

AUGUST 2022 UPDATE ON HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Since my last report in July 2022, I have reported 1 further Highway issues to KCC and a blocked footpath. This increases the grand total to date to 89.

The new reports were for: -

School Lane, school sign damaged (again)

Footpath ZR121 This cuts the corner off Wises Lane. It is blocked by vegetation from adjoining field.

80 of the 89 have now been dealt with either in a satisfactory manner or with a satisfactory explanation. 9, including the two above are still outstanding.

No further work has been undertaken on the diseased tree in Wrens Road. The ivy has been removed from the 30mph sign in Wrens Road and the illegal sign in that road has also been removed.

Other works still to be completed include the white line renewals in Pond Farm Road, Wises Lane and Oad Street.

No progress has been reported on flooding issues at Danaway or at the junction of Wises Lane and the A2.

The give way markings at the junction of Washley Hill and Hearts Delight have been provided but are hidden under stones and mud and have yet to be cleared.

Provision of Bench at junction of Mountview and The Street

The provision of a bench at this junction was discussed at the last Council meeting and an email to KCC Highways asking for permission for a bench to be placed alongside the bus shelter has been written.

M2/Junction 5 Stockbury roundabout improvements

No further meetings have been held with National Highways, KCC Highways or Grahams concerning the impact of this scheme. Information about road closures and diversions continued to be supplied by Grahams and are displayed by the Clerk on our various social media pages.

No further comments have been received other than acknowledgements from Grahams and National Highways and the local MP regarding our letter on the missing Oad Street link. It is proposed that a press release, see attached below should be released.

KCC Highways Service

As outlined in my report to Council in June, KCC have refused to meet with Councillors to discuss major highway issues within the Parish. As a result of the discussion around this at the meeting a formal letter of complaint invoking Stage 2 Complaint Escalation has been sent by The Clerk to Simon Jones, Corporate Director responsible for Transportation. His reply has been circulated. It is proposed that a reply is sent outlining our disagreement with his comments, particularly about promises made for help by KCC Highways, but proposing a positive way forward by accepting his offer of a meeting to progress the Parishes Highway Improvement Plan.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Swale BC has approached the Parish concerning the production of a LCWIP(Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan). The first stage in the development of a plan is the gathering of information about daily trips made by residents. There is a survey which individuals are being urged to complete details of which have been circulated by the Clerk. Initial contact has been established with officers from Swale with a view to sharing with them aspects of the plans prepared by PJA to reinforce proposals approved by Council for a Borden 20mph scheme plus details of our Highways Improvement Plan previous agreed by Council. It is hoped that some of these aspects can be included in the LCWIP and thus generate funding. Council are asked to approve this approach.

Speedwatch

Council decide in July that the Speedwatch scheme should come within the remit of the Highways Improvement Group. In order for the scheme to progress it needs someone to organise the various aspects. It is proposed, unless a Councillor wants to volunteer, that a person from the community is asked to supervise the scheme. Overall responsibility will still rest with the Council.

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

63% say no to Widening Oad Street

As part of the improvements to the M2/J5 junction at Stockbury Roundabout, Maidstone Road is going to be diverted southwards to join up with Oad Street just before the M2 overbridge. Thus, cutting its existing access to Stockbury roundabout. Oad Street will be diverted to form a new junction directly with the new Stockbury Roundabout.

The Parish Council are not aware of any specific proposals to widen all of the section of road between the M2 overbridge and the junction of Oad Street with Pett Lane which is not up to the standard of the rest of this route and could not safely accommodate HGV's or large buses. Although it does understand that National Highways and KCC Highways have been in discussions as whether or not to widen this section so that it can be used as a diversion route for the A249 and also capable of being used by large goods vehicles and buses.

The Parish Council therefore took the decision to survey residents of Maidstone Road and Chestnut Street as to whether Oad Street should be widened and used as a diversion route during maintenance works on the A249 or remain as it is. 63% of residents who responded to the survey felt the whole of Oad Street should not be widened to allow the use by HGV's and large buses. The results also show that residents are clearly against any use of Oad Street, Maidstone Road, or Chestnut Street as a diversion route.

Typical comments received:-

It should not be used as a diversion, Danaway and Chestnut Street will suffer heavy traffic permanently this bringing noise and pollution to residents.

Maidstone Road and Chestnut Street is not built for large volumes of traffic and is not suitable for large HGV's.

The rebuilt A249 should be designed to allow for two way working on a single carriageway.

At the Parish Council meeting in June 2022, it decided that a summary of the survey's findings should be sent to all interested parties i.e., National Highways, KCC Highways and the local MP Gordon Henderson for their comments. Also, to ask them that the Parish Council be involved in any consultation and/or decision making regarding what is going to happen to this specific section of Oad Street. The Parish Council is concerned that the surveyed views of the residence should be considered in any decision making.