



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

MPC(23)20.08

Local Highways Matters

Bredfield Road

The options proposed in the SCC Highways were not financially viable. However one of the Transport Planning Managers has proposed an alternative solution which would not incur substantial utilities costs. He sent the reports and thoughts to the Keir design team to draw something up. Nothing has been received yet. SCC have agreed to cover the costs for this design work.

The Community Speedwatch Group is up and running. They are seeing some changes in behaviour from drivers whilst present and have noticed that traffic is a little bit calmer at certain times of day. As the daylight improves, they shall be changing the session times to look at the speeds of commuters which seems to be higher than for school times now. Currently, they are running two sessions per week but that might increase depending upon the availability of people.

Speed Indicator Devices

The original SID has been returned to the supplier as it stopped working. We are awaiting an update. Councillors are asked if they wish to relocate one of the SIDs that is currently on Melton Road.

Melton Road Crossings and Traffic Regulation Order (double yellow lines)

The legal order is with the Legal team being drafted – it was delayed as they were looking for an order that needs revoking near Old Maltings Approach. Once ready the notices will be put up and the 21 day consultation period will begin. No dates have been received. Cllr Nicoll continues to apply pressure on our behalf. There is no update on further vegetation removal at the Melton Hill crossing. The keep left kicker arrows have been marked on the road.

Wilford Bridge Road Speed Reduction

The proposal for reducing the speed limit on Wilford Bridge Road from 60pmh to 30mph has been considered by SCC and they have agreed 'That the 30mph speed limit extension is approved for the A1152 Wilford Bridge Road based on Paragraph 21 of the Speed Limit Policy.'

The next step is for a design estimate to be provided. Unfortunately, with the current contract ending and the new contractor starting in October, no new requests for design works are likely to be accepted as they won't be completed before 30 September 2023. However SCC has agreed to get a design estimate so we could be ready to submit to the new contractor in October if the Council agrees to the costs.

Bentwaters/Peninsula Traffic

The Bentwaters/Peninsula group of Parish councils was formed as a pressure group to raise concerns about levels of traffic in Suffolk particularly on the A1152 (Woods Lane/Wilford Bridge Road as it passes through Melton) which is the main arterial road between the A12 and the Peninsula. Parishes involved include Bromeswell, Ufford Campsea Ashe, Tunstall, Snape, Eyke and Wickham Market.

Concerns originally focussed on additional HGV traffic arising from the expansion of the Bentwaters Business Park. When Bentwaters was given Planning consent limits on vehicle entries were imposed bearing in mind the limitations of the road system. Over the years expansion has been allowed by ESC with little regard to such limits on the basis that economic development and jobs trumps the costs and nuisance of extra traffic. Furthermore little improvement has been made to the road system. Particular pressure points are Woods Lane/Melton crossroads, narrow roads through Eyke Village, the narrow turnings in Tunstall and alternative routes to Bentwaters via Snape. The group has met several time with Planning

Officers and Executive Members to express its concerns that too much HGV traffic is using unsuitable roads and that ESC's Local Plan does not provide any mechanism for improving the situation.

Eyke Parish Council (using Freedom of Information Legislation) obtained a copy of a report in 2019 commissioned by ESC and carried out by consultants WPS. The report suggested that based on traffic projections all the main junctions off the A12, including those connecting to the A1152, would within the Plan period to 2036, be operating in excess of capacity unless significant action was taken. The Local Plan does not include significant road improvements other than some improvements to a few roundabouts off the A12 (subject to funding being received from central government) and the bypass being paid for by the Sizewell development. Accordingly Eyke drafted a letter suggesting the Local Plan was deficient. It had been intended that a version of this letter would be signed jointly by all members of the group. However Eyke Council went ahead and submitted its own letter on these lines to the retiring Chief Executive Stephen Baker. The response to the "complaint" was dismissive in tone on the basis that there had been ample consultation on the Local Plan and that the time for that or for any judicial review had passed.

