

Committee, Group or Sub Group : Road Safety Group

Meeting Date & Venue: Tuesday 9th January 2024, 7pm @ SPC office

Report Author: Cllr Adele Sharp - Chairman

Present: A Sharp (AS), P Riordan, (PR), M Buller (MB) Speed Watch Rep, A Martin (AM).

Apologies: M Alessi, B McLoughlin, K McLean.

Matters Arising:

Poyntell Road commuter parking – PR contacted the resident re RSG minutes from December 2023. PR will contact the resident and suggest they make a note of the parking that is causing an issue, to be able to build a body of evidence to give to Kent Highways (KH).

1.Highways Improvement Plan – Please note MBC only allow us to have 2 'live' projects – our other projects / wish list are 'archived'. Team: Michelle Norris & Greg McNicholl.

October 2023 – was there a HIP review? RSG reviewed and updated the HIP and sent to the clerk. KH said it was the wrong format so was amended to their requirements. Was this sent to KH? Should we have had a F2F / zoom meeting with Michelle or did the clerk do this?

AS to check with clerk.

HIP 1. (NEW) Double yellow lines (DYL) on main road A229, single lines (SYL) on Cornforth Close and Chestnut Avenue

Kent Highways have now agreed to us going ahead but that SPC will have to pay for it - @ £3,500. If this is an official item on our HIP we question why SPC not KH would pay for this! NP parking policy DM23 1.5.

Action: Ask Clerk to chase up the reason why KH would not be paying for this, having agreed we can have it.

HIP 2. The Quarter - Bus stop / crossing & 30mph HIP item 3

Clerk and PR are meeting with Kent Highways (KH) team to look at the site, mid January. Feedback when its happened. Reiterated we can get funding, so KH don't need to fund it.

Action: We await feedback of the meeting.

Background - Reasons KH have turned down our request for a crossing are: -

* It's a 40mph area – We would like it to be moved back to at least Pinnock Lane, ideally moved back a bit further maybe to the convent. (See our HIP4)

* Footfall is considered too low, only accessing the garage shop or the bus stop.

* a crossing can not be near the entrance / exit of the garage/ Pinnock lane

* no footpath from Frittenden Road to garage nor on to the bus stop. There is only a tiny bit of footpath that the bus stop is on.

In answer we :-

* There is no cost to them as funding is there via the developers, KH do not have to foot the bill. S106 funding £350,000 for improvements & station CIL money redirected for road crossing.

* We feel that the very fact that pedestrians are crossing at a dangerous point on the A229 is an accident about to happen.

* nowhere suitable for a crossing there, (if this was the only criteria used, there would be no crossing at the parade by the chemist. It does have a desire line and more footfall but not ideal).

** KH installed the bus top there (historical?) 'in a dangerous place' so its disingenuous to ignore that there is no issue to address.*

2. SID – permission at Headcorn Road, Marden Road, Bathurst Road sites.

Note - the camera should not stay in the same location longer than 3 weeks.

Batteries last 5 – 11 days depending on traffic going past i.e. run out quicker on Headcorn Rd

Headcorn Road facing east for 2 weeks (some leeway allowing up to 3 weeks subject

Headcorn Road facing west for 2 weeks to availability to turn the camera.)

Bathurst Road for 1 week (this should ideally be 1 in term time / 1 in holidays)

Marden Road facing west for 1 week

Marden Road facing east for 2 weeks

Looking at latest report

Headcorn Road average about 34% are speeding. Down from 40% last time, although this is December and road conditions not so good as July, it might suggest that it is slowing traffic. One 70mph on New Years Day!

Note - This adds weight to planning concerns regarding any developments on those roads. The impact on passing drivers of a vehicle emerging from extra driveways will undoubtedly be a distraction on Marden and Headcorn, especially if they are driving more than the speed limit.

Bathurst 8756 vehicles in the 2weeks 99% were under 30mph.

Anomalies e.g. in one hour 1949 vehicles under 15mph. Clearly something wrong but when MBcontacted the equipment manufacturer suggested it would be rain. It is not reasonable to expect us to monitor rainfall to see if it coincides with these 'flurries'! We would rather suggest that a SID should be able to cope with rain and this means that our data is skewed. Do we have a 'duff' SID?

