

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HIGHWAYS FORUM FOR HARBOROUGH
HELD AT THE HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES ON
WEDNESDAY 26 MAY 2010 AT 6.00 PM

PRESENT

County Councillors	District Councillors
Mr W Liquorish (Chairman)	Mr S Charlish
Dr R K A Feltham	Mr R Dunton (substitute for Mrs B Johnson)
Mr S J Galton	Mr C Holyoak
Dr S Hill	Mrs E Roeber (substitute for Mrs A Burrell)
Mr B Pain	

The following also attended the meeting:

County Officers present: I Drummond, K Notman, C Howe, D R Bradbury

District Officers present:

073. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members and officers to the meeting. He also welcomed members of the public who were in attendance.

074. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr G A Hart CC, Mrs R Page CC, Mr D Beaty DC, Mrs A Burrell DC, Mrs B Johnson DC and MR G D Spendlove-Mason DC. MR R Dunton DC, Mrs E Roeber DC were substituting for Mrs Johnson and Mrs Burrell.

075. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

076. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr W Liquorish CC declared a non prejudicial personal interest in agenda item 7(i) petition for zebra crossing Broughton Astley.

077. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 10th March 2010 were confirmed and signed as a true record subject to the following amendment.

Minute item 067 amend:

Mr Blake congratulated officers on the Commons Car Park TRO and explained that the church had come to a compromise with objectors with the TRO going ahead once the objections had been removed.

To:

Mr Pain congratulated officers on the work undertaken towards removing the objections to the TRO at the Commons Car Park. The church had come to a compromise with objectors with the TRO going ahead once the objections had been removed.

078. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman asked Members if they had any questions with the items in the papers.

Dr R K A Feltham CC confirmed that there had been a lot of movement by Network Rail and David Wilson Homes to get the work underway at Warwick Road Railway Bridge. This week there had been a breakthrough with David Wilson Homes managing to move the fencing back to enable pedestrians to use the footpath which had been unavailable previously.

079. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 36

A petition with 3,107 signatures (468 from children Old Mill Primary School and Thomas Estley and 2,639 from the local community) together with supporting documents from Michelle Cooper Burke will be presented. The petition requests LCC to take immediate action to install a zebra crossing outside the village hall, Station Road, Broughton Astley.

The Chairman asked Mr Ian Case to speak on the petition. Mr Case thanked the Chairman and gave apologies from Michelle Cooper Burke who was unavailable to attend the meeting. Mr Case explained that the petition highlights the crucial need in Broughton Astley, for a crossing outside the village hall. The County Council had approved the crossing but had confirmed that there were no funds available to undertake the work in the next three years. This was unacceptable as the crossing is needed for the safety of children and parents. In the region of 1,100 pupils attend the schools without the aid of a crossing or a crossing warden.

Community Speed Watch has been undertaken that shows the average speeds along the road are 27 mph where the speed limit is 20 mph. The installation of a crossing will decrease the dangers and Mr Case asked that officers seek to install the crossing in time for that start of the next school calendar year.

The Chairman fully supported the petition. He explained the difficulties behind recruiting crossing wardens. However, he confirmed that recently an appointment for a warden had been made and that he was hopeful of another soon.

The Chairman had asked officers for costings of a crossing near to the village hall as he was trying to obtain outside funding.

The Chairman explained the petition protocol where investigations would be undertaken with the outcomes reported to the lead petitioner and local Member with a report back to the Forum within the prescribed six month window.

Mr R Dunton DC asked whether the redundant equipment on St Marys Road could be used elsewhere in the county. In response, Mr Drummond explained that the equipment at St Marys Road was worn out and was also not the best solution for Broughton Astley. He went on to explain that there had been an incorrect statement that the work

could not be funded for three years. The scheme is currently in the 2011/12 programme (2010/11 programme is fully committed). However, there is talk of central funds being cut with the need for everyone to be fully aware of the financial challenges that will have to be faced if that is the outcome. He welcomed the petitioners community interest and the excellence of the petition that had been presented.

080. A47 ROAD SAFETY

The Chairman agreed for three members of the public to speak on the issue.

- Mr Martyn Griffiths Chairman of Skeffington PC
- Mr Ian Lockyer a resident of Skeffington
- Mr Paul Weston Harborough District Manager, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue

Mr Griffiths highlighted the major problems encountered in Skeffington amongst which were:

- 2 blind bends where vehicles are unable to slow down and stop safely.
- Problem for vehicles pulling out onto the A47.
- Problems encountered by school buses (the bus contractors are fully supportive of reducing the speed limit).

Mr Griffiths stated that statistics from the Fire Service show 9 serious accidents since 2007. However these were not injury accidents and were therefore not in the statistics quoted in the report. He went on to say that if you stood either side of the warning signs 85% of vehicles are travelling at speeds greater than the prescribed limit of 50mph.

Mr Griffiths stated that a petition had been handed to Mr Alan Duncan MP in January 2010 and was disappointed that the views of the villagers had not been taken on board in the report. He asked that officers take the views of the villagers on board and seek to reduce the speed limit to 40mph.

