



**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**LOCAL COMMITTEE IN EPSOM & EWELL**  
**2 March 2009**

**MEMBER QUESTIONS**

**Question 1                      Cllr Neil Dallen**

**Re: Traffic Lights in the centre of Epsom**

There are still many occurrences of 'near misses' when drivers do not stop at the crossing between Ashley Centre and the Post Office.

On Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> I personally witnessed someone nearly getting run over. I politely went over to the car and asked him why he didn't stop and he said that he was watching the lights at the cross roads. He was in the outside lane (Ashley Centre side).

Two other incidents were reported at the Neighbourhood Police meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> February and there have been many others that I am told about.

The latest action of 'shielding the lights' is NOT solving the problem and we need to find a solution before someone does get seriously injured or killed.

What action is going to be taken and when?

**Officer Response:**

The recent changes to the traffic signals at the Spread Eagle in Epsom have improved east bound traffic flows in The High Street by allowing more vehicles to turn right into Ashley Road at every cycle of the lights.

Following these changes concerns were raised that drivers might fail to stop at a red light at the pedestrian crossing outside the Ashley Centre because they were looking through the junction at the green signals at the Spread Eagle. Louvres were installed in December 08 to deter this behaviour and their effectiveness is being monitored.

The traffic signals can occasionally be obscured by high vehicles meaning motorists in the middle lane fail to see them if they are not paying attention, however this has always been the case at this crossing (and is not uncommon elsewhere). There has only been one injury accident involving a pedestrian near the crossing outside the Ashley Centre in the last 4 years. This is a very low figure given the volume of traffic and pedestrian movement.

Surrey Highways have an on going programme of work to improve all types of movement around Epsom Town Centre. In addition proposals are being developed with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council as part of the Epsom Town centre Action Plan. This location will be kept under review as part of this process.

**Question 2**                      **C Cllr Jan Mason**

**Gritting – Longmead and Blenheim Road during bad weather recently**

During the heavy snow earlier this month, SCC did not grit Longmead and Blenheim Roads. On enquiring why this had not happened, Epsom Coaches was informed that they were 'D' roads, they were not on the list for gritting. It is vital that these 2 roads are kept clear as they service Epsom Coaches - Quality Line Buses, the Recycling Centre, and the Borough's Operational Services Depot - all extremely important to the residents of this Borough.

Could the Committee write to the Head of Surrey Highways instructing them to ensure that these 2 roads are on the list to be gritted in future, and that all bus routes are reviewed?

**Officer Response:**

Surrey County Council operates 35 front line gritters, with ploughs when necessary, on an extensive, predetermined 'precautionary salting' network in the county. The winter maintenance operation for the Epsom area is operated out of our depot at Kingswood.

In advance of the snow event in early February the precautionary salting network that includes Longmead Road and major bus routes had been treated twice, at 19:00 hours on Sunday and 04:00 hours on Monday. Additionally the roads had also been treated on Saturday and with the intervening dry period some residual salt would also have remained from this treatment.

The extent and duration of the snow coverage was extreme, a similar event had not been recorded in the county since at least 1996. It is appreciated that mobility was restricted and difficulty experienced by many highway users including those of the emergency services, but this was a national event and not one restricted to Surrey.

From the onset of the snow our contractor was operating a 24 hour operation on the precautionary salting network and by Wednesday only spot clearance was being undertaken with the majority of resources being put into the clearance of the secondary network and strategic pavements and footways. In undertaking this operation our priority was to first open up the "A" road network before cascading down to the other important roads on the precautionary salting network.

During the period 6 to 13 February precautionary salting was only being undertaken on the "A" road network due to a severe shortage in salt stocks, however the full precautionary salting network is now in operation.

Surrey 's Asset Planning Group, who manage the provision of countywide Winter Service activities, are currently reviewing all aspects of the service with a view to implementing any appropriate and agreed changes for the 09/10 winter season which will start at the end of October 2009. This review will include an assessment of current bus routes.

