

From the meeting with KCC Highways on 10th August the KCC Highways Community Engagement Team Leader along with 2 colleagues from the Planning and Advice team and another from the Design and Delivery team, will be carrying out an on-site visit to Borden on 7th September and will drive around the village roads discussed at the meeting to ascertain the feasibility of 20 mph zones and other traffic calming measures that may be supported, including those that the Parish Council can financially contribute to from their own Highways reserves.

It was agreed that prior to the KCC visit that the Highways Group would re-iterate the previous conversation by sending a list of things that they should specifically look out for during their visit i.e. the width of the pavement at Chestnut Street, Bannister Hill parking which can cause safety issues, and other specific traffic hotspots mentioned at the meeting with them.

It was acknowledged that KCC has responsibilities around the maintenance of things such as fading white lines and broken highway signs etc, and so as not to confuse maintenance issues with new traffic calming measures required these will be noted separately on the revised HIP.

The £10k budget that KCC has allocated for the whole of Swale Parish Councils is not suitable for the purpose in Borden, so prior to sharing a revised HIP we will wait until the feedback from their assessment and understanding of the areas that they can and cannot offer support in. This will allow us to re-assess our priorities and build a new fit-for-purpose HIP that along with shared funding can be progressed.

Since our meeting with KCC, the following has already been arranged;

- 2 traffic surveys for Maidstone Road (Danaway) will be carried out w/c 11 September for a period of 7 days.
- The on-site visit is as mentioned above.
- The Community Engagement Team Leader will speak to colleagues in the Major Projects Team about the Key Street roundabout scheme.

National Highways have been contacted via email to ask what they could support with and they confirmed that they had met with the Highways Officer and offered Active Travel. This information was relayed to the Community Engagement Team Leader so that the KCC departments are aware of what the other is discussing, in the hope that with speed reduction measures, lower speeds will encourage active travel, and JB will be speaking to the Swale Active Travel co-ordinator about this.

CS advised that the wooden posts in front of the playschool pre-fab building on School Lane are not fit for purpose and should be replaced with Armco barriers for added safety measures.

Our current HIP has been updated and will be shared for Full Council review at the September meeting, but the updates include recent discussions with residents regarding:

- yellow lines at The Rise
- yellow lines on the bend on Bannister Hill
- add Armco posts at School Lane

The Clerk was asked to contact the school regarding the switching on/off of the lights, and CS will support with information for this.

FYI Please see below the notes taken from the meeting with KCC Highways meeting:

Notes from the Highways Group meeting with KCC Highways on 10th August 2023

Attendees: Cllr Bolas (JB), Cllr Baldock (MB), Mrs J Watson Team Leader KCC Highways (JW); Teresa Millum Parish Clerk (TM).

This meeting was requested by BPC with KCC Highways to discuss with them the parish HIPs and how they work regarding what we can and cannot do to achieve a positive outcome, prior to reviewing our own HIP and sharing the updated version with them.

JB - set the scene by advising that the HIPs take a lot of work, including consulting with residents to come up with a feasible list of priorities but in the past, without exceptions, there have been no positive outcomes at all from these actions with KCC Highway apart from a few speed checks followed by confirmation that KCC cannot do anything further.

Borden is not just one Parish with one village as there is the center of Borden which has problems, along with Oad Street, Wrens Road, Bannister Hill, Hearts Delight, Lower Borden, Chestnut Street and Danaway and Wisers Lane, and so to say that we can only have 2 priorities (on the HIP that will get looked into) where we have such a lot of problems which adversely affect the physical safety of our residents is very limiting, and it seems pointless to go through that every year with no outcome. A previous officer visited the area, went through Active Travel then left and the following officers did not bother to read the previous officers' work. So, we have a lack of consistency within KCC.

There is knowledge of KCC Highway budgets and an understanding that there is no funding for Parish Council activities.

