



Local Government for Langton Green, Speldhurst, Ashurst and Old Groombridge

Minutes of a Highways Committee Meeting held in the Upstairs Room, Ashurst Village Hall on Friday 16th September 2011 at 10.30am

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Mrs Podbury, Mrs Soyke, and Hemming, Mrs Waters and Mr Wheeler

OFFICER PRESENT: Chris May – Clerk

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT: Sue Laporte and Jonathan Dean (KCC Highways & Transportation Department – (H&TD), Cllr Milner, and five members of the public

- 1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests:** Cllr Mrs Soyke declared a personal interest – she is a resident of Stone Cross.
- 2. Declarations of Lobbying:** Cllr Mrs Soyke had been lobbied by residents about the traffic problems at Stone Cross; Cllr Mrs Podbury had been lobbied about a hedge in Barden Road that was causing visibility problems and Cllr Hemming had been lobbied by a resident who had complained about the islands at The Green.
- 3. Apologies and reason for absence:** Cllr Langridge (previous engagement) and Mrs Norton (holiday)
- 4. Minutes of the meeting dated 23rd June 2011** which have previously been distributed to all members, were signed as a correct record.
- 5. Matters Arising and Correspondence:**
 - The Clerk had met PC Howson and PCSO Jules and they confirmed that the three Cllrs (Mrs Podbury, Langridge and Milner) who had attended a training session earlier in the year were able to start speedwatch sessions. PCSO Jules confirmed that they were proficient at setting up the equipment. **Cllr Mrs Podbury to co-ordinate training and start sessions.**
 - There was no update on the Speldhurst – Langton Road

6. Public Open Session:

Members of the public spoke of the problems of living at Stone Cross

- volume and speed of traffic
- wide vehicles such as lorries and coaches were too large for the stretch of road
- motor cycles speeding through the bend
- that it was a blind bend coming from Ashurst

- it was NOT up to being A road status
- that the speed limit of 60mph was too high and should be 30mph
- record of accidents should warrant some change

Cllrs agreed that there were problems at Stone Cross and it was explained that there were measures to reduce the overall speed limit from 60mph to 50mph from Langton Green to Ashurst, however it was recognised that 50mph was too fast for this particular stretch of road. The Parish Council would approach H&TD to improve signage, the surface of the road, to include a possible ISS and endeavour to get the speed limit reduced but it was explained that funding was unlikely to come from KCC because of budget cuts and although there was an accident record for the area it was not enough for KCC to act on. **As a temporary measure the Parish Council would erect their own signs to encourage motorists to reduce their speed.**

7. Kent Highway Services:

Cllr Mrs Podbury welcomed both members of the team supporting the Speldhurst area and thanked them for their time attending this meeting.

Sue Laporte was the Operations Engineer which, she explained, was part of a much larger area. Jonathan Dean had recently been appointed as a Steward for the Speldhurst area and had joined her team and they both reported to Earl Bourner. There had been a number of staff cuts and average budget cuts of 30%

The Parish Portal (online reporting system) was to be the main contact with the department for reporting work that needed to be done. Any requests had to be responded to within 7 days and completed within 28 days. The department was totally reliant on crash statistics from the Police. She said that if there was a fatality they had 10 days to complete a report and any improvement works. If someone was badly injured there would have to be a total review of the road. She said that they were now working with a new contractor Enterprise instead of Ringway and the changeover was causing a delay to outstanding issues because they had to replace equipment. Jonathan Dean introduced himself – he had already met Cllr Mrs Podbury and the Clerk and was looking in to issues including carrying out minor improvements to signage that was covered by flora.

8. Outstanding Issues by Village and priorities:

- Stone Cross – Cllr Mrs Soyke said that the area was complicated by the fact that the “Weald Way” footpath crossed this road and walkers had to run to cross it. It was agreed to investigate having a proper footpath built extending east beyond Stone Cross Lodge, with potential funding coming from KCC via its footpath section and possible member funding (as previously discussed with Andy Smart of KHS). The recently installed salt bin had been knocked over and required lifting in position.
- Speldhurst School barrier - Jonathan Dean reported that the extension to the barrier should in place by the end of October
- Update on Groombridge/Ashurst speed reduction – Jonathan Dean said that this was with Steven Noad who was trying to establish the exact costs of implementation.
- Barrow Lane – it was **agreed to install a Parish Council sign** warning of the school and to slow down
- Double yellow lines in Speldhurst – it was explained that the delay was being caused by the changeover of external contractor
- Barden Road – traffic mounting pavement – Cllr Mrs Podbury and Langridge had observed traffic at peak periods and confirmed that this was happening. It was understood that it was dangerous and that a solution would be sought from H&TD, meanwhile it was agreed that a **temporary Parish Council sign would be erected** advising drivers not to mount the pavement. It was also suggested that the owners of the cottage had a gate installed. **Mrs Waters to seek permission for a sign to be erected.**
- Land outside the old Watson Hall – Cllr Hemming explained the problem of unsighted traffic from both directions. The Clerk said that KHS was going to install double yellow lines when the new islands had been established but at the last minute decided to monitor the

situation to see if they were required. It was agreed to report the problem to H&TD **via the portal**.

- Granite kerbing in Penshurst Road – Sue Laporte said that a request for granite kerbing had not been specified and the work was to Kent standard design. H&TD had no granite kerbing in stock but if the Parish Council could acquire them they could be replaced.
- Relining – erosion of lines – **report via the portal**
- Accident reporting – this was a Police matter and incidents needed to be reported to the clerk so that it could be checked that accidents were being recorded accurately.
- Parking in Langton Green – Jonathan Dean reported that he had been in contact with TWBC who said that they had just finished a consultation and would not be carrying out a new one till late 2012. The Parish Council were advised to deal directly with TWBC on this issue.

9. Review of Highways Committee's budget:

There had been no expenditure since the last meeting.

10. Items for Information:

Mr Wheeler said that he had noticed that the 30mph signs on the approach to Ashurst were covered by vegetation.

Mrs Waters said that the drainage on Speldhurst Hill was still an issue.

Cllr Mrs Podbury reported that water lay on the road after heavy rain in Barden Road.

Cllr Mrs Soyke reported that the drain on the Stonewall Park Road/Holmewood Road junction was blocked.

Cllr Mrs Podbury said that there was a rosemary bush at the George & Dragon exit which inhibited visibility.

Cllr Mrs Podbury added that the hedge outside Kent House had been reported and the assistant Clerk was in the process of writing to the house owner.

The Clerk would report all issues.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12pm.

Chairman