

MEETING WITH COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS OFFICERS

NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28th May 2009

Present: **Parish Council Representatives:** Tim Banks, John Crow
Compass Group Representative: John Coombs
Highways Area Team Officers Clive Howe, Highways Area Team Manager
Ian Vears, Team Leader Transport Schemes
Development
Parish Clerk: Sherry Clift

1 **Welcome**

The Chairman of the Parish Council welcomed Mr Howe and Mr Vears and thanked them for attending the meeting.

2 **Introduction**

The Chairman of the Parish Council outlined the problems facing the village as a result of traffic movements. The recent survey had shown that there were over 2000 vehicles per day passing through the village, many of those using the village as a rat run. This raised issues of traffic volume, speed and road crossing. Recent developments such as The Point and the Alvington Way estate had resulted in an increase in traffic using the village and extra housing as a result of the District Council's Structure Plan would make this worse. Great Bowden had not received any Section 106 money to address these problems. The village was hoping that the County Council could advise on how to spend any funding both wisely and jointly to deter traffic from using Great Bowden and to keep it on the by-pass.

3 **Transport Schemes Development**

Mr Vears explained that the work of his team covered highway improvements (excluding by-passes). The funding for the improvements came from Central Government's Transportation Capital Programme and was allocated to limited budgets in line with identified priorities. These covered; traffic calming, reducing congestion, maintenance, and preventing accidents. Within these areas resources needed to be allocated on a basis of need.

Government funding was supplemented by external bidding. Some of this external funding came from money provided by new developments. However, the County Council was a consultee on planning applications that were made to District Councils and while the County Development Control Team were good at gaining contributions developments could go ahead without the County Council getting what they had requested because the responsibility for the decision lay with the District Councils.

The Team had an annual budget of £450,000 for traffic calming and £450,000 schools initiatives identified by School Travel Plans. The team received over 400 requests for traffic calming measures and a criteria for implementation had been devised which related to firstly speeding and secondly accident prevention.

4 **Discussion**

During discussion the following points were made:

- Many villages were suffering from traffic problems.
- Although traffic calming would deter some traffic and slow speeds it

- would not have an impact on all traffic.
- The extended period that traffic lights were in operation on the bridge had a traffic calming effect.
 - The feasibility of a one-way system was queried and Mr Vears advised that such a system would cause traffic speeds to rise and would inconvenience local residents and would not gain the support required.
 - One of the main problems was the number of access points into the village
 - Parked cars could form mobile traffic calming.
 - The blind corner on Dingley Road was raised and it was suggested that the 30mph limit should be commenced further outside the village. However, the County Council had a policy of only considering speed alterations as part of an overall scheme.
 - It was possible for the Development Team to devise a package of traffic calming measures with Parish Councils but these would have to be fully funded by the Parish Council in order to be installed unless the speed assessment indicated that the area should be prioritised.
 - A points system was employed to decide the priority of various schemes. Firstly it was considered whether there was speeding problem and if so then a community assessment was undertaken looking at factors such as schools, accidents, average speeds, houses, types of traffic, shops and churches. The scheme was then weighted for cost.
 - In the current economic climate it was much harder to get funding from developers for highway improvements.
 - As a consultee the County Council cannot enforce their recommendations for new developments District Council's can choose to ignore the County officer's advice and recognised guidelines.

5 Potential for Action

Village Plan

A County Council Section at County Hall could help the Parish develop a Village Plan. This involved looking at ways to improve the village overall including highways. This then formed a useful piece of evidence for future discussions with developers. Mr Vears would ask the County Council officers to contact the Clerk.

Speed Assessments

The Transport Schemes Development Team would undertake speed assessments after the summer and this would then give an indication where Great Bowden would be in the priority for action and funding of traffic calming.

School Travel Plans

These should be a living document and should be revisited. Non-car use was to be encouraged and traffic calming might be considered if it would contribute to modal shift.

Community Speed Watch Initiative

The village could sign up to this initiative, which would involve residents in using speed guns and writing to speeding residents. Mr Vears would ask the officer concerned to contact the Clerk.