

**SAFFRON WALDEN LOCAL ROAD SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 12
FEBRUARY 2003 at 7.30 pm**

Present:- Councillor W F Bowker – In the Chair (Uttlesford District Council).
Councillor Mrs C A Bayley – Saffron Walden Town Council
Councillor R C Dean – Uttlesford District Council
Mr J A Hardisty – Radwinter Parish Council
Mr P Hughes – The Sampfords Parish Council
Mrs A V Kent – Birchanger Parish Council
Mrs M F McDonald – Wendens Ambo Parish Council
Mrs L Sanders – Littlebury Parish Council
Mr A Thomas – Hempstead Parish Council.

Officers in attendance:- Miss E Anderson – Committee Officer
Mr P Hardy – Essex County Council Highways
Mrs R Johnson – Road Safety Officer
Mr A Playle – Essex Police Traffic Management Unit.

SW169 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Inspector M Harman and Mr D Richardson.

SW170 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2002 were received, confirmed and signed as a correct record.

SW171 **BUSINESS ARISING**

(i) SW164 – Area Transportation Manager's report

Councillor R C Dean had requested, at several meetings, that trees at the Ashdon Road/Harvey Way junction to be cut to enable better visibility for drivers exiting the junction. He said that he was satisfied with the information recorded on this issue to date. Paul Hardy reported that Highways had already cut back the trees on the roadside and that the landowner had been requested to trim the part of the trees that lay on their property for which they were responsible. Councillor R C Dean thought that the trees required more trimming as visibility was still poor.

RESOLVED that Councillor R C Dean and Mr P Hardy would arrange a site meeting to assess the situation and decide if any further work should be carried out.

SW172

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Secretary reported receipt of a letter from Saffron Walden County High School. The letter dated 7 January 2003 confirmed that the school intended to get involved with the 'safer journeys to school' initiative and would keep the Saffron Walden Local Road Safety Advisory Committee informed of their progress. Councillor Mrs C A Bayley requested that Newport High School be approached to recommend that they become part of the 'safer journeys to school' project as well.

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to Newport High School suggesting that the school applies to become part of the 'safer journeys to school' project.

SW173

ROAD SAFETY OFFICER'S REPORT

The Road Safety Officer updated the Advisory Committee with the progress of current projects and schemes. She informed that she had been very busy with all of the projects.

(i) Road Safety Education Primary/Senior School

The Committee were informed that officers had worked with over 3,000 students since the autumn term and that they were now becoming familiar faces throughout the district's schools. Work had begun with Saffron Walden County High School and the Friends School.

(ii) Future Projects

The Epping, Harlow and Uttlesford Road Safety Partnership were organising interactive safety plays titled 'why did the Chicken?' Stopwatch Theatre Company were holding these productions at three senior schools, Saffron Walden County High, Newport Free Grammar and Mountfitchet High.

(iii) Motorwise

Funding was being actively sought for the 2003 event and that there was now a video available which The Road Safety Officer would like the Group to view at a future meeting. In answer to a question, she said that the motorwise scheme would require approximately £10,000 funding.

(iv) Anti-natal classes/in-car safety

The Road Safety Officer had attended six anti-natal classes where she lectured on in-car safety and fitting child seats. This had proved very popular and worried parents had been coming to the Council Offices to have their child seats checked.

(v) Business Driver Awareness/Occupational Risk Lectures

An interactive road safety presentation had been developed which was suitable for businesses and had so far been presented to one business in Ashdon Road where 16 employees attended the morning session. The session involved employees ranging from top management to workmen and proved a success. The Road Safety Officer intended to work towards further business contracts in the future.

(vi) Partnership – Essex Police

The latest work with traffic police involved a safety belt campaign.

(vii) Christmas Drink Drive Campaign

The Committee was informed of the Drink Drive Campaign carried out before Christmas at Tesco stores in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow where stands were set up and leaflets issued. Leaflets were also sent to all local public houses. Over 2,000 leaflets were distributed in total and posters were sent to parish councils and local press to highlight the campaign.

(viii) Future Events

The Committee was informed that there would be a training evening for cycle instructors in March, The Road Safety Officer would like instructors for all Schools but wasn't sure if it would ever be possible to achieve 100% cover as people often dropped out. Road safety training would be given to child minders, pre-school and playgroups along with a seat belt enforcement scheme would take place in March.

Other planned schemes were the Responsible Rider (Motorcyclists), which would take place in May, and a driver awareness course. This would consist of five evening sessions taking place at 7.30 pm on 29 April, 6 May, 13 May, 20 May and 27 May 2003 and would be advertised once the posters were available.

Mr P Hughes asked about the situation on failing to provide cycle routes throughout this district. The Road Safety Officer commented that it was a disappointment that these routes had not been provided and this meant that training and education was even more important as children would be cycling on roads. She said that young children who were used to cycling on cycleways were not as street-wise as children that cycled on roads.

Adam Thomas commented on the rising problem of people cycling without lights. He commented that in rush hour travel he had often seen cycle clubs without lights on their bikes and asked the Road Safety Officer to contact cycle clubs as well as young people as they were often the worse offenders.

