

Committee, group or subgroup: **Road Safety Group**

Meeting Date & venue: Monday 14th October 2024, 10.00am @ SPC Office

Report author: Cllr A Sharp - chairman

Present: A Sharp (AS), M. Alessi, Chris Rhodes.

Apologies: B McLaughlin (BM), M Buller (MB) Speedwatch Rep. and SID data expert.

Matters Arising: - The HIP report was presented at the last full council meeting to update all.

HIP – awaiting for KH to respond- **will chase**

1. Highways Improvement Plan HIP– Kent Highways contact: Greg McNicholl.

Please note MBC only allow us to have 2 'live' projects – our other projects / wish list are 'archived'.

Last F2F meeting with KH was 19th February (MB, PR and AS present). KH has no money.

The HIP was presented to full council, discussed and agreed to send to KH

The minutes were also given to SPC explaining the work completed by RSG.

HIP 1 (was 2) The Quarter - Bus stop / crossing & 30mph

Following our February meeting with Kent Highways, SPC discussed and agreed a confidential item regarding what KH is suggesting to improve the A229. As in KH hands now, our latest information was that we may see some feasibility design work in September, although the previous employee's contract has now run out! Richard clerk was meeting with LP-Reed on 19 June.

Action: **Still awaiting KH & LP-Reed comments. Clerk will chase.**

HIP 2 (was 3) Hawkenbury Bridge

Background – It's a grade 2 listed bridge so can't demolish and rebuild wider.

We would need to be gifted some land to enable the widening of the bridge.

There is no good, easy electrical provision. (we note there are houses next to it with electricity).

Need some way to indicate to traffic going over the railway bridge they could be about to encounter stationary traffic; could this be achieved by a higher traffic light indicator?

There is historical precedence - Wye bridge grade 2 listed bridge, close to a railway crossing, was widened to comply with EU regulations of width and weight needs. However a house was demolished providing the extra space needed. Looking at £100,000 to £150,00 to install power.

Action: **We suggest it remains on HIP and continue to liaise with Headcorn PC and monitor crashes.**

HIP 3 (was 1) Double yellow lines (DYL) on main road A229 and Chapel Lane extension, single lines (SYL) on Cornforth Close, Chestnut Avenue and Poyntell Road.

Kent Highways have said that they will not do this as there is no current **road safety issue**.

Maintenance:

Crossroads and Sainsburys roundabout now done.

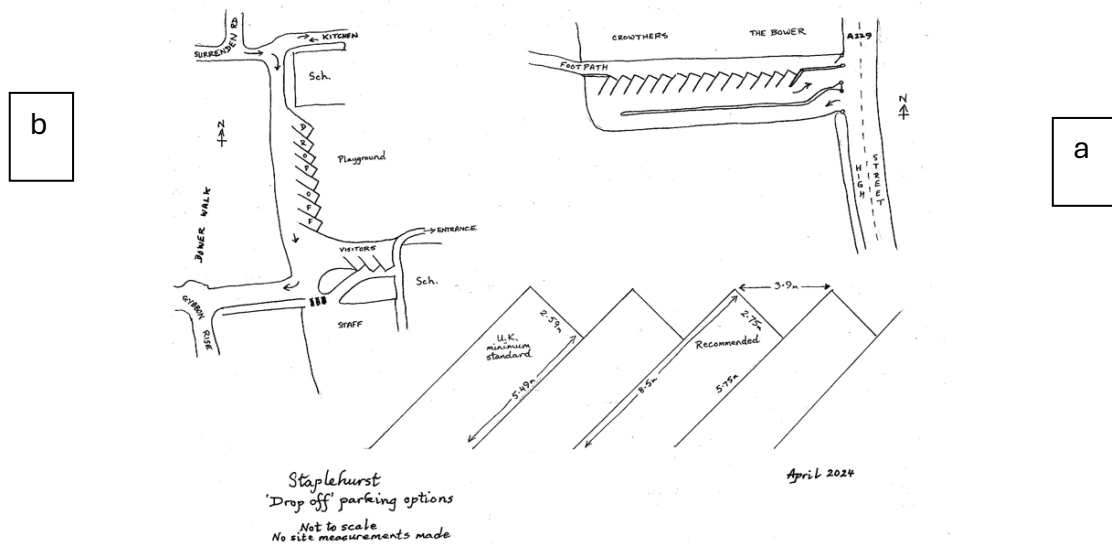
Potholes that had been marked for repair seem to have been begun – not sure how well done.

