

POLO
PARISHES OF THE LOWER OUSE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD (VIA ZOOM) ON MONDAY 23 Sept 2024

Present – Alex Pett (POLO Chair) (Southeast Parish Meeting), Christine Moulder (Kingston Parish Council, Claire Dishington (Rodmell Parish Council), John Scaife (Piddinghoe Parish Council), Stella Spiteri (LDC), Cllr Cathy Gallagher (Telscombe Town Council and Peacehaven Town Council), Sue Carroll (Safer C7 Project)

Apologies - Sarah Roberts (KRCRA), Neville Harrison (Egrets Way).

Did not attend: Christopher Baker (Iford PM), Cllr Sarah Osborne (ESCC).

1.	<p>Apologies for Absence and POLO Membership</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Neville Harrison, and from Sarah Roberts (Kingston Rd and Cranedown Residents Association. As Sarah rarely attends POLO, Sue has suggested to her that perhaps an alternative representative for KRCRA could be identified.</p> <p>Christine Moulder has now replaced David Hoare/John Bewick as the KPC representative. Christine is the transport and environment lead for KPC. Des McGuckian has resigned from Telscombe Town Council so is no longer a member of POLO. Cathy Gallagher is a councillor on both Peacehaven and Telscombe Town Councils so can represent both councils.</p>	
2.	<p>Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on Mon 13 May 2024, where not covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p> <p>Rodmell Parish Council held a public meeting to plan how to operationalise the Rodmell Parish Priority Statement (PPS). Priorities for the year May 2024-25 were identified, with a view to the formulation of a 3-5 year plan. Southeast Parish Meeting is still in the process of producing its PPS but anticipates that there will be some priorities shared with other POLO parishes. It was agreed that once POLO parishes have produced their PPSs, there could be scope for some liaison and collaboration between parishes and this could be explored at a future POLO meeting.</p>	Future agenda
3.	<p>Reports from Councils on Matters of Potential Interest to other POLO members.</p> <p>There was some discussion about the need for affordable housing and smaller accommodation for ‘down sizing’. This has been identified as a priority by several parishes but there are serious practical challenges, including the scale of funding required for the purchase of land and the scale of the undertaking involved, in terms of the time commitment of councillors or volunteers. In Southeast, much of the land is owned by the Glyndebourne Estate. It was noted that none of the POLO villages have had land identified for potential development in the SDNPA local plan. It was suggested that the matter of providing affordable and smaller</p>	Future agenda

	<p>accommodatiion should be discussed as an agenda item at a future meeting of POLO.</p> <p>The SDNPA Local Plan is currently being formulated and a scoping document has been out for consultation. Rodmell PC is making comments. Cllr Cathy Gallagher (Telscombe and Peacehaven Town Councils) made the point that developments along the boundaries of the national park are potentially an issue for neighbouring councils. These ‘bordering’ councils would like advance notice of relevant SDNPA developments and the opportunity to make comments on these.</p> <p>Lewes Town Council is also complaining that although Lewes is the largest town in the SDNPA, insufficient weight is given by the SDNPA to its views in planning decisions which affect the town.</p> <p>The new National Planning Framework consultation is also due to close shortly. It is understood that that this new framework will not apply within national parks and conservation areas. <i>Subsequent note – there is some ambiguity about this point.</i></p> <p>It was noted that Piddinghoe parish chair, Paul Bevan, has been elected as the second (of two) members representing parishes. It was agreed to invite him to the next meeting of POLO, as an opportunity to listen to, and to inform his ‘constituents’ about any relevant matters.</p>	<p>Next meeting</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Updates on Road Matters and Interactions with ESCC Highways. <u>Kingston Parish Council</u></p> <p>Kingston PC commissioned a survey of traffic coming from Ashcombe roundabout and travelling through Ashcombe Hollow to the junction with the C7. The aim was to ascertain the volume of vehicles which are contravening the existing width and axle weight restrictions.</p> <p>The survey found that 68% of the approximately 4000 vehicles passed straight through the village in under 5 minutes. 22% of vehicles contravened the Ashcombe Hollow 6’6 width restriction. None contravened the weight restriction.</p> <p>KPC councillors are meeting ESCC Highways representatives on 25th September to present the survey evidence and discuss what action can be taken. KPC want to know what measures ESCC Highways can/will support to address the problem.</p> <p>POLO members discussed the high number of contraventions and realised that a 6’6 width restriction does not just affect obviously large vehicles such as trucks and mobile homes, but would also affect vehicles such as Ford Transit Vans and even some large SUVs.</p> <p>It was suggested that a relatively small amount of enforcement – such as a week’s monitoring followed up by letters from Operation Crackdown – could deter a large number of drivers, because it is probably the same vehicles using the route several days per week. Enforcement would benefit the C7 as well as Kingston Village, although it could increase the number of large vehicles negotiating the narrow bends near the Swan Inn. It would be hoped that more vehicles would use the A26 as an alternative.</p>	