Action: Can the clerk to contact re duff SID as response so far not helpful. Report to do for Village update.

3. Sainsburys shuttle bus

The new timetable was implemented before Christmas. MB went with Robin the driver on the route to ensure he knew the route. The rural route takes longer than has been allowed for by Hams – extra 15 minutes. Plenty of rural houses passed. Only needs 2 journeys not 2 – passengers using it were consulted. This means it can be used around Staplehurst in the afternoon. This prevented the timetable being printed so it can be accurate.

Action: Ask clerk to liaise with James at Sainsburys to do the amended timetable pdq. It would be great to add to the update!

4. Crossroads

A parishioner raised a complaint about the safety of the crossroads with traffic trying to overtake stationary vehicles and mounting the kerb.

Action: We recommend the following - SPC contact Kent Police and Kent Highways to suggest installing cameras on the traffic lights, **redoing of the white lines**, and the possibility of wooden bollards on the high street turning into Marden Road (chestnut tree side) all other sides the pavement is too narrow for this possibility. **ASK clerk if contacted and about roundabout at Sainsburys.**

5. Hawkenbury Bridge HIP 3

We now have Kent Highways FOI response

In just the last 5 years they have been called out 19 times and spent £39,349. 88

Crashes are categorised by severity (and has approximate costs of):

Fatal - a crash resulting in a death £2.1 million

Serious - detention in hospital, inc paralysis, fractures and severe lacerations £243,000

Slight - includes whiplash, sprains and minor lacerations. £25,000.

This means the true cost of these 19 call outs would be £475,000. Previous KH comments said that traffic lights would be in the region of £60,000, which may have been more cost effective for KH in the long term.

Potential Solutions

A – Do nothing

B – Lobby for traffic lights – no doubt technical issues but appears the common sense approach – KCC estimate £60,000

C – Build a second bridge – would be challenging and expensive

D – Priority signs – discussed but considered dangerous as there are no clear sight lines either way for traffic to see. Rejected as an option.

E - Mirrors - Concern that they would be smashed very quickly. KCC won't install as 'people rely on them' ?!

Verbally we have support from Headcorn Parish Council who have been campaigning for improved safety at Hawkenbury Bridge.

Action: report written to SPC

- 1) Lobby Kent County Council to undertake a feasibility study and report back the findings
- 2) Seek support from Headcorn Parish Council and others to lobby Kent County Council to undertake a feasibility study and report back the findings

They are about to do repairs –closing the road for 5 days **chase the clerk re above**

6. Church Hill sign

AS contacted Emma Tilbury at Kent Highways and had this response:

According to the Department for Transport's (DfT) Traffic Signs Manual, the "Frail or Disabled pedestrians" warning sign should be restricted to sites where relatively high numbers of slow-moving pedestrians are likely to cross a road, other than at a Zebra or signaled crossing. This would predominantly be near sheltered housing or nursing homes, where drivers need to be reminded that, on a regular basis, a pedestrian in the road ahead might be frail and need more time to cross than an able-bodied person would.

As such I am afraid that we wouldn't look to place this type of warning sign near to a Church.

AS responded that given that criteria residents would argue that we do qualify.

We have an elderly congregation to the church that cross the A229 to access the church, We also have a sheltered accommodation development in Bell Lane that directly accesses the A229 - see map below, its on the left of the map. Add to that the elderly attending funerals there as well. There have been some near misses as people can't get across quickly and cars from the North side (top of the map pic), can not see over the brow of the hill until they are at the top - see second picture - access road is where the Kings Head sign is - as you can see, you can't see it ;) ! And you can't see the church on the left set back from the houses. Third picture is over the top heading South towards Cranbrook down the hill, for reference. We already have double yellow lines and a 30mph warning light up sign to try and help. I don't know whether any of the above helps our case or not?

We received this response:

I have now had the opportunity to discuss this with colleagues and I'm afraid that they are not satisfied that there is evidence that a relatively high numbers of frail or disabled pedestrians would be regularly crossing the High Street at this point.

