ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

**TRAFFIC SITE MEETING IN ALFRISTON ON FRIDAY 14TH MAY 2021 AT 10:00.**

*Rule of 6 and social distancing was adhered to.*

**Present**

Ian Johnson                   ESCC

Andrew Keer                 ESCC

Maria Caulfield             MP

Cllr Stephen Shing        ESCC

Cllr Nick Beechey          APC

Cllr Stephen Rabagliati APC

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Andy Mileham, who was unfortunately stuck on a failed train at Bishopstone, having travelled from Norwich.

The purpose of the meeting was to walk through and explain each of the APC's proposals for the benefit of the ESCC/ESH attendees and, in particular, Andy Mileham who had authored the ESCC Feasibility Study and responses but has only limited personal knowledge of Alfriston.  All agreed that it was unfortunate that he had been prevented from attending, and Cllrs Beechey and Rabagliati offered to repeat the walkthrough later in the day or on a future date for his benefit. Mr Mileham did not manage to visit later in the day.

It was explained that APC are not seeking to address an accident record in the village, as there is not one as such, but are very keen to develop a scheme that establishes a sense of place and public realm that makes the village a more comfortable and pleasant environment for residents, visitors and motorists alike. It was explained that given Karl Taylor’s indication that any proposal that passes a safety audit would be included in a consultation (so long as it was understood that ESCC would be unlikely to fund much more than a basic scheme), APC felt frustrated at the pushback every time it pressed for something to be included. Andrew Keer stated that there was no pushback and that reports prepared by ESH set out technical/statutory reasons why suggested measures may not be possible or the challenges associated with their implementation It was indicated that APC remains keen for all of their proposals to proceed to public consultation, and any item should only be ruled out beforehand because it is not allowed, not just because it is something that ESCC might not otherwise implement. It was explained that APC understand that any ambitious scheme would require APC to obtain funding.

During a walk through the village, the following features were discussed in some detail:

1)  Northern gateway. A position to the south of the Willows car park entrance was discussed and IJ indicated in principle there was no issue with position. APC restated their wish for a buildout at the gateway. APC do not wish there to be a white picket fence, but instead have for instance a wooden gate to give a more rural look. The village sign would be moved and incorporated in the Gateway, and the village wide 20mph would start here. There was general agreement that gateway, 20mph and village sign could and should all be in the same position. IJ indicated that a buildout may require additional signage and would have to include some form of visibility aid given there is not street lighting. It was pointed out that the village sign is made from reflective material. Consideration would also need to be given to the visibility requirements for the access to the Car Park and the remaining length of the existing 30mph speed limit.

2)  Gateway to gateway road surface. APC’s request is for each of block paving, road surface treatment, road surface colour, with indicative costs, to go to consultation, as well as gateway changes to the road surface as per the last ESCC report. It is accepted by all that the funding requirements for end to end changes would be high, but cost should not preclude this going to consultation. Such a significant feature, given the extent to which it would reinforce the sense of place, would justify long term finance. Consideration has to be given to ongoing maintenance costs and replacement of surface by utility companies.

3) Roundel between Dence car park entrance/exit and Willows car park pedestrian exit. The purpose of the feature was explained as being to prevent drivers accelerating out of the bend into North Street, reinforcing the sense of public realm, and making it a more comfortable experience for pedestrians exiting the Willows. Additional benefits would be slower speeds in North Street and a more comfortable environment for residents on North Street accessing the front of their properties. There was some suggestion that such a feature might encourage drivers to ‘accidentally’ drive up Sloe Lane, but APC found this hard to understand. It was explained by AK that there is a moratorium imposed on local authorities by DfT on shared space designs at present (until DfT provides new guidance), but it was explained that there was no intention to remove the pedestrian barrier at the Willows, for instance. Query therefore whether this was a shared. space. AK further advised it is important that the purpose of any new arrangement, and how to use it, must be clear to both driver and pedestrians. Alternative measures, in the event that a roundel is not allowed (as opposed to being something that ESCC might not ordinarily implement) were discussed. These could include some form of different road surface treatment at this intersection.

4) North Street. No obvious solution is apparent and no plan was concluded. However it is hoped that the implementation of all other measures as part of a comprehensive design would address some of the driver behaviour.

5)  Village Square. Removal of the Give Way markings by the bus stop was discussed and it was indicated that ESCC would give consideration to this. The need for enforcement of parking restrictions was discussed.There was a suggestion made that ESCC might have the power to delegate enforcement to APC -to be investigated further.

6) The need for double yellow lines to prevent congestion caused by on street parking was discussed. IJ asked whether parked cars in fact slowed the traffic, but it was explained that they can lead to bad congestion at busy times. APC reiterated that any measures should be put in place in the expectation/readiness for the day that enforcement is once again active. Double yellow lines have general agreement. APC restated a desire for some planters, positioned so as to allow for vehicles to pull in between them, and which would not encroach too far into the roadway in any event. The purpose of these would be to break up the linear nature of the road and increase the sense of place, slowing traffic. These were not ruled out.

6)  The installation of bollards at various points along the High Street has been somewhat haphazard over the years. Many can be seen to have been impacted, and a review is required to see if a rational scheme can be put in place.

8)  Lower High Street. The location of the Give Way signs and road markings discussed, with a view to possible removal. ESCC will give consideration to this. Convex mirror was discussed and, although DfT approval is no longer required, IJ explained why a mirror would not work. Primarily this is to do with distance. Given the length of road to be addressed, any mirror would have to be enormous to achieve the desired effect. Safety issues include fogging, misting, dulling of surface, reflection of headlights at night being misleading. Consensus was that a mirror would not work even if allowed and APC should focus on more achievable aims.

9)  Southern gateway. The location midway between Deans Place pedestrian entrance and Tye Road was discussed as the straight road at this point provides adequate visibility and the position is the point where the church is first visible. The inclusion of a buildout and the repositioning of the village sign and the commencement of the 20mph limit, all in same location, were discussed.

**Next steps**

Hopefully it will be possible for Andy Mileham to visit in the near future, and the offer from SR and NB to meet still stands. As per Karl Taylor's suggestion, a meeting is to be scheduled with stakeholders, possibly Village Hall.

Everyone agreed that that it had been highly beneficial to visit the village today, and well worth the time spent.

*Comments from Mr Karl Taylor, Assistant Director of Transport at ESCC, following his sight of the minutes:*

* *I stand by my earlier comment that I am happy for any proposal that passes a safety audit to be included in a public consultation, as long as it is clear those elements that ESCC is prepared to fund and what APC would fund. Any suggestion that ESCC is pushing back is unfortunate and definitely not intentional.*
* *With regard to the suggestion in 5.0 that ESCC might have the power to delegate enforcement to APC – currently parking enforcement has not been decriminalised in Wealden District and remains the responsibility of Sussex Police. In the event that civil parking enforcement were introduced, ESCC as the highway authority would be responsible for parking enforcement across the district. And whilst ESCC could delegate enforcement to APC it is unlikely that we would. Instead we would employ our parking enforcement contractor NSL to carry out that enforcement as they do across Lewes District, Eastbourne and Hastings Boroughs and Rother District.*