

## HIGHWAYS ISSUES IN RINGMER

### Issue

1. Ringmer Parish Council is asked to consider how to take forward action following the meeting held with Nick Skelton from East Sussex Highways on 10<sup>th</sup> May (see note at Annex A).

### Proposals

2. The Parish Council is asked to consider the following proposals:
  - (i) To apply to ESCC for the “Community Match” scheme to address traffic concerns on Church Hill;
  - (ii) To apply for a Weight Restriction Order on each of Church Hill, Norlington Lane and Potato Lane; and
  - (iii) To apply to ESCC for a Traffic Regulation Order to impose parking restrictions on Bishop’s Lane.

### Community Match Funding

3. When we met with Nick Skelton in May he told us about the “Community Match” fund which could be used to design and implement any number of ideas we might have about road improvements in the village. Details of the scheme, as described on ESCC’s web-site, are at Annex B. Councillors will wish to note that the maximum cost of any scheme, if accepted, is currently £100k, split between the County Council and the Parish Council.
4. The first step in any application is to decide what we are applying for. The Parish Council will be asked to pay £500 towards the cost of a feasibility study and the implication of the guidance is that we will need to be specific about the area of concern.
5. In the light of the discussion held on 10th May I recommend we apply for a **traffic management scheme on Church Hill** which would result in single file traffic only around the Church, with the aim of improving pedestrian safety, slowing traffic on the bend and protect a valued asset of the Grade 1 Listed Church and its flint wall.
6. Would Councillors wish to nominate an alternative area targeted for the Community Match scheme?

### Weight Restriction Orders

7. Problems experienced by HGV use of Ham Lane / Church Hill have been well documented. The road is too narrow to accommodate two vehicles passing safely and many have been witnessed using the pavement in front of St Mary’s Church, threatening pedestrian safety. There is no signage to warn of the narrow width of the road, nor any to warn of pedestrians crossing to access the car park, church yard and public footpath. Requests to ESCC for such signage in the past have been refused. Meanwhile the road is experiencing

increased use by HGVs including some accessing the Bovis site erroneously and Brown's lorries going to and from Lower Stoneham Farm. Meanwhile the flint wall surrounding the Church is showing signs of damage which may, in part, be attributable to the vibrations from the HGVs.

8. It would seem appropriate to limit the size of vehicles permitted to use the road. The mechanism for imposing a limit is through a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), specifically a Weight Regulation Order (WRO). See Annex C for a full description of TROs and WROs.
9. As can be seen from the guidance there are a number of roads in Ringmer which appear to fit the criteria for a WRO. In addition to Church Hill, therefore, I would suggest applying for a WRO for Norlington Lane and Potato Lane as the most obvious candidates, being predominantly used for leisure purposes of walking, cycling and horse riding. Both have also experienced problems in the past with heavy vehicles attempting to take a short-cut or avoid road-works.
10. The starting point of the process would be to apply to ESCC who are the statutory body with the authority to impose a WRO. I would be happy to take the lead on the process (through the Clerk). Whilst there is no clear advice available from ESCC on the process, West Sussex has an online application form and guidance notes which I would use as the basis for our application. I have also made enquiries of ESCC for a list of roads within Lewes District which currently have WROs on them which I hope to use for comparative purposes. At the time of writing I am still awaiting a full list from ESCC, which I first requested in April.
11. If ESCC agree to our application, the buses will still be permitted to use the route as will any vehicles needing access to a specific property along the route. In reality enforcement will be nigh on impossible but it will be a deterrent and ultimately it should show up on sat-nav software that the roads are unsuitable for large vehicles.
12. Are Councillors content to apply for WROs as indicated?

#### **TRO – Parking on Bishop's Lane**

13. Parking in Bishop's Lane, particularly at school drop-off and collection times is becoming a safety issue by obstructing the view around the bend near to Clark's Croft. It is recommended that we apply to ESCC for double yellow lines to be painted along one side of the road. The process for doing so would be to ask ESCC to include Bishop's Lane in their annual consultation about parking restrictions, which will be issued later in the year.
14. Are Councillors content to apply to ESCC for parking restrictions as described?

#### **Presentation and Further Background**

15. Highways issues are a cause for complaint for many residents, especially: anti-social driving, including speeding; the volume of HGVs using Ringmer as a rat-run; and poor road conditions. Ringmer Safer Roads Group has recently held meetings with Sussex Police and

Maria Caulfield who will be hosing a further meeting, including with the Parish Council in July. Any lead the Parish Council can take to address some of these concerns will therefore be welcomed by residents and the proposals herein are intended to address some of these issues.