We appreciate that there is sheltered accommodation on Bell Lane, near to the junction with South Bank, as well as a day centre and retirement housing on McCabe Close and this would be good justification for a warning sign on Bell Lane as this would accord with the technical guidance in the traffic signs manual.

However, this does not extend to the High Street. What we have to be careful of when looking to place warning signs is that they're not overused to the point where their effectiveness becomes diluted because drivers are used to seeing them and become sign blind. That is why

it is important for us to reserve their use for locations only where whatever hazard we are warning drivers of occurs on a regular basis throughout each day.

Emma Tilbury

Agreed that this doesn't take into account the set of steps that have to be used access the area on the East side. This is the reason pedestrians cross at the old Bell site on the West side.

Recommendation: AS will take photos and reply

7. Chapel Lane – bin collection

Parked cars too far into Chapel Lane which is impeding the refuse lorries accessing the lane. A Martin (AM) followed the advice given by Jennifer Stevens and Jeff Kitson (MBC) and wrote to our KCC Councillor, Ms Parfitt-Reed (LP-R) asking for her support. The advice given by MBC Officers was inaccurate, as LP-R has confirmed that KCC Councillors no longer have a Members' Highway Fund.

Chapel Lane is not on our HIP as KH only allow 2 items and we have 3+ see above item 1. The process for getting this onto the HIP is long and drawn out and won't help residents immediately.

1. *Need a residents consultation 'ok'd' by Kent Highways (KH) to extend the DYL*
2. *Await KH to take necessary action*
3. *This would allow MBC to provide enforcement measures*

The best and quickest solution would be for the new refuse contractor to use a smaller lorry. John Perry (JP) BC - has said that he will take this up with the Cabinet Member responsible to see what can be done, including the use of a smaller vehicle. Ask JP to mention Market Street too.

JP said that he had *spoke to Jeff Kitson and also raised this with LP-R.*

In the meantime, residents could park their own cars there on Sunday night, to try and help the bin lorry access the lane.

Also note the amount of times bins are not collected – with data it could then be pointed out that residents are paying council tax for a service they are not receiving . . .

Make sure all residents report when not collected, not just one on everyone's behalf.

Any accidents at entrance to Chapel Lane?

JP would not recommend contacting MBC's contractor direct as this is a contractual arrangement between MBC and its contractor and there was a considerable amount of detailed negotiation involved.

Ask SPC if they would agree to support the request for DYL to be extended by one car's length.

Recommendation: reccomend add to HIP, ask for SPC to support DYL, await to hear from JP

8. Bower Walk

One resident of Bower Walk is driving onto Bower Walk

Recommendation – PR will ask resident that complained to note when and registration of vehicle (we have been sent a photo). SPC can then do a letter explaining that this is a pedestrian area and they must not drive on Bower Walk.

9 Surrenden Road

Parking on corner of verge at entrance to the field during the school drop off / pick up times. Concerned for safety of children coming out of the field.

Suggestion: Need KH permission ? Recommend to SPC that we put bollards there. If need KH permission but could use some CIL to fund this?

