

Committee, group or subgroup: Road Safety Group
Meeting Date & venue: Thursday 7th August 2025, 7pm @ SPC Office
Report author: Cllr A Sharp - chairman
<u>Present:</u> A Sharp (AS), M. Alessi, Josh Melville (JM) <u>Apologies:</u> M Buller (MB) Speedwatch Rep. and SID data expert), Bill McLaughlin (BM), CR, MW <u>Matters Arising:</u> Thursday 3rd July 2025 Minutes agreed 1. Clerks feedback: Clerks efforts to arrange a meeting with school to debrief and discuss doing another traffic awareness day in September declined. Borough Councilor Riordan has arranged a public meeting re the issue, in September when term starts. See below <i>" I can inform you that in my position as a Borough Councillor that I have met with the school hierarchy and arranged a public meeting to be held when the children are back at school in September. I have offered courses of action which they were very supportive of. I will be inviting the PC, PTA, members of the public, School parents, MBC officers, School Governors and teachers, KCC Councillor and our MP. I have heard from Mr Pullen in the past and always acknowledged his concerns and got MBC parking officers to attend. Obviously it is not illegal to park on the pavement in Staplehurst, so we are limited to what we can do. I do however hope for a positive outcome on the concerted effort being put in at the current time, effectively starting from the public meeting in September"</i> A resident unhappy about the school traffic issue contacted us to say MBC had advised him that we can have a TRO. AS checked with Kent Highways that as we have the zig zags, double yellow lines and restrictions in place – they ARE the TRO and should be enforced as such, by traffic wardens when attending on site. Action: SPC councilors can attend the public meeting. AS to contact resident re TRO b. <u>A229 Cranbrook Road</u> re crossing and elderly crossing sign. Note The funding is from SPC not KH from our S106 funds for improvements for bus services – i.e. we desire a safe crossing to the bus stops. AS followed up with Kent Highways. Work is ongoing but are progressing. 1. Services affected by the proposed crossing – SGN (Gas) were unable to locate a valve due to the hedge being overgrown and being right next to the live carriageway, however they believe any necessary work would be minimal. BT have not responded but any work should also be minimal, although no indication of costs. Water likely to be similar to Gas works. This means that plans can progress despite not being certain about the costs at this point. 2) landowner discussion regarding hedge – keen to assist with discussion. Land and access/maintenance details need to be agreed in any plan. This will require Kent highways contacting several different departments to obtain their counsel, then we can discuss options etc. and work together to proceed with something that works for all. 2. SID – Nearly half of all road users on Headcorn Road during March to April were over the 30mph Every day 15 cars were 45 – 59mph w/c 3.6.25 SID had a nice holiday on Bathurst Road with 3% of drivers over the 30mph Marden Rd we are awaiting access to the data. Action: caretaker to continue to changes SID every 2 weeks.

Note - permission at Headcorn Road, Marden Road, Bathurst Road sites. Best sites Headcorn Rd and incoming Marden. **Camera should change every 2 weeks, no longer than 3 weeks in same location.** Batteries last 5 – 11 days depending on traffic going past i.e. drain quicker on Headcorn Rd Headcorn Road facing east for 2 weeks then west for 2 weeks (some leeway allowing up to 3 weeks subject 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 then facing east for 2 weeks

3. Speedwatch

8th July a group went out. 110 cars 25+ doing 35mph + @22% Data input 23 from 118

Action: Await feedback from M Arger who attended 14th June Speedwatch conference.

4. Accidents/incidents reported – staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com website and FB

* No reports via email. There was an accident on Tuesday at the crossroads – 2 cars collided, minor incident. A second one happened about a week later.

* Hawkenbury pub accident – Terrible crash but comes under Headcorn Parish council.

* Hawkenbury bridge – Still plastic barriers, on both sides and an additional metal fence. Previous damage to bridge still not rectified. – AS contacted KH Maintenance.

