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**STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET PARISH COUNCIL HIGHWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the HIGHWAYS SUB-COMMITTEE held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 19th October 2022 in The Mountfitchet Exchange, Crafton Green, 72 Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex

**PRESENT** Cllr G Sell (Chair), Cllrs M Caton, M Jessup, P Jones, J O’Brien, L Prior,

F Richards and Mr Ray Woodcock (co-opted member)

**ATTENDING** Mrs Ruth Clifford – Parish Clerk

Mrs Emma Philbrick – Deputy Clerk

Cllr A Khan – Via Zoom

Cty Cllr Ray Gooding

1 member of the press

4 members of the public (2 via Zoom and 2 in person)

**185 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jessup – work and will attend late if possible, and Cllr Khan – illness so joining via Zoom

Having been proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr O’Brien it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED** to accept the apologies from Cllrs Jessup and Khan

**186 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr Woodcock declared an interest as he lives on Chapel Hill.

**187 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20TH JULY 2022**

**RESOVLED** to accept the minutes of the Highways Sub-Committee meeting held on 20th July 2022 as a true and accurate account.

**188 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON ACTION POINTS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

Action Point 118 – clarification email now posted on the website

Action Point 121a – not yet received the Terms of Reference for the feasibility study together with timescales from Cty Cllr Gooding

**189 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CHAIR, CLLR GEOFFREY SELL**

Cllr Sell reported that he had received correspondence from a resident of Burton End who raised concerns about speeding. The Clerk has confirmed that both the Special Constable and PCSO had carried out visits in the area.

**190 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM COUNTY CLLR GOODING ON HIGHWAYS PROJECTS FOR STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET**

Cllr Sell advised that he had written to Cty Cllr Gooding to ask if he was attending the meeting or to submit a written report but had not yet heard back from him.

Cllr Jones commented that with regards to the project of attempting to ban large vehicles from entering Stansted and using Grove Hill that as with any project, there should be projections of what should be done and timescales of when. It should not be a big exercise to determine what the alternative routes would be. He suggested that the Parish Council ask to see a projection and timescale report.

Cllr Caton advised that she was not even sure if the project had been agreed by County so they may not have this available until/if it is agreed.

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Cllr Jones asked if Cllr Gooding and Cabinet Member Cllr Lee Scott could be told that we expect to see a report and, if they don’t have one, then ask why and what is causing the delay of this. If we do not get a response, then the Parish Council should put in a Freedom of Information request.

Cllr Sell commented that he wasn’t sure that County had agreed to do anything on Grove Hill and that the Parish Council was yet to see any concrete action and we can understand the frustration of residents.

Cllr Caton advised that she has asked Cllr Gooding for the timeline as requested but that she was yet to receive a response. The Clerk pointed out that they had never assumed it had been agreed but had asked what the steps were for a decision to be made.

County Councillor Gooding arrived at the meeting.

Mr Woodcock commented that there were large piles of earth being dumped on May Walk / Gypsy Lane and that representations should be made to the Environment Agency as no-one has any idea of the effect on health from this and the issues it is causing to drainage in the village. It is not just on Grove Hill either, it is all over the village from the tipper trucks passing through. He also asked what is going to happen regarding Grove Hill? It has been some 12 to 18 months since Cllr Scott visited on a number of occasions and met with him, residents and the Parish Council. He left with the promise that there would be a firm action plan and that by Autumn 2022 they would see steps in place limiting heavy goods vehicles. Nothing has been done and everyone is receiving total silence or just that they are working on it.

Cllr Gooding advised that there were two main issues and that the issue with heavy goods vehicles is getting worse and not just in Stansted but also in Elsenham, Ugley and as far out as Hallingbury. Spoils are being dumped and roads left in an awful condition. They have been doing a lot of work on this and it’s not easy as it falls under a number of different departments. He has today had a long conversation with Cllr Scott and agreed that a number of different agencies need to work together and the best way to achieve this is to call a summit. This would involve the Highways Agency, Environment Agency, Waste & Minerals and UDC. They need to find out why it’s happening and the need to clear the spoils. A lot is coming from the Bishops Stortford North development so they will also try and get East Herts along to the meeting.