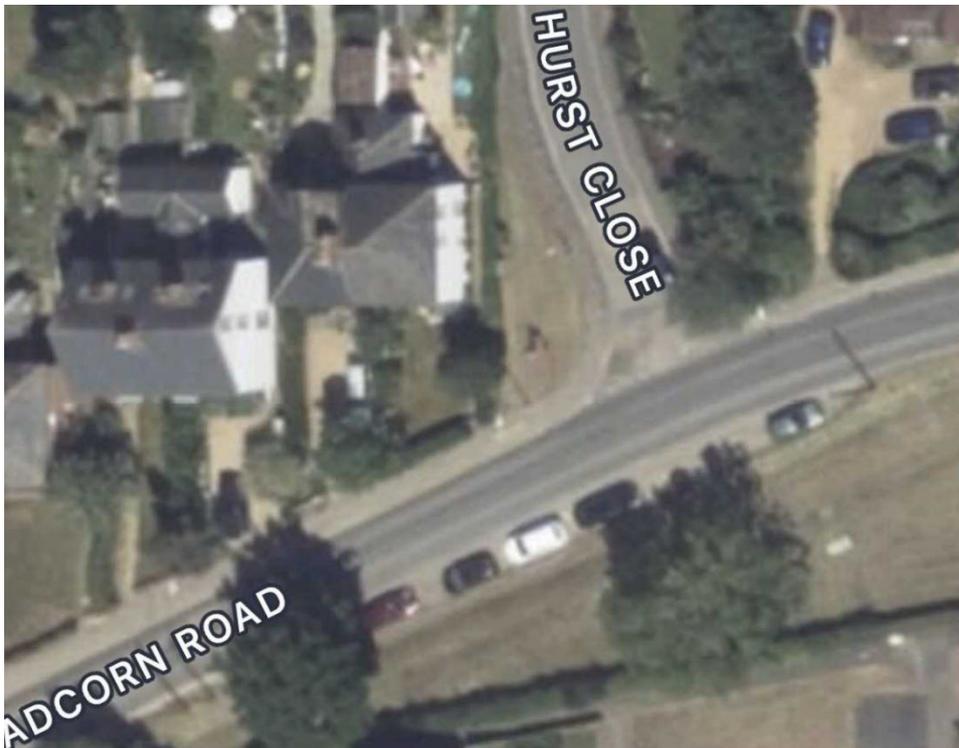
10. Gybbon Rise

PR emailed the MBC operations support manager to have a patrol over the next few weeks to deter people from parking on the zig zag lines.

Suggestion: Contact the school to ask them to remind parents that SPC have made the effort to try and ensure children's safety by getting DYL and its parents that are now breaking the law and creating a hazard. To Head and governors letter to Police to protect children's safety, disappointing that Police say they can't enforce the law. We feel that the Police should be in a position to enforce this law surrounding schools as children's safety is at stake. It would likely only need to be done in a while to get the message across to parents

11. Headcorn Road Layby Layby - £11228.40

Background – Area along Headcorn Road where about 8 vehicles park just off the road on the side. Suggested it be tarmac'd.



PR obtained a quotation £11228.40 and suggested CIS (CIL?) money be used to fund this.

Agreed that it does look messy as a self made DIY parking area. Only room for about 8 cars.

1. Who owns this area? Suspect its Kent Highways.

Most Kent main roads have a strip of land, about 1m owned by KCC Highways for services etc, and then the land could be anyone's – private, housing association / MBC / PC etc

2. KH should do / may refuse SPC doing it / may expect KH quality job – more £

3. Not sure it is a safe area to park as its mostly opposite a T junction.

4. If agreed to go ahead with the project, SPC would then be responsible long term.

Action:

1) Do not recommend SPC spend £10,000 of CIL to benefit 8 residents

2) Ask Kent Highways their thoughts on them maintaining this area as its theirs (most likely) - or would they fill it in as they have done in other areas?

3) We could let the 8 residents using it regularly know that £10,000 would fix the problem if they wished to fund it, but they would need to liaise with KH.

4) We need to continue to remind MBC when passing developments with 1.5 parking spaces that this is the problem that occurs

12. Thatcher Road

Residents running onto the green over a path owned by SPC – aesthetically unpleasing – suggestion ? 1 foot high wooden bollards?

13. Pot holes in general

PR has sent a list to KH of all the pot holes from the Summer. Met with Sue Laporte and there was some action in Gybbon Rise but now 2 more. North Down, filled and now 2 more.

Clapper Lane 82 pot holes resulted in a phone call in July and don't seem to have done any work – flooding work is being done.

Offens Drive as a main access route is appalling

Action: Can they confirm when the pothole blitz will be coming to Staplehurst.

14. Pavements

When is our yearly report on pavements due to happen? PR would like to go round with them. Many are unsafe due to dips and holes etc.

Action: Email KH cc LP-R.

8. Hedges

Golding Homes church green has been done. Looks tidy after lobbying from residents and cllrs.

There are a number of hedges that are overgrown currently.

Also check any hedges that are KH responsibility.

Action: deliver letters if needed

9. Speedwatch - Not been out recently.

Auto Speed watch - Auto speedwatch records cars 46mph – 69mph

Still with us but may go soon. Letters sent automatically not by SPC.

