

## **STRENGTHENING LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS**

### **East Dean & Friston Parish Council Liaison Meeting**

**7 May 2014 at 10.00am**

**In the Small Hall, East Dean Village Hall**

### **Draft Minutes**

1. Apologies for absence: Sophie Coleman (ESCC Rights of Way).
2. The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2013 were confirmed as a correct record. The following Matters Arising were discussed:
  - **Footpath connecting the end of Old Willingdon Road to the mouth of Windmill Lane.** ESCC had agreed to formally assess the eligibility of the location for county funding and to supply a copy of the assessment form to the parish for information. Mr Johnson advised that the assessment had been done, but the location did not meet the benchmark score for county funding. He would check whether a copy of the assessment had been supplied to the parish. The parish could pursue the project via match funding.
  - **Reclassification of Birling Gap Road as a B road.** A considerable amount of maintenance work had been done by Highways, and resurfacing would also be carried out from Birling Gap Hotel to the A259 in August. The parish's concerns about the state of the road had therefore been met, and the Parish Council would not make a formal application for the road to be reclassified as a B road.
  - **Rights of Way matters. (1) Creation of a cycleway along the Twitten** – the county supported in principle the creation of a cycleway along the twitten (Footpath 25), to take cyclists off Friston Hill. However, the advisory body Sustrans had recommended that the path should have a tarmac surface at least 1.25 - 1.5m wide to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians safely. The Parish Council would not install the sign directing cyclists to the twitten until the widening had been completed. This could be achieved in the lower half simply by clearing vegetation to reveal an existing tarmac surface, but in the upper half the path would need to be physically widened, which would be difficult and costly. Lisa Simmons, ESCC Principal Transport Policy Officer, would assist the parish in applying for funds to widen the path. Wealden District Council would offer volunteer assistance to clear the path to 1.5 metres in the lower section, as part of

a team building exercise on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2014. The ownership of the path was not known, as there had been no response to advertisements, but it was possible that it had been gifted to the parish in the early part of the twentieth century when the adjacent land known as Hobbs Eares had been enclosed by the Gilbert Estate. Ownership must be established if public liability insurance were to be provided for users. An alternative proposal was discussed: make only the bottom half of the Twitten cycle-friendly, as far as the existing barrier. A safety review would then be needed of the suitability of the location where cyclists would be routed back onto the A259. **(2) Maintenance of the Twitten** – an old problem had recurred, as the lower half of the path had been roughly strimmed by ESCC Rights of Way, and the upper half done to a much higher standard by Highways, but the middle section about 10 metres along had not been touched. It had previously been agreed that Rights of Way should do the whole path because Highways did not have the right equipment to cope with the distance and height of the bank above the main road. The Highway Steward agreed to investigate and to have the work completed. **(3) Maintenance of footpath signs in Friston Forest** - the ESCC Rights of Way team had confirmed that the county was responsible for signage on definitive rights of way in the forest. Members of the parish Rights of Way team would take photographs of signage needing repair to be forwarded to ESCC. **(4) Frequency of Strimming of Rights of Way/Verges** – ESCC had recently indicated that due to limited resources, many paths could no longer be strimmed by the county even once a year. Councillors objected that this was a very substantial reduction in service. It was critically important for a parish such as East Dean, in prime walking country, to have its paths kept in good order. The county offered to train volunteer groups, but the scale of the task in the parish was considerable, and it was not known whether ESCC provided equipment for volunteer teams. These matters would be pursued in correspondence with the ESCC Rights of Way team. It was also noted that part of the grass verge at the junction of Lower Street and Upper Street was rarely cut, but should be included in the cutting schedule. Annabelle Harvey would remind the team.

- **Yellow lines.** The parish was now in the fourth block on the list awaiting action. No prediction could yet be made as to the timing of the next (consultation) phase.
- **Road safety at Friston Pond.** The ESCC safety survey had been carried out and had shown that the location did not meet the criteria for a crossing to be provided by the county. However, it might still be feasible to build out the kerb to prevent traffic undertaking in the bus layby, if the parish could offer match funding. The match funding would need to cover part of the design fee, and could be lost if the project did not proceed e.g. for safety reasons.

3. **The legal status of the Downlands Estate Roads:** - An enquiry from the Parish Council had been referred to the Highway Land Information Office at County Hall. The advice received was that the roads were considered to have the status of 'Unadopted Public Highway (also known as Private Streets)'. These were ways over which the public had a right to pass and repass but which were not maintainable at public expense. It was believed that these roads had acquired highway rights under Section 31 of the Highways Act 1980, though the acquisition could be open to legal challenge. A copy of the advice had been forwarded to the Chair of the Residents' Association. Wealden District Council's Dog Control Order should be operative on the Estate. Enquiry should be made of WDC as to current arrangements for providing Dog Wardens. (Action: Parish Clerk).
  
