

Committee, group or subgroup: Road Safety Group

Meeting Date & venue: Monday 18th March 2024, 10.30am @ SPC Office

Report author: Cllr A Sharp - chairman

Present: A Sharp (AS), M Buller (MB) Speed Watch Rep, B McLaughlin.

Apologies: M Alessi, P Riordan (PR).

Matters Arising: - none

1. Highways Improvement Plan HIP– Please note MBC only allow us to have 2 'live' projects – our other projects / wish list are 'archived'. Contact: Greg McNicholl.

As a consequence of our meeting with Kent Highways Greg McNicholl and Chris Avis on 19th February (MB, PR and AS present) we will need to update our HIP document.

HIP 1. Double yellow lines (DYL) on main road A229 and Chapel Lane extension, single lines (SYL) on Cornforth Close, Chestnut Avenue and Poyntell Road.

Kent Highways have said that we will not get this as there is no current road safety issue.

Action: Monitor the road situation to see if there is evidence of a safety issue. Move to 3

HIP 2. The Quarter - Bus stop / crossing & 30mph HIP item 3

Following our meeting with Kent Highways we had a confidential item about what KH is suggesting that was to be discussed at full council on 11th March. Move to 1

Action: recommendation to be on the agenda at next full council 2nd April 2024.

Note the bus shelters at the quarter are going to be cleaned to see if that fixes the visibility.

2. SID – permission at Headcorn Road, Marden Road, Bathurst Road sites.

Note - the camera should not stay in the same location longer than 3 weeks.

Batteries last 5 – 11 days depending on traffic going past i.e. run out quicker on Headcorn Rd Headcorn Road facing east for 2 weeks (some leeway allowing up to 3 weeks subject Headcorn Road facing west for 2 weeks to availability to turn the camera.)

Bathurst Road for 1 week (this should ideally be 1 in term time / 1 in holidays)

Marden Road facing west for 1 week

Marden Road facing east for 2 weeks

MB report

SID spent 13 days in Bathurst Road, nothing speeding bar one driver at 50+. Vast majority slow to turn into Pope Drive so no speeding.

Camera is presently facing into the village, in Headcorn Road.

We think it is helping to keep the general traffic speed lower, especially as we keep moving the camera.

Action: Continue to monitor.

3. Sainsburys shuttle bus

We have heard that there are people using this and very happy. Still want more to use it. MB would like to chat to Robin the driver about how its going to be able to report back next meeting. The new timetable has been published and was sent out with the village update.

Action: Keep an eye out to see how well it is used and keep promoting it FB etc.

4. Headcorn Lay by

KH said the area belongs to them, any road works would be highway standards, because there us a ditch they will not put in a layby.

Action: Contact KH that due to the safety re the manhole covers there, consider leveling the area for safety.

5. Crossroads

* DYL – see item 1

* White lines need redoing there and at the Sainsburys roundabout. This is a maintenance job not KH and should be done once weather improves, i.e. not wet weather.

* A parishioner raised a complaint about the safety of the crossroads with traffic trying to overtake stationary vehicles and mounting the kerb on the main road turning into Marden road. KH now said not possible as not enough pavement width to put in bollards.

* Cameras on the traffic lights – we don't meet the criteria as not enough accidents!

Action: We need to continue to monitor this and continue lobbying Kent Highways / KCC.

6. Hawkenbury Bridge HIP 3 – change to 2

Background

Its a grade 2 listed bridge so can't demolish and rebuild.

We would need to be gifted some land to enable the widening of the bridge.

There is no good easy electrical provision. (There are houses next to it with electricity).

There would need to be some way to indicate to those going over the railway bridge that they could be about to encounter stationary traffic. This could be achieved by a higher traffic light indicator.

MB investigated and found that Wye bridge was a grade 2 listed bridge that was widened to comply with EU regulations of width and weight needs and was close to a railway crossing. However a house was demolished providing the extra space needed.

Action: We suggest that it remain on our HIP and continue to liaise with Headcorn PC and monitor crashes.

