

Questions from Members of the public

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

DATE: 11 MARCH 2020

LEAD OFFICER: JESS EDMUNDSON, PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE OFFICER

SUBJECT: QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

DIVISION: ALL



Question 1: Roger Troughton:

Given the increasing need to promote walking and cycling for numerous reasons, when is Surrey Highways going to prioritise the maintenance of footways, shared paths and the like, to make them fit for purpose?

As examples, recent investigation of such routes alongside the A25 showed:

The footway on the northern side of the Westcott Road (west from Sondes Place Drive) indicates that it was constructed as 2.2m wide, yet typically 0.7m is now overgrown. This is in the Milton Heath area:



The shared path on the southern side of the Reigate Road between Punchbowl Lane and the railway bridge (itself recently cleared) is in a similar or worse state. In places it is now barely 1m wide. Again, it appears the original width is around 2.2m, yet it is being overgrown from both the verge and the adjacent bank:

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Further on towards Betchworth Park, much, but not all, of this shared route (originally a “Safe Route to School”) was sided out a couple of years ago, but lack of regular sweeping is resulting in it becoming overgrown again.

The footway alongside the A24 between the Cockerell and North Holmwood roundabouts is also much encroached upon, and the footway north from Dorking towards Leatherhead on the western side of the A24 is all but non-existent in places with the result that pedestrians use the dedicated cycle path – and then motorists wonder why some cyclists won’t use it...

Would Surrey Highways allow roads to reach this state of affairs?

Response:

Responsibility for the clearance of leaf fall and soil detritus on footways and shared paths falls with the District Council to undertake within their street cleaning department with the use of mechanical sweepers. However, as mentioned Surrey Highways was able to carry out some work to clear some footways and shared paths during the 2018/19 financial year from the limited revenue resources available.

During this financial year some County Members elected to contribute £6,000 of the £7,500 Member Highway Fund allocation towards the purchase of a “Revenue Maintenance Gang” which has allowed for multiple small scale works to be carried out within some divisions. These works have included vegetation clearance, drainage investigations, sign maintenance and ditching. These jobs have ranged in size and scale and have helped to respond to enquiries raised by members of the public, elected members and to carry out maintenance in areas where Surrey Highways have come accustomed to maintaining in order to keep the highways clear. None of the works that were carried out would have fallen within our Highways Safety Inspection Policy or on our maintenance schedule.

It is clear from the photos provided that the footways have reduced in width due to the build-up of leaf fall and soil detritus, however they are still usable and have not become unsafe and unfortunately with the limited resources available this year, we have had to prioritise the resource accordingly.

Surrey Highways prioritise road and pavement maintenance as follows;

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Road maintenance works are prioritised using a number of criteria including:

- Risk to the public - this is calculated using data such as past insurance claims and the number of small repairs carried out.
- Condition of the road - this includes an engineer's assessment
- Road priority - greater priority is given to roads with the greatest usage or need. Road class (A, B, C and D), speed limits and daily traffic are all factors in this.

Please see our Inspections Policy (available to download at the bottom of this page) for more detail on how we put roads into a priority order for maintenance purposes. We call this 'Surrey Priority Network' (see pages 2 and 3 of the policy).

The above criteria ensures that the available funding is used on the roads and pavements that are in greatest need of treatment in a fair and consistent manner across the county.

More information about our prioritisation policy and criteria for roads, pavements, structures, drainage and safety barriers can be found in the 'Highway prioritisation policy and criteria' found on the following link.

https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/45052/Prioritisation-Policy-Criteria-Dec-2018-v4.0.pdf

Over the next 5 years, Surrey County Council will be investing significant funds into the maintenance and improvement of the highway, and this includes footway works. There is currently a large number of requests for leaf and soil detritus to be cleared from footways and shared paths, and these need to be prioritised. Officers are unable to provide a date when works to remove the accumulated leaf fall and soil detritus could be prioritised, although it is very helpful that the Mole Valley Cycle Forum have identified support for these works.

