

APRIL 2023 UPDATE ON HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Since my last report in March 2023, I have made three further reports about Highway issues to KCC. This means the grand total increases to 113. These three reports were:-

A Pothole in Pond Farm Road near the Church

Illegal highway signs in Wises Lane near Orchard Cottages.

Bend sign bent in School Lane

106 of the 113 have now been dealt either in a satisfactory manner or with a satisfactory explanation. 7, including the three problems above are still outstanding.

The 30mph signs in Pond Farm Road just as you enter the village are obscured by vegetation and the 30mph sign on the road is worn out and awaiting the spring weather for improvements. Other works still to be completed include the white line renewals in Pond Farm Road, and Oad Street.

The provision of a new sign at the junction of Sutton Baron Road and Pond Farm Road was installed at the end of March. The repairs to signs around Borden Primary School and the provision of additional pedestrian warning signings have also been completed.

M2/Junction 5 Stockbury roundabout improvements

Information about road closures and diversions continues to be supplied by Grahams and are displayed by the Clerk on our various social media pages.

With regard to the need for a Safety Risk Assessment for Maidstone Road and Chestnut Street. It is understood that Grahams have appointed consultants to carry out this work. I have been assured that the Parish will be consulted about the conclusions of this assessment. On the 19th December the Clerk wrote to the Head of KCC Highways with an urgent request for this assessment, this can be seen in Appendix 1. The reply recently received on 4th April, some 105 days later, is in Appendix 2. Councillors are asked to decide what further action to take.

There is considerable concern from the local residents about the continued use of Maidstone Road and Chestnut Street as a diversion, which often happens at very short notice. I have made efforts to convince KCC Highways and National Highways to provide more measures and signs to slow the traffic down using these roads but with only limited success.

With regard to the missing link at Oad Street it is understood that the lack of improvements at this point will be considered as part of the Safety Risk Assessment mentioned above. The new Maidstone Road link to Oad Street is due to be opened in May.

KCC Highways Service

At the January 2023 meeting it was resolved that the Clerk writes to County Cllr Baldock outlining the originally approved 20mph scheme and that the Parish Council have had funds available in budget to implement this. As mentioned in previous reports this letter has been written and copies were circulated along with the reply from KCC. I understand that Cllr Baldock is continuing with this enquiry.

Waiting restrictions in The Street, Borden.

I have still not heard from KCC Highways with regard to any comments from the their Planning and Advice team. The scheme was passed to them for assessment.

Key Street Roundabout Improvements

At the Council's last meeting I reported about a recent meeting of the Swale Joint Transportation Board when a report was presented updating the proposed junction improvements of the Key Street roundabout.

I asked the following questions at the SWJTB meeting followed by an email on the next day. [Below in blue](#) are the answers I have now received from KCC Highways.

1. In section 3.3 of the report it mentioned that these improvements were considered a permitted development and thus do not require planning permission. This contradicts a letter recently received from Duncan Smith, Executive Director of Operations at National Highways, see attached. He states that the scheme would be subject to the planning process. Could you please answer this contradiction?

KCC as the scheme promoters will need to follow due planning process. KCC have submitted a screening opinion to KCC planning, this has been reviewed and confirms that the development would be permitted development. This will form part of the technical submission to the National Highways for acceptance of the works on their network.

2. Section 3.4 mentions a new footway/cycleway to be included along Chestnut Street, which is something supported by the Parish. Does this mean that the footpath on the opposite side of the road is to be dug up and replaced by a verge as shown on the scheme diagram shown on page 25 of the report? If this is the case the Parish would urge keeping the existing footpath particularly as it looks to serve a bus stop layby shown on your scheme plan.

Yes, this is the current proposal, however we will consider the appropriateness of a footpath on both sides as part of the detailed design and will revert to you in due course.

3. In the scheme plan shown on page 25 it shows a short link road from Chestnut Street to the redundant part of the southern slip road onto the A249. What is the purpose of this road?

This is maintenance access for National Highways.

4. The Parish are very concerned about the access road into the proposed Manor Farm development as this access is just round a bend which will be used more heavily than at present for vehicles heading for the southbound A249. KCC Highways have raised no objection to this access or suggested, as the Parish have done, it should be for left turners only. Can I assume that you are happy with the comments from KCC Highways Planning developments team?

The current planning application at Manor Farm is for reserved matters only, and KCC officers have commented on those aspects of the proposed development that are for consideration at this time. Access is not a reserved matter in the current application, as that was a detailed matter determined in the original outline planning application consented under reference 17/500727/OUT. The junction arrangement is secured through condition 21 of that planning consent, and the developer will therefore be entitled to construct the access in accordance with the details already approved.

5. I understand from what was said by the Kent Highway Officer present last night that a safety audit is being prepared regarding the fourth arm from the new Chestnut Street roundabout onto the southbound A249. Stating also that as yet no scheme for this new slip road has been agreed with National Highways. Would it be possible for the Council to have a copy of any safety audit so that it satisfies our considerable concerns about the safety of this truncated slip road?

The Road Safety Audit 1 has been undertaken, designers responses received and it is currently with National Highways for acceptance. Happy to share this with you, following National Highways response.

6. In section 5.2 it mentions the development of a Communication and Engagement Plan. Could you reassure me that Borden Parish will be part of this Plan as we have had very little contact so far with the development of this scheme?

Borden Parish Council, along with other local Parish Councils, will be included within the Stakeholder Management Plan.

