

Minutes of meeting of Highways Committee, 16/10/24

Present: Cllr Terry Hayward (Chair); Cllr Carrie Allen; Cllr Stephen Woodbridge; Colin Burns; Jill Leyland; Sue Lowen.

Apologies: Claire Brown; Vicky Ellis; Nigel Pickford

1. **Budget.** There was confusion over the Highways budget and reported spending figures for the first half of 2024/25. A number of items (in addition to the CCTV) did not appear relevant. Terry Hayward agreed to seek a meeting with the Responsible Financial Officer, Joanne Woodward, to sort out what is relevant. A further short meeting will then be needed to discuss the budget for 2025/26.
(Action: Terry Hayward)
2. **Faversham Road.** Only 2 objections were made to the proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO); after review by a senior officer these were not deemed to be sufficiently serious to prevent the Order being made. The project has now proceeded to the detailed design stage. KCC Councillor Charlie Simkins had earlier agreed to fund the design costs out of his councillor's budget. However, due to his illness he was unable to carry out the administrative procedures needed to release the money. It had therefore been agreed that the Parish Council would pay for the design costs and we will hope that Cllr Simkins will be able to contribute instead to the installation costs when he is recovered.
3. **Gates and Roundels.** The proposals for the A252 and A20 (East) gates, and the small Pluckley Road gate are now at detailed design stage. Village nameplates will be moved to the new gates.
4. **The Hill.** Despite objections pointing out the increased risk of an accident, KCC wish to proceed with the TRO. Since the legal agreement has been made with the developer KCC feel they must proceed and it would be unreasonable to expect the developer to pay anything additional. KCC has suggested that the issue is added to our Highways Improvement Plan (HIP). The problem with this is first the delay and, second, the cost. It would require a new TRO which normally costs £3,000 plus the complete cost of additional installation since presumably it would not be carried out at the same time as the original TRO. It was not discussed at the September meeting of the Joint Transportation Board. Cllr Clair Bell (who is a KCC councillor but also the ward councillor for the ward which includes Charing Heath) has kindly taken this up for us with the Cabinet Member for Highways (outcome awaited). While it was very unsatisfactory it was agreed that the issue should be added to our HIP. **Colin Burns** offered to investigate the legal requirements for TROs and possibly to contact media.

Post Meeting Note. A copy of a letter from the Cabinet Member for Highways to Clair Bell has since been received. This reiterates the impossibility of changing the TRO. However, it does confirm that if more than 5 objections have been received the issue has to go to the JTB (next meeting is December 3rd) and it also suggests ways in which the cost of a new TRO could be reduced.

Terry Hayward had drafted an update to the HIP which puts the current two projects (Faversham Road and Gates) into a “work in progress” section in the hope that work can potentially start on other projects. The order of the projects was discussed including the inclusion of The Hill issue. **Jill Leyland** agreed to circulate a new draft. **(Action)**