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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

of the meeting of the **Working Party** formed to address traffic-related issues in Lewes held on **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall, Lewes** at **11:00am**.

**PRESENT** Cllrs S Catlin (Wischhusen); M Milner (*Chairman*); S Murray; R O’Keeffe. Also present (*not nominated to serve on Working party*): Cllr J Stockdale.

**In attendance:** S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); F Willis (*Reception/administration officer*)

**TIWP2013/09** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies had been received from Cllr L F Li, who was on holiday, and Cllr A Dean, who had a family commitment.

**TIWP2013/10** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** Cllr Stockdale, although not appointed to the Working party, declared an interest as a governor of South Malling School, which would feature in discussion during the meeting.

**TIWP2013/11** **MINUTES:** The minutes of the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013 were signed as an accurate record.

**TIWP2013/12** **QUESTIONS:** There were none. No members of the press or public were present.

### **TIWP2013/13** **BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**

The Chairman reiterated how positive and constructive the previous meeting had been, and he undertook to ensure the benefits of this were transferred where areas of interest overlapped with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

There was a brief discussion on general matters such as the practical execution of the recent Council decision to fund bench seats at the bus station, and the need to keep traffic issues in focus during the evolution of the North Street Quarter planning proposals.

*Safety issues near South Malling School* - The main reason for the meeting was the recent request from parents of children attending South Malling School for assistance in finding a short-term solution to the lack of provision for dropping-off children. The parking, drop off and pickup around South Malling School, Church Lane, was described as a nightmare, and sadly a pupil was injured by a car before Christmas. The area around the school, including Barn Lane, The Deanery, The Martlets and along Church Lane accommodates the 'school run' for the parents of 253 pupils that attend South Malling School. It was observed that Church Lane rapidly becomes congested and some parking practices are “questionable”.

It was recognized that the majority of local parents did walk their children to school, based upon school data. The catchment of the school had increased steadily (Ringmer, Pells, Wallands, Winterbourne, even Denton), and a double intake was introduced in 2011-12, some parents having no choice but to drive to the school. Many parents dropped their children off en-route to their jobs by car.

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) had no budget for improving the roads around the school, but there could be access to the 'community match' grant scheme. Regarding an initial solution, it had been discussed whether 4 or 5 road-painted pick up/drop off bays could be introduced either side of the bus stop on the school side of Church Lane, with limited hours of 8.30-9.15am and 3.00-3.30pm. Such a project would be reasonably simple to design, although consultation on a traffic Order would take time. An alternative could look to introduce “grasscrete” or bays to

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allow additional parking on the northern side of Church Lane, but access issues meant that this was not a particularly practical idea.

There was a lengthy debate as to the current practices, and the scope for altering behaviour through education *versus* intervention. It was acknowledged that there was genuine pressure on parking provision in the area, and that although the school's crossing patrol officer was quite effective in preventing abuse of the school zig-zag line markings, there was no real enforcement of general parking regulations. There were recognized constraints upon the siting of any physical engineering features, arising from current deliberations on the future design of the Earwig Corner junction and the route of outstanding sections of Lewes-Ringmer cycle path.

Members heard an account of the problem from a parent's perspective, and it was observed that the issue had earlier tended to "self-regulate" if vehicles briefly using the bus-stop were not prevented from so doing.

After a lengthy and detailed discussion, it was **agreed** to recommend that Council should offer £1,000 towards the cost of painting drop-off bays, subject to agreement by ESCC.

*Footway repairs* – Arising from ESCC responses to disputed repairs to pavement within Lewes Conservation Area, Members discussed the principles at issue. Tarmac had been used in a highly visible area considered to be a "gateway" zone to the town. This followed similar earlier repairs, leaving an unsightly and uneven surface. Initial responses to complaint by a Town Councillor had raised fears that this would be treated as permanent and not properly reinstated within six months as required by prevailing regulations. It was reported that a senior ESCC Traffic Manager had undertaken to pursue contractors for early correction, and that proposals were extant to amend the present two-stage scheme and encourage reinstatement to an appropriate standard immediately after completion of works. There were also proposals to change standard criteria applied to the assessment of damage and the urgency of a repair in the context of potential for slips/trips/falls. Primary factors were under scrutiny in the review, including fundamental principles such as the risk posed by the height or depth of a hazard as opposed to the length of time it remained unrepaired.

Members were encouraged to learn of these moves toward an improved system, although they still sought a coherent approach to the quality of materials used in repairs/replacements within the Conservation Area. This was a long-standing issue, and was now more prominent given the town's status within the South Downs National Park. It was **agreed** that TC would draft a letter expressing these concerns to the County Council's Director; Lead Member; and Chief Executive.

**TIWP2013/14**

#### **CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:**

It was recommended that Council should offer £1,000 towards the cost of painting drop-off bays on the highway adjacent to South Malling School, subject to agreement by ESCC.

**TIWP2013/15**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed.

*The meeting closed at 12:40pm*

Signed: .....

Date: .....