749 speeders in September. 419 October daylight drops so 96 in November, 2 December solar powered and the camera picture.

Nearly 4,000 letters sent since we had the camera from June 2022

10. Accidents/incidents reported – staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com – none reported

AOB:

30mph bin stickers useless as red fades rapidly – let Michelle know.

Big banner on SCC front hedge – SCC Trustees have given permission to do this.

MBC Gutter sweeping – Once every 6 weeks allegedly. Ask when last came and when next due. PR will ask MBC officer in charge of road sweeping.

Dates of forthcoming meetings: Thursday 8th February 2024 6.30pm SPC office

Notes on HIP items not activated as far as Kent Highways work:

* Fishers Road - bottom - car parking - filling in ditch area to make rear access to gardens - sounds like an MBC planning enforcement issue. **No further info**

* Market Street / Winches Garth - an access made into Fishers Road at rear & parking on green at bottom of road.

* bins not collected before people go to work due to too many cars. They will be doing them later in the day which may solve that. **clerk to check if MBC own the green** - suggest they either protect it or grass crete it. left into Wiches garth into . . . some parking bays and then dble yellow line - could be parking area as no purpose to dble yellow line and we are sure no one enforces it. MBC need to investigate this area.

Selling cars down there too, even though police have done a check. Have they moved to Fishers road? **No further info Action : Has MBC looked into?**

Archived HIP items as can only have 2 things live on HIP. **AS will tweak HIP**

HIP 6. Hawkenbury Bridge work – archived as Kent Highways felt that as they had put signs and painted road marking it was completed.

HIP 8. Narrow paths Cuckolds Corner / crossroads - Greg felt road might yield 20cm nothing significant. MB emphasised that the junction is already above capacity and pedestrians have to step into the road to pass each other. Too narrow for wheel chairs and buggies. - **archived 9-14** Michelle returned to the only 2 priorities per year - remaining items are 'archived'
Broken edges of country lanes should not be on HIP but be reported via 'report a fault' on website. The Marden Rd roundabout misuse is a police matter.

New contacts at KCC Highways - email addresses on file for ease of access by all

Kent Highways contacts

west.highwayimprovements@kent.gov.uk

the new system (since 6/6/22) of a team instead of one local person (Jennie Watson) who knew us personally and visited Staplehurst so knows the roads!

Claremarie.Vine@kent.org

Marden Road projects ref. Hen & Duckhurst aka Dickens Gate estate

Elizabeth.Bineham@kent.gov.uk

Assistant Engineer @ Highway Improvements (West Kent) | Design & Delivery | Road Safety & Active Travel Group | Highways & Transportation | Kent County Council | Doubleday House, St Michaels Close, Aylesford, ME20 7BU | 03000 41 81 81 | www.kent.gov.uk

Toby.Donlon@kent.gov.uk

Overseeing the surveying of sites in co-operation with Claremarie, to install an interactive SID system, to be paid for by Hen & Duckhurst development

Sainsburys contact? Gary ?

Note – kept on minutes FYI

'The Quarter' High street down the hill towards Pinnock Lane (Garage & Morrison shop)

Costs: Zebra crossing = £17,000 , puffin crossing £38,200.

We would need to lobby for the 30mph to extend to past Pinnock Lane, Iden Manor, as they have to be installed in a 20 – 30 mph area to have a crossing. **Action:** On the HIP

* current 30mph starts at Frittenden Rd area. On that side of the road (East) is the Cricket Lodge, which flows onto to the garage / Morrison shop / car wash site

* Bus stop on both sides of the road - opposite the garage & on the garage side it's past the Pinnock Lane turn off towards Cranbrook.

* This is used by children in the properties (West) who have to cross this busy main road during rush hour to be able to go to school in Cranbrook. We are all concerned about potential fatalities.

* Our suggestion would be to:

a) extend the 30mph at least to Pinnock Lane where the built up properties extend to, ideally to where the 50mph threshold is (Fuller House) and

b) install a crossing between the Hallwards pedestrian walkway and the bus top (West side)