Cllr Gooding also advised that they know a lot of lorries are coming from Elsenham and they start at 6am and drive down Grove Hill empty meaning they don’t exceed the weight limit. Because they are empty, they are creating a lot of noise which is waking residents up. They are looking into making swoop raids on organisations and looking at the tacho records for such companies. It may not prevent them, but it will send out a message and give them a wake-up call.

Cllr Khan asked to speak and put three questions to Cllr Gooding:

* A strategic review of traffic had been promised – what progress has been made?
* Residents have reported being impacted by the work taking place on the Birchanger Roundabout. Have discussions taken place with the various bus companies and highways about the impact especially to school buses?
* Old Bell Close – an issue with the manhole cover which has been repeatedly reported to Essex Highways and nothing has ever been done?

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Cllr Gooding said the strategic plan – centred on removing HGVs from Stansted - was still underway, but it takes a long time as there are many different elements involved. Whatever course of action is decided upon, they need to ensure that they are not moving the problem from Stansted to other surrounding areas. The original thoughts were to divert the traffic along Hall Road but in the last couple of weeks there have been three serious accidents, two of which were fatalities. Safety investigations into those accidents will now have to be undertaken and the results taken into consideration, and they have to make sure they get it right.

With regards to the Birchanger roundabout, the work was commissioned by the Highways Agency to relieve the traffic on the Jct 8 roundabout and is aimed to help control traffic. It is causing a huge amount of inconvenience to surrounding areas but is needed. All bus companies are properly advised and notified.

The issue in Old Bell Close is the responsibility of Affinity Water and this has been reported to them. He will chase Affinity as it is always a problem trying to get them to come back to do repairs. The drains have been recently jetted so should not be an issue.

Cllr Jones asked regarding the increased amount of material being tipped at sites around the area, he wants confirmation that it is legal and that the material being dumped has been checked to ensure it’s not dangerous.

Cllr M Jessup arrived at the meeting

Cllr Jones commented that he does not accept that it has taken so long to come up with a project plan for Grove Hill when there is only one route out of Elsenham. This is a project that Cllr Gooding and Cllr Scott have confirmed over a long period of time, and he does not accept that it has taken this long so far. They should have a timetable even if that slips, and residents should be advised if it slips. A lot more detailed information should have been given to us by now. We accept the legislation has not been passed through Parliament yet but maybe this is something that Kemi Badenoch MP could assist with.

Cllr Gooding answered that the Elsenham Road and Grove Hill issue is not an easy one due to the impact it will have on surrounding areas. There had recently been a camera survey undertaken and this covered areas as far away as Thaxted, the A120, Airport etc to see where the traffic was coming from, going through and going to. Vehicles are not taking the routes they thought they would. Where they divert the goods vehicles to and how they make them go that way is what is taking time, as well as the grouping of accidents including the recent ones which has delayed it further.

Cllr Sell asked if the plans for Grove Hill are considered untenable in the longterm and wondered if there is a political will to deliver the project? Cllr Gooding advised that there were some quick wins such as moving parked cars from Grove Hill but that wouldn’t be favourable with residents. Anything put in place needs to be sustainable or the problem will come back. It is taking longer but he will try to ensure it stays at the top of the agenda but all areas of the county are pushing for improvements. Mr Woodcock advised that residents are bitter as they don’t hear anything. They don’t know of any conclusions and that is the major criticism. Cllr Gooding pointed out that he would not keep repeating himself and telling them the same thing over and over.

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Cllr Sell commented that the residents are getting more and more frustrated, but he understood that the buck did not totally stop with him. He asked if Cllr Gooding could consult with Cllr Scott and come up with a timeline which he agreed to do in the next week or so.

Cllr Jones also asked that Cllr Gooding confirm that there is no health issue with what is being tipped? He confirmed that Minerals & Waste were involved but they are having difficulties because the locations for the dumping keep changing.

The chaos caused by the jumping of the red lights on Grove Hill was also discussed and a number of suggestions made, including the installation of an additional set of lights further up the road, but Cllr Gooding advised that these had previously failed every safety audit and been rejected on safety grounds. There is no simple solution.

Cllr Caton referred back to the alternative route for HGVs and asked if we are clear on the position of Elsenham, Henham and Ugley? Cllr Gooding responded that Ugley were rightly concerned about Pound Lane as it wasn’t big enough to cope with any additional traffic. With regards to Elsenham and Henham, they believe that the issues on Grove Hill help to reduce the chances of development in their villages. He believes they would pay lip service to a resolution only in that it doesn’t affect them. Cllr Caton reiterated that they would need to be consulted and that we need clarification on their position before we steam ahead.