JW - Advised that the HIP is a tool that KCC Highways use with Parish Councils as one place where all issues and requests can go. So, residents can come to their Parish Councils and if it's felt that the action can support and be beneficial to the community it is added to the HIP, and discussions are held with KCC Highways around what is feasible or not feasible, if it's not feasible the Parish Council will be told the reasons why. She is here to help the Parish Council and will try to get as much done for us as possible. The HIP budget is £10k for the whole of Swale's 30 Parishes, and she can help with TRO's and can do things like signs, and can sometimes contribute to bigger schemes, and the 2 priorities only as stated on the HIP can be ignored as she is happy to discuss anything and if she can do more will do more. Money can be taken from other districts' budgets if not spent there, and the money will be there if needed. Although, things like a 20mph scheme are very costly and there would be an expectation for the Parish Council to fund something that big. There is also a lot of information in the Highway Improvement Pack. If something is over budget but is really a good idea, they also have a local highways transport budget that can bid on.

JB – This was promised to us before for Chestnut Street and Oad Street & Hearts Delight rat runs but nothing got done.

JW – Apologised for what had gone on previously.

JB - Advised of road schemes that have not been supported for Borden in the past but then given to other parishes i.e. red tarmac and white lines, reduced 20mph speed zones, etc.

JW - Confirmed that a road can go from 60 down to 20 mph

MB – Challenged this as has been told repeatedly by KCC that cannot do that.

JW - Explained about de-restricted roads and could not see a reason that you could not go from 60 to 20 mph as just need to be sensible about it, she was sure that there are no rules around that and can go from 60 to 30mph.

There was an elongated conversation regarding the M2/J5 construction and Chestnut Street / Oad Street diversion and the issues surrounding this including the safety of residents using the pathways. Both JB & MB put forward a strong case for a traffic speed survey whilst the current TRO is in place for 30mph, and although this area of discussion is outside the remit of the Community Engagement Team Leader, JW did agree that she would go away and talk to the Planning and Advice Team to see what their views are about this, including a traffic survey whilst the TRO is in place.

JB - Asked how we move on and get someone to come and see what our problems are and experience them, and get KCC's take on the overall strategic interventions that are needed and what parts are jointly affordable to achieve that i.e. the Sittingbourne bypass from Tunstall through Oad Street to J5 which will get worse when bypass built, also the traffic from Sittingbourne central that go up Borden Lane through the village then off down Chestnut Street and Danaway of Pond Farm Road then off down Oad Street again.

JW with the HIPs, can look at any development and see what parish requests are and see if developers will support them.

MB – Advised that he has been told KCC does not do this with developers anymore.

JW – Confirmed that she has conversations with developers all the time.

There was also an in-depth discussion regarding Chestnut Street and Danaway speed limits being surveyed. whilst the TRO for 30 mph is in place. This normally must be completed once the TRO has been lifted and the road is back to the normal speed limit.

MB – Advised that the issue is that people drive too fast, and this can be up to 10 mph higher than the normal speed limit, we've got to find another way of getting changes other than proving that cars won't go faster than the 50mph limit because they do. There is a proven reduction in speed limits when a reduced speed limit is put in, which was agreed by JB.

The traffic hot spots in Borden including Heats Delight, Bannister Hill, The Street, Lower Borden, Wises Lane, Chestnut Street, and Oad Street were viewed on a walkthrough of the roads on Google Maps so that JW could see and fully understand the road types where 20 mph zones and other traffic calming measures would be beneficial and JW agreed to an on-site visit with a colleague to actually see and assess for herself so that options can be fully discussed at our next meeting.

The meeting ended at 10:50

Actions agreed from the meeting.

1. JW – Agreed to book in a site visit on 7th September, with colleagues (one from the Planning & Advice Team and one from the Design & Delivery Team) to drive around the Parish looking at where 20 mph speed zones are viable. The outcome will be fed back to at the next planned meeting with BPC Highways Group on 8th September.
2. JW – Confirmation after meeting that on speaking with her Manager it has been agreed that a speed survey can be carried out in Maidstone Road (Danaway) whilst the 30 mph TRO is in place, to give a good idea of current compliance. The survey will take place w/c 11th September for a 7-day period and will be funded by KCC Highways. Results will be made available to BPC once analysed.

Notes from the Highways Group Meeting on 15th August 2023 @ 7pm

3. JW – Will speak to her colleagues in the Major Project Team about the Key Street roundabout scheme and come back to BPC.
4. TM – Updated JW on BPC correspondence with residents of Oad Street relating to a query they had received.