



## OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

### PUBLIC QUESTIONS

3 MARCH 2010

#### **Question from Edward Bennett For the Westcott in Bloom Committee**

#### **The section of pavement between Westcott House and Lince Lane on the north side of the A25, Westcott**

This pavement sees heavy usage by people, including young children and mothers with prams and push chairs walking between Westcott and the Village Sports Ground, the offices of UNUM and Dorking

On the inside of the pavement is a wall which originally defined the pavement width as 1.3M, but following years of neglect, the shrub growth on the bank and weed growth in soil washed down from the bank on to the pavement has reduced this to 60cm in places, so that it is now impossible for two people to pass without one walking into the main road. The danger is exacerbated by the narrowness of the road at this point so that when two large vehicles pass the near side one is forced to within centimetres of the pavement edge so that even a single pedestrian is in danger of being be struck by a truck wing mirror

This very dangerous situation has been brought to the attention of the County Council's Highways department for some time, culminating in a site meeting in September last year arranged by our County Councillor Hazel Watson, Highways representative Wally Howe and members of the Westcott in Bloom committee. Since then no response has been received despite frequent requests for information.

Please could The County Council Highways Department confirm that road safety, especially as it relates to pedestrians, is given the highest priority when allocating funds and if so when this essential work will be carried out.

**Response from Local Highway Manager**

Following the meeting in 2009 arranged by County Councillor Hazel Watson with Mr Edward Bennett and a Surrey Highways Maintenance Engineer, it was agreed that funding was needed to reduce the foliage overgrowth and to side out the footway next to the wall. It was considered that mechanical flailing would be the most appropriate method to deal with the foliage. It was also considered that manual labour would be most appropriate to side out and clear the footway.

As the location is narrow and adjacent to the A25 carriageway, work could be hazardous and correct traffic management would be essential. Temporary traffic signals would probably be necessary, which would add greatly to the cost. Funding has not yet been allocated for this work although discussions with a suitable contractor have been held.

It is of course confirmed that road safety for all highway users, including pedestrians, is given the highest priority when works are considered by Surrey Highways. Regarding the works to improve safety on the A25 between Westcott and Lince Lane, I confirm that a cost estimate and funding is being sought, having regard to the many priorities for safety work that exist in current circumstances.

**Question from Rosie Norris**

At the last meeting of MVDC's Access Group on 26 January SCC Highways Authority notified the Group it would no longer be able to attend Group meetings in the future. Issues relating to dropped kerbs (or lack of), narrow pavements, obstructions (from parked cars, barriers to footpaths) are a significant part of MVDC's Access Group's considerations and we rely totally on HA input for any improvements in these areas. It's not going too far to say that lack of HA input will radically undermine the purpose of the Group. Progress in these areas has already been severely restricted by very limited HA attendance during 2008/9.

I recognise that funding/time is at a premium - are there other ways HA could continue (1) to have an in-put to the Group and (2) bring about road/footpath accessibility improvements? Could the Group meet at the HA office for example or a set period of time be allocated to two-way email communication between HA and the LAF?

**Response from Local Highway Manager**

Surrey Highways appreciates the work of the Access Group in relation to the maintenance and improvement of the public highways. Officers have not ruled out attending future meetings of the Access Group but did decline a recent invitation to give a presentation on highway matters relating to disability. The Local Highways Manager thanked the Chairman of the Access Group for the kind invitation and commented that he would like to go along to the meeting and other meetings held by many other organisations in Mole Valley. Unfortunately, commitments for the many other highways matters in Surrey rarely leave time for officers to attend such meetings. We try to be consistent in our attendance policy and generally would attend such a meeting only if a County Councillor requested officer support on technical issues associated with a specific highway improvement scheme or issue.

The Chairman of the Access Group, Anne Howarth, kindly met with Surrey Highways officers in August last year to review the Group's list of accessibility issues related to highways in Mole Valley. This was a useful meeting and the Local Highways Manager has confirmed that officers should be able to attend similar meetings from time to time. The next meeting has been arranged for 16th March 2010 with the Chairman of the Mole Valley Access Group.

Regarding the suggestion for the Access Group to meet at the HA office, it is probably more effective for officers to meet with just the Chairman of the Group and perhaps one other member. The meeting is of course open to any County Councillor who would like to attend.

Regarding the suggestion for allocating a set period of time to two-way email communication between HA and the LAF, Access Group members are welcome at any time to use the defect reporting facility on the County Council's website and send email communications to the east Surrey Highways email address [east Surreyhighways@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:east Surreyhighways@surreycc.gov.uk). Emails are recorded on a customer communication database and allocated to an appropriate officer for response.

#### **Question from Ray Adams**

Would Mole Valley be better served by having its own resources to restore our roads to the satisfaction of all our ratepayers?

For example, an "in house" repair contractor, which could deal with the most urgent pot holes in the Mole Valley area. This could help preserve the roads, prevent serious injury, damage to vehicles, and save money from unnecessary claims.

#### **Previous letter send to Head of Surrey Highways: (for information only)**

This letter is to report to you about the state of our roads, and in particular the single-track road called Abinger Common Road, which connects Hollow Lane to Abinger Bottom. From the house called Green Pastures to Hollow Lane is about half mile long and now has 27 potholes, which we list in centimetres, the last measurement represents the depth of the potholes:

*60x30x20	50x50x2	40x35x5	40x30x5	60x30x5
50x30x5	40x50x5	90x70x5	60x50x4	*100x75x10
*70x70x15	*90x70x12	60x40x8	60x25x4	*90x60x10
*120x70x12	*110x100x10	*100x70x10	40x40x7	30x20x3
*100x40x10	43x35x5	60x30x4	60x46x5	*80x100x10
50x50x4	40x50x7			

The 10 potholes marked (asterisk and bold type) are deadly, and recently a woman suffered personal injury visiting Abinger Bottom. The danger means "accidents waiting to happen". Most of these potholes were marked (in red) for attention sometime in the autumn, but never repaired. Our neighbours have made repeated telephone calls about the state of our road. If this continues without remedial action, the outcome could be serious for us all, with damage to vehicles, and injury to people.

Help us now - please!

**Response from Local Highways Manager**

The resources to repair roads in Mole Valley are sourced from a contract providing delivery of highway service functions across five districts and boroughs in the east of Surrey. Resources are varied in type and quantity depending on demand for work to be done and funding available. Coordination of resources across a larger area than just one district provides opportunities to benefit from economies of scale and better flexibility.

More resources have been deployed to repair the roads in Mole Valley since the deterioration caused by the damaging effects of the winter event from late December 2009 to mid January 2010. An indication of what is being achieved with this extra resource is the 865 urgent defects that were repaired in the east of the County in the first six weeks of this year, which is as many as in the first three months of 2009.

Urgent defects, known as Category 1, should be dealt with quickly, and within 24 hours if possible. Quick fill methods are used to deal with the current high demand for such urgent reactive refilling of potholes. However, planned patching and surfacing is also being carried out to provide better and more permanent repairs. There are 25 gangs at present in the east of the County undertaking a mixture of planned and reactive highway defect repairs.

The carriageway potholes in Abinger Common Road have been identified for repair and should be completed by 5<sup>th</sup> March. A highway inspection last year recorded a number of defects for repair but resources were not available to carry out the required work. With the helpful information provided by Mr. Adams, a further inspection last week resulted in the identification of urgent and more potholes for repair.