

FINCHAMPSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROADS & ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 31 MAY 2023 AT 7PM on Microsoft Teams

PRESENT: Cllr S. Bromley, Chair; Cllr R. Cundy, Vice Chair.
Cllrs E. Allen; P. Grainger; R. Marshallsay; S. Weeks.

K. Dagnall, Clerk.

66/2023 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Committee members were present except Cllr Bowers who has been granted a leave of absence from the Council.

67/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

68/2023 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2023 were agreed as a true record and will be signed in due course.

69/2023 MATTERS ARISING

335/2023 Bus shelters

The new bus shelters installed on Nine Mile Ride in August 2018 are still not illuminated. The electrical supply is apparently now in place but has not been connected. Seats from the shelters were removed (assumed stolen) earlier this year. The Clerk has asked Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) for an update on the current position.

The bus shelter due to be installed on the Finchampstead Road opposite the California Ratepayers Hall in August 2020 will be installed (subject to space) when the California Crossroads improvement scheme is implemented. The Parish Council owned bus shelter outside the Ratepayers Hall is due to be replaced as part of this scheme. The Clerk has asked WBC to consider a shelter with a green roof for this location.

338/2023 Road Safety Issues / Quiet Lanes

At the previous meeting it was suggested that WBC was looking into the designation of some minor rural roads as Quiet Lanes. There has been no further information on this.

339/2023 Funding for road repair / improvement works

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds are intended primarily for the provision or improvement of infrastructure but in some cases can be used for maintenance works. The Clerk confirmed that CIL funds cannot be used for road repairs or maintenance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

No members of the public were present.

70/2023 INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2023/24

The only expenditure from the Committee budget is £160 for the street light energy supply during April and May.

71/2023 COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

Traffic volume and speed monitoring units

- Two Black Cat speed data recorders were purchased in February 2022. There were some difficulties in making the units operational but this has been resolved and the units have been in use since February 2023. Various roads are monitored 24 hours a day over 7 days.
- The Parish Council used similar units for approximately 10 years until December 2020. The data collected was useful both to inform community speed watch activities, and in connection with development control matters.
- It was noted that over time the latest monitoring may show a significant difference in traffic volumes and patterns of road use due to the increase in working from home and other lifestyle changes following the pandemic.

Post mounted Speed Indicator Devices (PSID's)

- The units continue to be used in rotation on the roads with the worst speeding problem and are left in each location for 3 weeks.
- There was a problem with one unit in January but this was resolved by the manufacturer and the unit has been in use again since March.

In June 2022 WBC was promoting the use of its 6 Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) which are installed for up to 3-month periods on roads where there is an intermittent speeding problem. The promotion stated that locations are generally chosen following feedback from Town and Parish Councils, the public or community groups, although the Parish Council has not yet been approached in relation to this.

The Clerk has asked WBC to consider installing it's VAS on the Lower Wokingham Road but has not had a response.

Cllrs Bromley and Cundy will obtain images of the VAS / PSID's / other kit on the Reading Road so that the Clerk can follow this up with WBC to establish which are authorised units.

Speed indicator device (SID) sessions

- Roadside SID sessions have been taking place regularly since May 2022, following an enforced break during the pandemic, followed by a period when changes had to be put in place to comply with the new Thames Valley Police (TVP) rulings on community speedwatch activities.
- Some former volunteers have stood down but following recent promotion four new volunteers have come forward although to date only one is active.
- The most recent sessions were on Longwater Road where 24 vehicles were recorded exceeding the speed limit, and on Nine Mile Ride (west) where 27 vehicles were recorded.
- The Deputy Clerk is working on documenting how sessions are planned, run on the day and the follow up. As part of this the Deputy Clerk has completed the TVP training and has attended a speedwatch session. The current risk assessment will be reviewed as part of this process.

Equipment for volunteers

Weatherproof jackets have been provided for Cllrs Bromley and Cundy. No other regular volunteers have requested jackets. This will be considered again in Autumn 2023.