Alan Playle reported on tractor accidents throughout the district. He informed that Mouchels carried out the report over the last three years and that only nine accidents in Uttlesford had been reported which involved tractors. He

gave details of each accident to the group and the majority were caused by tractors turning or by drivers being in a hurry and overtaking on bends.

The Advisory Committee was presented with a report giving the statistics of fatalities within the local area. The number of fatalities had decreased in the last year. Five out of seven cyclists killed in the area were killed on A roads. It was reported that 13 pedestrians were killed last year on Essex roads and 7 of these were killed on A roads and there had been one pedestrian fatality in Uttlesford this year. John Hardisty said that the decrease in fatalities was definitely good news and it looked like education was paying off as well as the increased introduction of speed cameras. He commented that a recent report, which detailed European statistics for road safety, had shown that England had the best road safety. Portugal, Germany and France had some of the worse statistics for road safety. England was also reported to have good road safety on motorways, which was promising as we have some of the busiest in Europe.

Some members of the group requested more information on the causes of the fatalities outlined within the report and Mr Hardy agreed to send reports detailing causes of fatalities to the Secretary to be issued to members of the Road Safety Advisory Committee. The Group all agreed that this would be very useful. Alan Playle said that speed was a significant contributing factor to fatalities, but was not always the cause. He said that there was still a lot of drink driving in existence and a lot of accidents were caused by driver error. Adam Thomas mentioned that a lot of accidents are now drug related and this was increasingly becoming the contributing factor. Alan Playle said that ways to detect drug use were being perfected.

The committee was then informed that motorcyclist fatalities for 2001 were high and two thirds of the statistics were the motorcyclist's own fault. 38% had happened on junctions, 16% on bends and 21% of motorcyclists had owned their bikes for less than a year. Councillor R C Dean asked the police whether they promoted advanced driver training for motorcyclists and Alan Playle reported that advanced training was provided as part of the road safety officer's Responsible Rider Scheme. Lots of fatalities were self inflicted and education was vital.

There was some discussion on the issue of prescribed drugs affecting driving ability and Alan Playle commented that driving standards tend to get worse as people get older and the majority of the reasons for this were caused by prescribed medication. There was also discussion on the issue of elderly people driving motorised buggies within the town centre. In answer to a question from Councillor Mrs C A Bayley, the Road Safety Officer said that she knew of one company in Bishop's Stortford, which sell these buggies and put their clients through a training programme before they drive on the streets. She commented that she had helped them with their training in the past, but knew of no other training that was available. Alan Playle commented that at present driving licences or insurance were not compulsory for these vehicles. The Road Safety Officer commented that it was something that the Government needed to look into and was not for her to enforce.

AREA TRANSPORTATION MANAGER'S REPORT

Paul Hardy reported that there was one new accident remedial site, which was Fox crossroads in Debden. Some work had been done and more work was to be completed by the end of March. All other sites would be finished by the end of the financial year.

The Group were given progress on the 'safer journeys to school' initiative. Three new schools from the district had been included within the initiative for 2002/03 which were:

- Thaxted Primary School
- St Thomas More RC School, South Road, Saffron Walden
- St Mary' CE Primary School, Castle Street, Saffron Walden

Work taking place at Thaxted Primary School included flashing lights, walking bus and increased parking restrictions and Work at St Thomas' would be completed by March. Meetings were still taking place with St Mary's Primary School and the initiative would not take place this financial year, but a scheme was being put together for them to be implemented in the future.

Mr Hardy then informed the Group of the events which took place during the recent period of heavy snow. He informed that gritting roads would not stop snow settling, but it would help to stop the snow freezing hard to the road surface. He also pointed out that when traffic grinds to a halt on roads then the gritters are unable to do their job. The gritters went out at 1pm on Wednesday 29 January and were out for 30 hours non-stop gritting the roads. Once the nominated routes were gritted other roads were tackled. 23 farmers were helping out and did quite well. Mr Hardy commented that the M11 was not highway's responsibility, traffic did grind to a halt, but there had already been a two-hour hold up because of an earlier accident.

Councillor W F Bowker asked about the recent controversy over farmers who previously gritted on roads, but now were not allowed without relevant insurance. Mr Hardy explained that farmers now needed to have a certificate of competency and the relevant insurance to work on the highway.

In answer to a question from Councillor R C Dean, Paul Hardy said that costs were significant every time the gritters went out. It would cost more money to carry out more work because this would not only require more staffing but also require purchasing more lorries. The gritters usually go out on the roads at 4am in order to clear roads in time for the rush hour. It was not possible for them to do a second run in time for it to be of any use to people trying to get to work and therefore more vehicles would be required to carry out more work at one time.

SOLVING ISSUES/IMPLEMENTING DECISIONS

It was reported that the ongoing problem of implementing decisions had not progressed. Decisions made at the Road Safety Advisory Committee Meetings needed to be filtered through to the main committees such as the

Environment and Transport Committee and this needed to be looked into further.

SW177

FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that future meetings would be held on the following dates:-

Wednesday 21 May 2003

Wednesday 15 October 2003

Wednesday 10 December 2003

Wednesday 11 February 2004

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm.