

STRENGTHENING LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS

East Dean & Friston Parish Council Liaison Meeting 16 January 2013 at 2.00pm In the Small Hall, Village Hall

Minutes

Present: Cllr R Page (Chair, East Dean & Friston Parish Council); Mr Graeme Lake (Team Manager, Inspection and Enforcement, ESCC); Cllr D Windsor (Vice Chair, East Dean & Friston Parish Council); County Councillor Stephen Shing; Mr Ian Johnson (Principal Traffic and Safety Engineer, ESCC); Cllr S Fuller (Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee, EDFPC); and Cllr P Hill (Chair of Rights of Way Committee, EDFPC)

In attendance: Mr J Fyfield (Highways Liaison Officer, EDFPC); Mrs K Larkin (Parish Clerk).

1. **Apologies:** - None.

2. **Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2012 and matters arising:**

The Minutes were agreed to be a correct record.

The following Matters Arising were noted:

- Item 7: School Bus blocking Gilberts Drive – IJ had contacted Passenger Transport, who had not yet responded. **ACTION: IJ to contact Passenger Transport again.**
- Item 8: Eastbourne Airborne – SS would arrange a meeting with Eastbourne Borough Council to discuss traffic management for the 2013 event, and DW would attend on behalf of the parish. **ACTION: SS and DW.**

3. **Derestriction signs on the Downlands Estate.** The parish had suggested that the Downlands Estate should be treated as comparable to the Ratton Estate in Eastbourne, where derestriction signs were not used. However, Ratton was classified as a 'public road' over which the general public had no highway rights, whilst Downlands was classified as a 'public street' over which the public did have highway rights. This meant that if the residents put up an unofficial 20 mph sign at the Downlands entrance it would create anomalies which could not be legally regulated. Equally, if residents removed the official de-restriction sign, the 40 mph speed limit on the A259 would become unenforceable for drivers coming off the Estate onto the A259. Historically the Highways Authority had drawn up detailed plans of the signage that would be required to extend the speed limit into the Estate, but all the signs would have been in residents' gardens and verges, and residents had objected. The proposal had been reviewed 4-5 years ago with the same result. Councillors expressed an interest in seeing the proposals.

ACTION: IJ to try to find the records of these proposals.

4. **Safety at the junction of Crowlink Lane and the A259.** The junction has been assessed for a formal crossing of some kind, but the result has been negative. The cheapest solution would be to provide a build-out to protect the lay-by and help people cross, whilst protecting them against cars using the lay-by to undertake. However, this would have to be funded locally, and would cost £10,000 - £15,000. A refuge would cost £30,000. Management solutions included keeping sight-lines clear of vegetation and improving pedestrian signage. **ACTION: the ESCC Countryside Team to be consulted about improvements to pedestrian signage.**
5. **Placement of temporary advertising by the roadside.** Section 32 of the Highways Act 1980 generally forbade roadside signs without authorisation from the Highway Authority, and section 333 permitted anyone to remove an illegal sign (the actual wording is to 'abate an interference'). In practice, the Authority generally allowed temporary signs advertising events, on the basis that there should be no more than two such signs on each approach road, put up no more than two weeks before the event, and taken down promptly afterwards. A weekly sign advertising a Village Market was also acceptable if it appeared 24 hours in advance and then disappeared. However, commercial advertising was a different matter and was not permitted: the sign advertising breakfast at the Tiger Inn came in this category. Signs should be located at least 60 metres away from a junction, and the fixings should be at least 18 inches away from the metalled surface of the highway. Roadside signs should not be put up on private property without the permission of the landowner.
- Commercial advertising was actually a planning issue. The Town and Country Planning Act 2005 controlled such advertisements and gave 'deemed consent' to certain categories of sign like estate agents' boards, which were permitted at the front of the property for sale, but were illegal if positioned on the highway verge at the end of the road.
- Advertising on vehicles had its own rules. If a tradesman had a van giving his business details, that was legitimate, but if a vehicle was parked in a prominent position and left there to advertise something for sale then planning permission was required. The primary purpose of the vehicle must NOT be to advertise, or the planning authority's Enforcement Team should be contacted.
6. **Improvement of rainwater draining system on A259.** Several different problems had been reported on the A259. At the bottom of Friston Hill two covers on the south side over a highway drain were repeatedly being dislodged by the volume of water trying to escape along a pipe clogged with debris. It had been jetted in the past month, but the problem would recur. The underlying cause was the loss of the old drainage system on Friston Hill which had depended on channels taking water off the road and into adjacent fields; the maintenance of the channels had been abandoned because of the danger of having operatives standing in the highway. Mr Lake reported that work was scheduled to take place on the A259 between Upper Street and Gilberts Drive to improve drainage and to install a new gully grille and pot; he would review what was planned and contact Mr Fyfield to confirm the details. **ACTION: GL/JF.**
7. **Verge cutting.** PH produced a map showing two areas between Upper Street and Lower Street where a grass bank and a narrow strip of verge by the flint wall were being missed from the cutting schedule. **ACTION: GL to pass on the map to Mr Sorhaindo for action.**