4. **Community Highway Self-service Scheme.** The parish would like more information about ESCC's proposed scheme, e.g. whether it would be feasible for all the town and parish councils in Highway Area 9 to join forces to organise local provision of suitable services. It was noted that ESCC would be hosting a seminar on the scheme in Uckfield on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014, at which the parish would be represented.
  
5. **Permanent traffic control at Exceat Bridge.** The parish council had resolved to campaign for permanent traffic lights at the Bridge. It was recognised that part of the problem was that the present exit from the car park of the Golden Galleon was so close to the bridge that three-way controls would be needed, unless the car park exit could be moved to a new location further away. Mr Johnson advised that the regular flows of traffic had been measured and it had been found that 700-800 vehicles passed the location per hour on an ordinary day, rising to 1000 per hour at rush hour. These figures did not justify the provision of lights. When numbers were in excess of 700-800 per hour the use of lights could actually increase delays, and create a dangerous situation as traffic from Seaford would meet the tail end of the eastbound queue round a bend. Councillors suggested as an alternative that the bridge should be made two-way. Mr Johnson replied that the county's Highway strategy was to maintain the A27 as the main trunk route. The A259 was regarded as a route for local traffic and tourists, which should not be improved to the point where strategic through traffic might divert onto it from the A27. Councillors questioned whether this would really be the effect of widening the bridge. Geographically the A259 could never be a viable alternative to the A27, being far less direct, but the welfare of local people and of tourists could be considerably increased by widening the bridge. The related problem of **marshalling traffic at the Bridge during Airborne** was also discussed. Eastbourne Borough Council was expected to pay for the police to marshall traffic at the bridge on two of the three days of the 2014 event (Saturday and Sunday, but not Friday). It was agreed that this should be checked. (Action: Parish Clerk). The parish

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should also contact the Emergency Services to check whether they experienced problems at the bridge and whether they would support a campaign for improvements.

6. **Community speed watch.** The parish had asked whether it would be worth setting up a community speed watch team to monitor speeding through East Dean. The results of a village survey carried out at the end of 2013 had shown that speeding was a topic of great concern among residents, though many residents would not support a change if it meant installing street lights. Mr Johnson explained that lighting did not have to be provided in a 30 mph zone (though where there was street lighting, the speed would always be 30 mph or less). East Dean's request must be seen in the context of the 180 requests for reduced limits received across the county within the last year, only a handful of which could be actioned. A certain number of driveways must open directly onto the main road within a certain distance to qualify for consideration: in East Dean this frontage criterion was not met. The present 40 mph zone had been introduced in 2000 and extended within the last few years; it predated the traffic calming measures now in place in the centre of the village. However, Mr Johnson would investigate the possibility of the county funding the installation of black box recorder to collect data in the centre of the village over a period of about a week.
7. **Parish name signs.** The 'Friston' name sign on the main A259 entering the village from Seaford had disappeared; a comparable sign marking the entry into Friston on the Jevington Road had also rusted away, leaving only the posts and the ESCC 'Martlets' badge behind. The parish requested that both signs be replaced. Mr Johnson advised that signs were not being made in this old-style format any more. The county would replace the sign on the main road with a modern version, but would not fund a replacement on a C road. However, it would erect a sign on the Jevington 'C' Road if the parish would pay for it. It was agreed that ESCC should design and cost a new sign, to include the message 'Please drive carefully' if the verge width was found sufficient to take it.
8. **Uneven pavement in Gilberts Drive.** A resident had complained that tree roots were breaking through the tarmac and causing a hazard in the vicinity of Glebeland Cottage. The Highway Steward advised that it might be possible to put on an overlay, which would be a cost-effective repair. He would inspect the site following the meeting.
9. **Construction & Planned Maintenance**  
Contact: Simon Marchant, Team Manager 0345 6080193

Road No	Location from - to	Work Type	Traffic Management	Start date	Duration	Finish Date
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C37	Birling Gap Road - Birling Gap Hotel to A259	Surface Dressing		22/08/14	0.5 days	22/08/14
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Mr Johnson advised that once the surface dressing was completed, the intention was to paint a 30 mph roundel on the road in the vicinity of the Recreation Ground. Councillors confirmed that this would be welcome, and thanked Highways for all the works done to improve the C37.

10. **Any other business**

**Speed limits on the Downlands Estate** – Mr Johnson stated that the county had re-estimated the cost of installing 30 mph repeater signs all around the Downlands Estate (with no street lighting). The total cost would be approximately £7,200 for the works plus £1,000 legal costs. The limiting factor was likely to be that there was nowhere to put the signs, other than on privately owned verges, and that this was unlikely to be acceptable to the majority of verge owners.

11. **Date and time of next meeting**

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014 at 10.00 am in the Cricket Pavilion, East Dean Recreation Ground.**

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.45 am.*