Question 2: John Moyer:

What update can SCC offer on resolving surface flooding in Cleeve Road, Leatherhead as pictured in Surrey Matters this month and other locations in the area eg Waterfields? Is it now accepted that Cleeve Road is SCC's responsibility to fix or is it still being explored with Thames Water? Should the use of the picture give residents hope that it is some kind of priority?

Response:

Surrey Highways has undertaken multiple visits throughout the year to determine a cause for the localised flooding at this location in cooperation with Thames Water.

Surrey Highways continues to work with them to try to resolve the issues that arise. Surrey Highways has carried out some repairs, whilst Southern Gas Networks has also carried out works to repair the damage that they caused to Thames Water's Surface Sewer Main.

Drainage investigations have also been carried out by Surrey Highways, and results of the investigations has been used to draw up drainage plans to show what has been found, and we continue to liaise with third party utilities to resolve these issues.

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Following the works carried out by the South East Area Team on this issue, the Flood Risk and Network Resilience Team have now recorded this location as a Wetspot and will continue further investigation and/or discussions with Thames Water and other utility companies regarding surface water drainage within Cleeve Road and the surrounding area.

Question 3: Stuart McLachlan:

Background:

In Coldharbour 2 byways begin. The first is called Wolvens Lane and heads north towards Wotton. The second is called Coldharbour Common Road and heads west towards Cockshot Hollow on Abinger Road. Both byways are dirt tracks and attract many recreational 4x4's and scramble bikes particularly during the winter months in the late evening hours on Fridays and the weekends. These vehicles often travel off-piste from the byways causing significant damage to the surrounding land, the majority of which is owned either by the Forestry Commission or the National Trust. When challenged the drivers have been abusive and threatened violence to residents and other legal byway users. Many such incidents have been reported to the police who seem powerless to take any action. A number of other byways in the area have already been closed to motorised vehicles by SCC with a TRO (Traffic Regulation Order). I have repeatedly asked officers to initiate this process for these 2 byways and have repeatedly been refused. The last time one of the reasons being that because all the others have been closed then where would the 4x4's go!! This is not good enough.

Question:

I want to know why this TRO process cannot be started for the 2 byways in question? My parish council is very happy to contribute funds towards this activity.

Response:

The question relates to BOAT 526 (Wolvens Lane) Wotton & Capel and BOAT 527 (Coldharbour Common Road) Wotton & Capel and the significant damage to surrounding land from vehicles who "often travel off piste from the byways".

The County Council is able to make Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) on BOATs under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 if the criteria in our Policy are met. The Council's Policy on making such Orders states that TROs will only be used pro-actively where a countywide assessment indicates a Byway Open to All Traffic is in poor condition, in need of significant repair and it is considered necessary to restrict traffic, coupled with programmes of repair as resources permit. Where a countywide assessment indicates a BOAT is in reasonable condition a TRO be only made on grounds of significant danger to users of the route, or to prevent significant damage to the route. The Policy does not relate to damage to adjoining land.

The Countryside Access Team consider that the surfaces of the BOATs themselves, as a whole, are in a reasonable condition for their expected use. The damage to adjoining land/banks is unlawful and anti-social and we recognise this problem, but stress that landowners are free to protect their land from trespass and damage. Clearly this is easier said than done, but, in the past, work has been successful to clamp down on this type of behaviour/damage and significant sections of the

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land/BOAT have been protected using a range of measures. We are aware that the Forestry Commission have just completed some bank protection works. The Countryside Access Team did some works to close down an area of egress and repaired damage a couple of years ago on Wolvens Lane and this still stands.

We are not aware of an increase in reports of abusive behaviour and this has not been reported by the Parish Council to the Surrey Hills Byways User Group, of which they are a member.

We have received funding to undertake some repair works to the surface of Wolvens Lane this summer, north of Upper Meridan Farm. These works will also include stumping the edge of the Byway to prevent egress.

