

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

Meeting Date & venue: Monday 2nd September 2024, 10.00am @ SPC Office

Report author: Cllr A Sharp - chairman

Present: A Sharp (AS), B McLaughlin (BM), M. Alessi, M Buller (MB) Speedwatch Rep. and SID data expert.

Apologies:

Matters Arising: - from previous minutes – previous minutes amended to July not June.

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.

Was presented to full council, discussed and agreed to send to KH

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

Following our meeting with Kent Highways we had a confidential item about what KH is suggesting that was to be discussed at full council in April, which was agreed. In KH hands now. Latest information is 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: **We await KH response. Ask Clerk for LP-Reed comments.**

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 £150,000 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:

The existing lines on crossroad now done but already seem to be fading. Sainsburys roundabout not done. **Ask RG to chase.**

Did Marden Road bends posts / bollards get replaced? **Ask RG to chase**

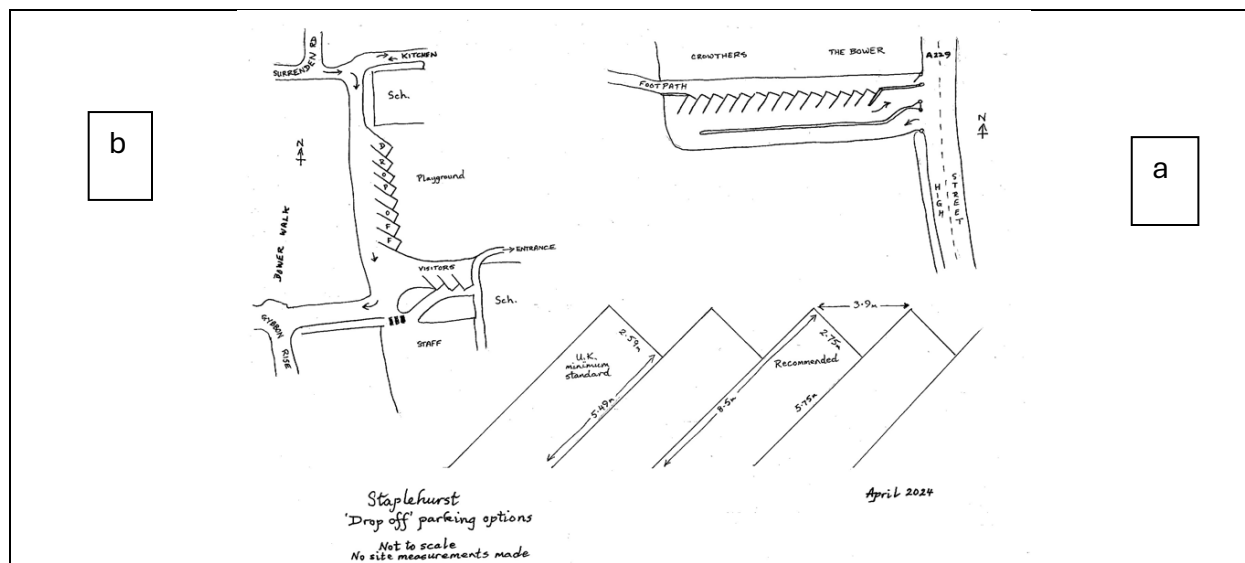
Potholes that have been marked for repair – when is that happening? **Ask RG to chase**

Action: Monitor the road situation to see if there is evidence of a safety issue.

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

Greg at Kent Highways put this back to 'us' to meet with the school and sort.

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.

Action: report to SPC to confirm the group's work done on this. It is the groups suggestion that this is a highways safety issue and as such Kent highways should manage this directly with the school as SPC have no powers to intervene.

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: report to SPC to confirm the group's work done on this. It is the group's suggestion that this is a highways safety issue and as such Kent highways should manage this.

AS to draft letter to KH so they deal with it.

