

MARCH 2023 UPDATE ON HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Since my last report in February 2023, I have made two further reports about Highway issues to KCC. This means the grand total increases to 110. These two reports were:-

Oad Street – Road narrows sign damaged for the third time in three months.

Borden Lane – Road markings near Parish boundary worn out.

102 of the 110 have now been dealt either in a satisfactory manner or with a satisfactory explanation. 8, including the Borden Lane problem above are still outstanding but the sign in Oad Street has now been straightened but is still close to the carriageway.

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.

I am informed that the provision of new signs at the junction of Sutton Baron Road and Pond Farm Road are scheduled to be installed at the end of March. The school sign in School Lane near the village is due to be replaced along with additional signage in the area of the school. This is scheduled to start on the 10th March. Other works still to be completed include the white line renewals in Pond Farm Road, and Oad Street.

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.

Concerning the Council's letter to KCC 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.

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.

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. This letter has been written and copies were circulated again recently 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 it was resolved to write a letter again to National Highways expressing considerable concern about the standard of the alignment of the new southbound slip road from the new Chestnut Street roundabout to the existing southbound A249. This proposed new access would lead to a high risk of serious accidents where the new slip road meets with the A249. This letter has been written to the CEO of National Highways and also sent to the Minister of Transport. A copy was circulated to Councillors along with their subsequent replies.

I was present at a recent meeting of the Swale Joint Transportation Board when a report was presented updating the proposed junction improvements of the Key Street roundabout. This report is a separate attachment which is part of this report. It must be read in conjunction with the questions and comments below.

I asked the following at the meeting followed it up by an email on the next day.

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?
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.
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?
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?
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?
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?
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?

Should I receive any answers before Council I will update everyone.

Speedwatch

The new Co-ordinator continues to contact volunteers in an attempt to find resources to carry out the speed checks. His short report requesting help has been included in Broadside and his full report has been put on the Parish website as well as various social media pages.

John Fassenfelt March 2023.