Cllr Sell asked if Cllr Gooding would be communicating with residents of Grove Hill about tonight’s discissions and he agreed to do so.

Mr Woodcock mentioned Air Quality Assessment figures for 2021 and that the evidence showed that air quality numbers are decreasing. He asked if each month’s figures for this year could be obtained? The Clerk advised that this is something they had been asking for to use in the draft NDP but they didn’t seem to be available, but she will try again.

Cllr Gooding finished by asking that the illegal cones placed on Grove Hill by residents be removed. He has told the residents previously that these were illegal and enforcement will come along and remove them and if they appear again then it is a prosecutable offence and they will take action. He would like them removed before enforcement get involved. Cllr Sell reiterated that the Parish Council does not support the cones.

Cllr Khan asked if there was any news on his 20-is-Plenty scheme and it was confirmed by Cllr Gooding that this scheme was in validation, and he will come back to him with an update.

A discussion took place regarding the Local Highways Panel and this is recorded under minute number 67

**191 FORESTHALL PARK – TO RECIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE WORKING GROUP**

Cllr Jones updated that they had been on two walkabouts covering the whole of Foresthall Park. The group consists of approx. 4/5 residents as well as councillors. They are discussing options for the different areas of the estate which will eventually come back for discussion at a meeting before going out for consultation.

Cllr Khan gave thanks to the residents as they are giving a good insight into the issues and area and their support and thoughts are appreciated.

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**192 TO CONSIDER THE INTRODUCTION OF 20MPH SPEED LIMITS IN STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET**

Mr Woodcock advised that he had seen a proposal by an Uttlesford District Councillor, Susan Barker, for a 20mph speed limit for Dunmow. We desperately need to reduce the speed limit in the centre of Stansted Mountfitchet and would propose putting this forward for High Lane, Lower Street, Chapel Hill and Church Road. In High Lane the traffic travels very quickly and there are no crossing points.

Cllr Gooding commented that if they do get larger vehicles out of Stansted, he would hope to see a more social environment in Stansted so this would help that.

Cllr Jones pointed out that there has already been a scheme submitted for High Lane to reduce speed and create crossing points. He would welcome a 20mph limit but doubts it would be honoured and doubts it would get through and there is more of a chance of a traffic calming scheme than a speed reduction scheme. Cllr O’Brien thinks that a raised pedestrian crossing will slow traffic down more and also that it needs crossing points. Cllr Gooding advised that High Lane is a ‘B’ road and the strategic review would seek to downgrade it to a C as 20mph limits are rare on ‘B’ roads. It needs physical measures to get drivers to slow down.

Having been proposed by Cllr Jessup and seconded by Cllr O’Brien it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED** To submit an application to the ULHP for funding for a feasibility study on introducing a 20mph scheme for Lower Street, Chapel Hill and Church Road.

**193 TO CONSIDER WHAT ACTION, IF ANY, CAN BE REQUESTED TO IMPROVE THE FOOTWAY ON CAMBRIDGE ROAD FROM HIGH LANE TO FIVE ACRES**

Cllr Jones has been contacted by a resident of King Charles Drive who has a baby and toddler and often walks this stretch. The footpath is not fit for purpose and is extremely dangerous. He proposed that the Parish Council submit an application to the Highways Panel for a proper footpath to be installed. Cllr Gooding believes this is a reasonable scheme to request and it was agreed that a request to widen the footpath and improve the surface be submitted.

**194 TO CONSIDER THE INCREASE IN ON-STREET PARKING ON BENTFIELD ROAD AND WHETHER TO REQUEST ANY WAITING RESTRICTIONS**

Cllr Sell advised that both himself and the office had been contacted by residents about the stretch of road that goes from Bentfield Gardens to the corner by City and Country Group’s offices. They are reporting that cars are regularly parking there, and it is a combination of airport parkers and rail commuters. They have also seen people with NHS badges who work in the village. Residents are in favour of a single or double yellow line due to the issues with safety and sight-lines. Comments are that they have never had this before and is a recent issue that is getting worse.

Cllr Prior asked where the people will go if they are moved from there. She would agree to the restrictions on the corner to help with safety and sight-lines but would not like to see them along the whole stretch due to the unintended consequences.