72/2023 ROAD SAFETY ISSUES

Lower Wokingham Road – there has been no progress with the potential pedestrian / cycle crossing near the Wellingtonia Avenue roundabout. In 2020 WBC agreed to investigate the proposal.

Finchampstead Road near Church Lane junction – the sight line issue for pedestrians crossing the road has been raised with WBC several times in recent years. Cllr Cornish raised this again with WBC in Autumn 2022; the hedge alongside the Finchampstead Road on the Church Farm boundary was cut back around the same time but it is unclear who did the work. It is uncertain whether there is a viable solution to the sight line issue.

Biggs Lane pedestrian crossing

Barkham Parish Council is leading on the project to install a crossing by Hazebrouck Meadows. The need to address the slope, and to reduce the height of a BT box, appear to be the reason for the delay, but there is still no actual agreement over putting a crossing in. If a crossing is installed it is likely to be a zebra crossing to allow pedestrians to safely access Hazebrouck Meadows, although it is acknowledged that cyclists also cross at this point and will continue to do so.

WBC appears to be focussing on the planned and approved crossing further along Biggs Lane, on the 'official' route to Bohunt School.

White Horse Lane

In Autumn 2022 concerns were raised by residents about the increased use of White Horse Lane as a short cut when The Ridges re-opens. The road re-opened in November 2022. WBC had advised that it was looking at measures to discourage use of the Lane but there is no further update on this – the Clerk has followed this up again recently although there have been no further concerns raised by residents.

73/2023 ROAD CONDITION ISSUES

The poor condition of roadsides and footways is an ongoing concern. Issues with dirty or broken or obscured road signs, encroaching vegetation, potholes or footway condition should continue to be reported using the online reporting system on the WBC website. It was noted that this system sends reports direct to the contractor and it is unclear how WBC monitors the level of reports, or contractor performance in resolving issues.

Blanket reports for the stretches of roads with multiple issues have had some success, for example with sections of Finchampstead Road and Barkham Ride.

Local residents will continue to be encouraged to report issues through items in the e newsletters. It was suggested that local cycling groups could be encouraged to report issues.

Commonfield Lane

The condition of the Lane is a concern, particularly the informal passing points. WBC has said that it will be undertaking improvements to the Lane and passing bays, but the timescale is unknown – the Lane is not included in the WBC published work programme.

Lower Sandhurst Road and Dell Road

The roads were heavily used while The Ridges was closed. WBC committed to undertaking repair and reinstatement when The Ridges re-opened. Lower Sandhurst Road is in the WBC works programme for 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2024 and part of the road has recently been resurfaced. It is unclear if any works are planned for Dell Road.

Road surface condition at the Barkham Ride roundabout and the California Crossroads

A section of the road surface at the Barkham Ride / Windsor Ride junction was in extremely poor condition – this was finally repaired in early May. It was included in the WBC work programme for January 2023 to June 2024.

The Nine Mile Ride between White Horse Lane and the Finchampstead Road is also included in the programme and this may include the problem area at the California Crossroads adjacent to Creswell's Garage.

Finchampstead Road between the Doctor's Surgery and Spring Gardens

This stretch of Road has numerous potholes, and floods caused by blocked gullies, and has also suffered water leaks. There are several sections where the road surface is in poor condition. All issues have been reported to WBC and some adhoc work has been carried out.

Other planned works included in the WBC programme for 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2024

Jubilee Road (B3016) between Wick Hill and The Ridges – minor repairs have been implemented but the road is in the programme for full resurfacing. Improvements to the Reading Road (A327) between the Nine Mile Ride Extension and Park Lane.

74/2023 LARGE PROJECT UPDATES

Nine Mile Ride Extension

The new road opened in October 2022. The Clerk has asked WBC if a Parish gateway and a community speed watch area sign could be installed close to the Reading Road roundabout. This has been followed up again.

California Crossroads: The improvement scheme was deferred from 2019/20 due to major utility works on Nine Mile Ride followed by the pandemic and then the closure of The Ridges for 18 months due to subsidence. Implementation is now expected in 2024. WBC has committed to arrange a meeting for stakeholders at an appropriate stage, to be followed by regular meetings going forward.