16. Other issues demand a more strategic response, including the Group's call for a uniform 20 Mph throughout the village. Nick Skelton described to us the process we would need to go through to introduce 20 Mph on any of our roads (see Annex A). I have suggested that the Group writes to the Parish Council with a proposal for us to consider, including a list of which roads they see as a priority for a reduced speed limit.
17. At our meeting in May, Nick Skelton undertook to ensure that bi-annual meetings between Highways and the Parish Council are reinstated.

### **Financial Implications**

18. If our "Community Match" application is accepted there will be an initial charge of £500 to ESCC for a feasibility assessment. We have earmarked reserves of £1,000 for speed reduction measures which we could use to cover these costs. If the scheme is progressed there will be a maximum cost to the PC of £50,000 to come from CIL.
19. I am not aware that there will be any costs to the Parish Council for the WRO and TRO described above.

### **Conclusion**

20. There are a host of highways related issues affecting the Parish as a whole. The proposals above are aimed at addressing some immediate issues whilst discussions are ongoing with ESCC about others which require a more strategic approach.

**Cllr Sarah Phillips**  
**June 2021**

**ANNEX A****COPY OF EMAIL RECORDING MEETING BETWEEN RPC AND ESCC ON 10 MAY 2021**

Dear all,

I've annotated the agenda to give a quick report-back following the meeting we had last week with Nick Skelton, Assistant Director for Communities, responsible for traffic and road safety matters. Some comments are from Karl Taylor, mostly on maintenance issues, who did not attend. From our side Councillors Crompton, Denis, Kay, Morgan, Turner and myself attended together with the Karen and Gail. Cllrs Crompton and Turner had to leave before the end of the meeting.

No great breakthroughs to report at the meeting, I'm afraid, but there is the offer of joint working. Anything that we want to see outside of their planned maintenance will have to be paid for by someone other than them.

Nick opened by giving a run through of how resources are allocated for road safety. The criteria is to investigate sites which report four crashes per year resulting in personal injury. They get between 70-90 such sites reported each year and go on to undertake work on about 20-25. He described this as an "evidence based framework". Cllr Denis introduced himself as the newly elected ESCC Councillor for Ringmer and challenged Nick's reactive criteria which is out of step with Sussex Police and Sussex Safer Roads Partnership policies which recognise the impact traffic issues have on residents and the environment and the importance of prevention.

Nick described to us the "Community Match" scheme operated by ESCC. ESCC have an annual budget of £250K which can be used for these schemes, with a maximum of £50K per scheme. If we want to take advantage of this we would have to pay £500 for a Highways Engineer to discuss our priority areas. The engineer would then draw up a feasibility report and costed options. We would have to share the cost of any resultant scheme. This might be something worth considering and so I'll put a paper to a future Greens and Amenities Committee for Council to consider and decide upon.

So, in terms of the specific items discussed:

**1. Safety**

- (i) Church Hill/Church Villages/Vicarage Way being used by HGVs:
  - Wider pavement/raised kerbs needed
  - Speed restriction
  - Signage (pedestrians crossing & narrow road)
  - Weight limit
  - Failure to address large dip in road and objects flying out of vehicles
  - Concerns about the impact of the Earwig Corner works

**ESCC response:**

Nick said that ESCC don't anticipate an impact from Earwig Corner works, or at least hadn't thought about it, I wasn't clear which. He seemed to be suggesting as there was no evidence of crashes occurring there regularly there wasn't a need to do anything. He was very against introducing any speed limits and didn't think signage was necessary either. Johnny intervened at this point and saying in essence that he was continuing the experience we had seen for years that whatever we suggest ESCC says "no". I mentioned my intention to apply for a weight restriction on Church Hill via a TRO. He said that wouldn't be accepted by ESCC because there's no evidence of HGVs crashing. In response I quoted from the guidance for TROs and pointed out there is nothing in the legal framework that says HGVs have to crash at a site before a weight limit can be introduced. Instead the area met with many of the other criteria listed, including the suitability of the built environment. John Kay went on to describe the Grade 1 Listed Church and the cracking which is appearing in the flint wall around the Church, believed to be a result of the vibrations from the heavy lorries. Nick said he wasn't aware of any damage and would report it to the relevant Highways Dept.

