

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE IN SPELTHORNE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 10th October 2005 at The Bishop Wand School Conference Centre, Laytons Lane, Sunbury on Thames

County Council Members:

Mrs Denise Saliagopoulos (Chairman)*

Mr Victor Agarwal*

Mr Ian Beardsmore*

Mr Laurie Burrell*

Mrs Carol Coleman*

Mr Frank Davies*

Ms Denise Turner*

*** = present**

(All references to items refer to the Agenda for the meeting)

25/05

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

26/05

MINUTES (Item 2)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2005 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

27/05

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

Councillor Burrell declared a personal interest in respect of item 10 as his wife is a Friend of the Bradbury Centre. Councillors Agarwal and Saliagopoulos declared personal interests in item 8 as members of Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee.

28/05

PETITIONS (Item 4)

The Area Transportation Director reported that three petitions had been received; one signed by 102 residents of Fordbridge Road, Ashford concerning excessive speeds and the number of heavy goods vehicles using the road and requesting traffic measures to stop speeding traffic and to enforce the lorry ban; a second signed by 152 residents of Wheatsheaf Lane and Penton Avenue, Staines requesting extensive tree surgery on two trees on the junction of the roads and; a third signed by 75 residents in Manor Lane, Sunbury concerned about the speed of vehicles and calling for traffic calming initiatives for the road. The Committee noted the proposed action by the Area Transportation Director in respect of the first two petitions and that a report on the third would be submitted to the 12th December meeting.

29/05 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME (Item 5)

No Members' questions were received.

30/05 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (ITEM 6)

Mr. Kidd asked a question about the maintenance of trees in Rookery Road, Staines. Mr. Carruthers asked a question about the possibility of the Local Committee funding more carved trees. Mr. Watts asked questions about the works on the Walton Cycle track, the school crossing signs in Manygate Lane, Shepperton, Shepperton High Street slip road and flooding in Green lane, Shepperton. Mr. Hawks asked questions about the progress of the Brett Aggregates application for an extension of their existing licence, Walton Lane, Shepperton Cycle path, the time taken to repair speed warning signs and Walton Bridge. Mr Sider asked questions about the maintenance of flowerbeds in Walton Lane, Shepperton, the replacement of chevron directional signs at the Shepperton War Memorial roundabout, traffic signs in Walton Bridge Road and the cost of the implementation of the shared pedestrian cycle lane in Walton Lane, Shepperton. The questions and answers are set out in the annex to these minutes.

31/05 SURREY POLICE DIVISIONAL COMMANDER CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT RICHARD MORRIS PRESENTATION (ITEM 7)

The Chairman welcomed Richard Morris to the meeting who gave a presentation on partnership working, resources, operational initiatives, performance and challenges. Members were particularly pleased to note the increase in Neighbourhood Support Officers, Police Community Support Officers and Police Constables. The Committee commended Surrey Police's efforts to redress some of the loss of police resources after Spelthorne transferred from the Metropolitan Police to Surrey Police and in acknowledging that whereas Spelthorne had been one of the lowest crime areas in the Met it was the highest in the area covered by the Surrey Police.

In response to a question from Mr. Beardsmore the Chief Superintendent advised that the traffic division were reviewing how police bikes were deployed at times when traffic became very congested at Sunbury Cross after an accident on the M3 or M25. Ms Turner requested that the Police raise their profile in parts of Ashford which were currently experiencing anti social behaviour problems and the Chief Superintendent undertook to raise this with the Borough Inspector. In relation to the statistical information presented the Committee requested that in future absolute numbers be given thus giving more meaning to the percentages quoted.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Morris for attending the meeting and congratulated the Police for the very positive efforts that were being made to tackle crime and community safety issues in the Borough.

(The meeting was adjourned from 8.20pm to 8.25pm to enable Mr Morris to answer questions from a member of the public about the level of turnover of police personnel in Spelthorne and the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme for Spelthorne).

