

Surrey County Council Local Committee (Guildford) 28 November 2012

Petitions [Item 4]

None received

Written public questions [Item 5]

1. Submitted by: PETER HATTERSLEY, LOCAL RESIDENT.

On a recent visit I noted that Surrey Wildlife Trust has erected new entry and exit signs and that large areas of tarmac have been renewed. The raised islands have been removed and are tarmaced over to add to the parking spaces.

I further note that the whole area has been marked out in white lined carparking bays. Double yellow lines have been painted at the entrance together with a 7.5T sign painted white.

Comments have been passed that when the bays are occupied car doors cannot be opened fully (particularly 4x4s).

I understand that the intention is to charge car parking via a pay and display system. Comments have been made to me that a number of users will go elsewhere if the charges are introduced. The proprietor of the adjacent Barn coffee shop/restaurant has express concerned that displaced cars will use the Barn car park.

I understood the 1930s agreement between the land owner, the Duke of Northumberland, and the Surrey County Council was free access for all. What consultation has taken place?

What happens for members of the public:

- 1 wishing to use the toilets
- 2 wishing to use the refreshment kiosks
- 3 who are daily dog walkers (dozens)
- 4 who are horse riders (parking trailers/horse lorries)
- 5 who are ramblers
- 6 who are at school partaking in Duke of Edinburgh Award events
- 7 who belong to motorcycle clubs meeting on Sundays
- 8 who belong to various classic car clubs which meet there
- 9 who partake in Charity fundraising events
- 10 who are visitors to Surrey, holidaymakers, etc., etc.
- 11 who are mountain bikers or use scramble motorcycles
- 12 mobility scooter and Tramper users, not necessarily registered disabled.

As most, or all, will be users of the car parking facilities - will there be a 'short stay' provision or how are the charges to be levied?

I do not think there should be any charge for the use of car parking at Newlands Corner or any other car parks managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust.

Answer

Surrey County Council currently has an Access Agreement with the Duke of Northumberland's Albury Estates to manage Newlands Corner and St Martha's Hill for public access which has been in place since 1962. The current agreement dates to 1993 and is under the provisions of the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Surrey County Council also lease part of the Visitor Centre and toilet block. Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) are purely the County Council's contractor in the management of this Access Agreement providing a ranger service, a visitor centre, and carrying out day to day maintenance on public access and to a lesser extent landscape elements of the site. The enabling legislation whilst allowing free access on foot over open country envisages that access in other ways or for other services may be subject to charge.

The recent repairs and car park layout work has been carried out by SWT as part of the general management of the site and are not related to any possible future introduction of parking charges. Newlands Corner car park receives approximately 700 vehicle movements per day on average, at busy periods cars are often parked along the access road or parked badly in the previously unlined car park, taking up several spaces or blocking other vehicles in. The reinforcing of entry and exit lanes, exclusion of HGVs, and the lining of parking bays are simply designed to make the car park work more efficiently at busy periods. The parking spaces marked at 2.4m x 4.8m conform to national guidance and Guildford Borough Council's Vehicle Parking Standards (SPD).

However, Members are reminded that £30,000 was cut from the Countryside Management budget during the 2010 Public Value Review to be recouped from charging across the Countryside Estate - this figure amounts to 40% of the cost of managing this site alone. Officers are considering how this short fall may be made up, of which parking charges are obviously one option. Car parking charges are now common across countryside sites in the UK having been introduced by many other local authorities, the Forestry Commission and National Trust. However, no final decision has been taken over whether to seek to introduce parking charges on the Surrey County Council Countryside Estate and Access Agreements, nor has a scheme of charging been devised, or consultations begun.

2. Submitted by: AURIOL EARLE, GUILDFORD RESIDENT.

What measures are the Councils taking to manage vehicular traffic along the Mount to Henley Fort and ensure that the track-way verges are protected and the site itself is sufficiently screened by trees and bushes?

Answer

Surrey County Council's interest in this lane relate to a private access to Henley Fort and to its duties as Highway Authority (in respect of the bridleway). Henley Fort is part of SOLD (Surrey Outdoor Learning & Development Service) which is owned and

run by Surrey County Council. SOLD's principle users of Henley Fort are schools and youth organisations.

The public are entitled to drive along the Mount only as far as number 106 The Mount, which is the extent of the public highway. To the west of that point the route is (and has been for at least 60 years) recorded as Bridleway 14 (Guildford). As such the public have a right to use it on foot, on horseback and on a bicycle. A horse, donkey or mule may also be led over a bridleway. In the last few years evidence has come to light which indicates that higher rights might exist over the bridleway and that it should in fact be recorded as a restricted byway. If such rights were shown to exist, non-motorised vehicles (such as a horse and cart) would also be entitled to use the route.

Neither bridleways or restricted byways carry public vehicular rights. Furthermore, section 34 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, makes it a criminal offence to drive a motorised vehicle over a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway without lawful authority to do so. In this context lawful authority includes a private vehicular right and the permission of the landowner. Surrey County Council do not own the land over which the bridleway passes. Bridleway 14 and its verge areas would appear to be owned by the Loseley Estate

In the first instance SCC Highways and Countryside officers will consult with landowners and investigate options that restrict vehicular access to those with the appropriate lawful authority.