In response to Mr McLachlan's penultimate sentence, all of Surrey's BOATs represent just 4% of the public rights of way network. BOATs provide a legitimate means of access for those who would otherwise be unable to access the countryside including those with mobility problems.

I hope the above explains why the TRO process cannot be started for the 2 byways as requested. The recent and planned works should help restrict vehicles trespassing off the BOATs and improve the situation.

Question 4: Cllr Paul Kennedy:

Please can I have a list of roads which were put forward for consideration in the recent Mole Valley parking review but not recommended for public consultation, with the reasons (if possible) for not taking them forward at this stage?

Response:

Please find below a list of the roads that had requests to change / introduce parking restrictions, as part of the 2019 / 2020 parking review and that were not carried forward.

In total there were, 16 councillor / officer requests, 88 requests by email / telephone / letter and 169 on line requests, totalling 273 requests in total – some are repeats or may have actually been completed in the interim as they were looked at as part of the previous review.

Requests are prioritised based on safety and obstruction issues (highest) followed by multiple requests for a particular restriction or petitions.

Typically the budget for a parking review is around £10,000 however up to £4,000 of this is earmarked for the legal requirement to place adverts in local newspapers as part of the statutory consultation. The parking review process is however intended to reduce the overall costs of making multiple changes to parking restrictions and get the best value from the money available, but it is not possible to accommodate all the requests made.

The parking review budget can be supplemented where there is a desire to do more in a parking review, such as implement larger parking management schemes. For example surplus income from parking enforcement or income from planning considerations can be used for this purpose.

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Cllr Requests:

Windfield

**Resident requests
via email / telephone
/ letter:**

Ashtead

Barnett Wood Road
Grove Road
Grove Rd, j/w, Dene
Road
Hatherwood
Woodfield Lane

Bookham:

Little Bookham Street
Meadowside
Oakdene Close

Brockham:

A25 Slip Road

Dorking:

Ashcombe Road
Beresford Road
Cotmandene
Longfeild Road
Old London Road
Spook Hill
Tanners Meadow
Victoria Terrace

Fetcham:

Nutcroft Grove
Pound Crescent
Guildford Road (A25)

Leatherhead:

Emlyn Lane
Linden Gardens
Poplar Avenue
Reigate Road

**Surrey Says
requests – on line
form:**

Ashtead:

Barnett Wood Lane
Bramley Way
Craddocks Avenue
Greville Park Avenue
Hillside Road
Oakfield Road
Rectory Lane
Woodfall Drive
Woodfield Close

Betchworth:

A25 Reigate Road

Bookham:

Dorking Road /
Chrysties Lane
Fife Way
Griffin Way
Guildford Road
Leatherhead Road
Post House Lane /
Church Road
Sharon Close

Brockham:

Whealers Lane

Capel:

Bennetts Wood

Dorking:

Ashcmobe Road
Cotmandene
Curtis Road
Harrowlands Park
High Street
Highland Road
Marlborough Hill

Fetcham:

Cock lane
Copperfields
KennelLane
The Street

Great Bookham:

Downs View Road
Eastwick Park Avenue
Griffin Way

Leatherhead:

Bridge Street
Church Road
Cleeve Road
Cophorne Road
Cressall Mead
Dorking Road
Edenside Road
Forty Foot Road
Hartfield Road
Homelands
Kingston Road
Linden Gardens
Linden Road
St Johns Close

Little Bookham:

Guildford Road

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Question 5: Danielle Armitage:

What mitigation measures will Surrey Highways take to reduce traffic speeds in Punchbowl Lane and make it safer for pedestrians?

The road is under 6m wide and there is no footway or pavement. Vehicles regularly exceed 30mph and my neighbours (who are Community Speedwatch Volunteers) recently recorded 2 vehicles travelling uphill at speeds exceeding 40mph!