32/05 HEATHROW AIRPORT INTERIM MASTER PLAN CONSULTATION (ITEM 8)

The Chairman welcomed David Maxwell, Planning Officer.

Resolved:

That the following comments be conveyed to the Executive Member for Transportation for inclusion in the County Council's response to the consultation:

1. That mixed modes operations should not be supported.
2. That the surface access proposals were inadequate, in particular with the increased use of the M25 to access the airport.
3. Road user charging for roads around the airport would be detrimental to Spelthorne residents.
4. The economic case had not been demonstrated.
5. The serious negative environmental impact on the Borough needed to be mitigated.
6. The location package for residents within the 63db noise contour would be inadequate.
7. A proper assessment of Terminal 5 on the Borough would need to be undertaken to be able to comment in detail on plans for the future expansion of Heathrow Airport.

33/05 LOCAL COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME (ITEM 9)

The addition of a report on Manor Lane, Sunbury – Petition was noted for the 12th December 2005 meeting agenda.

Resolved:

The Forward programme, as amended, be noted.

34/05 MEMBERS FUNDS (ITEM 10 AND SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT)

Resolved:

1. The funding approved under delegated authority as set out in paragraphs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 be noted.
2. A contribution of £2,500 towards a Youth Worker at The Matthew Arnold School be made to be drawn equally from the allocations to individual Members.
3. Consideration of whether to make a contribution of £10,000 towards financing new trees be deferred to the next meeting at which a fuller report on this proposal would be submitted.

4. Consideration of the application from Shopmobility be deferred to the next meeting pending further information on the outcome of Shopmobility's other funding efforts.
5. A contribution of £2,500 towards the refurbishment of Stanwell Village Hall be made from the capital allocation.
6. The Area Director in consultation with the Chairman be delegated authority to approve a grant of £2,500 from the capital allocation to Laleham Cricket Club subject to the Club raising the balance of £2,5000 needed for the refurbishment and providing a satisfactory statement of the community use of the ground and facilities.
7. A contribution of £2,500 be made from the capital allocation towards The Swan Sanctuary.
8. £250 from Mr. Burrell's allocation be made to remove a tree in Shepperton.

35/05

B378 CHURCH ROAD, ASHFORD AND D3314 THAMESIDE LALEHAM – WAITING RESTRICTIONS (ITEM 11)

Mrs Coleman advised the Committee that she was unable to support the recommendation until she had received feedback from her constituents.

Resolved:

1. Subject to consultation, the County Council advertise their intent to change the waiting restrictions as detailed in paragraph 2.1
2. Subject to any objections being received as part of the advertisement proposals, the County Council introduce the new restrictions.

36/05

SPELTHORNE CYCLE STRATEGY (ITEM 12)

Mrs Coleman supported the principle of joining up the routes but expressed concern about some of the ways proposed for this. Mrs Coleman read out extracts from a statement xxxxx(I am getting this from Carol).

Mr. Burrell referred to the photograph on the front of the Cycle Strategy and described the posts along that particular road as hideous. He did not support a mixed mode form of cycle track and asked that the Surrey Association for the Visually Impaired be consulted.

Resolved:

The Spelthorne Cycle Strategy as set out in Annex A be approved.

37/05

NEW PARK ROAD, ASHFORD – PROPOSED SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT MEASURES (ITEM 13)

Resolved:

That New Park Road be removed from the list of schemes being assessed for traffic management measures.

38/05 LOCAL ALLOCATION 2005/ (ITEM 14)

The Area Transportation Director undertook to inform Mr. Agarwal of the number of bus stops being improved.

Resolved:

1. The third phase of funding as indicated on Annex A be approved.
2. Delegated authority be given to the Area Transportation Director and Local Transportation Manager in consultation with Chairman and Vice Chairman and Divisional Member as appropriate to agree expenditure of the Local Allocation.