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

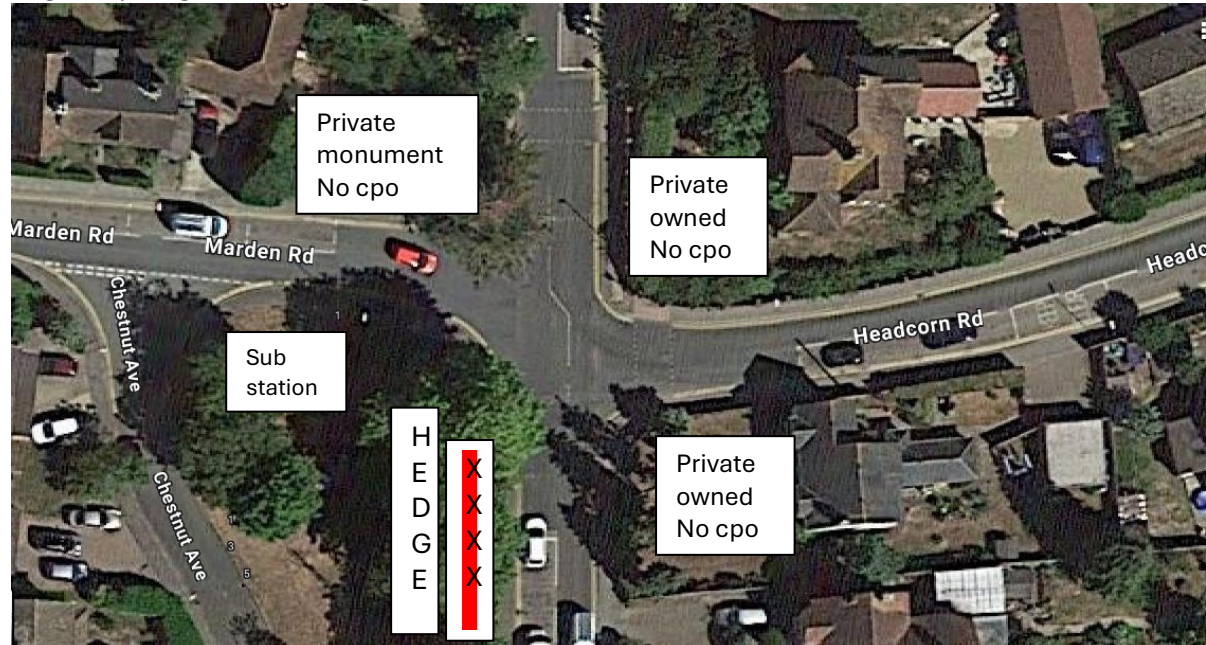
Cars parking on corner of verge at entrance to the field during the school drop off / pick up times. Concerned for safety of children coming out of the field. Contacted KH to suggested that SPC could install some bollards.

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.

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

Inactive for 24 days 16th July – 9th August as not moved to Bathurst til then.
It was reported to full council When SPC accepted the SID it was on the understanding that staff – caretaker Paul – would be able to change the battery once a week and turn or move the camera every 2 weeks. It was not inferred that volunteer councilors would be doing this. The group understands the personal constraints of the caretaker, but this is a staff task as they would be covered by insurance. RSG doesn't think volunteers would be covered? RSG suggest that if this was proving impossible for staff, then staff should do a report to full council. RSG is unable to assist on a regular basis.

Bathurst Rd lasted 12 days.

During March it recorded 662 vehicles a day, 0 over 40mph.

9 – 15th August recorded 2965 a day. Speed – 12.67% were speeding 30+

About 20,000 were law abiding (30mph or below) but 152 were 45+ including four over 60mph and one over 65mph on Saturday 17th August

We discount 0 -10 vehicles as it was suggested these are due to heavy rain!

We now have empirical evidence that while most slow as they approach the SID, there are some reckless drivers. This raises the suggestion of a 20mph zone in that area, although Police do not enforce this.

Action: Continue to monitor SID data.

6. Speedwatch Friday 26th July they had four sessions with about 8 people.

Logged 33 speeders coming up Station Road going South from Sainsburys roundabout. Two letters, one was a second and one a third offence in last 12 months.

Reported to Police some concerns with electric scooters / bikes not minding pedestrians and a motorbike frequently doing wheelies on the road and footpath.

Auto Speed watch – June 2022-> to now. Auto speedwatch records 46mph – 69mph & no MOT or Tax. Has stopped working in July – maybe the battery has failed or some other technical issue. MB will contact Alan (Police Inspector)

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

None reported.

7. Hedges - Nesting season over. We need to nag KH footpath on A229 cut to Medical Centre but not rad side. Remind KH they need to check Staplehurst! And Golding Homes their areas.

Ask clerk for 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 re general disruptive behavior.

Dates of forthcoming meetings: Next meeting Monday 14th Oct, 25th Nov '25 , 13th Jan '25, 10am.