

**SAFFRON WALDEN LOCAL ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE held at 7.30pm
on 29 NOVEMBER 2000 at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN**

Present:- In the Chair – Councillor W F Bowker – Uttlesford District Council

Miss K Barwood – Arkesden Parish Council
Mrs M Asinya – Elsenham Parish Council
Mr B Peterson – Great Chesterford Parish Council
Mr D Richardson – Little Chesterford Parish Council
Mr C Forster – Manuden Parish Council
Mr P Lawson – Radwinter Parish Council
Mrs C Bayley – Saffron Walden Town Council
Mr P Hughes – The Sampfords Parish Council
Mrs B Ryan – Stansted Parish Council
Councillor R C Dean – Uttlesford District Council
Mr C Stoneham, Assistant Engineer – Essex County Transportation and Operational Services Department
Inspector M Harman and Sergeant J Sones – Essex Police
Mrs R Johnson, Road Safety Officer – Uttlesford District Council
Mrs C Roberts, Secretary – Uttlesford District Council

SW60 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D Boatman and Mrs A Smith.

SW61 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2000 be received, confirmed and signed as a correct record.

SW62 **BUSINESS ARISING**

Minute SW58 – Accident remedial site by Prouds Bridge, B184.

The Sampfords representative informed the meeting that the new bend warning sign had been badly positioned for traffic coming from Saffron Walden. The Assistant Engineer undertook to investigate this.

SW63 **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The Committee considered the Secretary's report.

(i) **Cycle Path to Audley End Station**

The Secretary read a letter received from Essex County Council which had been circulated with the agenda. The Assistant Engineer added that there would be a report to the Advisory Committee when more was known at the beginning of the next financial year.

The Sampfords representative commented that the Essex County Council transportation portfolio holder had not provided any information about the substantial projected costs for the scheme, or any response to the request to build the first part of the route to accommodate cyclists in the most dangerous section.

Councillor Bowker said that he had expressed disappointment to the Highways Sub-Committee, at its special meeting, about the lack of progress with the cycleway. In addition a report was to be placed before a meeting of the Planning and Development Committee the next day which contained a recommendation in the following terms "that, subject to the Government Financial Settlement, high priority should be given to the proposed cycleway between Saffron Walden and Audley End in 2001/02".

Councillor R C Dean asked what would separate the cyclist from other road traffic in the proposed scheme. The Assistant Engineer explained that no specification had been settled for this purpose. Councillor Dean emphasised that the proposed cycleway must be perceived as safe by the general public or it would not be used. The representative for Arkesden commented that the road was too narrow to carry its current traffic already. She felt that it should be established what width of road was required by the Police, what width of cycleway was necessary, how land was to be acquired for these purposes and how much it would cost.

RESOLVED that Members' comments be forwarded to the Essex County Transportation and Operational Services Department and the transportation portfolio holder and that Mr P Hardy's observations be sought.

(ii) **Variable Mandatory Speed Limits near Schools**

Members considered the information supplied by the Area Transport Manager about criteria for 20mph limits.

In answer to a question from the Chairman, Inspector Harman and Sergeant Sones explained that such limits could be shown by signs alone or could take the form of a 20mph speed limit zone in which case other supporting measures would be present. The most important factor was that the limit must be realistic within the general speed of

the area. Compliance should not rely on enforcement. In, for example, Notley there were self enforcement features which made the zone a success. It did not work to place speed limit signs with no other supporting measures. In the case of schools variable signs would be valuable but primary legislation was needed to introduce these on roads other than motorways.

Some Members were of the view that a short area of permanent speed limit should be enforced outside schools, particularly if the school was a visible reason for the limit.

Sergeant Sones felt that a fixed limit was unlikely to be obeyed on a Sunday.

The representative for Chesterford asked whether funding could be provided to provide speed limits outside schools and the means of enforcing them eg speed cameras. Mrs C Bayley drew attention to the problems caused by parents parking on pavements.

In answer to a question, Inspector Harman indicated that private sponsoring of enforcement by cameras would not be practicable because the siting of cameras was at significant casualty areas in response to historical data. Fatalities and serious injuries were generally not outside schools but on the 60-70mph speed limit roads.