39/05 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12th December 2005 at 7.00pm at The Jubilee Centre, Thamesmead School, Shepperton.

40/05 HIGHWAY TREE MAINTENANCE (Item 16)

Resolved:

To note a risk assessment-based schedule that was currently used to prioritise arboricultural maintenance works in relation to available budgets.

As this was the last meeting which Mr. Alan Harvey would be attending the Chairman thanked him for his contribution to the service and the Local Committee and wished him well in his new position.

The meeting which commenced at 7pm ended at 10.06pm

Chairman.....

**Annex to the Minutes of the SCC Local Committee in
Spelthorne held on 10th October 2005**

QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC

Mr. Norman Kidd asked the following question:

"I live in Rookery Road, Staines where the trees have not been properly maintained for many years and are now seriously over height relative to the width of the road. For the past two or three years residents have been promised that pruning would be undertaken but as each financial year passes the work has been shelved. We continue to endure the problems of excessive leaf fall including, blocked gutters, drains and slippery pavements, leaving council tax payers in general to bear the cost of removing tons of leaves each year. Some houses are completely overshadowed, often causing street lights to stay on and necessitating householders to leave house lights on during the day. Neglect of responsibilities over the years by your authority and previously Spelthorne Council has allowed the trees to grow out of control with root structures spreading towards houses, lifting paving, damaging drains and giving the potential for other structural problems in time. Had the trees been properly pruned on a regular basis, costs would not have escalated to the significant sums probably now involved. When will SCC undertake its responsibilities and properly maintain these trees?"

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

"It is estimated that there are around 19,000 highway trees within the Spelthorne area of Surrey, a large proportion of which have not been properly maintained for many years. In the light of extremely limited funds for this financial year a risk assessment based priority points system has been introduced to grade tree issues according to need.

Trees that are dead, dying or potentially dangerous obviously have to be attended to as a top priority, as do those that are subject to insurance claims relating to physical damage to property. Also a high priority is given to trees that may be obscuring CCTV cameras and thus impinge on crime and disorder issues and those where road safety is compromised, such as the need to keep clear sight lines at road junctions.

There are 19 mature trees in Rookery Road, comprising mainly London Plane, with some Lime and Hornbeam species. These trees have reached an average height of around 18 metres, but have not been properly managed for a number of years. It is estimated that it would cost between £6,000 and £10,000 to bring them back into a reasonable state. Based on the priority system, the trees in Rookery Road receive a low points rating, and it is therefore not possible within the current budget to authorise expenditure on this work at present. However, the location will be kept on the schedule until such time as finance is available to carry out the work."

Mr. John Carruthers asked the following question:

“May I ask why we have not had more carved trees being produced such as the much feted one produced last year in Springfield Grove, Sunbury? This one hit the headlines in the local papers and also featured in various magazines such as the Surrey Monocle and people have even rung me up asking where it is so that they can pay a visit. Many compliments for an imaginative initiative from this Committee. At a recent Local Committee meeting there were comments of perhaps wasting public money on this art, so please therefore will you state

- (a) How much the Springfield Grove carving actually cost?
- (b) How much instead it would have cost anyway to have had to remove the tree and restore the ground in the usual way?
- (c) How much each of the works of art that now adorn Staines cost on average?
- (d) Compared to Staines, how many works of art are sited in other parts of the Borough.

Here is an opportunity, very cheaply, to improve the street scene and to bring art to those Borough tax payers who do not live in Staines, and I ask that more such carvings are provided. May I therefore ask that it becomes standard procedure within the Borough that all dead trees first be considered for carving, and that actual removal with grubbing up of roots is only considered as a last resort?”

The Area Director gave the following answer:

“The cost of the sculpture was £1400 and for the arboricultural work £550 totalling £1950 funded from the Members funds allocation during the last financial year. The cost of removal would be the same. I am unable to tell you the cost of the works of art in Staines or how many there are in other parts of the Borough as these are not the responsibility of Surrey County Council. Mr Carruthers could approach his Borough Councillor concerning the works of art which are the Borough’s responsibility”.

