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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 20th July 2022 in The Mountfitchet Exchange, Crafton Green, 72 Chapel Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex.

**PRESENT** Cllr G Sell (Chair), Cllrs M Jessup, A Khan, J O’Brien, L Prior, F Richards. Mr R Woodcock (co-opted)

**ATTENDING** Mrs Ruth Clifford – Parish Clerk

Cllr P Jones (via Zoom)

Cty Cllr Ray Gooding

2 members of the public

**116 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Received from Cllr Caton (holiday) and for not being present in-person from Cllr Jones (holiday).

**RESOLVED** to accept the apologies presented.

Cty Cllr Gooding had informed the Clerk that he would be late arriving.

**117 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - None.

**118 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 4TH APRIL AND 11TH MAY 2022**

The Clerk reminded members that following the meeting on 4th April, she had circulated an email to the sub-committee clarifying some issues that had been raised. It was agreed that the email should be posted with the approved minutes on the Council’s website.

**RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the meetings held on 4th April and 11th May as a true and accurate account.

**119 UPDATE ON PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

Updates on various schemes and traffic counts to be requested from Cty Cllr Gooding when he arrives.

Cllr Sell reported the latest position relating to footpaths at King Charles Drive. He aims to attend the planning committee meeting when the application is discussed. It would be beneficial to have a Parish Council representative presend also. All schemes agreed have been submitted to North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) or the Uttlesford Local Highways Panel (ULHP) with the exception of 206a – Walson Way. It had been agreed under minute 414 that a more detailed review of parking on the Foresthall Park development should take place – this is on the agenda. The Foresthall Park S.106 fund is also an agenda item.

Cllrs Khan and Jones both commented that Stansted is not receiving a good service from Essex Highways currently. Communication is poor and maintenance almost non-existent. Timescales for projects are needed in order to allow parish councillors to report back to parishioners otherwise it appears that parish councillors are not taking any action to lobby or push for projects to be progressed.

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**120 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CHAIR**

Nothing in addition to the items on the agenda.

Cty Cllr Gooding joined the meeting

**121 UPDATE FROM CTY CLLR GOODING ON VARIOUS HIGHWAY PROJECTS**

A Changes to HGV restrictions

Cllr Gooding reported that the ULHP had approved £25,000 for a feasibility study to be undertaken by Ringway Jacobs. The study would include looking at the alternative traffic routes to ensure that the problem is not just moved to another area. He stated that the package would also include discussions with neighbouring councils and should include traffic counts.

The proposed scheme would take effect on all roads into Stansted with the exception of the B1383. Plenty of advance warning signs would be required. The legislation to introduce such a scheme already exists. However, the most effective form of enforcement would be via remote or hand-held cameras and it is the use of this technology that requires Parliamentary approval which is still awaited. Cllr Lee Scott is pushing hard for this as it could be used across the county.

Cllr Khan sought clarity on the Terms of Reference for the feasibility study and asked to see the full details, together with the proposed timescales. Cllr Gooding agreed to obtain this information. Cllr Jones questioned why it has taken so long to get to this stage when the scheme has been in the pipeline for months and supported the request for a timetable. Cllr Gooding reported that Essex Highways had devolved it to the ULHP to commission the study and this has now been done. It is hard to demonstrate the amount of work that has to go on behind the scenes to get to this stage. Cllr Sell stated that the displacement effect is of concern but hoped that the views of other communities would not be given priority over the residents of Grove Hill.

Talking about alternative routes, Cllr O’Brien flagged his concern that the airport may refuse traffic to be re-routed along roads which they own. Cllr Gooding stated that those roads are still public highways and can be used.

Reference was made to meetings that have taken place in the past with Cty Cllr Lee Scott but to which the Parish Council have not been invited. Cllr Gooding has taken this on board. It is essential that all parties are kept informed of progress – or lack of it.

