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Surrey County Council Local Committee (Guildford) 13 March 2013

Written public questions [Item 5]

1. Submitted by: PETER HATTERSLEY, WEST HORSLEY RESIDENT.

Please could the Local Committee update on what progress has been made towards implementing an agreed 40mph speed limit on the A246 between Effingham and the East Horsley Parish boundary; and would the committee agree to extend the 40mph limit to include West Horsley?

In follow up, if a decision has been made by the Local Committee to change a local speed limit, under what constitutional arrangements could this decision not be implemented as has recently been the case in Elmbridge where the Surrey County Councillor holding the portfolio reportedly reversed the decision and refused to progress the speed reduction?

Answer

Work on installing reduced speed limits on the A246 through Effingham to East Horsley is underway and will be completed by the end of March.

Surrey County Council's Speed Policy (November 2010) includes the following provision:-

"If the Local Committee OR Cabinet Member considers that a proposed lower speed limit would not reduce average speeds sufficiently, then either: (i) Retain the existing higher speed limit in order to manage speeds at a realistic level or; (ii) Implement other speed management measures to achieve speeds closer to the preferred limit, and then introduce the lower limit."

2. Submitted by: ROBERT SHATWELL, WESTFIELD RESIDENT

I wrote to the county council on 5 Oct 2011 regarding the footpaths spanning the River Wey on Footpath 52 between Send and Fishers Farm, Woking. Since then I have to report a serious deterioration in the condition of the bridges which are still being used by pedestrians.

Why has Surrey County Council not carried out its duty of care to the safe passage of pedestrians using footpath 52, and when will this be carried out?

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Answer

Public Footpath 52 Send

This footpath has been legally closed to safeguard the public. This is due to the unsafe condition of the bridge at the eastern end of the footpath known as Fishers Farm b. The western bridge, known as Fishers Farm straddles the River Wey, the district boundary, and so half of this bridge is on public footpath 45b in the borough of Woking. Fishers Farm bridge was last inspected by Structures on 7.12.12 and is not considered unsafe for public use.

The closure on FP 52 removes the public right on foot to use the bridge, however we cannot remove any private rights that may exist. We are aware that the owner of the bridge continues to use it with vehicles on a daily basis. For this reason it has not been possible to block off the bridge, although there are notices on site informing the public that the bridge is closed.

We have taken legal advice on the matter of responsibility and counsel's opinion is that Surrey County Council does not have a responsibility to maintain the present bridge on site. We are sorry that the closure of this public footpath is an inconvenience as there is no easily accessible alternative route, however it is important that we explore all options as there is no quick or inexpensive solution.

The bridge in question does not belong to SCC and we have no right to remove it and replace it with a footbridge. We have explored the option of placing a bridge adjacent to the present bridge. There is significant cost in this and it may require the public footpath to be legally diverted on to a new route. The public can object to this process and so is not a certainty.

The owner has said that they are taking advice on replacing the bridge and we are currently waiting for this information from them.

3. Submitted by: GAYNOR WHITE, CLERK TO WORPLESDON PARISH COUNCIL

Years ago Surrey County Council used to regularly flail alongside Salt Box Road creating a narrow footpath which residents could utilise. For 4 or 5 years this did not happen. At our request, some flailing was carried out in 2012, however, various obstacles were left on the ground which meant that pedestrians still had to walk in the road which is extremely dangerous. May we take this opportunity to request that regular flailing is again carried out to at least enable residents to walk on common land rather than in the narrow road?

Will the Local Area Committee reconsider the proposal to install traffic lights at the

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railway bridge (bridleway 434) and give consideration to providing safe crossing points where the following footpaths cross Salt Box Road: Footpath 437, Footpath 444, Footpath 442, Footpath 441.

Answer

Salt Box Road runs through Whitmore Common which is managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust and SCC Highways will discuss how best to maintain passable verges immediately alongside the road with the Trust.

The committee will recall the response to a petition requesting that '...Surrey County Council introduce a safe crossing point next to the railway bridge on Salt Box Road, Guildford.' was discussed at the 13 June 2012 LC meeting. This response explained that a traffic signal controlled crossing would have a significant impact on traffic flows in Salt Box Road leading to increased congestion, journey times and could result in traffic diverting to other roads in the area leading SCC officers to recommend against such a scheme. It should be noted that the petition requested a safer crossing point, and did not mention traffic signals.

At the LC meeting of 12 September, the Area Highways Manager reported he had asked the Casualty Reduction Group (CRG) for Guildford to review accidents near the bridge, carry out a site inspection and make recommendations. The CRG have visited the site though their final report is awaited, and recommendations will be shared with the petitioners and local members who sit on this committee.

The Highways Update item on today's agenda includes the Guildford Task Group recommendation to allocate £20,000 from the 2013/14 budget towards improving safety for pedestrians crossing Salt Box Road at the railway bridge. This will fund minor works such as warning signs and footways to a crossing point away from the bridge and could be used to address the other crossing points listed in the question. A traffic signal controlled crossing would be in the order of £150,000.

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