



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

**Minutes of the Highways Working Group Meeting held on Wednesday 2nd November 2022 at 7.30pm
Conducted via Microsoft Teams electronic communication**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cllrs Norton (Chair), Barrington-Johnson (Vice-Chair), Ellery and Rajah, with Mr Langridge.

BOROUGH AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Borough Cllrs Allen, Rutland and Sankey.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: There were four members of public present.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mrs K Neve – Clerk and Mrs C Barrett – Assistant Clerk (minutes).

1. Election of Chair

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Norton as Chair of the working group.

2. Election of Vice-Chair

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Barrington-Johnson as Vice-Chair of the working group.

3. To enquire if anyone present intends to film, photograph and/or record the meeting

The meeting was recorded by the Clerk for administrative purposes.

4. To receive and approve apologies and reason for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Scarbrough (work commitments) and Turner (covid-related).

5. Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

6. Declarations of Lobbying

There were none.

7. Minutes of the meeting held on 14th June 2022 – RESOLVED that the minutes of the Highways Working Group meeting dated 14th June 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8. Public Open Session

Members of the public are invited to make representations to the Committee on any matters relating to the work of the Committee or to raise any issues of concern.

- Borough Cllr Justine Rutland was in attendance to raise the possibility of a 20mph zone on the A264 in Langton Green as part of a town-wide plan for such zones. She was joined by two members of the Tunbridge Wells Town Forum, Mr Adrian Berendt and Ms Jane Fenwick. As the Cabinet Member responsible for Tunbridge Wells Town and Local Areas, and a member of the Planning and Transportation Cabinet Advisory Board, Cllr Rutland was keen to help the parish council achieve a speed reduction and advised the following:
 - Although Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) was unable to help with funding, Kent County Council (KCC) Members' grants had previously been made available by County Cllr McNroy to help fund Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). Cllr McNroy had supported past efforts to achieve 20mph zones in other areas of the borough and was likely to support the parish council in doing the same.
 - Cllr Rutland was beginning a conversation with the KCC Cabinet Member for Transport about a plan for town-wide speed reductions. She offered to use her voice to support the parish council where she could and stressed the importance of crash data and other evidence for KCC Highways when requesting a TRO.

Cllr Sankey raised other possible traffic-calming measures, such as chicanes, at the entrances to villages in the parish that were known speeding hot spots, for example, Speldhurst Hill. Cllr Barrington-Johnson said that although he supported raising this again with KCC Highways, their previous response had been that street lighting would be needed to implement these measures. With minimal street lighting in the parish, and a history of some resident opposition to installing more, no further progress had been made.

Cllr Barrington-Johnson added that although there was appetite for a 20mph speed limit in Langton Green, it was important to identify which areas of the village were appropriate for this, which should be reduced from 40-30mph, and which should stay at 30mph, in order to make any 20mph zone most effective.

Cllr Barrington-Johnson and Cllr Rajah also noted that although the intention was to discuss a 20mph zone in Langton Green, speed reductions in Old Groombridge and Stockland Green had also been on the parish council's Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) for some time.

Cllr Ellery said he had been told by the local Speedwatch Police Coordinator that the Speedwatch site on Speldhurst Hill approaching Speldhurst village was the worst in Kent, and the speed limit was constantly undermined. The Police Officer who had raised this with Cllr Ellery was not able to attend the site regularly. An action point was set for Cllr Ellery to email Cllr Rutland with further details so that she could request that the Police attend more frequently.

Mr Berendt of The Tunbridge Wells Town Forum shared his experience of introducing 20mph zones, and advised the following:

- It was important to identify the right location for a transition from 30mph-20mph.
- A 20mph speed reduction was easier to pass than other traffic calming methods, but it was advisable to make the TRO part of a bigger plan.
- Putting a plan in place should take priority, and the question of how to fund it could be addressed later.
- It was advisable to take a 'this is what we're trying to achieve, please can you help us?' approach to traffic-calming measures with KCC Highways, as the road safety experts, this left the ball in their court to suggest what could be done.
- He would be happy to visit the parish and advise further if necessary.

Cllr Norton thanked Cllr Rutland, and the members of the Town Forum for their helpful ideas. The Working Group would keep these in mind when developing the HIP. They left the meeting at 7.57pm.

- Mrs Sarah Jobber and Mrs Jill Robinson attended to talk about road safety for horses and riders in the parish. They estimated that there were nine equestrian yards with horses and riders needing access onto the Langton/Speldhurst Road. The most dangerous areas were the junction of Burnt House Lane with Speldhurst/Langton Road and Bullingstone Lane, the junction of Farnham Lane with the A264

and Barrow Lane, and the junction of the bridlepath with Broom Lane near the sewage works. Speeding traffic on Leggs Lane was also a safety issue.