Robert Watts, Shepperton Residents Association asked the following question:

“Walton Lane Cycle track - Why has this been held up for so long and why was there a partial safety audit carried out before the works are carried out?”

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

“As part of the work to introduce a shared use cycle / pedestrian facility along Walton Lane the footway was widened to 2.5m. At this stage we were contacted by the police and local residents due to their concerns regarding the width of the carriageway and that it was too narrow for larger vehicles to safely negotiate those vehicles parked outside the properties on the northern side. An intermediate safety audit of the existing conditions was therefore

arranged to independently determine if there were any highway safety implications.

The resulting safety audit recommended that

1. Hatched markings be provided to guide drivers away from parked vehicles. Remove the existing advisory cycle lane markings on the carriageway as they are no longer required. Cut back the hedge on the northern side.

and/or

2. reduce the footway width to 2.0m within the area of concern.

The owner of the hedge has been requested to cut it back to the limit of the highway and our contractor has been asked to carry out the white lining works as detailed above.

The signing and road markings required to legally allow the use of the footpath by cycles will not be erected until the above work has been completed and monitored for a period of one month. Such works may be wasted if substantial changes, as detailed in point 2, are found to be required at a later date.”

Robert Watts, Shepperton Residents Association asked the following question:

“School Crossing Signs Manygate Lane - Why did it take months to get the electricity supply to illuminate these signs? How does this delay relate to Ringway’s Key Performance Indicators?”

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

“There were several issues concerning the contractor’s co-ordination of the project and the supply of electricity to the “Wigwag” school warning signs, which resulted in an unacceptable delay in bringing the units into operation. This matter has been discussed by senior management from both the contractor and the County Council to make sure such a situation does not happen again.

With regard to Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and their impact upon this piece of work. The order was not subject to KPI scrutiny and did not therefore affect the KPI results at that time. The reason it was not recorded related to the process at the time, which only provided for auditing of 10% of works costing under £5k.”

Robert Watts, Shepperton Residents Association asked the following question:

“Shepperton High Street slip road - Why have double height kerbs been erected making it difficult to get out of the car when parking in the slip road?”

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

“Over 10 years ago work was undertaken in Shepperton High Street to resolve parking problems within the service roads, where vehicles parked on both sides of the service caused obstructions other traffic and pedestrians.

In order to resolve this problem the services roads were widened, resulting in the narrowing of the island between the service road and the main carriageway. This required the removal of trees and a suitable retaining system to be constructed adjacent to the main carriageway. That retaining system comprised of two kerbs set at a height that allowed a normal car door to be opened when parked against it. Care was taken to make sure this arrangement was still useable for on street parking, with alternative provision elsewhere in the High Street and its service roads against normal kerbs.

No other concerns about this arrangement have been raised in recent years and it is still regarded as adequate and fit for purpose.”

Robert Watts, Shepperton Residents Association asked the following question:

“Flooding in Green Lane - The gully pods are holding water and water sits on the carriageway. The Transportation department has advised that these will be checked again in the winter but what about in the meantime when the water will continue to sit on the carriageway?”

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

“There are 53 gullies in Green Lane Shepperton, which were last cleaned in February 2005. Of these, 7 gullies were highlighted as having blocked outlets and/or not running properly.

Due to a revised programme this financial year, the annual cleaning will take place in Green Lane this month (October). If there are problems highlighted following this cleansing, we shall put these on a list of works to be further investigated when resources allow.”

Mr. Phil Hawkes asked the following question:

“What is the exact progress of Brett Aggregates application for an Extension to their existing Temporary Concrete Crushing Plant in Littleton Lane, Shepperton. I understand that they have appealed against the original refusal. Also, was this appeal ever publicly announced?”