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**Question 3                      Cllr Michael Arthur**

**Re: Traffic congestion - Epsom Town Centre**

We are all aware of the traffic congestion within Epsom Town Centre and I wish to draw attention to one aspect of what I consider a very unsuitable order of allowing a Bus Stand marked bay to be provided to High Street East (southbound).

This section of the A24 takes a very high volume of traffic not only along the A24 itself from Ewell but also joining traffic from the A2022 (Upper High Street) and Church Street.

Allowing busses to “Lay over” on a very busy primary route taking 50% of the road lane width at that point is nonsense.

I wish to ask –

1. Was the Bus Stand installed under officer delegation?
2. Can early consideration be given to delete the Bus Stand in this location and replace elsewhere where there will be minimal effect on traffic flow, e.g. relocation to existing bus stand facilities in one way section of Station Approach?”

**Officer Response:**

The southbound bus stop in High Street (East) used to be both a bus stop and a bus stand. Due to the number of bus movements the bus stand was moved to a location further west along the High Street, near the Abbey Building Society. The changes were endorsed by the Passenger Transport Section, The Police and the Bus Operators as standing buses obscured visibility to the pedestrian crossing.

The 460 service using the stand is usually stopped for about 10 mins every half hour but the bus stop is in constant use, meaning there is very little time when the inside lane is free from buses either standing or on route. Waiting / loading restrictions allow vehicles to load between 9.30 and 4.30 and there are often vehicles parked in the nearside lane doing this. Consequently changes to the bus stand are unlikely to make any difference to the flow of traffic in the High Street. Surrey County Council's Passenger Transport Team have recently looked at the route of the 460 service to see if there are any changes that could be made to avoid the High Street but letters from customers have confirmed that the service is highly used and convenient. The Passenger Transport Group therefore feel the service should continue as existing. The bus Operators would object to relocating the bus stand as the 10 min break would be used up traveling around the one way system.

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**Question 4                      Cllr Anna Jones**

**Re: Burgh Heath Road – Parking Bays and pot holes**

[A] Could the parking bays on Burgh Heath Road have spacings painted onto them so drivers are encouraged to park in a way that would allow the maximum number of vehicles?

[B] What is the plan for repairing the pot holes on Burgh Heath Road

**Officer Response**

[A] This can be investigated, however it may not increase the number of vehicles that can park in the space available if most of the residents have small cars.

[B] When potholes are reported they are inspected and repaired within set timescales depending on their location and size. The recent cold weather and snow has caused more potholes to appear and these are being repaired as quickly as possible, with additional resources being directed to this activity.

**Question 5                      Cllr Anna Jones**

**Re: Downs Hill Road safety issues**

What progress is being made on ways of making Downs Hill Road safer for pedestrians and residents?

**Officer Response:**

An investigation is being carried out to see if bollards can be placed in the already narrow southern footway of Downs Hill Road to prevent vehicles driving on it. This will entail digging trial holes in the footway to locate the best position for bollards in order to avoid utility company cables and ducts. It is possible that there will not be any suitable locations. The trial holes will be completed during March. It is also planned to introduce one or two passing places in the parked cars on the northern side of the road using double yellow lines as part of the phase 4 waiting restriction review. This should also prevent vehicles mounting the southern footway to get past each other.

**Question 6                      Cllr Anna Jones**

**Re: Rifle Butts Alley improvement**

What can be done to improve the condition of parts of Rifle Butts Alley? In particular the areas, which become almost impassable in wet weather because of the mud?

**Officer Response:**

Rifle Butts Alley is a public bridleway and as such is used by horses and cyclists as well as pedestrians and is therefore likely to be muddy at times. However, compared to other bridleways in the County it is in good condition and it is not planned to carry out surface improvements at present due to budgetary pressures.

This bridleway is on an annual vegetation clearance programme so it does get cut automatically once each summer. In addition felling and clearing of all the dead elms and crown lifting all along the section between Treadwell Road and Burgh Heath as well as drainage and surfacing works on the section south of Treadwell Road to the Downs were carried out a few years ago.