Representatives of the group have been told subsequently by officers from Planning and Highways that the report by WPS has been overtaken by events because traffic volumes on Suffolk roads peaked in 2016 and the effects of the pandemic and subsequent change in working patterns have stopped the traffic levels returning to 2016 levels, albeit that the reduction may reflect an increase in commercial vehicles offset by larger fall in private car traffic.

The Group has drafted a new letter (see appendix A) reiterating their ongoing concerns and seeking a meeting with the new Chief Executive Chris Bally to discuss these at "policy" rather than "officer" level. Councillors are asked if they wish to be a signatory to this letter.

Yarmouth Road

30mph roundels have been installed on Yarmouth Road and local residents are very grateful. A resident near the entrance to Ufford Park reported some near misses between pedestrians crossing between Ufford Park and footpath 27 and vehicles. They were advised to report it to the police. The Clerk has contacted Highways to ask if there is any signage that could be installed to warn motorists of pedestrians in the area. Cllr Nicoll is supportive of the proposal and might be able to part fund if the Council wishes to pursue this.

Love Woodbridge & Melton

A draft version was submitted on the 24th February as requested by Active Travel England (ATE). They have asked for final versions to be submitted by the 31st March, so the team is taking the opportunity to have the document professionally proof read. Once it's all finished they will share the final version with all stakeholders and publish on the website.

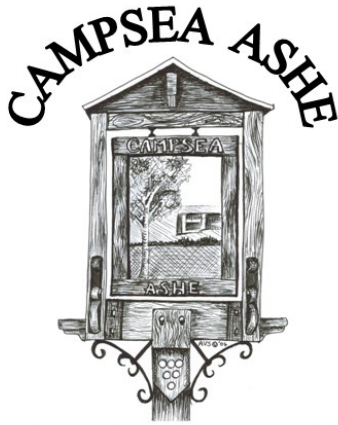
Regarding funding cuts that have been in the news recently, ATE have encouraged LAs to submit bids for elements of Mini Hollands in this year's ATF4 funding. So SCC took the decision to include bits of the Mini Holland scheme for one of our bids. These are focused on the southern end of Woodbridge because they need to do more work in the Melton area to evidence the proposals discussed.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note and comment on this report
- Decide if they wish to proceed with seeking costs for installing pedestrian warning signs on Yarmouth Road
- Decide if they wish to move the SID from Melton Road
- Decide if they wish to be a signatory on the letter to Chris Bally

Pip Alder
Clerk, Melton Parish Council
March 2023



PARISH COUNCIL

Chris Bally

CEO East Suffolk District Council

Riduna House

Station Road

Melton

Dear Mr Bally

PARISH CLERK

Klaus Fortmann

The Old Smithy, Eyke Rd

Campsea Ashe

Woodbridge

Suffolk,

IP13 0PY

1. I am writing on behalf of the Joint Parish Initiative (JPTI) a group of 8 Parish councils who have, over the last few years engaged with ESC and SCC to try and resolve serious traffic issues related to the Bentwaters/Rendlesham area. We are also signatories of an yet unsent letter of complaint to ESC, re the inception of the Local Plan 2020-2036, but we decided to first to seek a discussion with you, as the new Chief Executive of East Suffolk. We are seeking a meeting with you, to raise again the serious concerns we have, that the pace of development (both Commercial and Housing) is creating traffic issues beyond the capacity of East Suffolk's current and planned infrastructure.
2. As a result, the quality of life for Suffolk residents is being eroded and moves to arrest the effects of climate change held back. We feel these issues need to be considered at 'policy making" level rather than "officer level" within ESC and SCC, hence this approach to you.
3. We know ESC has in place a signed off Local Plan for the period from 2020 to 2036, but are also aware of growing concern across the country, that Local Plans have placed too much emphasis on development and too little on the actual demand and needs of local people. Recent statements from UK central government (M Gove) suggest, that it too is beginning to recognise this issue. This presents an opportunity for the senior team within ESC to take stock of progress on the Local Plan and consult further with local representatives. Many LA's have already paused their Local Plan, to adjust theirs to more locally appropriate parameters.
4. In the JPTI we have continually raised our concerns about the volume of traffic, particularly Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) using roads like the A1152 to and from the Deben Peninsula. We have had a number of meetings with representatives from Highways and Planning Departments and, whilst this co-operation is very welcome, the information provided there rather than answering our concerns, raises new ones. Some of these are summarised in the following paragraphs.

