

**Minutes of a Meeting with Bedford Borough Council Highways Department,
Borough Cllr. T. Wootton, and representatives from Staploe, Little Staughton,
Colmworth and Bolnhurst and Keysoe Parish Councils on**

**Wednesday 19th February 2020 at 2pm at Keysoe Village Hall, Keysoe Row
West, Bedford MK44 2JE**

Present: Andrew Prigmore (Bedford Borough Council Highways Dept.), Borough Cllr. T. Wootton, Lucy Crawford (Clerk to Staploe Parish Council), Cllr. Veronica Zwetsloot (Staploe Parish Council), Cllr. Kevin Head (Little Staughton Parish Council), Cllr. Gordon Johnstone (Wyboston Parish Council), Cllr. Martina Perry (Bolnhurst and Keysoe Parish Council) and Cllr. Beverley Brightman (Colmworth Parish Council).

Apologies: Gareth Turner (Bedford Borough Council Highways Department)

1. Consider the introduction of a 50mph limit on Bushmead Road

All the parish councils represented supported the introduction of reduced speed limits on the Bushmead Road to a maximum of 50mph but KH suggested it should be 40mph in places. They recounted witnessing several nasty accidents on the road (one requiring an airlift to hospital). They also recounted many near misses some of which they believed were due to large HGV's passing at speed when the road is not wide enough and cars being forced into the middle of the road by potholes. They acknowledged that recent repairs had improved the worst areas of the road but were concerned that some areas with failing patches had not been addressed. Andrew Prigmore explained that the worst areas had been repaired at a cost of approximately £70K but they had to choose the worst areas due to their limited budget. He reported that police data showed that none of the accidents on the road had been directly caused by excess speed. He reported that introducing a speed limit would cost £20K. £2K for the legal order and the remainder for new signage. He was concerned that people might not comply with the new limit(s) and that the police might object because they cannot enforce the limit effectively if 90% of people are not complying. Councillors agreed that introducing a speed limit would enable enforcement as an option whereas currently people can drive at 60mph with no power to enforce anything lower.

MP reported that, since the speed limit was introduced on the B660 in Keysoe and Bolnhurst fewer people were using the road. AP said that the before and after checks did not show a significant reduction in speeds.

AP explained that average speed cameras (ASC) on Bushmead Road would cost approx. £70K. TW asked what contribution would be required from the four villages represented to increase their chances of getting ASC's. He said there was not magic number and it would be best to gather evidence first.

The following next steps were agreed:

- Bedford Borough Council Highways will install 8 data loggers to gather data on speed, type and volume of traffic. These will be in three places on the Bushmead Road: east of Two Brewers, middle and Bushmead Cross end. Also on each of the three exits from Bushmead Cross. This will be done in March in order to avoid school holidays. One month later he will make a recommendation regarding speed limits as it might be appropriate to have different limits on different parts of the road. TW will make representation of the recommendations to the Mayor.
- Depending on the results of the survey the four parish councils involved will consider whether to raise money for and request ASC's.

2. Consider the need for further works and / or resurfacing

LC reported that, until the recent repairs, Bushmead Road had been in the worst state she had ever seen it and all those present reported incidents of cars dodging potholes and driving in the middle of the road.

KH reported that he had punctured a tyre in a pothole on the Bushmead Road recently (before recent repairs were carried out).

Borough Cllr. T. Wootton also expressed concern that the traffic on the Bushmead Road is likely to increase dramatically when the works begin on the Black Cat roundabout and he and KH emphasised the need to improve Bushmead Road in anticipation of this.

VZ reported that there had been extensive flooding on the road recently. AP will pass this on to the area team to look at whether recent clearing of the grips / culverts had helped. LC will take video footage of floods with her dashcam if it happens again.

AP reported that £70K had been spent on repairs to Bushmead Road just prior to this meeting. There is no money in the budget for further improvements, but it was last top dressed more than 5 years ago and will be top dressed in the next 3 years and this should help seal the surface. It would then be resurfaced (at a cost of approx. £500K) approx. 10 years later.

Next steps:

- AP to report flooding to the area team to investigate
- LC to record flooding if it happens in future
- Surface dressing within 3 years.
- Resurfacing 10 years after top dressing.

3. Consider any other matters relating to Bushmead Road

VZ was concerned about the number of HGV's on the road. She suggested that it would be more appropriate for Moor Road to be developed for HGV's travelling to Little Staughton Airfield Industrial Estate / Staughton Moor. This would also avoid them travelling through Eaton Socon and past schools and urban areas.

AP said he believed that many of the HGV's were attending other sites eg. Tythe Farm, Colmworth and making home deliveries and that developing Moor Road would not stop this.

TW explained that there had been meetings between Bedford Borough Council Highways and Planning Departments, himself and Cambridgeshire planners in the past in which it had been agreed that they were to inform Bedford Borough Council if there were any new developments at the airfield and it was also agreed that there would be no further development on the site unless Moor Road was developed. The new hanger for aircraft works would now constitute new development. It would be up to Cambridgeshire County Council to pay for the development of Moor Road, not Bedford Borough Council.

LC and TW asked whether Bedford Borough Council would consider cutting the hedge at the ex traveller site in Upper Staploe and recharging it to the debt on the land. Staploe Parish Council have successfully worked with the landowners to encourage them to get their hedges cut along the road but they do not have contact details for the owners of this particular site and the hedge is very overgrown.

Next Steps:

- TW, AP, John Shortland (Bedford Borough Council chief planner and previous head of highways) to meet with Cambs County Council regarding new developments at Little Staughton and Staughton Moor Industrial Park and the potential development of Moor Road.
- AP to investigate whether Bedford Borough Council can cut the hedge in Upper Staploe
- LC will report the damaged footpath sign between Two Brewers and Gypsy Lane to Bedford Borough Council