

JPCTCG

Minutes for the Joint Parish Councils Traffic Consultative Group

**Wednesday 26 September 2018 at 7.30 pm
at TMBC Offices, Committee Room,**

Present: Tom Tugendhat MP and Mr Matt Boughton, Cllr Mary McKinlay – Chair & Ryarsh PC, Sarah Huseyin – Secretary & Clerk to Ightham PC & Shipbourne PC, Cllr Tim Shaw, Cllr Steve Perry – Borough Green PC, Cllr Ron Moore – East Malling & Larkfield PC, Cllr Sarah Barker – Kings Hill PC, Cllr Philip Olden and Cllr Jenny Thorogood – Mereworth PC, Cllr David Stretton – Offham PC, Cllr Pat Darby – Platt PC, Cllr Keith Johnson – Plaxtol PC, Cllr David Gaunt – Trottiscliffe PC, Cllr Michael Wells – Watlington PC, Cllr Keith Bullard, Cllr Trudy Dean and Cllr Gwyneth Barkham – West Malling PC, Cllr Harry Rayner and Cllr Robin Betts – Wrotham PC, Mr Norman Kemp – NuVenture (21)

MEETING ADMIN – Chair - Cllr McKinlay, Ryarsh PC

- Apologies For Absence – Sarah Hohler, Mick Mearns and Sue Bell
- Minutes of Last Meeting – The Minutes from the meeting on 26th May 2018 were approved.
- Matters Arising From Minutes – to be dealt with during the meeting.
- Action Points From last Meeting – To arrange the next meetings
- New Members – Ryarsh, Trottiscliffe

TOM TUGENDHAT MP

Tom began by thanking the group for the invitation and for giving up their time to attend meetings.

M25 J5 – The campaign for J5 Slips has been going for 5 years now and the issue has been raised again with the Transport Secretary but there are some opponents in Sevenoaks. We need to keep pushing for this as it is right for commuters and for our transport infrastructure. Tom gave thanks to Tim Shaw for his support.

M20 - Progress report. There have been some successes with this project and the works have started. The motorway will have 4 lanes resurfaced between junctions 3 and 4 with a low noise surface. Large trees will be planted along the verges for sound insulation. Sound barriers will be installed between junctions 4 and 5 to minimise noise in residential areas but not all affected houses near to the M20 will currently benefit from this due to the readings are being taken from 200m. Tom is asking for new readings to be taken from a shorter distance away to address this in the vicinity of Ryarsh and Addington.

Railway franchise - Update and fast train to Cambridge. We will find out who has won the contract in October, but we currently have no information as the bidding process is private. The fast service from Maidstone East to Cambridge has now been postponed until December 2019. By the time that the service starts the timetabling should have been sorted as it will have been tested beforehand. Issues with the Thameslink tunnel will hopefully have been resolved as trains have to travel through on automatic so initially there will be some issues with the electronic signals.

Big Conversation – We are waiting for the results of the consultation but have received no feedback yet.

Ryarsh Quarry – KCC have reported that the meetings have been delayed for information gathering. It is likely to go to committee in November and that KCC will appoint an Inspector to take this on which means that there probably won't be any answers until November 2019. In the meantime, residents of Ryarsh are concerned about the house prices. Cllr McKinley reported that a leaflet had been produced by Borough Green Sandpit refuting everything put forward by the Ryarsh Protection Group.

Border crossings on the South Coast (Operation Stack and Operation Brock) – Since the pledge of £250m to provide a lorry park there has been no movement; this would have made a huge difference to the local community. An idea has been put forward for a car park on M26 but this is not thought to be a viable solution. There is a request that Highways England should speak to MP's urgently about Operation Brock (use of a contraflow to keep roads open) and it is evident that a solution is being looked at but we have no idea what.