Reply

Thank you for your recent enquiry regarding the lack of progress on the repair works at Hawkenbury Bridge.

The repair works have been scheduled previously on three separate occasions, but unfortunately on each occasion have had to be aborted, twice due to flooding on the diversion route and a further time due to a burst water main on the bridge.

Due to the extent of the damage and the narrow width of carriageway the repair works will require a total closure of the bridge of 3 weeks duration to complete, we have installed the temporary vehicle restraint barriers to ensure public safety until the repairs can take place.

We are currently liaising with Streetworks to find a suitable 3-week period that would cause the least possible disruption to the local residents and are also considering a slightly longer diversion route that would avoid the flood prone roads.

AS responded

Thank you for your very prompt response. No doubt you have thought this but if flooding is a concern, maybe getting the work scheduled during August would be an idea, before the back to school run as some Staplehurst children catch buses in Headcorn

Action: Ensure another reminder if nothing happens.

5. Hedges – Hedge letter (previously agreed at full council)– 2 reported on Fletcher Road and Chestnut avenue.

Nesting season March to August so we don't send letters then. We can report to KH if there is a dangerous hedge. Discussion about an August letter, resolved to visit residents at the end of August in person instead. Include an article in the next update. Possibly a video on face book / website.

Action: – ideas for next year, refer to comms re video, etc

6. Standing item - Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) – Kent Highways contact: Greg McNicholl & Amy Cartwright. **Please note ALL HIP requests should be on the HIP document, ideally in order of our preferred importance. Previous directive that MBC only allow us to have 2 'live' projects and our other projects / wish list are 'archived' is not correct, In which case we could add the Sainsburys roundabout and the crossroads again.**

Action: Discuss HIP update at next meeting. Current top 3 below.

HIP 1 The Quarter - Bus stop / crossing & 30mph / elderly crossing sign **see item 1** Amy Cartwright (Greg will have left by the time these minutes are read) await a response on the updated efforts to get a crossing and a hill warning of old / young crossing sign.

HIP 2 Hawkenbury Bridge – **See item 4**

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: It remains on HIP and we will continue to liaise with Headcorn PC and monitor crashes.

HIP 3 Double yellow lines (DYL) on main road A229 and Chapel Lane extension, single lines (SYL) on Cornforth Close, Chestnut Avenue and Poyntell Road. Hurst Close & Newlyn Drive
Kent Highways have previously said that they will not do this as there are no current road safety issues.

Discussed that even after Churchill development is built, this remains on the HIP as there is likely to be a lot of vehicle movement around the site and we believe that there will be safety issues.

Action: remains on HIP DYL on Bell Lane need redoing

Headcorn Lay by – this is maintenance Kent Highways issue not HIP item.

Our current response for parishioners re this matter is:- Over the past 2 years the Parish council has been raising this issue with Kent Highways Maintenance. Its KH land, and as such we have been told not to touch it and that the public should not be parking there. We have exhausted all avenues to try and improve this area but will continue to lobby them.

Action: Let KH knows still dangerous – log as a maintenance, send photos to AS

9. AOB:

* MB suggested a Road traffic survey as last ones were done pre 2018 and post covid 2021. Should we recommend a current one as we now have more residents. 1 week 24 hour - cost? Streetwise 2018 £? Transport Survey systems 2021 £Kent Highways paid for Cranbrook Road and SPC funded Headcorn Road. (Maidstone Rd near Tower House , Station Rd near Free church Churchill by 30mph flash sign , Quarter by flashing 40pmph – near Poppies Headcorn Rd in 2021) online figures suggest £299 - £350 / 950 + VAT

Action: ask clerk to investigate costs of a traffic survey – 5 year housing quota – chase.

* Cameras on traffic lights – there may be some county money we can bid for – maybe a project for that.

Dates of forthcoming meeting: Next meeting Thursday 11th September 2025, 7pm at the office.