7. I said last night that no mention was made in section 6.2 about the contributions, through S106 agreements, being made to this scheme and the new southbound slip road by BDW (developers of the Wises Lane development) of approximately £1.345m and £0.885m respectively. Could you explain why this mention was not included?

The S106 contributions have been identified, however it was an oversight on our part for not including in the most recent JTB update report. I will ensure this is included in the next report.

I await a copy of the Safety Audit for the 4th arm of Chestnut Street roundabout and I am continuing to push for a meeting with KCC Highways to discuss this scheme.

Speedwatch

The new Co-ordinator continues to contact volunteers in an attempt to find resources to carry out the speed checks.

John Fassenfelt April 2023.

APPENDIX 1 SEE NEXT PAGE

BORDEN PARISH COUNCIL



19th December 22

Parish Clerk, Ms T Millum

Tel: 07821 664737

Email: clerk@bordenparishcouncil.gov.uk

FAO Simon Jones Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport
KCC

Dear Simon

RE: SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT FOR MAIDSTONE ROAD AND CHESTNUT STREET, BORDEN

Borden Parish Council have been very concerned for some time for the safety of residents, non-motorised vehicle users, pedestrians and people who cycle or ride horses, who live along Maidstone Road and Chestnut Street, Borden, due to the high level of traffic that uses this road, especially since the improvement works that have started at the M2 Junction 5 Stockbury Roundabout. This situation has been exacerbated by using these roads as a diversion route when the A249 is closed as part of these improvement works, or as a result of an accident and when drivers then also use it as a 'rat run' believing it to be a quicker route when the A249 is then open.

The increased use of these roads as a diversion route, with now upwards of 30,000 vehicles a day including 12% goods vehicles, has led to several personal injury accidents, damage to property, damage to the highway and pavements and a considerable number of near misses, often involving residents. Other highway users such as cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders have complained to the Parish Council that they feel particularly unsafe and vulnerable along these roads, even when they are not being used as a diversion route.

The Parish Council understands that the latest consent for use as a planned diversion route was issued in 2008 by KCC Highways and omitted to mention or consider that Chestnut Street had been closed to through traffic since 1982 having been deemed as unsuitable for the lower traffic levels of that period. This clearly is too long ago given the changed circumstances, the additional development along Maidstone Road and the absence of any other route for users who cannot use the main A249.

The Council is therefore making an urgent request for a Safety Risk Assessment for these roads to be carried out as soon as possible. Measures to minimise the risk for residents and those participating in active travel, must be developed from this assessment.

Any Safety Risk Assessment must ensure all the local population, including those living along it (and not just car or lorry drivers using it), are taken into consideration. The Parish Council accepts that you cannot eliminate all the risks on these roads, but measures must be taken to ensure that risks to the above groups are mitigated as far as possible.

Any assessment must initially be focussed on its current use as a daily and diversion route between Key Street Roundabout and Stockbury Roundabout. A further assessment also needs to be made

when Maidstone Road is closed at the Stockbury Roundabout and traffic is diverted onto Oad Street and then onto the new roundabout at Stockbury, and again after the planned highway changes for Wisles lane and Manor Farm development in 2023/4 have been completed by KCC.

Clearly any Safety Risk Assessment must involve the Parish Council the residents of properties in these roads and demonstrate how it takes into account both recent government guidance on provision for active travel and KCC's vision zero policy.

National Highways will also have an important part to play in the assessments and should not assume that just because a highway exists it is suitable for use as a diversion either for planned or unplanned use. No approved diversion exists between Bobbing and Iwade or between j5 and Maidstone.

I shall be reporting the matter back to the Parish Council on the 19th January 2023 and would be grateful for a reply to my urgent request mentioned above by then. I have taken the liberty of copying this letter to our Local MP Gordon Henderson, Daniel Rollinson National Highways Project Manager and County Councillor Mike Baldock.

Yours sincerely

Signed on behalf of Borden Parish Council

Teresa Millum

Clerk to Borden Parish Council

Appendix 2 see next page.



Appendix 2.

Teresa Millum

**Growth Environment and
Transport**

4 April 2023

Reference: 34044438

Dear Teresa Millum

Enquiry about Highways and Transportation

Dear Ms Millum

I am writing in response to your email and letter dated 19 December regarding diverted traffic on Maidstone Road and Chestnut Street, Borden. I am sorry to hear of the continued issues that the parish is facing.

The risk assessment in relation to any planned works is the responsibility of the works promoter, in this case National Highways. Kent County Council (KCC) Streetworks agree to the use of Maidstone Road as a diversion route for any restricted closures of the A249. The A249 from Stockbury Roundabout heading north is owned by National Highways and any works that have taken place are usually overnight or for a weekend only.

The road construction of Maidstone Road and Chestnut Street designates it as a category 1 road. This means it is capable and sufficient to be used as a diversion route for temporary and restricted periods when the A249 is closed.

Borden parish have referred to the agreement made in 2008 by KCC to use Maidstone Road as the official diversion route for the A249 in the event of an emergency. Following discussions between National Highways and the KCC Traffic Manager in early 2022, the new route agreed will be via Chestnut Street, Maidstone Road, the new link to Oad Street back to Stockbury Roundabout. This is on the understanding that National Highways will construct these routes to ensure they are of sufficient carriageway construction.

I trust the above provides some further information into the diversion route for this area and thank you again for contacting me regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely

Simon Jones
Corporate Direct