

Minutes of the Strengthening Local Relationships Meeting
Catsfield Parish Council and East Sussex Highways
Wednesday 11th September 2024 at 10:00
The Village Hall, Church Road, Catsfield, East Sussex TN33 0PE

Present:

Cllr Keith Robertson, Catsfield Parish Council [*Chair*]
Cllr Martin Holgate, Catsfield Parish Council
Cllr Sharon Harris, Catsfield Parish Council
Cllr Sarah Jacques, Catsfield Parish Council
Vicki Rutt, Clerk to Catsfield Parish Council [*Minutes*]
Jo Reed, Road Traffic Safety
Sam Crowhurst, Stakeholder Liaison Officer
Mal Ellison, Steward
Liam Reilly, Steward
Lucy Richardson, resident for agenda item 2

Apologies:

Cllr Kathryn Field – ESCC

1. Welcome, apologies for absence and introductions.

KR welcomed everyone to the meeting. It had been a while since the last one. KR acknowledged that everyone is doing the best they possibly can within the procedures they must follow.

2. Update on our application for speed reduction and speed limit changes.

KR updated that the contract management team at ESCC have received an application from CPC for a speed reduction in Catsfield. There has been a problem with speeding for years. The PC brought a black cat device and the results are constant. Around 9,000 vehicles go through the village a day, over 50% of them are doing over 30mph and around 1000 are doing over 40mph. The Parish Council has done all it can to reduce speeds, and we now need the help of ESCC to implement a change to the speed limit and if possible, to introduce traffic calming measures. We have a speedwatch team working with the Police to educate drivers to slow down, we have the support of the Police who regularly conduct speed checks in the Village, but we need engineering measures from ESCC to further slow traffic speeds. Speeds through the Village is a problem and here is a serious problem with speeding in the S bends, where there have been 2 crashes in the last fortnight, and frequent crashes over many years. The speed of the vehicles needs to be reduced whilst they go through the bends and then when they enter the village. The application asks for 3 things: a speed reduction to 30mph, plus speed bumps and builds outs on the Green. JR is unable to inform the PC of the decision on the application, but she confirmed a decision report is due imminently. JR did state that the Road Safety Team are fully supportive of the reduction in speed.

KR invited a resident to attend the meeting who witnessed one of the crashes recently to give an account to show the concerns of the community and the impact of speeding on their lives.

Lucy Richardson explained that she lives after the first bend, and she was first on scene when the cement mixer went over. She heard the shrieking of brakes and a loud bang, she thought it was going to explode. Her 7 year old daughter was petrified and is since traumatised. The driver managed to exit the vehicle and was thankfully ok. Lucy had to stop the traffic, on her own, for 20 minutes until help arrived. Just this past Sunday, there was another loud bang, this time a car had come off the road but managed to land in the ditch on its tyres. It did however land on the only 'path' in that area which is frequently used by equestrians. When walking through there, there are several parts of lots

of different vehicles that have come off the road. There have been so many, but they do not all get reported. Her neighbours are petrified, some do not walk in the village due to fear. Some feel that they put their life on the line pulling out of their driveway. They recently held a silent peaceful protest with children to request a speed reduction. Lucy explained that 3 times, she has seen a bus v lorry get stuck in the narrow section and has had to assist again in clearing the road. Lucy stated that a 30mph speed is the only solution, safety must outweigh everything else. She has written to her local MP, and he fully supports this.

KR explained that there is a clear risk of someone being killed or injured when attempting to cross the road or exit/enter their properties as well as when vehicles crash on the S bends or speed through the village, failing to stop at the pedestrian crossing. Reducing the speed to 30mph through the S bends would give a clear message to drivers that 30mph is the safe speed at which they should drive. At the moment drivers are expected to assess what they think the safe speed is within the 60mph limit and it is clear that they cannot assess this properly because there are constant crashes. Reducing the limit to 30mph should also slow the speed of vehicles entering the village and enable our speedwatch team and the Police to check speeds as vehicles pass the recreation ground. KR also noted that we cannot accept a decision not to reduce the speed limit because without this someone will eventually be killed, and we must try and prevent that.

JR stated that sites are prioritised following deaths and serious injuries, which at the moment means that action by ESCC alone is not a priority but action may be possible via the match funding scheme in which the costs of changing the speed limit are shared by ESCC and the Parish Council. This is the basis for the application now being considered. SC has a meeting with Victoria this afternoon so will explain what has been spoken about today and chase for the decision.

3. Residents are asking for a 20mph zone by the school. Is this possible and if so how to proceed?

KR reported that residents have complained about the speed that vehicles are going past the school. We have been told that the speeds are increasing but we do not have any data to back that. JR asked would the speed limit just be for when school is open. It is unlikely that a full time 20mph limit will be possible but a 20mph limit during school hours may be possible. JR stated that the school has the flashing lights outside albeit they are being hidden in the hedge and the roundels on the road need a refresh. JR is going to speak to the community focus scheme to see if it is something they can implement as whereas this would not be a priority for ESCC, the community focus scheme prioritises issues that are important to the community. **Action for JR.**

4. Blocked/broken drains case ref DRF001406.

KR explained that this was reported 6 months ago, the drain was blocked, and water was going into properties. He saw a drain lorry there but no update since. SC could see on the system that the drain was checked but there was no further info available. There has been no update on any further investigation. KR stated that the drain is still blocked or broken because water is escaping underground into properties near the drain. KR will show ME the exact problem after the meeting. SC will investigate further. **Action for SC.**

KR has video evidence so the Clerk will send the video to SC. **Action for VR.**

5. Hedges. We have made requests to clear hedges where residents do not respond to requests.

KR asked about hedge cutting requests. ME explained that it gets reported, a steward will inspect and a hedge cutting notice will be served. If no response in 2 weeks, this goes to enforcement. This can sometimes be a lengthy process if land registry searches need to take place. VR explained there has been a few recently. She will compile a list and send to SC. **Action for VR.**

It was raised that sometimes you will get an update on your report, other times you don't. LR explained that if an issue has been reported multiple times, the initial person who reported will get the update, not everyone.

6. Timeline on yellow no stopping lines at the junction of church road and the green.

KR explained that a year ago a request was made for yellow lines to be placed on the junction of Church Road and The Green. Around 3 months ago a notice was put up on the pole stating it had been authorised. There has however been no update since. SC will find out about this. **Action for SC.**

7. The signage on the one-way Church Lane needs a review because of the frequent occurrence of drivers going the wrong way.

KR stated that almost daily, you see someone go up Church Lane the wrong way. ME confirmed he has seen it twice recently. He has marked jobs for the lines to be refreshed and the signs to be shifted and cleaned. ME will also review the alignment and visibility of the no entry signs. A hedge cutting notice has been served on Thatched Cottage as this is also a safety issue for visibility. It was agreed to see if these maintenance measures improve the situation.

Action for JR and ME.

8. Any other business

- SH asked about the potholes in Church Lane. ME said it has been raised for constant monitoring, he will look into this. **Action for ME.**
- KR reported that every year, the end of Church Road floods. It gets blocked, and the flood affects houses nearby and the fire service have to come out annually to assist. We recognise that there is a schedule of checking drains but these need to be checked frequently during the winter. KR is going to show ME the exact drain after the meeting, and request that it is checked more frequently. **Action for ME.**
- JR confirmed that a school crossing patrol officer undertook training on 10th and 11th and will be in post from the 12th September 2024.

9. Next meeting – date, time, and location

A date will be confirmed for the next meeting to be held in March 2025.