8. **Signage in the Friston Pond area.** This had recently been improved, which was much appreciated.
9. **Yellow lines in Gilberts Drive and Upper Street.** The Gilberts Drive request was nearing the top of the list and would pull the other jobs up with it. The proposed changes would need to be advertised and the whole process would take six to nine months from start to completion.
10. **Problems of emergency communication in the parish.** No further report had been received. The County Council was strongly supporting improved internet and WiFi provision in rural areas, which would gradually help rural communities to become more resilient. However, the County Council could not do anything about mobile phone coverage. Only O2 had some coverage in the village because it had an aerial installed on the water tower. **ACTION: IJ to supply contact details of County/District Resilience Officers to KL.**
11. **Speed limits.** There was continuing support for a 30mph speed limit in the parish, and a new proposal for a lowering of speed limits throughout the National Park. In both cases the decision of the Highway Authority was final, and no changes were in prospect. However, it was noted that there was precedent in the Ashdown Forest for traffic to be limited to 40 mph over an extensive area. The parish council could raise money for traffic calming measures but would require permission to put them into operation.
12. **Pothole in Birling Gap road.** A temporary repair had recently been done.
13. **State of the local roads e.g. Gilberts Drive.** A backlog of repairs was building up. The rule regarding priority was that a pothole 300 mm wide and 100mm deep on a main road should be repaired within 2 hours, and on a side road within 5 days; a pothole 40mm deep would be done within 5 days on the A259 and on a side road it would await the next six-monthly inspection by the Highway Steward. A pothole on the main road caused 1000 times more risk than one on a side road. Repairs ordered by the Highway Steward should be carried out within a further six months, but this meant that some repairs were in fact waiting a year to be done. The Highway Authority had experienced a massive surge in demand and had recently increased the number of work gangs from 8 to 23, concentrating on doing good, permanent patching as opposed to temporary repairs, but this level of resource could not be maintained permanently. The policy on repairs was driven by budgetary constraints. **ACTION: GL to see whether the Gilberts Drive repair could be brought up the schedule, as it was on a bus route.**
14. **Blocked drain culvert on Birling Gap road.** Maintenance work had recently solved the problem.
15. **Overgrown highway verge near Shepherds Cottage.** The overgrown hedge was on the highway verge and was not a boundary. A bush on the bend between the Cottage and the Sheep Centre was forcing pedestrians into the road between two bends. **ACTION: noted for the attention of the Steward.**
16. **White road markings on the Downlands Estate.** Historically these markings had been paid for by residents but periodic renewals had been carried out by the County Council or their contractors. There would be no objection to the Roads Company getting their own contractor to refresh the existing lines. However, no additions could be made

without consultation between residents and the County Council. **ACTION: Councillors to report to the Residents' Association.**

17. **Construction and planned maintenance.** Works were planned for 'East Dean Road – South View Road to Church Road' from 08/04/2013 to 12/04/2013. However, this stretch did not appear to be in the parish of East Dean and Friston. Works were also planned on the A259 between the Jevington Road and Upper Street on the weekend of 16th – 17th February 2013; if the road were to be closed then diversions would need to be advertised widely at least three weeks in advance, to prevent motorists using the Downlands Estate as a by-pass. **ACTION: IJ to supply information about the diversion route, when available.** The County Council recognised that the main routes must receive major investment, and had set aside £24 million for a resurfacing programme, as well as requesting assistance from the Department of Transport to bring the total investment up to £32.3 million over the next two years.
18. **Any other business:**
The following were discussed:
- **Gore Farm Close – no cold calling sign.** A new sign was needed and could be provided by Trading Standards or the District Council, and put up by the parish council.
 - **Trees on the south side of the A259 east of the Old Parsonage.** Trees were loaded with ivy and leaning over the carriageway due to prevailing winds. It was not clear if they were on highway land or private land. Landowners could not be forced to do tree surgery unless a tree was dead or diseased or blocking a street lamp. If the tree caused an accident that would be covered by the Occupiers Liability Acts, 1953/1984. **ACTION: GL to inspect and see if a notice needed to be served on the landowner.**
 - **Footpath 18.** This busy path between The Brow and Peak Dean Lane was very steep and had become a mud slide in recent prolonged wet weather. Timber steps needed to be installed. **ACTION: GL to report to Andy le Gresley and the Rights of Way Team.**
19. **Date of next meeting:** to be arranged.