School buses – Every year there is an issue at the start of term and it usually takes a few months to sort out. There have been discussions between KCC and the bus operators and there have already been some resolutions although there are still issues on other routes. If the buses can run properly, it will encourage other users, especially as car travel is increasingly difficult with the rise in fuel cost and increased traffic on rural routes. People were encouraged to let the bus operators know if there is an issue; communication is key in resolving bus travel and Norman Kemp has proved that this is the case with the recent resolutions in Kings Hill.

Questions.

Cllr Shaw asked about J5 Slips and expressed frustration that it had the support and financial backing from KCC and many parishes but had not been progressed. He asked what we could do to move the project forward. Tom thought that the time was right to raise the profile again and suggested that we needed to have the backing of Sevenoaks Parishes and the Sevenoaks District Council. Highways England will carry out whatever project there is funding for however they need to have an established scheme and a route in place; this will need backing from the local parishes through which the route is proposed. The advice was to get as much stakeholder support as possible so that we can make use of the pot of money when it becomes available from the Government. For now we should keep a watching brief but with the pressure building for local housing schemes under the Local Plan, we will need to have a modern road network to make them sustainable. **Cllr Shaw agreed that he would, make contact with Sevenoaks District to establish their position.**

Cllr Olden asked about the A228 in the light of the proposed expansion of residential properties as it is not fit for purpose. There have been some proposals from Kent Highways for minor revisions but how can we ensure that infrastructure is taken into account? Tom said that a working group had been set up to look at the A228, it should be essential that roads are set up before building starts as otherwise it will be unsustainable. There is clearly work to do for Kent Highways but support is needed by neighbouring Councils.

Cllr Dean said that she thought that the proposal for the J5 Slips had been accepted and adopted in the Prime Transport Document. Cllr Dean said that the A20 was a far

greater problem than A228 and was concerned that the new housing would exacerbate the problem. She also reported that the Office for National Statistics had recalculated growth and concluded that the housing figures had been over inflated by 20%; this figure equates to approx. 1000 houses that have been allowed for in the Local Plan that may not be necessary. Is the Government going to react to this so that there could potentially be relief in the pressure for the Borough to provide such a large number of houses? Tom said that he wasn't aware of this but would raise the question.

Cllr Rayner asked what questions Highways England were going to raise with regard to the M20 moveable barrier and thought that it was unlikely to be a solution.

Cllr Rayner asked Tom to clarify his stance on the Local Plan. Tom said that his job is to represent us nationally in parliament and that he has deliberately expressed no opinions on local planning issues as it is outside his mandate. Local Parishes are elected and have a separate mandate to comment on planning and for him to express an opinion would undermine the Parishes.

Cllr Rayner then asked whether the volume of houses required and the method of calculating housing quantities were appropriate and deliverable? Tom said that the question depended upon the point that Cllr Dean raised however during his surgeries one of the most common issues raised is the lack of affordable housing; local people cannot afford to live near to their families and schools. A general discussion ensued and points raised included issues with large scale building projects; the possibility of smaller building projects in smaller villages with the addition of improving local transport; guaranteeing local houses for local people; lack of building in the past which has caused prices to sky rocket; house builder inflating the housing need numbers.

Cllr Bullard asked whether there would be some joined up thinking between providing infrastructure and housing together. Tom said that the Housing Minister is looking into exactly that.

The lack of joined up thinking was mentioned with regard to the Thames Crossing; Highways England hadn't spoken to Kent Highways about the problems in Snodland and A228.

Cllr Shaw mentioned the Borough Green Gardens proposal; the selling point was the train line into Victoria however there is currently standing room only on the service so how can it accommodate additional passengers from a 3000 plus development, particularly as the number of carriage can't be increased? Tom said that lots of investment is needed and the bottleneck at Herne Hill needs to be looked at in order to improve the existing network. There is a meeting with Network Rail next week. Unfortunately the current situation will only make the rat runs worse as commuters will travel to less crowded stations.

Cllr McKinlay gave thanks to Tom and Matt.