The Area Director gave the following answer:

“Local residents, including all those who made comments on the application, have been notified by letter that an appeal has been lodged, together with Spelthorne Borough Council and all other consultees.

The appeal is being dealt with at a local hearing, at present we do not have a date for this. When we do a location will be found and booked and a further letter will go out. Whether or not a notice is put in the local press depends upon the Planning Inspectorate. If they consider it sufficiently important then they will tell us to, in this respect we act as their agent. They may instead ask for site notices to be displayed, or neither, relying on the letter that goes out in all cases.

At the moment we are waiting on the Planning Inspectorate to offer us and the Appellant a date for the Inquiry.”

Mr. Phil Hawkes asked the following question:

“When will the new Walton Lane, Shepperton Cycle path be completed to the correct and safe design. Work stopped several months ago with part of the pavement / raised cycle way being too wide to enable safe residents parking and the passing of vehicular traffic”.

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

“Please refer to the answer given to Robert Watts, Shepperton Residents Association, on the same subject.”

Mr. Phil Hawkes asked the following question:

“Why does it take so long for repairs to speed warning signs to be carried out. Local residents have campaigned for many years for something to be done to control the ever growing problem of speeding traffic and when we finally have something which acts as a partial deterrent to some drivers, they are out of action more than in action. The 2 in Walton Bridge Road Shepperton have been out of action for several weeks now (one of them for months in fact)”.

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

“There were initial problems with the electrical connections on the Vehicle Activated Signs erected in Walton Bridge Road. These problems were resolved within 2 weeks of erection. The signs were switched on and as far as we were aware, they were working correctly.

Since receiving comments from councillors and the local residents, we have visited the site and found there are problems that we are unable to resolve without specialist support. We have contacted the supplier and are in the process of setting up a maintenance contract with them. We expect them to

be on site to attend to the signs within the next 2 weeks. The maintenance contract will allow for biannual maintenance and calibration of the signs and a call out facility in case of faults occurring between the routine maintenance visits.”

Mr. Phil Hawkes asked the following question:

“Hopefully you are aware that Walton Bridge Road residents in particular seem to have to continually fight for repairs and urgent highway issues to be addressed. We are sick of having to write letters, E Mails and raise jobs on your web site. You are probably aware also that out of sheer frustration we recently entered and won a competition for the 'Worst Road in Britain'. I also hear many similar complaints by residents throughout Spelthorne and Surrey, therefore could the current Director of Highways explain how Surrey intend to make the transition from an extremely slow reactive responsive / 'fire fighting' type of business to the professional pro-active organisation that us 'high' paying tax payers deserve. Be advised that our Spelthorne Borough Councillors in my opinion are pro-active in trying to help us with such issues, but also get frustrated at the continual lack of action from officers in Surrey CC and that our County Councillor is also doing his best to drive the Council to improve things.”

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

“With regard to Walton Bridge Road specifically, two TRACS surveys have been carried along the road over the past 18 months. TRACS stands for **T**RAffic speed **C**ondition **S**urvey. TRACS vehicles assess the condition of a road while traveling along it at the prevailing traffic speed. Eight data sets related to the carriageway surface are collected including profile, rutting and cracking. Both surveys gave a low TRACS rating, which indicates that the structural condition of the carriageway is reasonably good.

Nevertheless, during April and May this year, four separate repair exercises were carried out in Walton Bridge Road at an estimated cost of £10,000. Though these defects were not of an urgent nature, they were nevertheless attended to in order to reduce noise and vibration nuisance caused to local residents by heavy goods vehicles. Half the repaired defects related to old statutory undertakers' trenches that had settled over time, but were beyond the guarantee period which would normally allow use to call the statutory undertaker back to rectify the defective work.

