

STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Committee, Group or Sub Group	
KCC Highways Parish Seminar	
Meeting Date & Venue	
Friday 2 November 2018, Oakwood House, Maidstone	
Report Author	
Cllr Tom Burnham	
Report	
<p>This meeting was attended by representatives from many parishes in Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling and Swale Boroughs. The agenda is attached. Some key points were:</p> <p><u>Michael Payne (Deputy Cabinet Member)</u> – reviewed activity over the last year, including LED streetlight conversions, Brexit planning, rural (subsidised) bus services and road safety. Emphasised the role of parishes in providing evidence for road safety schemes.</p> <p><u>Simon Jones (Director)</u> – recently moved to KCC from Highways England, where he was Regional Director for SE England. His priorities are “accessibility” (i.e. reliability and even flow of traffic) and safety. Wants parishes to suggest plans for improving safety (before fatal accidents happen) leading to a programme of work for a particular road, not just spot improvements. Aims for “right first time” in highways work. Aims for faster response and reduced overheads – “slick and efficient”. John Wilson (KALC) commented that KCC should plan for housing developments across Kent. Simon Jones replied that KCC are creating a county-wide traffic model, but Highways England also need to be involved.</p> <p><u>Andrew Loosemore</u> – key activities in the past year have involved potholes and street lighting conversion to LED. 20-25% increase in enquiries and utility work in 2018 compared with 2017. More than 50% of highway enquiries now use the on-line system and 70% of pothole and streetlight enquiries are via on-line reporting.</p> <p>Kirstie Williams – reviewed factors resulting in potholes – when potholes appear at the surface it is because the road has already failed at a deeper level. The “pothole blitz” had used £10.1 million of funding from DfT and KCC, with a further £2.5 million from Feb 2019, plus £10 million for resurfacing in 2018/2019. Using a mix of “Find and Fix” and planned work.</p> <p><u>Carol Valentine</u> – the “Beast from the East” snow in Feb/March 2018 had cost Highways about £1 million and 5000 tonnes of salt were used in the first week. From this experience, 58 primary routes had been identified which would be kept open (A roads, some B roads, some other roads of local importance). Local district plans had been revised – would go to Joint Transportation Boards in December. Parish Councils can have up to 1 tonne of salt each but need to apply in advance, not during severe weather when all resources are committed.</p> <p><u>John Wilson (KALC)</u> – mentioned “One Community: A guide to effective partnership working between principal and local councils”, published jointly by the Local Government Association and NALC. (Staplehurst would be towards the smaller end of the “larger local councils” category in the report). It would be worth looking at this report (https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/5.25%20One%20Community_v04.1.pdf) especially in terms of developing a shared local vision. Mentions a partnership between KCC, Ashford Borough Council, and Wittersham, Stone-in-Oxney, Warehorne and Kenardington Parish Councils to employ a parish caretaker to improve upkeep and maintenance in areas such as</p>	

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grass cutting, hedge trimming, weeding and litter disposal, partly funded from ABC's current grass cutting budget.

Glyn Charlton (East Farleigh PC) – described efforts to improve safety on the B2010 Lower Road – 35,000 vehicles per week of which more than 40% exceeded the 30 mph speed limit. The PC had obtained a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to pay for a consultant's report, and budgeted £10,000 a year for highways improvement. However, many of their ideas had turned out not to be feasible.

Alison Hughes (East Kent Street Works Manager) – led an exercise related to planned and emergency utility works.

Questions included:

- 50 mph speed limits through road works – trial had suggested a 55 mph limit might actually be safer, as foreign HGVs (limited to 56 mph) would not tailgate cars sticking to the limit.
- Leeds-Langley bypass – feasibility being investigated and traffic counts done.
- Linton crossroads – scheme to improve capacity for HGVs being looked at – hope to start work on the ground in summer 2019.

As mentioned at the previous meeting, I had a conversation with Susan Laporte (District Highways Manager) about the High Street railings.

I spoke to the streetlight team about criteria for streetlights on new estates.

I picked up the following documents:

- New Highway Works Requests Information Pack
- Two papers on Highways Asset Management
- KCC Maintenance Schedule – Maidstone District (Cleansing Frequency – for Staplehurst, the A229, Headcorn Road and Marden Road are “Main Road – Every 12 Months” and Corner Farm Road is “Hot Spot – Every 6 Months”)

Date & Venue of next meeting

TBA