We discussed the possibility of a "Community Match" scheme for the area (see above) which could include engineered solutions such as single file traffic passed the Church.

(ii) What is their view of the "20s Plenty" campaign? How do we go about implementing 20 MPH in Ringmer's residential areas?

**ESCC Response:**

Nick said he understood that residents were calling for 20 Mph in a lot of places. If that's something we wanted to introduce in Ringmer it would only be considered in "residential" areas – the B2192 doesn't qualify as residential since it is a "strategic" route. For roads where the average speed is less than 24 Mph the limit could be introduced with just signage. Where the average speed is more than 24 Mph, accompanying engineered changes to road layouts would be required. In either case the cost of implementation would be for the Parish Council to meet (possibly using "Community Match") and the starting point would be measured speed surveys at a cost of £400 each, again funded by the Parish Council.

(iii) Concerns raised by residents about the siting of the zebra crossing on B2192 so near to the junction with Harrison's Lane.

**ESCC Response:**

Nick said the Zebra was placed there after extensive surveys had concluded it was in the best place. We'll keep a watching brief.

**Bishop's Lane**

In addition we also discussed safety concerns on Bishop's Lane. Cars parking along the bend and near to the junction with the Lewes Road and the café is causing problems with poor visibility. John Kay asked about introducing double yellow lines along that section of Bishop's

Lane. Nick said that the County Council would consider this and to do so would need to make a TRO (Traffic Regulation Order). He said that as a first step the Parish Council should write to ESCC to request that proposals for parking restrictions are included in their annual consultation.

## **2. Speed/Traffic Calming**

- (i) Residents calling for traffic calming measures on B2192 and other roads – what will ESCC allow?
- (ii) Can they explain why the RPC funded road sign was not eventually allowed?
- (iii) Can we work with ESCC to come up with a scheme to put to residents?

### **ESCC Response:**

Nick said that all the speed surveys conducted in the past along the B2192 showed that average speeds were well within “acceptable” limits. A lot of us are familiar with the stats shown in these surveys and have at various times challenged their validity and interpretation. Nick said it was open to us to request additional surveys if we were prepared to pay for them. I said that there didn’t seem a lot of point if the results were not going to lead to measures being implemented as a result. On the road sign that the Parish Council had asked to be installed three years ago, Nick said that there regulations in place which meant that the type of sign the Parish Council had requested [“SID” Speed Indicator Display] are not permitted. They may be displayed only temporarily. Nick said that as part of the Community Match Scheme the Parish Council could request some other traffic calming measures, after discussion with the engineer. These will largely be cosmetic changes to the road, perhaps extending chevrons in the middle of the road, or placing “Laughton” style gates at the edge of the Village (which ironically has been requested and refused by ESCC in the past). He also mentioned “build-outs” which are the “Ditchling” style calming measures.

## **3. Repairs**

- (i) What is the plan for Bishop’s Lane which has effectively collapsed along one side making it hazardous for residents?

### **Karl Taylor’s response:**

Our plans have already been published and we have no plans in the current financial year to re-construct the edge of carriageway along Bishop’s Lane, but I have asked one of our highway engineers to take a look at whether there is anything we can do by way of temporary repair.

- (ii) What is the plan for the B2192 which is in a parlous state of repair along large stretches?

### **Karl Taylor’s response:**

We have no plans in the current financial year to resurface the B2192, but we are aware of its condition particularly on the approaches to the mini roundabout which we will address. We are conscious that UKPN have yet to complete the installation of the 11kv power cable

(for the Uckfield development) and that further work / excavations by the utility contractor are expected. I am also conscious that many of the problems along the B2192 are the result of utility company workings and we will be checking once their work is complete that their reinstatement is to the requisite standard.

(iii) Impact on residents of poor road surfaces which does not qualify for repair (vibrations & noise)

**Karl Taylor's response:**

Unfortunately, there is very little we can do about road noise, albeit I do appreciate that newly surfaced roads are often quieter. The matter of vibration is tricky and very difficult to evidence that it is the road alone that is causing vibrations and damage to adjacent properties. Generally, we require residents to obtain a structural engineer's report where residents experience vibration and damage to their property. If there are particular residents / properties that are experiencing vibration that they believe are being caused by the carriageway, rather than from a utility service, they can contact us in the first instance, and we will check whether there is anything obviously untoward with the carriageway.

**Walking & Cycling**

(i) Are there plans to address the poor condition of the pavements in Ringmer making them unusable for wheelchairs and unsafe for pedestrians?