3. Submitted by: ROY HOGBEN, ALBURY PARISH COUNCIL.

Can the Old Mill Bus Stop be re-instated at its original location and that, for the safety of users, a Passenger Refuge Platform, in accordance with the Environment Agency's approval (2010-FRIM-251), be constructed on the south bank of the Tillingbourne Mill Race funded, in one way or another, by Surrey County Council.

Answer

The Committee would like to thank Mr Hogben for presenting the background paper on the exiting and the original bus stops in The Street on behalf of the Albury Parish Council.

Guildford Borough Council granted planning permission for the Old Mill to be redeveloped which included erecting a wall along the edge of the carriageway, which incorporated the lay-by within the site.

At the March 2009 Local Committee meeting it was agreed that public highway rights have been established over the lay-by adjoining the road of The Street along the frontage of The Old Mill. This was agreed as there was substantial evidence that the public had used the lay-by for more than twenty years.

The SCC officers who were dealing with the issues of the location of the original bus stop and the public rights over the lay-by fronting the Old Mill have since retired or moved on. As a result the issue of land ownership was never resolved.

Albury Parish Council has recently confirmed that the Environment Agency and the present owner of the land have approved the new proposal by the Parish Council for the groundwork and foundation work. The SCC officers will now look into the possibility of relocating the bus stop to its original location.

Surrey Hills AONB indicated that the Parish Council may be eligible for a Surrey Hills LEADER grant if the project was innovative (use of materials) and demonstrated a need for the community.

Removing the existing footway, situated on the south side of the road, to the north side from the Old Mill bus stop to the Drummond Arms Public House will affect the local residents. The SCC officers will consider this proposal, when the Parish Council have carried out consultation with the residents.

Written members' questions [Item 6]

1. Submitted by: COUNTY COUNCILLOR SIMON GIMSON (SHALFORD)

There have been a series of vehicle accidents and near misses in the area of White Lane, Foreman Road, Ash Green Lane and Poyle Road. Most are not reported to the police because the drivers do not want to involve their insurance companies and therefore do not appear on the accident database. I have had numerous reports from residents of near misses and other events. Some of those reported to me this year include:

- 19 Oct – a car travelling south on White Lane came off the road. Bridge and road narrows sign “knocked for six” as well as posts belonging to resident.
- Circa 28 Sep - incident on the corner which was witnessed by builders working for resident. A vehicle travelling north on White Lane (away from the Hogs Back) towards Forman Road failed to take the corner. The vehicle crossed the southbound side of the road and ended up in the hedge. Fortunately there was nothing coming in the opposite direction and it was the only vehicle involved.
- On or before 24 Sep – Vehicle exiting Poyle Road did not stop and crossed White Lane ending up in the hedge.
- 17 Sep – Vehicle hit the cable box on the corner of White Lane
- 10 July – in White Lane – Vehicle hit the cable box.
- 29 June – Vehicle left the road on the corner travelling south on White Lane close to bus stop

Although none of these accidents caused injury there was a serious accident involving a young pedestrian outside Ash Manor School on 13 September. The key issue in all these events is excessive speed. Drivers leave the A31 where they can legally travel at 60-70 mph and do not adjust their driving to fit the local road network.

The speed limits on the grid of roads between the A31 and the A323 is a mix of national limit, 30mph, 40mph and 50 mph. This is a wide variety and doesn't appear to be consistent. In particular the 50mph limit on Poyle Road could be seen by some drivers as a target speed rather than the maximum. The roads concerned are: White Lane, Foreman Road, Grange Road, Manor Road, Oxenden Road, The Street and Poyle Road.

Within this area of Ash South and Tongham there are a number of planning applications which could lead to a substantial increase in the amount of local traffic and vulnerable pedestrians and cyclists.

Please can the Highways Manager agree to undertake a review of these roads with the aim of creating a safer environment for residents and all road users. The review should consider traffic calming measures and changes to the existing speed limits.

Answer

Councillor Gimson has discussed these concerns with the Area Manager and the possibility of utilising potential local development funding to undertake a review of speed limits in the roads listed in the question. However SCC's Transport Development Planning Team (TDP), who comment on the highways aspects of planning applications, advise that this may not be possible, since measured speeds near local developments and not much above the 30mph speed limits in place at their locations. If (TDP) confirm that this funding stream cannot be used, it is recommended that the Task Group meeting in February consider this request as a potential Integrated Transport Scheme (ITS or improvement scheme) for the next financial year, 2013/14.

2. Submitted by: BOROUGH COUNCILLOR BOB MCSHEE (WORPLESDON)

To ease traffic to the hospital/research park/university area pressure must be put on Network Rail to start planning for a Park Barn station, then more people would leave their cars at home and this would relieve the local roads of congestion. By reducing the congestion, perhaps the proposed Onslow Park and Ride would be more successful.

The Park Barn station has previously been mooted, and this could be considered in the scheme to redevelop the main Guildford station complex, so can SCC raise this matter with Network Rail, South West trains and First Great Western.

Answer

Surrey County Council has recently commissioned a specialist consultancy firm to assist the council to develop a Surrey Rail Strategy. This strategy will consider a range of measures which could be delivered in the short term (next 5 years), medium term and longer term (by 2033). A potential station at Park Barn will be considered through the Rail Strategy. Officers have arranged meetings with Network Rail, the train operating companies and the various boroughs and districts. The Rail Strategy is expected to be published during 2013.

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