Mr Lockyer confirmed that he had been a resident of Skeffington for 13 years and had been horrified to see vehicles trying to obtain access onto the A47. At that time the road was a trunk road and the Highways Agency did not consider it was necessary to improve the junction. He stated that neighbouring villages of Houghton and Glaston had speed limits of 40mph and 30mph respectively.

He went on to say that the statistics in the report do not reflect the full picture as they are only showing reported accident injury statistics.

Mr Lockyer confirmed that he was a serving fire officer and in his service of 28 years he had lost count of the number of incidents that he had attended on the A47. The A47 was one of the most dangerous stretches of road that he drives along in his work.

Mr Weston stated that one of his jobs was to make the community safer. Road traffic collisions are one of his major priorities. He went on to say that when looking at collision statistics he believed the Tilton area was disproportionately high in comparison to other areas. Speed is a major factor in road collisions with the A47 being a fast road with sensitive areas, with people who live along the A47 feeling threatened as to the quality of their life. He fully supported the Skeffington residents.

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport on the A47, Road Safety. The report was introduced by Mr Drummond with a copy filed with the minutes.

Mr Drummond explained that the report updates Members with the results of the road traffic analysis recently completed on the A47 through the whole of the Harborough District. He went on to say that the A47 had been a county road since 2004.

The Highways Agency had changed the speed limit through Skeffington to 50mph in 2002 with the addition of 2 automatic warning signs. Those signs had been replaced last year together with the addition of 2 extra ones.

All accidents will not be reflected in the statistics in the report. The County Council in common with other local authorities use the accepted guidelines of injury reported accidents made available by the police. Police records are consistent and provide an accurate guideline.

Mr Drummond confirmed that speed readings were undertaken covertly and when the traffic was free-flowing. He also stated that the County Council was reviewing the speed limits of all A and B roads and the comments of the residents of Skeffington would be considered when looking at the speed limit in Skeffington. Work is also currently being undertaken to improve the A47 around Skeffington.

On the issue of speed cameras the new Secretary of State has given clear guidelines that he is not supportive of speed camera installation.

Mr S J Galton CC confirmed that he had met with residents, petitioners, Mr Duncan and Mr Drummond on site in January. He was struck by the concerns of the residents, and could see the problems encountered by cars trying to pull out onto the busy A47

Although the 85 percentile shows that cars are travelling below the 50mph limit, residents believe that by reducing the speed limit to 40mph then the average speeds through Skeffington can also be reduced.

Mr Galton highlighted a decision made by the County Council in 1997 relaxing the 85 percentile criteria in order to assess the speed limit through settlements. However at the time the A47 was the responsibility of the Highways Agency and was therefore outside the scope of County Council's review of speed limits. He appreciated the conclusions in the report but asked officers to consider looking outside of the set criteria in order to reduce the speed limit in Skeffington to 40mph.

Dr Feltham confirmed his support to the comments of the speakers and Mr Galton.

Mr B Pain CC asked why the statistics differed in the report from the ones quoted by the Fire Service. Mr Drummond explained that the fire statistics include all accidents even ones where there were no injuries. The statistics used by the County Council (in line with other local authorities) use the ones provided by the police which are purely injury accident statistics.

Mr Drummond confirmed to Members the process behind the speed limit review at present being undertaken by the County Council. He agreed that the views of the speakers, residents and Members be taken into account when officers review the speed limit in Skeffington.

Mr Pain gave his support to the review of the speed limit in Skeffington. His views were echoed by Mr S Charlish BC who commented on the excellent presentation by the speakers.

Mrs E Roeber BC commented that the A47 is very dangerous and supported the comments made by her fellow Members.

Dr S Hill CC also gave her support. Mr Drummond confirmed that the annual report on accident statistics would come to the next Forum meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the report of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted; and
- (ii) that officers take on board comments made by residents/Members when reviewing the speed limit through Skeffington.

081. UPDATE ON 2010/11 MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMMES

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport on the 2010/11 maintenance and improvement programmes. The report was introduced by Mr Howe with a copy filed with the minutes. Mr Howe explained to Members that the 2010/11 improvements programme would be sent to Members shortly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted.

082. PROGRAMME OF TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS – CURRENT POSITION

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport on the programme of traffic regulation orders. The report was presented by Mr Howe with a copy filed with the minutes.

Mr Howe agreed to confirm when the Woodlands Market Harborough was to be in place to Mr Pain.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That the report of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted; and
- (ii) that officers confirm to Mr Pain when the Woodlands Market Harborough TRO is to be in place

083. ON-GOING ACTION STATEMENT

The Forum considered a report by the Director of Environment and Transport on the on-going action statement. A copy will be placed with the minutes.

The Chairman brought Members up to date with the one outstanding action.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report of the Director of Environment and Transport be noted.

084. ITEMS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

Mr Pain asked if officers could consider the poor state of the pavement from the medical centre in Market Harborough to the Commons car park. Mr Howe agreed to investigate and speak to Mr Pain.

085. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN HAS DECIDED IS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

086. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Chairman confirmed the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 15th September 2010 at 6.00pm.

087. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their attendance at the meeting.

26th May 2010

Chairman

6.00 – 7.20p.m.

Date