MEMBERSHIP & FINANCES FOR 2018/9

The Clerk said that the remaining invoices had been circulated today and 17

parishes had agreed to join. We have around £700 in the account to carry forward. Payment goes to MAP as the JPCTCG doesn't have a separate bank account. Cllr Dean explained that MAP simply hold the money for the JPCTCG. They don't make any charge to the JPCTCG for having their funds in the account.

UPDATES ON THE FOLLOWING & DISCUSS AND AGREE ACTIONS

- Air Quality – Cllr Shaw said that there were concerns about areas with pollution and that Borough Green and Platt were looking into buying equipment to monitor particulate matter (PM) as only Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) has been monitored so far. PM is responsible for 1000 deaths across Kent each year yet there is no monitoring in place. The cost of the equipment is in the region of £7,000. Cllr Thorogood reported that in Mereworth the dust pollution is so bad that it is visible; a member of public had contacted TMBC to ask to carry out air sampling but it had been refused. Cllr Rayner said that it would be possible for the Parish Council to carry out their own monitoring and then take it to the Borough in the same way that local traffic can be privately monitored. He recommended Lesley Henry Associates. Cllr Shaw asked whether we should ask Yasmin Vawda to come and speak to us again. There is no clarity on what the statutory requirements are regarding air pollution. We have also asked the question about air quality and planning and have yet to receive a definitive answer. **JPCTCG to chase this up.** Cllr Rayner reported that Borough Green, Wrotham, Ightham and Platt has jointly appointed consultants to look into air quality with regard to the Borough Green Garden development.
- Phase III Kings Hill - Cllr Barker reported that the Parish Council are investigating hatching on A228 at Tower View and there will be investigations for traffic lights when phase 3 comes into effect. There have been some issues with the bus routes but it is being dealt with.
- Lower Thames Crossing – Cllr Dean said that she understood that the traffic would feed into M2 from junction 2 and that the bulk of the traffic would go over the bridge and feed into the various routes off the roundabout. It is understood that Bluebell Hill will be upgraded but there are no junction arrangements in places yet; we need more information.
- A20 Corridor - Nothing to report.
- Gatwick Airport - Cllr Barker said that she had received some information and would forward it.
- Speedwatch - Nothing to report.
- Local Plan – It was recommended that Parishes respond to S19 Consultation as soon as it comes out and comment on the local infrastructure. Cllr Rayner said that you can state that you wish to produce expert evidence and this will give you a right to make representations. Use professional experts to counter the views of the local authority. Cllr Barker recommended attending the TMBC meetings and KALC meeting for further information on the Local Plan. Cllr Betts said that we need to apply pressure as regards the infrastructure as no services are planned to go with the housing. It is best for individual Parishes to make their own representations rather than one group wide representation; each parish has their own issues and each of these issues will need to be considered as part of the consultation process.

IDENTIFY & PRIORITISE FUTURE JPCTCG TOPICS

- Gatwick Expansion
- Thames Crossing
- Rail Franchise
- Buses – Cllr McKinlay said that there was an issue with bus passes in Ryarsh whereby the passes cannot be used until 9.30am but the service ran at 9.25am; the following service wasn't until much later and it was discouraging people from using the service. Norman Kemp said that some services had been altered to accommodate this but he had faced criticism from other

Parishes further down the route as buses were passing through later. The bus pass is a government scheme and the bus operators do not get the reimbursement until the passes are swiped, if they let people on before 9.30am, they do not receive the reimbursement.

Cllr Barker suggested that we get an update on the Big Conversation from Philip Lightowler. Some of the suggested schemes are being trialled.

Norman Kemp reported that some of the buses had been retrofitted with Euro 5 which will be an improvement to air quality.

AOB & NEXT MEETINGS

26th November – The Clerk will approach Kent Highways about a speaker.

MEETING CLOSE 9.25pm

DRAFT