**Karl Taylor's response:**

We have no plans in the current financial year to carry out any pavement improvements in the village, but I have asked the local Highway Steward to highlight any pavements of particular concern for consideration for our future years' maintenance programmes. Our Highway Stewards carry out regular inspections of all the roads and pavements across the county and arrange for the repair of any potholes and defects that meet the Council's intervention criteria. If there are pavements of particular concern these should be reported via the East Sussex Highways website.

(ii) What are the next steps following the recent consultation on the Sustrans Walking and Cycling Strategy?

I reminded Nick that the Parish Council had sent a detailed reply to the consultation last year on the proposed route through Ringmer. In short we thought the proposed route was flawed and suggested alternatives which we felt would benefit more of the Parish. Nick said that the responses were still being considered. Proposals are due to go to Cabinet in the Summer / Autumn.

**Next Steps**

(i) Keep the Parish Council informed of scheme in and around Ringmer (we're affected by developments in Wealden for example)

(ii) Regular liaison – can we have a named contact for RPC to refer to?

Karl Taylor's response: There are three principle contacts within East Sussex Highways for the Parish Council:

- Local Highway Steward is: Sean Homewood
- Customer Service Manager is: Sophie Walker
- ESCC Stake Holder and Engagement Manager at ESCC is: Ruby Brittle

Nick agreed to reinstate the twice-yearly liaison meetings between the Parish Council and ESCC so we can expect another meeting before the end of the year.

I'll prepare a paper for the next Greens and Amenities Committee (1<sup>st</sup> July) which will include some proposals for Councillors to consider.

Sarah  
20<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**EAST SUSSEX HIGHWAYS “COMMUNIITY MATCH” SCHEME**

The following text has been pasted directly from the ESCC Highways website.

**What is Community Match?**

Community Match is an initiative created to enable Local Communities to apply for match funding to deliver additional highway projects.

ESCC will be able to provide up to 50% of funding (up to a maximum value of £50,000), with the community providing the rest.

Examples include:

- A Puffin Crossing on Brighton Road, Lewes,
- Flashing wig wag road signs outside the Sacred Heart School, Wadhurst
- New tourist information and pedestrian signs in Seaford.

**Who can apply?**

Applications can be made by Parish Councils, Residents Associations or local Community Groups who have the full support of their Local County Council Member.

**Applying for a community match scheme:****Step 1 - Identify the Issue**

The first step is for the Parish or Community group to work with residents to identify the exact issue(s) they want to address and what they would like the outcome to be.

We would advise carrying out some local consultation with residents who would be directly affected to see what their views are on it.

Once this has been identified the relevant party can register their interest with us. This can be done by emailing [Community@eastsussexhighways.com](mailto:Community@eastsussexhighways.com)

**Step 2 - Apply for a Feasibility Appraisal**

Once a scheme has been identified we would recommend you apply for a feasibility appraisal. This will cost £500 plus VAT which will need to be paid in advance and may include one site visit and one meeting with the community group.

The feasibility appraisal will assess the viability of the scheme based on factors such as the scale of the proposal, traffic flows, highway boundaries, safety implications and logistic.

From the appraisal we will also be able to give an indication of the likely cost for the design and construction of the project.

An application for a feasibility appraisal can be submitted at any time of the year.

If you are unsure whether you need a feasibility application please contact us at the email address below and we will be able to advise you.

Please submit completed forms to:

Email: [Community@eastsussexhighways.com](mailto:Community@eastsussexhighways.com)

Post : Community Highways, East Sussex Highways, Ringmer Depot, Ringmer, East Sussex, BN8 5NP.

#### ADDITIONAL SURVEYS FOR SPEED AND TRAFFIC SCHEMES

Please note that if your scheme is a speed or traffic related issue then a speed or pedestrian survey will also need to be carried out prior to completing a Feasibility Study. Additional charges will apply.

Please contact [transport.monitoring@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:transport.monitoring@eastsussex.gov.uk) for a speed or traffic survey. Find out more about traffic surveys.

#### Step 3 - Community Match Business Case Application Submission

Once a Feasibility Appraisal has been carried out and/or there has been local consultation, an application form for Community Match Funding will need to be submitted along with a Community Highways Funding contract.

The application form includes guidance on how to complete the business case. The following documents will be useful in the completion of the template.