B Applications to the ULHP

Cllr Gooding stated that the application for a pelican crossing on Silver Street, close to Blythwood Gardens, was not agreed, but a zebra crossing had been approved and the design work for that would now start. The Clerk asked if the Belisha beacons could be the type with halo lights as these were more visible than the traditional ones. These had been requested for the new crossing near the BP garage but this had been ignored and those lights are not effective. Similarly, the application submitted previously to upgrade the beacons on the crossing at the top of Chapel Hill appeared to have been lost in the system. Agreed that the Clerk should submit a new application. Cllr Jones referred to the National Planning Policy Framework

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(NPPF) which states clearly that walking should be a priority and pedestrians should be safe – Essex Highways need to prioritise this.

C Maintenance of Footways

Cllr Gooding referred in particular to the footway along the B1383 towards Birchanger and alongside the Elsenham Road. The maintenance of these paths, and others like them, had been devolved from Essex Highways to the Uttlesford Highway Rangers. However, as they are not allowed to undertake traffic management, they are unable to work beyond the 30mph limits. There are moves afoot to return this maintenance to a central Essex Team who have the ability to put up traffic management systems if required.

D Church Road drains

When investigated, the problems were not as serious as had been feared so the work was undertaken quickly. However, further gulley clearance work was identified and this will be undertaken during the Affinity Water closure of the road next week.

E Potholes

There is funding available to repair major potholes – please notify any known to Cty Cllr Gooding.

Cllr Khan referred to an issue faced by a resident at Burton End in relation to maintenance of a public right of way – he would pass the details to Cllr Gooding who could hopefully assist.

**122 FORESTHALL PARK – TO DISCUSS A TIMESCALE/STRATEGY FOR CONSIDERING AND CONSULTING ON ANY PROPOSED WAITING RESTRICTIONS**

The Clerk reminded members that the last meeting had agree to undertake a review of FHP and she outlined a proposed strategy:

1. Set up a working group
2. Review the existing information received
3. Invite further comments from residents via social media, The Link and perhaps a letter drop to all homes on FHP
4. Undertake site visits
5. Identify a list of the issues arising and discuss options with the NEPP
6. Consult with residents once the options are known
7. Evaluate comments received
8. Report back to the sub-committee with findings and recommendations
9. Highways sub-committee to take final decision
10. Report back to residents

Agreed that the working group should comprise 3 councillors and 3 residents. Cllrs Jones, Khan and Prior volunteered. Cllr Khan stated that Dist Cllr Caton should also be invited to join as his fellow ward member. Agreed that communication with residents is key and an article seeking residents’ participation should be placed on the FHP residents’ Facebook page.

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The Clerk and Chair of sub-committee will assist in pushing this project forward.

Cllr Gooding commented that the airport-related “no parking” signs which have been erected are unlawful. In response to Cllr Prior he stated that any attached to Essex CC assets were at risk of being removed.

Cty Cllr Gooding left the meeting

**123 MOUNTFITCHET ESTATE**

A To ratify the decision made in relation to the proposed residents’ parking scheme

Cllr Prior asked what actions could be taken now that the residents had voted against such a scheme. The Clerk outlined a scheme discussed by Essex, Uttlesford and the Parish some while ago which would see the worn verges converted to official, tarmacked parking bays. No funding stream has ever been identified, but it has now been submitted to Essex to be funded under the Foresthall Park Highways S.106 fund - a decision is awaited.

Cllr Prior asked about enforcement to keep airport parkers away and it was agreed that visual signs were probably the only option. Cllr Khan stated that some residents have multiple cars in the household and, as such, no decision will ever be reached that suits everyone. He had suggested to his contact at the Airport that their own car parking charges should be reduced to encourage travellers to park there. This has, apparently, been considered but rejected on the basis that car use should be discouraged for environmental reasons.

Having been proposed by Cllr Sell and seconded by Cllr Khan, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** not to submit an application to the NEPP for a Residents’ Parking Scheme.

