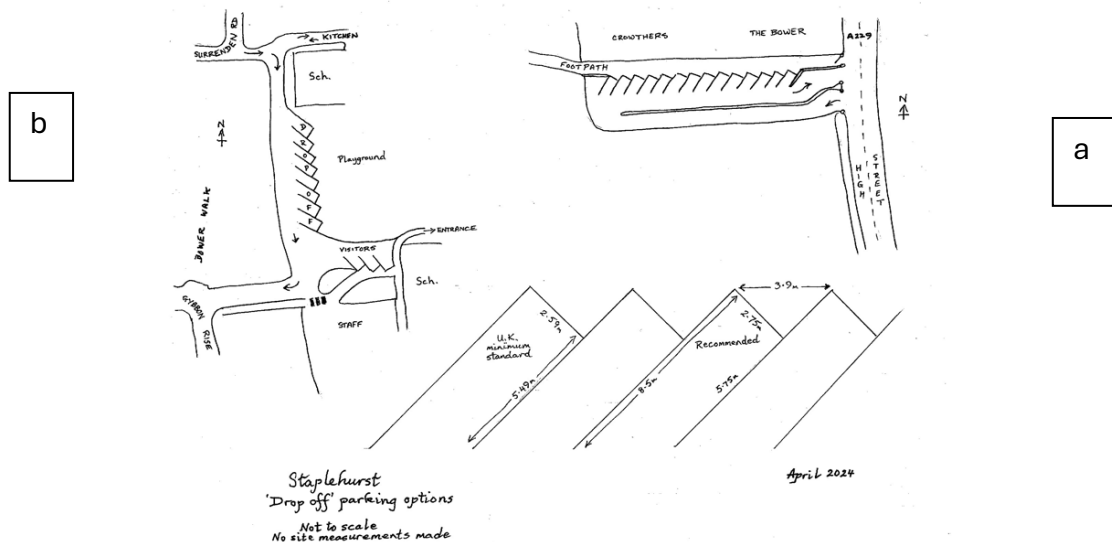


Committee, group or subgroup: Road Safety Group
Meeting Date & venue: Monday 2 nd December 2024, 10.00am @ SPC Office
Report author: Cllr A Sharp - chairman
<p><u>Present:</u> A Sharp (AS), M. Alessi, B McLaughlin (BM), M Buller (MB) Speedwatch Rep. and SID data expert, (delayed) Chris Rhodes.</p> <p><u>Apologies:</u> Mike Wakeford</p> <p><u>Matters Arising:</u> - 14th October 2024 Minutes agreed</p> <p>It was suggested that we add a 'clerks feedback' to future agendas.</p> <p>HIP –presented to full council, discussed, agreed and sent to KH – has been accepted.</p> <p>1. Highways Improvement Plan HIP– Kent Highways contact: Greg McNicholl.</p> <p><i>Please note MBC only allow us to have 2 'live' projects – our other projects / wish list are 'archived'.</i></p> <p><u>HIP 1 (was 2) The Quarter - Bus stop / crossing & 30mph</u> KH improvement suggestions for A229 (garage end) is in KH hands now. We believe that feasibility design work was done in September. <u>Action:</u> Still awaiting KH & LP-Reed comments. Clerk will chase.</p> <p><u>HIP 2 (was 3) Hawkenbury Bridge</u> The bridge with no accidents – The bridge is being closed for work on it as at some point the side has been hit. Last Tuesday 26.11.24 – Coming into Staplehurst direction, 2 cars had a 'bump'.</p> <p><u>Background</u> – 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. <u>Action:</u> It remains on HIP and we will continue to liaise with Headcorn PC and monitor crashes.</p> <p><u>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.</u> Kent Highways have said that they will not do this as there are no current road safety issues. <u>Action:</u> Monitor and await updates.</p> <p><u>Maintenance:</u> Trees on station Rd overhanging branches causing pedestrian issues – need to pop letters in to them and any others you deem worthy. Ask office to print letters and thank you slips.</p> <p>2. Gybbon Rise / Surrenden Road Primary School Drop off / pick up The police have attended twice recently and everyone behaved while they were there, however its still chaos when no official person is there. Greg at Kent Highways put this back to 'us' to meet with the school and sort, however neither the school nor SPC have any powers to enforce anything.</p>

MB produced a drawing of a potential traffic flow through the school site. Option a) was felt to be a safety concern as it would then involve the A229 already busy at peak times. Option b) raised concerns about safety on site, (combining vehicles and students), school liability and loss of land use on the 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.

Action: Agreed to ask clerk to contact KH.

The school traffic issues continue to be a matter of concern despite the efforts of the school and SPC to resolve issues. With the police attending, parishioners behave much more responsibly, but clearly they cannot attend every day.

This continues to be a safety matter and as SPC do not have any powers to intervene or enforce anything, we feel that Kent Highways should manage this directly with the school

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: Draft letter response to KH:

Further to previous conversations with both Greg at KH and also with the maintenance department, please could we see some resolution regarding this matter? As it has been confirmed by yourselves that this area is the responsibility of KH and SPC have now notified both departments of safety

concerns, we feel that this area should really have some work done to it. We look forward to hearing when this can be achieved, before an accident happens.

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 to HIP. Group members decided to all look round and see if there are other areas that need similar bollard protection to make it a worthwhile HIP addition.

4. Crossroads - A copy of last meetings plan below went into the village update for public information. Acknowledge the traffic problems and dangers of the crossroads, unable to get anything done due to below report as at last meeting. Suggest we add to the website?

Also discussed the importance of ensuring access roads on new estates built to relieve crossroads.



* 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

In September SID failed in wet weather and had to be sent to be repaired. 9 - 20 November (battery needed recharging due to so many vehicles 28,000 that go past it). Eightyfive were 45 – 59mph, two were over 60mph. 38% still speeding. eight a day would get a letter if speedwatch caught them.

Action: Continue to monitor SID data.

6. Speedwatch MB had about 8 people joined in the county wide effort in July.

Due to personal commitments, he's been unable to do any other speedwatch days.

There are a good group trained up, but most reluctant to lead unless MB present due to concerns about breaking the equipment. MB will contact members to do a refresher in new year.

Auto Speed watch – Picked up nothing for months probably due to age and winter sun, no longer working. Alan (Police Inspector) will know it needs maintenance as he will have and no data. It may be that it is coming to the end of its life.

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

22nd November Pinnock Lane delivery van robbery. Police caught them.

8. Hedges –

KH – have done some areas but Medical Centre still not good. Church Green and parade also done.

Ask clerk if you need some letters and thank you letters. Liaise with each other so we don't double up.

9. AOB:

Neighborhood Watch - we only have a treasurer Joan Buller, no chair or secretary. BM keen to try and get it restarted.

Xmas signs – same issue as last year. His contact was spoken to. All over highway stuff again. Group agreed to report to Kent Highways

Bower Walk – car parking letter

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