5. In 2019 a WSP Forecasting report commissioned by Highways identified that on predicted trends many major road junctions off the A12 would be operating at above capacity levels unless significant remediation was put in place. We understand, that surprisingly no particular action was taken following that report and, more seriously, it not being adequately reflected in the Local Plan. In recent meetings we even have been told, that it has in effect been superseded, because the pandemic and the subsequent "working from home culture" have seemingly at the moment reduced traffic volumes to below peak 2016 levels. However, we and the people we represent believe that traffic levels are rebuilding and will continue to do so. We think it is only a matter of time before the problems predicted by WSP become manifest. We therefore believe that the basis of the Local Plan is fundamentally and irrevocably damaging to our rural area - unless there is a feasible plan for dealing with this.
6. Furthermore, irrespective of any temporary fall in private car journeys, HGV traffic which causes more road damage, more risk to life and buildings and more pollution continues to rise. At our recent meeting Highways Department told us it has a target to reduce freight mileage by 15% by 2040 but could give no clear indication of how this would be done given the scale of development planned in Suffolk. How does this work with the expected impact of additional HGV movements (up to 700/day) linked to the whole hosts of energy projects in our confined area? Do you know how this is to be achieved or indeed what the baseline for measurement is?
7. We have restated many times, that vehicle movement limits for the Bentwaters Business Park were set with the express intention of limiting HGV traffic on this area's recognised very limited rural road infrastructure. However, it now seems that movements are no longer monitored, limits no longer enforced and planning permission (current or retrospective) readily given for further expansion, without any changes in the existing road infrastructure. Whilst we recognise economic growth being of importance, it should however not affect resident's in disproportionate manner, trumping sustainability and quality of life. This raises many questions, not least whether the negative impacts on our tourist industry {worth some £700m per annum} of such increased HGV traffic were factored into the equation?
8. We have mentioned particular areas of concern along the A1152. The two junctions/turns at Tunstall are a notorious accident blackspot with lorries repeatedly damaging properties as they try to make near impossible turns. Indeed, when the Sizewell team were shown this junction, they considered it unsuitable for HGV traffic and agreed no Sizewell traffic would use it. Even the Director of BEIS, when driven through Tunstall to a SizewellC related meeting, was amazed this location even being on a Lorry Route. So far, we have not been offered any feasible solution and wonder whether any could be achieved. We would be interested to know what in the opinion of ESC/SCC can actually be done there? Have any studies on this been commissioned?
9. Another concern is the Melton crossroads which has in the past been noted as operating at beyond capacity in peak periods. On Woods Lane alone there are 7,000 traffic movements every day including 400 HGV movements. We have been told the "Long-term Infrastructure Delivery Plan" includes a mitigation scheme to be delivered by 2036. However, we are told this could only be funded by section 106 levies on new developments in the Peninsula which would in themselves worsen the traffic problems. In any event, at the meeting it was said we should not "hold our breath" waiting for improvements to be delivered here. What should we say to our ratepayers about this rather absurd situation?
10. As noted, we believe it would be useful to all parties to discuss these concerns with you, as these are the issues our residents are increasingly raising with us and which are issues increasingly picked by other local communities. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Campsea Ashe PC Ed Berger

Melton PC Nigel Brown

Bromeswell PC Verity Brown

Ufford PC Nigel Smith

Rendlesham PC

Tunstall PC

Snape PC

Marlesford

Wickham Market

Hacheston