At the beginning of the year we received notification that Punchbowl Lane is due to receive surface dressing at some point in the coming year. Presumably this means that the existing white lines will need to be repainted also.

Is this not the ideal opportunity to "paint" a pavement alongside the road in the same way that has been done in other parts of Surrey. This would certainly not cost very much.

This would not only go some way towards protecting pedestrians, it would also further optically narrow the road to reduce speeds.

Alternatively, would Surrey Highways consider introducing a 20mph limit as is currently being proposed for the roads around Abinger Common?

A further option is to paint a give way system. The section near Overdale is not wide enough for two cars. Overconfident motorists and cyclists simply keep driving / cycling at speed and the rest of us are required to take action to avoid a collision. A give way system would simply be a few lines painted in the road and associated signage instructing drivers as to whose right of way it is:

These are simple cost-effective measures to provide much needed safety to pedestrians, but also to cyclists and motorists alike, along a dangerous section of suburban road.

Response:

Punchbowl Lane, Dorking is a suburban road with a 30mph speed limit and is street lit, between its junction with the A25 Reigate Road to its junction with Park Copse. To the south of the junction with Park Copse the speed limit increases to 40mph until the end of Punchbowl Lane at its junction with Chart Lane South. There is no footway along the length of Punchbowl Lane.

Surrey County Council holds personal injury collision data for traffic collisions that have occurred over the most recent 3 year period, this information is provided by Surrey Police and shows that there has been two personal injury collisions in Punchbowl Lane over the most recent 3 year period for which data is available (from 01/10/2016 to 30/09/2019). Both of these collisions resulted in slight injuries and Surrey Police did not record vehicle speeds as a contributory factor in either of these collisions.

However, due to concerns previously raised by residents regarding the safety of this road a scheme was constructed during the 2016/17 financial year to install new edge of carriageway markings to visually narrow the carriageway slightly to help make the running carriageway appear narrower thereby encouraging drivers to slow down. When these works were completed a speed survey was carried out outside property number

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28 Punchbowl Lane which recorded the average mean speeds below the existing 30mph as follows.

Northbound – 28.1mph

Southbound – 26.5mph

Surrey County Council has an approved Speed Limit Policy in place which sets out the criteria under which a reduction in speed limit by signs alone would be considered. Unlike the recorded average mean speeds in Abinger Common, the average mean speeds for Punchbowl Lane do not comply with Surrey County Council's Speed Limit Policy for a reduction of the speed limit to 20mph by signs alone. This is because experience shows that changing to a lower speed limit on its own will not be successful in reducing the speed of traffic if the prevailing mean speeds are much higher than the proposed lower speed limit. Therefore in order to install a 20mph speed limit in Punchbowl Lane, additional measures such as traffic calming in the form of full width speed humps would need to be installed in order to ensure that any 20mph speed limit works.

It is appreciated that, like a large number of roads across the county, some drivers will choose to exceed existing speed limits and that residents of Punchbowl Lane continue to express concerns about drivers speed. As a result a scheme to try to address resident's concerns that some drivers exceed the existing speed limit has been added to the Integrated Transport Scheme list for possible future funding. However, at present this scheme has not been prioritised for funding due to the existing average mean speeds and low collision history on Punchbowl Lane.

Surrey County Council has installed hatched road markings on some roads where the carriageway is of sufficient width, such as Pixham Lane. However Surrey County Council would not install similar markings on a narrow road, because this would encourage drivers to drive on the wrong side of the carriageway and increase the risk of vehicles colliding head on.

The installation of a priority give-way system could be one of the measures that could be introduced should funding become available. However it should be noted that this will not reduce drivers speed effectively during periods of low traffic flow, because there would be little need for drivers to slow down and give-way. Also local concerns are often raised once such measures are installed because some drivers choose not to give-way and they "race" to get through the give-way before oncoming traffic.

However, Surrey County Council continue to try to find funding to install additional measures on Punchbowl Lane in order to address resident's concerns about vehicle speeds.