

Goudhurst Parish Council



HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Minutes of a Meeting held on 26 October 2021 at 7.30pm in Goudhurst Parish Hall

Present: Cllrs David Boniface (Chairman), Alan Foster, Antony Harris, David Knight, Guy Sutton and Mrs Alison Webster.

Also Mr Paul Green (Market Place resident), Mr Ted Bennett (A21 resident) and Mrs Helen Sampson (GTAG) as advisors.

The meeting welcomed Mrs Christine Churchill from Brenchley & Matfield Parish Council.

The Chairman asked those attending to note the COVID-19 Risk Assessment attached to the Agenda for this meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Craig Broom (Holiday)

Declarations of Interest: There were none.

Questions from the public and press: There were none.

Lorry Watch in Goudhurst Parish.

Mrs Sampson reported on behalf of the Goudhurst Traffic Action Group (GTAG). The Lorry Watch team on GTAG had less activity **recently due to holidays etc.** but they are planning further activity over the weekend of 30/31 October. She noted that the volume of HGVs observed has reduced. GTAG believes subjectively that more HGVs are routing along Chequers Road and North Road so as to avoid difficulties in Goudhurst High St and Church Road.

Cllr Mrs Christine Churchill from Brenchley & Matfield PC introduced herself. She is keen to learn about traffic issues from other Parishes. She reported that her tactics for dealing with intrusive HGVs is to take the phone numbers of the vehicle owners. She then phones them to discuss whether they can route their trucks so as to lessen the inconvenience to local residents. She finds that the HGV owners are invariably courteous and willing to discuss the issues. She **noted** that at this time of year many HGVs are in use collecting farm produce. She believes joint action with Highways management by several Parishes together will be more effective than individual Parish action.

Speed Watch.

The traffic survey figures between March and July tabled by Cllr Boniface were considered with interest. Whilst the average speed on A262 Cranbrook Road both east and westbound was around 30mph the % exceeding 35 mph was higher. On B2079 North Road the figures were lower. It was **noted** that over 4,300 vehicles per day were recorded on A262 Eastbound in the 2nd half of May 2021. It was **noted** that Speed Watch volunteers should not be using mobile phones to record speeding vehicles.

Cllr Guy Sutton, who visits Spain occasionally, mentioned an effective scheme in all villages in that Country. Cameras are used to identify any vehicles that are exceeding the speed limit approaching a village. The speeding vehicle is stopped by a red traffic light (linked to the speed cameras) in the centre of the village. He did not mention what then happens to the errant driver! His proposed that Council should urge Kent Highways to implement such a scheme here was not agreed.

Progress on Highways projects

Members commented on the lack of action by Highways with progress bogged down by apparent bureaucracy. It was **agreed to recommend to Council** that a letter should be sent to Senior Officers in Kent Highways regarding a lack of action on several schemes (details to be highlighted). Council should seek assistance from our County Member, Cllr Seán Holden. An alternative proposal put was for a group of Parish Council representatives to demand a face to face meeting with Highways senior officers. No action was agreed on this latter point.

Highways Improvement Plan (HIP).

It was **noted** that Highways has required Council to resubmit our HIP. This is creating extra work for the Clerks with no apparent benefit that it will create any positive action by Highways.

St Mary's Churchyard Wall damage.

Cllr David Boniface reported that he understands that a St Mary's Goudhurst Church Warden is in touch with the Parochial Church Council's insurers about recovering costs arising from HGVs damaging the Churchyard wall. It was **noted** that Council's Amenities Committee is in discussion with a contractor about installing a suitable camera covering the most vulnerable part of the Churchyard wall.

Update on Highways England A21 safety improvements.

It was **noted** that on 21 September 2021, 4 Members of this Highways Committee had held a virtual meeting with Highways England. Highways England had proposed increased double white lining, a reduction in the speed limit from 60 mph to 50 mph, better signage and improved sight lines. Subsequently Cllr Antony Harris with Mr Ted Bennet had walked and driven along the stretch of the A21 which is in Goudhurst Parish. Cllr Harris had followed up with a ten bullet point list of observations. Included are the points that East Sussex has a 40 mph limit over a long distance, road markings are much better as are sight lines. Why is Kent Police resisting a reduction to 40 mph on the Kent side? He has an acknowledgement from Highways England promising further contact in early 2022.

Goudhurst EV Charge Points.

It was **noted** that a quote had been received from Connected Kerb back in August 2021. There was no agreement on further action.

Update on the Goudhurst Parish Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) Priorities

A262 Section at The Market Place. It was noted that Kent Highways is not willing to change the statutory 40 mph signs. But they have ordered and will install one 'Max 30' at their expense. It was further noted that the Parish Council has agreed expenditure of £1,000 (Minute £158/21) for a second 'Max 30' sign. No decision was made to order and install this second sign.

B2079 North Road – Pedestrians in road signs at Goudhurst Tennis Club. It was **noted** that Council has written to a local resident to ascertain if they claim to own a narrow strip of verge to the south of the Tennis Club's red door. It is shown as unregistered at the Land Registry. No reply has been received so far. It is on this verge that Kent Highways may agree to establish the requested sign. Members noted that this minor scheme has been outstanding with Kent Highways for at least 2 years without implementation.

Traffic calming on A262 Cranbrook Road by Beaman Close and G&K Primary School. It was **Noted** that Council has £6,000 (as quoted by Highways) set aside for a school traffic peak time 20 mph flashing sign. Council awaits a visit by a Highways Engineer to draw up detailed plans.

Next Highways Committee Meeting on Tuesday 14 December 2021, 7.30pm in Goudhurst Parish Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Anthony Farnfield, Deputy Clerk & RFO