

Note of Highways Group Meeting, 4th September 2023

4pm, 9 High Street

Present:

Terry Hayward (Chair)

Sue Lowen

Clair Brown

Jill Leyland

This was a special meeting called primarily to consider improvements that could be made to roads in Charing village.

Main issues are:

- i. lack of parking,
- ii. vehicles using the village as a “cut through” from the A252 to the Pluckley Road or to Ashford rather than using the roundabout
- iii. whether changes could/should be made to the exit from the High Street to the crossroads

Parking. It was agreed that there is little that can be done in the village centre. Various one-way schemes have been looked at in the past but any additional parking is likely to be minor and not worth the disruption and controversy caused.

It was noted that the sign to Brenchley Mews Car Park in the High Street had lost its information plate so presented a blank surface. The sign in School Road is hidden by vegetation. **Action: TH to report both these on the portal.** *(Post meeting note: Another issue noted in the past was that space dividers in Market Place are not always clear leading to inefficient parking. Part of the car park is owned by ABC and part by KCC.)*

Dissuading through traffic. The aim is to dissuade people to use the village as a cut through but not discourage any who want to stop and pick up something from the shops on their way. It was agreed that narrowing the road on The Hill with priority for uphill traffic is a proposal that might be explored further. (It might also help to reduce speeding which can be a problem on The Hill, albeit not as serious as, say, Pluckley Road.) Questions are: what would residents think; is the problem sufficiently serious to make any action worthwhile; is there sufficient uphill traffic to make downhill traffic wait in practice? **Action: JL to organise a survey of residents on The Hill and the Upper part of the High Street. Shop owners also to be canvassed.** If the survey results are favourable a trial road narrowing using cones could be suggested to KCC before deciding whether or not a permanent change could be put in place. *Note: the November 2021 survey had 3,200 cars travelling south during the week and 2,562 travelling north. 26.6% of cars travelling south exceeded the ACPO limit (the limit at which Chief Police Officers recommend action – 110% of speed limit plus 2mph) and 14.6% travelling north.*

Exit from Lower High Street. It was agreed that either blocking all exit from the Lower High Street or making it left turn only is worth considering. The exit from Old Ashford Road has good visibility and could be slightly modified to facilitate a right turn. (There is probably not room for a roundabout unless land in Parsons Mead is used.) What would be the impact on parking – could people turn if there was no exit? And what would be the impact on shops, especially Charing Stores,

or The Oak if that ever comes back into use? **Action: to discuss initially with the owner of Charing Stores and subsequently with Bookmakers and other traders.**

Other Points. No reply had been received from KCC re the proposal for gates and roundels. TH to chase. *Post meeting note: a reply has now been received suggesting going ahead with detailed design for the whole scheme which we have agreed. Invoice for this awaited.*

TH agreed to find out whether Charlie Simkins had been notified about the unsatisfactory reply regarding a 30mph limit on the A20 and proposed accesses to the west of the village. And if so, what his advice was.

JL

22/9/23