	<p>The Safer C7 Project</p> <p>Sue Carroll reported that a meeting had taken place in July between the project team, PJA consultants and ESCC Highways managers responsible for Policy, Strategy and Road Safety (Andrew Kier, Lisa Simmonds, Nick Flood and Michael Higgs). The purpose of the meeting was to present the measures being proposed by consultants, PJA and to gauge the response from ESCC. As promised, a written preliminary response from ESCC was subsequently received.</p> <p>The ESCC response stated that the Authority <i>has no objection in principle to the aspiration of the project of reducing the impact of vehicular traffic in rural settings and bringing about a change in driver behaviour and vehicle speeds</i>. They confirmed that the proposals are in alignment with the draft East Sussex Local Transport Plan 2024 – 2050.</p> <p>ESCC Highways stated that they support the proposals to provide village gateway and national park signage, as well as surface treatments at various locations along the length of the study area, subject to approval of suitable designs and materials.</p> <p>The PJA proposals include significant reductions in the speed limits along the C7 with lower speeds enforced by physical measures such as priority working. PJA has proposed 30 mph as the new default limit on the C7, except for the ‘no man’s land’ stretch from north of Piddinghoe to south of Southease (40 mph) and a 20 mph stretch through Rodmell and extended past Northease Manor School.</p> <p>As regards Northease Manor School, ESCC stated, <i>It is unlikely that a 20mph speed limit outside Northease School will be effective <u>without a significant amount of physical traffic calming measures</u>, especially outside peak times and during the school holidays</i>.</p> <p>Although other highways authorities have introduced 20 and 30 mph speed limits in rural areas, especially where there are a significant number of ‘vulnerable users in conflict with vehicular traffic’, ESCC continue to assert a requirement for 20+ visible properties (‘frontages’) within a 600m length of road. Their response states, <i>We consider it important that we retain 20mph and 30mph speed limits <u>to built-up areas and villages that meet our criteria on frontage development</u>, as this helps to provide drivers with a consistent message on their journeys</i>.</p> <p><i><u>The County Council does not support 20mph or 30mph speed limits on rural roads as drivers will not comply with the speed limit, if they cannot see any obvious reason for it.</u></i></p> <p>The PJA proposals seek to make it obvious to drivers why they need to reduce their speed, through ‘place making’, village gateways etc, and also to force drivers to slow down through physical measures.</p> <p>ESCC refer us to their policy document PS05/02. This takes no account of subsequent DfT Guidance on Setting Local Speed Limits – with specific guidance on rural roads – published in 2013. (Circular 01/2013). It also takes no account of national statistics (2022) which show that that almost two thirds of road fatalities are on rural roads rather than on urban roads and 3 times as many cyclists are killed on rural roads, rather than urban roads.</p> <p>This preliminary response from ESCC has been written from the current ESCC mindset, although it leaves several doors ajar. For example, their</p>	
--	--	--

	<p>criteria for 30 mph include, ‘Significant number of vulnerable road users in conflict with vehicular traffic; mean vehicle speed below 33 mph’, and measures to enforce a slower traffic speed. The PJA proposals include such self enforcing measures. ESCC criteria also state that a 20 mph limit could be acceptable ‘in the vicinity of schools’.</p> <p>With County Council elections in April, and a possible change of regime at ESCC, the project team have decided in the meantime to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek to make progress on the measures supported by ESCC - the village gateways, road surface treatments and crossing points. - Make progress on the design of measures that will physically slow the traffic. <p>We have asked PJA to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce a ‘blue print’ by November to show what the measures could/would look like; ie. the repeating pattern of village gateways, surface treatments, improved crossing points, and a more precise indication of where they would be. - Assess the feasibility, and ‘deliverability’ of the measures and indicate the scale of costs, as requested by ESCC. <p>The C7 Project will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support (liaise with etc) the Egrets Way north Piddinghoe phase. - Have a follow up meeting with ESCC when the information above is available. - Play ‘the long game’ (but not too long – April 2025) in terms of a possible change of regime at ESCC. There are many votes in road safety improvements. We will seek to engage/inform local politicians and voters and seek to involve Northease Manior School governors. - Publish an update on the project on our website, and for parishes and other stakeholders. - Convene a meeting of the project Advisory Group in November when we have the PJA ‘blueprint’. 	
	<p>Other C7 Matters</p> <p>We presume the C7 night closures (8.00pm – 4.00am) are for the purpose of re-surfacing. The published schedule is as follows: 7-8 Oct Kingston; 9-10 Oct Swanborough; between 11-17 Oct Iford; between 18 – 23 Oct Northease; between 24-28 Oct Rodmell.</p> <p>Work is in progress on the new Iford farm estate access road. The hedges which have been removed will be replanted further back from the C7 to maximise sightlines.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Egrets Way Update</p> <p>Neville Harrison was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. Alex Pett, Southease Parish Meeting chair, reported that the stretch between Rodmell and Lewes has now been surfaced, except for the section by the pumping station north of Rodmell which is still being worked on. The ability to ride a bike on a paved surface almost all the way to Lewes was much appreciated.</p> <p>Some top dressing on the section between Rodmell and Southease was washed away when the river over-topped its banks earlier in the year. This has not yet been repaired.</p>	

	An update on Phase 7 (north Piddinghoe) is expected from Alistair Lynton Crook (SDNPA) shortly.	
6.	Developments Along the C7 – Unpermitted Developments. None detected.	
7.	AOB It was agreed to invite Paul Bevan to come to the next meeting of POLO in his capacity as SDNPA Parish member, to make a report, answer questions, consult POLO members etc, as appropriate.	
8.	Date of Next meeting - Monday 13th January at 7.30pm, via Zoom	