Cllr O’Brien commented that there is an additional problem for pedestrians due to the overgrowth on the very narrow footway which is also an issue. A clearance programme needs to be formed to deal with vegetation. He also believes that there should be double yellow lines on the junction.

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Cllr Caton commented that we are always talking about airport parking so we need to get MAG and UDC involved. We need to get to the root of the problem instead of moving it around the village.

Cllr Jessup voiced his support for an application for double yellow lines as it is more a matter of danger than getting rid of airport parkers. Cllr Richards also supports double yellow lines due to the dangerous situation.

Having been proposed by Cllr O’Brien and seconded by Cllr Jessup and with 7 votes in favour and 1 abstention it was:

**RESOLVED** To apply for double yellow lines from Bentfield Gardens to Bentfield Causeway.

Cllr Khan asked that we manage expectations and that all we can do is apply to the NEPP and hold a consultation. We do not get to make the decision. Cllr Prior asked

that we consult with roads such as Cannons Mead as there will likely be a knock-on effect.

Cllr Caton asked that we consult with UDC regarding their Car Parking Review which has never materialised.

**195 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON SECTION 106 PROJECTS**

There are no projects currently in train as the sub-committee has previously rejected further expenditure on the Cambridge Road proposals.

At the previous meeting, Cllrs Jones and O’Brien had been asked to go away to look at potential improvements to the footway along Church Road. This has been done and options were tabled for members to consider. Cllr Jones believes that the Church Road project is not just a maintenance job and that the S106 money is there for the capital work required to create a new and better footpath. This was backed up by Cllr O’Brien.

Cllr Gooding advised that previously S106 money could be added to the funds of the ULHP and asked if Cllr Sell might raise this at the next meeting and ask for this to be done. The match-funding that would then be available could help to move this project forward. Cllr Prior commented that the proposal to have the footpath behind the trees along that stretch would feel unsafe and anyone walking on their own would be safer being seen by traffic.

Having been proposed by Cllr Jones and seconded by Cllr O’Brien, it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED** to press hard for S106 funds to be used for safety improvements to the footway along Church Road.

**196 UTTLESFORD LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL**

**a) TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CHAIR/CLERK ON SUBMITTED PROJECTS**

The Clerk advised that she had submitted three projects. The one for the crossing on Silver Street has been approved but she had not received any updates on the remaining two for the Town Twinning village signs and the completion of the footway from High Lane round into Cambridge Road. It was agreed that the Clerk would ask for an update by email.

**b) TO CONSIDER SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS**

It has already been agreed to submit proposals for the footway along Cambridge Road and the 20mph feasibility study for Lower Street, Church Road and Chapel Hill.

The Clerk wondered if vehicle activated signs would be a good idea for areas such as Burton End. Cllr Gooding advised that the ULHP are no longer supporting the

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funding of these due to the costs of maintenance once they are installed. Parishes will now have to fund them themselves. It was suggested that they could add it to the S106 scheme for the Church Road application. Cllr Khan advised that he would support these for Burton End but that it would need to be discussed as a possible future budget item. It was agreed that the office would investigate the costs of the signs so they could be considered as part of the budget process.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm

**ACTION POINTS**

190 Ask Cty Cllr Gooding and Cabinet Member Lee Scott for a project plan for the proposed removal of HGB’s for the centre of Stansted

190 Cty Cllr Gooding to contact Affinity regarding the Old Bell Close drain

190 Cty Cllr Gooding to consult with Cabinet Member Lee Scott and come up with a timeline for Grove Hill.

190 Cty Cllr Gooding to communicated with Grove Hill residents regarding the discussions at this meeting.

190 Clerk to try and obtain Air Quality Assessments for each month in 2022

190 Cty Cllr Gooding to chase for an update on the 20 is plenty scheme

192 Submit an application to the ULHP for funding a feasibility study on introducing a 20mph scheme for Lower Steet, Chapel Hill and Church Road.

193 Submit an application for a proper footpath with improved surface to be installed

194 Apply for double yellow lines from Bentfield Gardens to Bentfield Causeway

194 Chase UDC regarding the Car Parking Review

194 Press hard for S106 funds to be used for safety improvements to the footway along Church Road

196a Clerk to request by email for an update on submitted projects

196b Office to investigate costs of vehicle activated signs so they can be considered as part of the budget process