37 p.m.

Signed:

Date:

Chairman

Public Question Time

Mrs Sharp praised the bus service.

Mr Zoller referred the new lorry purchased by Kent Highway Services to clean out soakaways.

Cllr Graeme asked for an update on the condition of the bus stops.

- Hartley Parish Council does not like the apparent lack of consideration given to the inevitable silting up of the soakaway and the cut-off trench and would like a more robust design that is less dependant on routine maintenance.
- Reconsideration of the open base element of the soakaway which is likely to silt up within a very short timescale. Furthermore the open base is likely to increase the risk of erosion towards the deep bored element of the soakaway and possibly provide a shortcut for silt into the deep bore, thereby reducing its effectiveness.
- More importance be given to the need to clean out the cut-off trench. At present the trench is in essentially sacrificial and given time will silt up and loose its operational capacity.
- Provide additional chamber(s) to allow maintenance of the trench. Possibly consider a catchpit with a 900mm deep sump (below base of the trench) at the point where the two legs of the trench meet with the overflow towards the soakaway. The catchpit could reduce the volume of silt entering the soakaway. This would also allow access to each of the trench pipes and would need to be directly connected to the catchpit. The catchpit would also increase the available storage of the system which could in turn allow for a traditional base to be placed in the bottom of the soakaway.
- Use of larger size of shingle (possibly between 20 and 40mm angular to make it more stable at the surface) around the pipes in the trench, all surrounded by a geotextile lining of the trench itself.
- Bearing in mind the risk associated with the potential depth of water in this chamber in a remote location where there is often evidence of youth activity, a lockable cover to the chambers should be specified.
- The future performance of the chamber is dependant on an adequate cyclical maintenance regime. Given the financial constraints with which KHS are required to operate, can KHS guarantee that they will have the available funds to provide the necessary maintenance to this arrangement, and on that point, how will they access the soakaway (as proposed) for occasional cleaning out of the silt?
- Horse riding is enjoyed within Northfield. Specific reference has been made to the need to keep the top of the french drain level with existing surfaces and firm enough to ensure the safety of horse and rider.
- Provide a detail for the embankment, key concern being the existing topsoil is stripped stockpiled before the works start and this is used to cover the bund.
- Confirm that all earthwork including the bund shall be finished with a minimum of 150mm of topsoil and seeded with an appropriate grass seed mix.
- All works shall be completed in accordance with the Highways Agency's Specification for Highway Works including all latest revisions.
- The works shall be completed to the satisfaction of the Hartley Parish Council.