B To consider a request to the NEPP for waiting restrictions around the estate

The working group looking at this had taken into account some of the views received from members of the public and were of the opinion that two areas on Stoneyfield Drive could be removed from the plan. Cllr Prior stated that the plan should be put on the Council’s website and it should be made clear to residents that they could be ticketed for parking on the grass at junctions as the red lines apply to the verges as well as to the road. Having been proposed by Cllr Sell and seconded by Cllr O’Brien it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to submit an application to the NEPP for red line restrictions around the estate as shown on the plan.

Cllr Khan stated that the working group would be putting thank you letters through the doors of the residents who had responded, together with the findings of the consultation.

**124 HIGH LANE – TO CONSIDER WHETHER SPEED REDUCTION MEASURES ARE NECESSARY OR FEASIBLE**

The Chairman reported that he had recently been contacted by a High Lane resident concerned about speeding traffic. The lady was present at the meeting and he invited her to address members.

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The lady gave background to how long she has lived on High Lane and the difficulties that she encounters entering and exiting her driveway. Drivers leaving the village northwards on High Lane speed up well before they are out of the 30mph zome. Mr Woodcock stated that data collected by the SpeedWatch team would confirm this – most likely in both directions – with some offenders travelling in excess of 50mph.

Cllr Jones confirmed that this is a route he walks regularly and pedestrians are also put at risk by having no continuous pavement and having to cross back and forth. After further discussion, it was unanimously agreed that the Clerk should submit a request to the ULHP for traffic calming measures. A scheme similar to that in Rye Street was discussed, whereby zebra crossings are combined with raised cushions but it would be for the professionals at Essex to see what options could be offered.

**125 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON S.106 PROJECTS**

The Clerk gave some background to the projects put forward for funding and explained why some of them were not being progressed by Essex Highways. The proposal to improve traffic flows along Cambridge Road has been with the design team for a couple of years and an email has now been received to say that only one part of the scheme – the creation of a parking bay near to the Woodgrill – is not affordable within the funds remaining. Cllr Jones expressed his anger that it has taken so long for Essex to reach this conclusion with no explanation as to why the other elements of the scheme cannot be progressed. After brief discussion it was agreed to officially withdraw our request for the Cambridge Road scheme.

The one scheme remaining was referred to in item 123b above – the creation of parking bays around the Mountfitchet Estate – but a decision on whether this can be funded is awaited.

According to the s.106 officer, a scheme in Birchanger for a Clearway has been added to the programme at the request of the ULHP. Members expressed their displeasure that such a scheme should be included under this FHP fund and the matter should be raised with Cty Cllr Gooding for clarification. Cllr Khan proposed that we lobby strongly against the Clearway project.

The s.106 officer asked members to consider any other scheme to be put forward to utilise the funds remaining which stand at around £250,000. Cllr Jones referred back to previous discussions about long term solutions to widen the Church Road footway which would incur some capital cost and should therefore be eligible for funding. He offered to work with Cllr O’Brien to draw up a specification to submit.

**126 UTTLESFORD LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL**

This item had been covered by the Clerk under item 119 above and two suggestions for future projects were agreed under 121b and 124 above.

Meeting closed at 9.45pm

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**ACTION POINTS**

118 Clerks clarification email to be posted on website

121a Cllr Gooding to obtain Terms of Reference for the feasibility study together with timescales

121b Clerk to submit application for new style beacons

121e Members to report any potholes to Cty Cllr Gooding

122 Working Group to draft article seeking residents’ participation which is to be placed on the FHP residents’ Facebook page by the office.

123b Submit an application to the NEPP for red line restrictions around the Mountfitchet Estate

124 Clerk to submit a request to the ULHP for traffic calming measures

125 Officially withdraw request for the Cambridge Road scheme

125 Cllr Jones to work with Cllr O’Brien to draw up a specification for works on Church Road footway