In general, highway maintenance works are prioritised in relation to limited resources, and by their very nature, repairs are often reactive. Major maintenance, however, is planned and programmed Countywide via a 5-year Rolling Programme, which collates available data, including TRACS, to objectively assess potential schemes. A244 Walton Bridge Road is currently on the Rolling Programme for 2008/09, though this date is dependent on completion of the new Walton Bridge. It would not make economic sense to resurface Walton Bridge Road until completion of the new Walton Bridge.”

Spelthorne Borough Councillor Mr Robin Sider asked the following question:

“At the Local Committee Meeting on the 11th July 2005, in response to my question regarding the maintenance of the flower beds on the highway outside 'Justa Cottage' in Walton Lane Shepperton, the Local Director in his reply,(shown at the Annex to the minutes of the SCC Local Committee in Spelthorne 11 July on pages 8 and 9 of the agenda for the meeting of 10 October) stated, 'There is no specific County budget for maintenance of garden areas. However, it is anticipated that this area will be tidied once a year by the Community Gang. The first such exercise is planned to be carried out in August, at which time a bark mulch will be applied in order to suppress weed growth' Not unsurprisingly, some three months later nothing has happened and not one weed has been suppressed. Can the Local / Area Director inform me why this is so, and in which year I can expect maintenance to take place?”.

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

“The cultivated highway area by Justa Cottage, Walton Lane, should have now been tidied and mulched. The delay, for which we apologise, was due to an increased workload for the Community Gang. Many of their outstanding jobs were related to safety issues, which clearly had to be given priority.”

Spelthorne Borough Councillor Mr Robin Sider asked the following question:

“Can the Local / Area Director inform me why, after over a year and requests for replacement by both the Borough Member for Shepperton Town and the County Member, one of the chevron directional signs is still missing from the Shepperton War Memorial roundabout?”.

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

“The County Council’s term maintenance contractor has given assurances that the missing chevron at Shepperton War Memorial roundabout, originally damaged as a result of a road traffic collision, will be replaced by the end of this month.”

Spelthorne Borough Councillor Mr Robin Sider asked the following question:

“Can the Local / Area Director inform me why after reports to Spelthorne Highways by the Borough Member for Shepperton Town and subsequent report by the County Member for Shepperton several weeks later, three road traffic signs in Walton Bridge Road are still partially obscured by overhanging

trees and other vegetation?”.

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

“We are only aware of two signs in Walton Bridge Road obscured by overgrown vegetation, as the tree branch partially obscuring the vehicle activated sign southbound was removed in early July, just after this sign was installed.

The “Bend” sign southbound opposite 10 Windmill Terrace is partially obscured by a highway tree, which will be cut back when funding becomes available. This job has been added to the priority list for tree works, as detailed in a report to this committee today.

The junction warning sign southbound outside 43 Walton Bridge Road is partially obscured by a private willow tree. Due to pressure of work, the area Highway Steward has not yet contacted the owner / occupier to order the tree to be cut back. This has now been addressed, and depending on the co-operation of the owner, should be completed within the next month.”

Spelthorne Borough Councillor Mr Robin Sider asked the following question:

“Can the Local / Area Director inform me the cost of the implementation of the shared pedestrian cycle lane in Walton Lane, Shepperton, and who was responsible for its design and construction which has now been identified by the police as having been constructed too wide, and what further action is to be taken and at what cost to the taxpayer?”.

The Area Transportation Director gave the following answer:

“The estimated cost of the Walton Lane shared use cycle \ pedestrian facility is £80k. Until the work is completed we will not know the final construction cost.

The design and construction has been carried out by the County Council’s term contractor Ringway Highway Services.

Please refer to the answer given to Robert Watts, Shepperton Residents Association, concerning the Police’s and local residents concerns. The extra road markings recommended by the safety audit will be accommodated within the current budget allocation for this scheme. However if it is necessary to physically modify the footpath then extra funding will be required.

Please note that funding for schemes such as this are derived from Local Transportation Plan allocations from Central Government and not taken from Council Tax revenue. However the County Council regardless of funding sources seeks to achieve good value for money in all its projects.”