Mrs Jobber and Mrs Robinson requested signage at these locations, and mirrors at the junctions listed. After some discussion it appeared that only the local authority could install mirrors on a public highway, unless they were installed on private land. An action point was set for the Clerk to investigate this further. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that warning signs be produced and paid for by the parish council. Cllr Norton thanked both residents raising these issues and they left the meeting at 8.15pm.

9. Review of action points

The action points were reviewed. Action Points 10/22, 19/22, 20/22, 21/22, 22/22, 23/22, 25/22, 26/22, 27/22 and 28/22 were marked as complete. 24/22 would be discussed as part of agenda item 11.

10. Review of Highways Committee's Budget – to review the expenditure to-date.

With the amount carried over from 2022 and the budget allocated for the next financial year, the working group would have a budget of £30,000 for the financial year 2023-24.

11. Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) (including consideration of any new issues by village taking into account correspondence, recent accidents, Speedwatch, and media)

Mr Langridge had met with the KCC Highways Improvements Programme Manager and shown him the parish's HIP priority locations in August. He gave the following update:

a) Ashurst

There was nothing to report.

b) Old Groombridge

- HIP Item OG5: The KCC Highways Improvement Programme Manager had said that a 20mph zone might not be suitable for Bird-in-hand Street or The Walk, as additional 20mph repeater signs would have to be introduced every 200-300 metres. This may be unacceptable in a conservation area as could create excess sign clutter. It was agreed that the Chair would re-visit this issue with KCC Highways, as it was agreed that this feedback was not consistent with the siting of 20mph zones in other local conservation areas.

c) Langton Green

- HIP Item LG5: Following the meeting, KCC Highways had set up an ATC on the eastbound A264 at the Hare and there was some confusion as to what they aimed to use the data for. An action point was set for the Clerk to clarify with KCC Highways.
KCC Highways had expressed doubt about the suitability of the Farnham Lane junction with the A264 for a zebra crossing. This site had originally been suggested by LGVS. There was already a traffic island crossing at this location, and an initial estimate of the number of pedestrians using the island to cross was about 20 per day. The KCC Highways Improvement Manager said that for a zebra crossing to be viable, the daily number of pedestrians crossing needed to be at least 200.
- HIP Item LG8: There was discussion about the high cost of installing a pavement along Farnham Lane, as the land was owned by Miller Homes. An action point was set for the Chair and Mr Langridge to draft a letter to them asking if they had any objection to pedestrians using their land as an informal footpath.
- HIP Item LG9: KCC Highways had identified a site they thought suitable for a pedestrian crossing '30 metres west of Lampington Row.' This would involve installing streetlights and extending the footway, at a cost of up to £100,000. KCC Highways had also noted that the crossing would be 'away from the pedestrian desire line'. After some discussion, it was agreed that this was not a viable location. While not ideal, the current location of the school crossing patrol and lollipop lady was more effective. An action point was set for the Clerk to clarify the location of the suggested pedestrian crossing with KCC. If it turned out to be where expected, and therefore not viable, this HIP item should be archived.

d) Speldhurst

- HIP Item S9: KCC Highways would progress the installation of double yellow lines at the junction of Cobhams and Barden Road. The Parish Council would need to pay for the TRO at a maximum cost of £1,500 for this and HIP item S10 below, and KCC Highways would pay for the installation.
- HIP Item S10: KCC Highways would progress the installation of double yellow lines at the junction of Ferbies and Langton Road. It was agreed that a councillor should be present at the site visit by KCC to explain how this should be done. An action point was set for the Clerk to make KCC aware of this.
- HIP Items S7 and S11: These items related to excessive speeding, near misses and road traffic accidents along the length of Barden Road. KCC had not identified any solutions for this location. There had been an email from residents relating to an accident at the Old Dairy. After discussion it was agreed that the HIP should be updated to prioritise a speed reduction from 40-30mph on the stretch of road where the 20mph zone ended, leading out of the village towards Bidborough. An action point was set for the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk (CB) to write to residents on this stretch of road asking them to provide all details of near misses going forward. Cllr Sankey advised reporting all near misses via the near miss register: [Report a near miss \(tunbridgewells.gov.uk\)](https://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/report-a-near-miss).
- HIP Item S6: It was agreed that the lack of progress in achieving a speed reduction on Stockland Green Road was frustrating. Cllr Rajah said that part of the problem in collecting data through Speedwatch was that the speed limit was 40mph. He added that although few vehicles exceeded this limit, they actually drove too fast at any speed over 30mph. Cllr Sankey reiterated the importance of recording near miss data, as this had proved successful for those lobbying for speed reductions in other areas.