Community Highways LTP3 Objectives

Community Highways Funding Contract

Community Highways Consultation Advice

Community Match applications can be submitted at any time during the course of the year but are only reviewed once a year. The closing date for applications is the end of December each year. If you cannot make this deadline, your application will move into the round for the following year.

Please submit the completed Community Match Application form by:

Email: [Community@eastsussexhighways.com](mailto:Community@eastsussexhighways.com)

Or

Post : Community Highways, East Sussex Highways, Ringmer Depot, Ringmer, East Sussex, BN8 5NP.

#### STEP 4 – APPLICATION REVIEW

We will then review the submitted application form and decide whether it is appropriate to take forward. It is worth noting at this stage as funding is limited we may decide to not take the application any further.

If your application is approved this will be reported to the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment for final approval.

Lead member will assess the business case against:

- Local need
- Benefits of the scheme
- How the scheme contributes towards achieving the LTP objectives
- How deliverable the scheme is and what risks there are to its delivery

We will let the applicant and the local County Council know when the meeting is to take place. We will also notify the applicant on the result of their application.

#### Step 5 - Approved Applications

If the application is approved a design cost will be agreed between us and the Parish Council/Community group, who will then be asked to pay half of the cost up front.

Once designed, the project will progress to the construction phase. Again the Parish Council/Community Group will be asked to pay the costs up front.

## TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS

### Extracts from House of Commons Library Briefing Paper No CBP 6013, 11 June 2020

#### 1.1 Permanent Orders

Section 1(1) of the 1984 Act states that local traffic authorities in England and Wales (outside London) may make permanent orders for the following purposes:

- To avoid danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or to prevent the likelihood of any such danger arising;
- To prevent damage to the road or to any building on or near the road;
- To facilitate the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic (including pedestrians);
- To prevent the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property;
- To preserve the character of the road in a case where it is specially suitable for use by persons on horseback or on foot;
- To preserve or improve the amenities of the area through which the road runs; or
- To preserve or improve local air quality.

Section 2 of the 1984 Act states that Orders may be used for almost anything prohibiting, restricting or regulating the use of a road by traffic – which includes motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians:

- A TRO may make any provision prohibiting, restricting or regulating the use of a road, or of any part of the width of a road, by vehicular traffic, or by vehicular traffic of any class specified in the Order, or by pedestrians. This may be a general prohibition or subject to exceptions (e.g. limited by times or dates);
- A TRO may include any provision requiring vehicular traffic generally, or vehicular traffic of any class specified in the Order, to proceed in a specified direction or prohibiting it's so proceeding. It may specify the part of the carriageway to be used by such traffic; and prohibit or restrict the waiting of vehicles or the loading and unloading of vehicles, the use of roads by through traffic, or overtaking.
- A TRO may include any such provision specifying through routes for heavy commercial vehicles, or prohibiting or restricting the use of heavy commercial vehicles in such zones or

on such roads as may be so specified, as the traffic authority considers expedient for preserving or improving the amenities of their area or of some part or parts of their area.

## 1.2 Weight Restriction Orders

Section 2(4) of the 1984 Act permits local traffic authorities to make TROs to restrict the use of 'heavy commercial vehicles'.

Heavy commercial vehicles are defined in section 138(1) of the Act as any goods vehicle with an operating weight exceeding 7.5 tonnes. This is the maximum laden weight of a vehicle not drawing a trailer, an articulated vehicle or the aggregated laden weight of a vehicle drawing one or more trailers.

The TROs made to limit the use of these vehicles are often called (Environmental) Weight Restriction Orders ((E)WROs) and they are often put in place to preserve a local area and, for example, to protect villages and historic towns from noise, vibration, road surface damage and/or structural impacts.

### Enforcement

It is a criminal offence to contravene a TRO [section 5 of the 1984 Act]. A person guilty of an offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale (£1,000) [Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988, sections 9 & 33(1), and Schedule 2, Part I].

It is also subject to the fixed penalty regime [1988 Act, section 51, and Schedule 3].

Generally, enforcement is by the police, though there are a number of local areas where the police enforce alongside local Trading Standards (e.g. in Derbyshire, Oxfordshire, and Warwickshire). Trading Standards are generally unable to enforce effectively alone because, unlike the police, they cannot stop vehicles, get instant replies from DVLA on owner details, or issue on the spot fines (fixed penalties).

Enforcement can involve the use of ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) cameras, vehicle stops and checks and working with local companies and drivers to educate them on permitted routes.