

Annual Parish Meeting – Monday 20 April 2009
Highways, Footpaths and Lighting Committee

The Committee comprises of Shirley Beazer (Chair), Hugh Baker, Richard Wickham, Keith Masdin and Jean Vesey.

BATHFORD HILL/HIGH STREET

The latest proposals from B&NES (18 February 2009) regarding Priority Point 1 and the junction of Bathford Hill and Ashley Road include the following:

(a) Refusal to remove but extend Priority Point 1 upwards to the junction with Ashley Road with kerb build out which will create a “funnel” effect; (b) Increasing the available carriageway width from 3 metres to 4 metres to accommodate larger vehicles (ie HGV and agricultural vehicles) would also be considered as part of any amendments; (c) Kerb build out at Ashley Road to deter vehicles to turn in fast and enhance pedestrian crossing facilities - resulting in the loss of two parking spaces; . (Our request of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) could be located at a later date).

Safer Routes to School funding for 2009/10 has now been allocated, so any improvements will have to wait through the 2010/11 budget or even further in the future. We continue to strongly contest these proposals and consider they would undoubtedly create an even more disastrous safety situation.

Two 20 mph speed restriction signs which operate during Primary School and Pepperpot start and finish times have now been installed in the High Street

The recommendation for the extension of the footway from No 56 Bathford Hill to the Parish Office was also refused as it was “thought to be difficult without imposing a priority system of traffic or a more substantial priority calming scheme that would necessitate traffic proceeding in one direction at a time, under traffic signal control”.

The sudden collapse of the pavement at the entrance to Portals after a heavy rainfall proved to be the result of previous inefficient repair of the culvert underneath.

SIGNS

We do not approve, and therefore immediately request the removal of, advertising signs, invariably illegally attached to highway signs, in the Parish. Unfortunately, our objections on safety grounds of advertising boards on the Roundabout were overruled. Our aim is to improve the appearance of the parish and to eliminate unnecessary “street furniture”

POTHOLES

We cannot fail to be aware of the continuous appearance of so many deep and dangerous potholes, especially in the High Street which were eventually repaired late February 2009, despite repeated (almost weekly) requests for their urgent repair.

A363

Flooding on two sections of the A363 continues to be a major safety hazard. At times, flood water threatens to cover the whole width of the road a short distance upwards from the Warleigh Lane entrance and at the 3 drains situated close to the Dry Arch. Your co-operation with “on the spot” flood reports either to myself or to Council Connect Tel: 394041.would greatly improve the response timescale.

The newly appointed B&NES Specialist Engineer (who reportedly would be analysing known accident hotspots and major routes where accidents occur) was also requested to investigate the safety measures of the A363. Records are only kept by B&NES of accidents actually reported to the Police and this does not convey the appalling number of innumerable and ongoing near-misses and accidents.

WARLEIGH LANE

Disappointingly, the request for a 30 mph speed restriction on Warleigh Lane was refused because “It has the same characteristics as many other rural lanes and therefore does not conform to the characteristics of a 30 mph speed restriction”. Meanwhile, the increasing volume of traffic using Warleigh Lane warrants even further diligence.

BATHFORD BRIDGE

Bathford Bridge comprises of 3 arches. To date, one is completely silted up and the middle arch is rapidly following suit. The Environment Agency (*Tel: 0800.807060*) have finally confirmed an inspection will be carried out to investigate appropriate action.

ROUNDABOUT/THE POUND

Eventually we saw the welcome removal of overgrown bushes and pruning of trees on the Roundabout to improve visibility and safe exit from Box Road and Bathford onto the A4.

The removal of the willow tree adjacent The Pound at the Bybrook which unacceptably blocks sight of the large directional sign and inevitably leads to HGVs mistakenly attempting to negotiate Bathford Hill instead of the A363 is also under review.

DOVERS PARK

As the circle at Dovers Park is gritted as part of the bus route, the grit bin has now been relocated - but to date in the wrong location. B&NES are endeavouring to remedy the situation.

Dovers Park is now included on the route of the X72 bus to Melksham operated by Faresaver.

We also strongly contested the proposed removal of the Sunday evening No 713 bus service and hopefully bus operational hours (although slightly reduced) have been retained.

MAINTENANCE

Weed control and verge cutting is woefully inadequate – eventual action is usually too little, too late. The maintenance of all footpaths in the parish is continually stressed and especially weeding of our unique cobbled Church Street. There is a promise of future improvements. We can only hope to convey that prevention is better than cure

BIRDCAGE WALK

Repair of Birdcage Walk was carried out as a result of lifting tree roots (the tree is too large to remove) on two sections of this widely used footpath. The uneven incline was eventually resurfaced with tarmac (with edging stones on the School playground boundary) to form a ramp. We still await funding for the provision of subdued lighting on this footpath.

ILLEGAL PARKING

The entrance to the Playing Field and the adjacent bottleneck of Ashley Road continues to be regularly and unacceptably obstructed by parked vehicles. The double yellow lines were installed as a last resort to facilitate essential visibility to and from the Playing Field onto Ashley Road and sufficient road width for local and emergency vehicles. Illegal parking will not be tolerated.

COUNTY BOUNDARY AT KINGSDOWN INTO HIGH STREET

The cause of frequent and seemingly inexplicable accidents at the boundary from Kingsdown into the High Street causing vehicles to lose control in the same stretch of highway is currently under investigation by B&NES Engineers.

And finally, may I once again remind you that Council Connect Tel: 394041 can be contacted at any time and will automatically log your complaint to the appropriate department.

Thank you.

Shirley Beazer
Chair - Highways, Footpaths & Lighting Committee