7. Church Hill sign - Carried over from previous meeting

AS contacted Emma Tilbury at Kent Highways and had this response:

According to the Department for Transport's (DfT) Traffic Signs Manual, the "Frail or Disabled pedestrians" warning sign should be restricted to sites where relatively high numbers of slow-moving pedestrians are likely to cross a road, other than at a Zebra or signaled crossing. This would predominantly be near sheltered housing or nursing homes, where drivers need to be reminded that, on a regular basis, a pedestrian in the road ahead might be frail and need more time to cross than an able-bodied person would.

As such I am afraid that we wouldn't look to place this type of warning sign near to a Church.

AS responded that given that criteria residents would argue that we do qualify.

We have an elderly congregation to the church that cross the A229 to access the church, We also have a sheltered accommodation development in Bell Lane that directly accesses the A229 - see map below, its on the left of the map. Add to that the elderly attending funerals there as well. There have been some near misses as people can't get across quickly and cars from the North side (top of the map pic), can not see over the brow of the hill until they are at the top - see second picture - access road is where the Kings Head sign is - as you can see, you can't see it ;) ! And you can't see the church on the left set back from the houses.

Third picture is over the top heading South towards Cranbrook down the hill, for reference.

We already have double yellow lines and a 30mph warning light up sign to try and help. I don't know whether any of the above helps our case or not?

We received this response:

I have now had the opportunity to discuss this with colleagues and I'm afraid that they are not satisfied that there is evidence that a relatively high numbers of frail or disabled pedestrians would be regularly crossing the High Street at this point.

We appreciate that there is sheltered accommodation on Bell Lane, near to the junction with South Bank, as well as a day centre and retirement housing on McCabe Close and this would be good justification for a warning sign on Bell Lane as this would accord with the technical guidance in the traffic signs manual.

However, this does not extend to the High Street. What we have to be careful of when looking to place warning signs is that they're not overused to the point where their effectiveness becomes diluted because drivers are used to seeing them and become sign blind. That is why it is important for us to reserve their use for locations only where whatever hazard we are warning drivers of occurs on a regular basis throughout each day.

Emma Tilbury

Agreed that this doesn't take into account the set of steps that have to be used access the area on the East side. This is the reason pedestrians cross at the old Bell site on the West side.

Action: Not sure what more we can do at this stage.

8. Chapel Lane – bin collection

Moved onto HIP item 1 which will be 3

Recommendation: AS spoke to A Martin about suggestions to mitigate in the meantime:

Note the amount of times bins are not collected – with data it could then be pointed out that residents are paying council tax for a service they are not receiving . . .

Make sure all residents report when not collected, not just one on everyone's behalf.

Any accidents at entrance to Chapel Lane to be reported.

9. Surrenden Road & Thatcher Road

Parking on corner of verge at entrance to the field during the school drop off / pick up times.
Concerned for safety of children coming out of the field.

Suggestion: Greg Mc Nicoll at KH has said that if KH own the road we would need their permission and they would have to do it. Add to HIP

Suggest check the exit onto Thatcher Rd whether the hedge needs trimming.

10. Gybbon Rise

Continues to be a problem with student's guardians blocking residents drives etc.
MBC have sent out their officer to enforce zig zag lines and PR has been out with his hi viz jacket to dissuade them parking there. However, it continues to be a problem.
Greg from Kent Highways has contacted the liaison officer for school issues to see if they can do a parent meeting. It now seems he is asking 'us' to meet with the school.

Suggestion:

MB will produce a visual of the possibilities from Main road or Surrenden Rd/
We will try to visit the school to discuss.

11. **Headcorn Road Layby Layby** - £11228.40

The report to council on Monday 19th February was deferred following the meeting with Kent Highways on the same day.

This was due to us pointing out the lay by was likely their responsibility, Greg was going to check the ownership of the land from his mapping tool, and come back to us. He felt it was theirs, they could tarmac it and even put parking bay lines in place.

12. Hedges - Nesting season

9. Speedwatch - Not been out recently.

Auto Speed watch – June 2022-> Auto speed watch records cars 46mph – 69mph
Auto watch camera January & February – 0 Suspect this was due to not enough sunlight to power it and catch anyone. 8th March started up again and caught speeders, data coming in again. Also catches not MOT or Tax.

10. Accidents/incidents reported – staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com – none reported

MB now has an issue re BT internet re google mail preventing access to the gmail account.

AOB:

Dates of forthcoming meetings: Monday 15th April 2024 10am at the SPC office. More dates after the local elections.