Action: Monitor and await updates.

2. Gybbon Rise / Surrenden Road Primary School Drop off / pick up

There has been a ticket inspector out giving tickets last week. There is a lot of double parking including horse and carts now. Head Mrs. Davenport is in Gybbons Rise as often as possible, trying to manage the situation with little success.

MB produced and drawing to create a flow of traffic through the school site.



a) Coming off main road A229 onto school field. Agreed this would pass the issue onto different residents on the main road, cause more traffic issues and be too dangerous.

b) Coming onto school site from Surrenden Road, through playground and out onto Gybbon Rise.

Diagram does not show current shed, play area, rain shelter on left of site. Concerns about safety on site, (combining vehicles and students), school liability and loss of land use on the site.

Previously, Greg at Kent Highways put this back to 'us' to meet with the school and sort. Neither the school nor SPC have any powers to enforce anything.

Action: As it is the group's opinion that this is a Kent Highways safety issue. Both SPC and the school have made efforts to resolve issues but Kent highways should manage this directly with the school as SPC have no powers to intervene. Letter saying such to go to KH.

3. Headcorn Lay by

KH Greg McNicholls said that the area belongs to KH, so any road works would need to be to highway standards. However, because there is a ditch, they will not put in a layby as they "wouldn't want to formally encourage parking there, as there is a risk someone could fall in to the ditch. People are currently parking there of their own accord, but if we were to formalise it, it means we then take that risk on. There is also the initial cost and ongoing maintenance as a factor too."

Generally felt that this was not a good enough response. Surely by admitting they are responsible for this part of the highway and its poor condition they must surely be responsible for any pedestrian tripping and should ensure the area is safe?

Action: It is the group's suggestion that this is a highways safety issue and as such Kent highways should manage this. Draft letter to KH so they deal with it.

Other items to consider adding considering what is achievable and affordable:

Cars 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. Contacted KH to suggested that SPC could install some bollards.

Greg Mc Nicoll at KH has said that if KH own the road we would need their permission and they would have to do it, so add to HIP. i.e. SPC not allowed to do the work.

The group were concerned that putting in a few posts was a waste of a HIP item and as low urgency would never reach the top of the list. Group suggested we add in the Surrenden Road, Thatcher Road and Chestnut Avenue bollards as HIP 2 – shunt all the other items down. Report to SPC to decide. Group members decided to all look round and see if there are other areas that need similar bollard protection.

5. Crossroads - completely acknowledged the traffic problems and dangers of the crossroads, unable to get anything done. See diagram



* We have looked into CPO on the corners indicated but were informed that this was not possible as it didn't comply with reasons and regulations for cpo.

* Private Protestant Martyrs Memorial monument Grade 2 listed. 1904 Dedicated to the Memory of Alice Potkins, Joan Bradbridge and Alice Benden of Staplehurst, also of Edmund Allen and Katherine his wife, of Frittenden, who for the faith suffered death 1556 · 1557 during the Marian persecution". Erected by the Protestants of Staplehurst and District.

* Chestnut Avenue green side of the hedge is privately owned by the residents, can't be CPO

* substation at end of Chestnut Avenue road has to be a certain distance from main road – Marden side. To move it is possible, would cost £1 – 2million just to move the substation. KCC have no money. Main Road side of the hedge has electrical and other wiring and would also require major adjustments. Think there is also large tank re drainage there.

* mini roundabout – insufficient space.

* bollards on Marden side of the road to stop cars mounting the pavement – KH rejected as have to be .5 metres from road completely defeating the point of having them. Then the path would have to be widened. Of all the suggestions this is the only one even slightly feasible.

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

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

No data as has been getting new batteries?!

Batteries last 5 – 11 days depending on traffic going past i.e. drain 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

Action: When SID returns, continue to monitor SID data.

6. Speedwatch MB absent

Auto Speed watch – Await to hear from MB who was contacting Alan (Police Inspector)

8. Accidents/incidents reported – staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com

Bridge / Sainsurys roundabout BMW was written off. Van too although may have just broken down.

7. Hedges – KH had cut Medical Centre. Remind KH and Golding Homes of any areas missed they need to check in Staplehurst.

We have a supply of letters and thank you letters. Remember to liaise with each other so we don't double up.

9. AOB:

Neighborhood Watch - we don't currently have one.

Dates of forthcoming meetings: Next meeting 10am Monday 25th Nov '25 , 13th Jan '25.