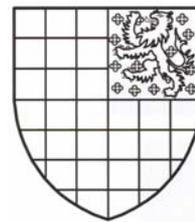


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to address traffic-related issues in Lewes held on **Thursday 16th February 2012**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall**, Lewes at **6:30pm**.

PRESENT Cllrs S Catlin (Wischhusen); P Kingham; L F Li; S Murray; R O’Keeffe, also present (*not nominated to serve on Working party*): Cllr M Kent

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*) Mr A Cook, *Principal Transport Planner (Infrastructure Design & Delivery) East Sussex County Council [ESCC]*

TIWP2011/08 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:** Due to the absence of Cllr Milner, Cllr S Murray was elected as Chairman for the meeting.

TIWP2011/09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Milner, who had telephoned shortly before the commencement of the meeting to announce the birth, earlier that afternoon, of his first child. Members expressed their pleasure at this news and recorded their best wishes for Cllr Milner, his partner, and their new baby boy.

TIWP2011/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none

TIWP2011/11 **MINUTES:** The minutes of the meeting on 26th July 2011 were signed as an accurate record.

TIWP2011/12 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS:** There were none. (No public or press were present)

TIWP2011/13 **BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**

i] **20mph speed limit for Lewes** – Mr Cook gave a brief overview of the background leading to the present position on this issue. ESCC had been preparing for the introduction of a scheme, and had data which showed current average traffic speeds in the core of the town centre was within the limit (24mph) at which a scheme could be introduced without attendant physical traffic-calming measures. It was noted that such a scheme in the town centre would not address ESCC priorities (*eg* there were no significant accidents recorded) within the Local Transport Plan (LTP3). In the wider town area, average speeds exceeded 24mph, and ESCC had been awaiting revised guidance from the government’s Dept. for Transport which may have altered the requirements. When guidance was published at the end of 2011, many expected changes had not materialized, but there had been some relaxation of the design criteria for calming features. Simple painted “roundels” on road surfaces would be permissible in some areas although engineers considered that these would be largely ineffective. A scheme for the town centre core was now identified in the *draft* 2012/13 programme. ESCC were keen to discuss the details, and to take-up the Council’s offer of a contribution of £5,000. There was a possibility that updated checks on average speeds might allow a wider area. In answer to a question, it was explained that data from a physical sensor survey lasting only one week could be adequate. If ESCC believed that accident reduction would be significant, they would fund such surveys; otherwise third-party contributions were sought.

It was **agreed** that Cllr Milner (or Cllr S Murray if he was unavailable) and TC would attend a meeting with transport planning officers as soon as possible, to discuss implementation. ESCC would confirm the draft programme before the end of March and it was further **agreed**, therefore, that Council should be asked to confirm its offer of £5,000 subject to a positive outcome from the meeting. Mr

Continues...

Cook indicated that timescales could be quite short with, potentially, a scheme in place within six months: design resources were the biggest constraint.

ii) *Lewes parking scheme* – Members briefly discussed anticipated changes to the Lewes parking Order; due to be re-published in revised form in early summer. It was understood that Lewes District Council were likely to adopt the same changes for off-street car-parks as ESCC proposed for the on-street regime. This accorded with the Town Council's recent request.

iii) *Pedestrian crossings and traffic-calming* – Mr Cook confirmed that the design of two crossings for Church Lane Malling was included in ESCC's draft 2012/13 programme, to be paid-for by the Town Council's agreed contribution.

Members recounted concerns regarding the "speed humps" adjacent the Riverside Centre, in Railway Lane, where the uneven profile and poor visibility of markings were known to have caused serious problems for pedestrians (including injury) and some vehicles (*eg* "grounded" suspension and exhaust systems *etc.*). ESCC had recently repainted the markings, but these faded quickly and it was feared that the improvement would not be sustained. Mr Cook was aware of these issues and had discussed options with his colleagues, although none were likely to effect much improvement. These were: remark/enhance markings; or remove depressions and re-profile to afford safer footing; or remove completely and replace with tarmac humps. The problems were that ESCC did not rate the issue as a priority and, as several days road closure would have to be allowed-for, costs were likely to be disproportionate to any benefits. Members encouraged further consideration by ESCC as to how improvements might be effected.

iv) *Ringmer – Lewes cycleway* – (Cllr Kingham declared an interest in this matter as she resides on the proposed route) Mr Cook recounted the background to the project, and related recent meetings with ESCC Cllr R StPierre and representatives of Sussex Wildlife Trust who owned land which would be crossed by one proposed route. The options originally being considered were (*extract from ESCC options brief*):