Parking at the California Crossroads

The WBC owned and managed Avery Corner Car Park continues to be heavily used, with staff from Nine Mile Ride Primary School and the Day Nursery / Pre School taking up a large number of spaces. Staff from the shops and businesses also use the car park, and the bays at the front of the shops which are intended for short term parking.

Since 2018 WBC has stated that it will put in place or is considering various Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to limit parking in the bays in front of the shops and the car park but none have been put in place to date. It is understood that when the California Crossroads improvement scheme is implemented a one hour parking restriction will be placed on the bays in front of the shops.

The Parish Council has worked with WBC in recent years to try to alleviate the pressure on parking, including modifying the car park layout to maximise spaces, and getting one bottle bank removed to release a space. The Parish Council has also regularly contacted the school and the local businesses asking that they park considerately and use other forms of transport or car share where possible.

The potential for creating additional parking on land adjacent to the Co-op has been looked into. This project has now been shelved as the development at 422 Finchampstead Road has closed off the rear access to the space in question.

The Parish Council therefore has no more options or suggestions which could help alleviate the problem and has contacted WBC, the owner and manager of the car park, to ask what its plans are.

The WBC Parking Manager has responded with a number of options. The Committee considered the options and suggested that half of the car park could be allocated to the school on weekdays during term time, with the other half available to the public with a one hour time limit. The Committee agreed that this would be the best way of helping the local businesses and residents, while still supporting the school.

The Clerk will ask the Parking Manager for a meeting to discuss how this could be put in place, and how it would be enforced. The Parish Council has previously offered to contribute to the cost of enforcement and may consider this again.

Junction of the B3348 and B3016 – former ‘War Memorial junction’

The War Memorial Working Group is leading on this project, reporting to the Finance & General Management Committee and Main Council. The Working Group is expecting to hear more from WBC about its proposals in June, and will report to the Finance & General Management Committee and the Council in July.

75/2023 INCIDENT REPORTS

There were no incidents to report.

76/2023 FORUM

Cllr Bromley noted that WBC has applied to take over the enforcement of moving traffic offences in specific locations, mainly in Wokingham Town. If the application is successful this may be rolled out to other areas in due course.

77/2023 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is 6 September 2023.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting of the Committee.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS – Roads & Road Safety 31 May 2023

MINUTE REFERENCE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S)
69/2023	New bus shelters on Nine Mile Ride – continue to follow up lighting issue and seat replacement. Question level of use of the shelters.	Clerk
69/2023	Continue to monitor progress with planned installation of new and replacement bus shelters nr Ratepayers Hall, including provision of a green roof	Clerk
71/2023	Continue to ask WBC to put VAS on Lower Wokingham Road (Oct 22, Jan 23)	Clerk
71/2023	Footage of VAS/PSID/other on Reading Road Clerk to follow up	SPB/RC Clerk
71/2023	Roadside speed watch sessions Document procedures for session planning, implementation and follow up	Deputy Clerk

	Review Risk assessment	
72/2023	Maintain contact with Barkham PC re Biggs Lane crossing by Hazebrouck	Clerk/SPB
73/2023	Dirty/missing/broken/obscured signs, potholes, footway problems – continue to report issues and encourage WBC to address these.	All
74/2023	California Crossroads improvements – maintain contact with WBC over progress towards implementation	Clerk
74/2023	Avery Corner Car Park / parking bays parking issues – arrange meeting with WBC parking manager to discuss suggestions	Clerk
	Follow up with WBC/ monitor progress Gateway – NMR nr junction with Sandhurst Road / Lower Wokingham Road Gateway / community speed watch signage on NMRE KD/AW 7/10/22 Lower Wokingham Road crossing Finchampstead Road / Church Lane crossing Lower Sandhurst Road / Dell Road reinstatement Commonfield Lane works White Horse Lane works Road condition at California Crossroads. Ref W2241909. 5/10/22. Request for double yellow lines at Arnett avenue / Gorse Ride North. 09/2021.	Clerk