12. SID Read Outs

The Assistant Clerk (CB) had produced two Speed Indicator Device (SID) data reports showing daily vehicle count versus average daily speed, and average hourly speeds, together with a bar-chart showing weekly vehicle count versus speed. These reports showed data for the same time period in two different locations, the eastbound A264 Langton Road, and Speldhurst Hill approaching Speldhurst village. It was agreed that the data produced was useful and that these reports should be presented at every meeting. The Assistant Clerk (CB) explained that data could be generated for any given time and location as long as the SID had been in place during the required time period (two SIDS were currently rotated between several different locations). With this in mind, councillors should consider which SID sites should take priority so that data could begin to be collected to support appeals for traffic-calming measures. Cllr Ellery asked if it were possible to see the raw data and the Assistant Clerk (CB) said she would ask the manufacturer. An action point was set for the Clerk to email Cllr Ellery the instruction manual.

13. Items requiring Full Council approval

- The progression of double yellow lines at the junctions of Cobhams with Barden Road, and Ferbies with Langton Road. There would be a maximum cost of £1,500 to the parish council for the TRO; further costs would be covered by KCC Highways.
- The production of SPC signage at Broom Lane near the sewage works, and the Speldhurst/Langton Road giving warning of horses approaching/crossing.

14. Items for information

- The Clerk reminded members that highways faults should be reported via www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem.
- It was agreed that the National Highways & Transport Network - Public Satisfaction Surveys should be promoted and an action point was set for the Assistant Clerk (CB) to publicise this on the website and social media.
- It was agreed that it was unnecessary to attend or promote a talk on road safety on the A21.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting ended at 9.23pm.

Chairman

| Action Number | Action | Owner | Date created | Status |
|---------------|--|--|--------------|--------------------------|
| 29/22 | Email Cllr Rutland re. Speldhurst Hill Speedwatch site police attendance: Justine.Rutland@TunbridgeWells.gov.uk – please cc. the Clerk. | Cllr Ellery | 02/11 | TBA |
| 30/22 | Investigate privately owned land at locations where mirrors could be installed for horse & rider safety. | Clerk | 02/11 | TBA |
| 31/22 | Contact KCC Highways rep to clarify comments following site visit on 12/08. | Clerk/Cllr Norton | 02/11 | TBA |
| 32/22 | Draft letter to Miller Homes re. land owned by them on Farnham Lane. | Chair/Mr Langridge | 02/11 | TBA |
| 33/22 | Contact residents on Barden Rd where 20mph ends leading out of village to Bidborough re. near miss register. | Clerk/Assist Clerk (CB) | 02/11 | TBA |
| 34/22 | Follow up with Cllr Rajah to collate near miss data for Stockland Green Road. | Clerk/Assist Clerk (CB) | 02/11 | TBA |
| 35/22 | Email SID reporting instruction manual to Cllr Ellery. Ask manufacturer how to extract raw data. | Clerk/Assist Clerk (CB) | 02/11 | TBA |
| 36/22 | Publicise transport public satisfaction survey. | Assist Clerk (CB) | 02/11 | TBA |
| 24/22 | Re-visit OG HIP following KCC advice relating to prioritising traffic-calming measures | Chairman/Cllr Norton | 14/06 | Complete |
| 10/22 | Share relevant messages from meeting via media channels | Assistant Clerk | 12/04 | Ongoing Closed |
| 19/22 | Download SID data to feedback at next meeting | Clerk | 12/04 | Ongoing Closed |
| 20/22 | Evaluate fixed assets on fixed asset register relating to Highways | Cllrs Barrington-Johnson/ Langridge/ Clerk | 14/06 | Complete |
| 21/22 | Check with LG Speedwatch Co-ordinator whether a new site had been authorised at Gipps Cross | Cllr Barrington-Johnson | 14/06 | Complete |
| 22/22 | Request ATC at A264 Langton Road Eastbound | Chairman | 14/06 | Complete |
| 23/22 | Update Borough Cllr Sankey on decision regarding traffic lights/double yellows at the Hare/A264 | Clerk | 14/06 | Complete |
| 25/22 | Draft consultation letter to residents ref. HIP items 9 & 10 | Chairman/ Assistant Clerk | 14/06 | Complete |
| 26/22 | Write to Penshurst Road residents explaining the importance of keeping their hedges cut ref. HIP item 12 | Clerk | 14/06 | Complete |
| 27/22 | Add standalone SIDS agenda item to next meeting agenda | Clerk | 14/06 | Complete |
| 28/22 | Add agenda item to end of Highways agendas for items needing FC approval | Clerk | 14/06 | Complete |