Sergeant Sones explained the procedure of hypothecation and added that because camera running costs were very substantial the Police would not accept a gift of a camera.

The Assistant Engineer added that DETR guidelines prohibited the County Highways Department from introducing variable speed limits.

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to the Essex County Council Transportation and Operational Services Department asking for information about the cost and implementation of fixed and variable 20mph limits and the methods which may be used to prevent cars parking on pavements outside schools.

(iii) **Date for further meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 21 February 2001.

SW65

ROAD SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT

The Committee received the report of the Road Safety Officer which covered recruitment of a new assistant Road Safety Officer for education to schools, safer journeys to school, cycle training and adult education. She explained that campaigns in December were targeting cyclists without lights and

encouraging responsible driving. Anti-drink driving campaigns were being organised using Tesco's car parks.

In answer to a question the Road Safety Officer explained that a walking bus should include a trolley to carry the children's bags. Mr J Horne of Friends School stressed that this was important in view of the heavy weight of books which children had to carry. The Road Safety Officer added that back problems were now being found in children as a result of this. It was important to educate parents.

In answer to questions Inspector Harman explained that it was useful for cyclists to wear jackets with fluorescent strips which picked out the outline of the body. He confirmed that the Police carried out random tests on bike lights.

RESOLVED that the Committee reviews the situation regarding cyclists after the Think, Drive Safe – Cycle Safe campaign has been completed.

SW66

POLICE REPORT

Inspector Harman reported that the casualty figures for Braintree and Uttlesford so far this year represented a 36% increase in deaths and serious injuries as compared with the figures for the previous year. He explained that the M11 absorbed a lot of Police Officer's time and overtime working, which was very expensive, was being used to free other Officers. Accidents tended to happen on the rural national speed limit roads not in the built up areas. He described the approach taken in the Drink Driving campaigns. In answer to a question he explained that 15 motorcyclists had died in accidents recently, mainly due to excess speed for the road conditions. He stressed that the age of motorcyclists was now on average 40. Some of the accidents were drink related.

SW67

DISTRICT TRANSPORTATION MANAGER'S REPORT

The Assistant Engineer reported that no further accident remedial sites had been added to the list. A scheme design was being prepared for the Birchanger Lane site and the 40mph limit was now operating at Cutlers Green. A meeting had been held with Clavering Primary School which was intending to have a school zone to include flashing lights and keep clear signs within a 30mph speed limit. It was hoped that these would be achieved by February 2001. Following investigation of the concerns expressed about the zebra crossing at Audley Road it was being recommended that the signage on the approaches to the crossing be improved.

SW68

QUESTIONS FROM THE PARISHES

In answer to a question from the representative of Manuden the Assistant Engineer explained that the road in question was being reassessed for surfacing and an estimate was being made. The results would be known later in the financial year. There had been a speed survey for Manuden and road markings would be examined.

The representative for Elsenham reported a very large pothole at Grove Hill, Stansted.

The representative for Great Chesterford asked what progress was being made with reducing the clutter of signs in Saffron Walden. The Assistant Engineer informed him that the Highways Authority endeavoured to minimise posts and signs particularly in conservation areas. Combined signs were provided if resources were available. The Chairman of the Committee informed the meeting that Newport Parish Council had identified obsolete signs during a walk in the parish with County Highways Officers.

The representative for Radwinter drew attention to the need for readjustment of the traffic calming at Radwinter.

The representative of Little Chesterford informed the Committee that a meeting was being held on Tuesday 5 December at 7.30pm following the submission of a planning application for traffic lights. Concerns had been expressed about its effect on the bus stop and other matters.

The representative for Radwinter asked about the bus from Cornish Hall End to Saffron Walden County High School and described some previous incidents. Inspector Harman asked for details and the Assistant Engineer undertook to convey these to passenger transport department at County Hall.

RESOLVED that a letter outlining these matters be sent to the appropriate authority.

SW69

SEASONAL WISHES

The Chairman expressed the compliments of the season to Members and Officers.

The meeting ended at 8.48pm.