1. *Along the south side of the B2192 to the private access road, up this road and down Mill Road then down Church Lane via the signal-controlled crossing.*
2. *Along the south side of the B2192 and along the A26 and down Church Lane via Earwig Corner.*
3. *Along the south side of the B2192 as far as the bend near the electricity sub-station. Cross the B2192 and along the path to Stoneham farm. Cross the A26 and then behind the wall to join Prince Charles Road and on towards Church Lane.*

It was now clear that the local community wish to see something constructed sooner rather than later and would be willing to accept the construction of the western section of the Lewes/Ringmer cycleway in stages. The priority was to enable cyclists to avoid the high speed section of the B2192 and provide cyclists with a safe route between the current 30 mph speed limits in Ringmer and Lewes. The extension of the existing cycleway to the private road, up to the Malling Downs car park and down Mill Road to the A26 would, it was claimed, achieve this.

It was stated that future developments anticipated along the A26 would inevitably affect the Earwig Corner junction (due to increased traffic volumes) and this was to be addressed in the emerging Local Development Framework. The "Mill Road Option" recently-circulated for discussion was favoured by ESCC as work would not be wasted; as it might with Earwig Corner. ESCC were seeking to stimulate discussion on the single option, mindful that there were other constraints and conditions requiring completion of the route with in 15 years.

Members found this argument to be unsound, and could see no practical merit in such a hilly route, ending in dangerously-steep downhill gradients. They considered the proposal to be evidence of undue haste and exhorted further research into the other options; in particular the Stoneham Farm route.

v) "Cities Fit For Cycling" and "Good Driver" initiatives – Members considered a discussion paper (copy in the minute book) promoting the *Cities fit for Cycling* campaign initiated by The Times Newspaper. The campaign was intended to both highlight the ongoing safety issues on Britain's roads and to encourage local authorities to pledge to the following 8-point manifesto:

- Trucks entering a town or city centre should be required by law to fit sensors, audible truck-turning alarms, extra mirrors and safety bars to stop cyclists being thrown under the wheels.
- The 500 most dangerous road junctions in the UK must be identified, redesigned or fitted with priority traffic lights for cyclists and "Trixi" mirrors that allow lorry drivers to see cyclists on their near-side.
- A national audit of cycling to find out how many people cycle in Britain and how cyclists are killed or injured should be held to underpin effective cycle safety.
- Two per cent of the Highways Agency budget should be earmarked for next generation cycle routes, providing £100 million a year towards world-class cycling infrastructure. Each year towns and cities should be graded on the quality of cycling provision.
- The training of cyclists and drivers must improve and cycle safety should become a core part of the driving test.
- 20mph should become the default speed limit in residential areas where there are no cycle lanes.
- Businesses should be invited to sponsor cycle-ways and cycling super-highways, mirroring the Barclays-backed bicycle hire scheme in London.
- Every town and city, even those without an elected mayor, should appoint a cycling commissioner to push home reforms.

Members considered that this initiative had worthy aims, although recognizing most of them were outside the current powers of a parish council. Consequently it was **agreed** that council be asked to state support for the principles of the scheme, and willingness to embrace any aspects which may arise, where it might have power or influence.

The paper also described a scheme, operated by Hardwicke Parish Council and Gloucestershire Police, prompting motorists to make a pledge to drive safely and within the speed limit. Those that made the pledge received a car sticker and their names were placed on a local public database. Those that broke their pledge were removed from the database and their *Good Drivers* car sticker withdrawn. Members considered this worthy but impractical for introduction in Lewes.

TIWP2011/14

CONCLUSIONS/RECCOMENDATIONS:

1 Council should be asked to confirm its offer to ESCC of £5,000 subject to a positive outcome from the meeting to discuss details for implementation of a 20mph scheme for Lewes. Cllr Milner; Cllr S Murray; and TC to be authorized to agree on behalf of Council if they are satisfied with the outcome.

2 Council should be asked to endorse the views of the working party regarding completion of the Ringmer - Lewes cycleway, expressed above at TIWP2011/13 iv).

3 Council should be asked to state support for the principles of the *Cities fit for Cycling* campaign initiated by The Times Newspaper, and willingness to embrace any aspects which may arise, where it might have power or influence.

TIWP2011/15

As there was no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed.

The meeting closed at 8:20pm

Signed:

Date: