

STEVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Public Meeting of held by Stevington Parish Council Wednesday 8th February 2023 at 7:30 in the Village Hall, Stevington.

Present:

Charles Royden **(CR)**: Deputy Mayor & Borough Portfolio Holder for Environment, Highways and Transport

Andrew Prigmore **(AP)**: Manager for Traffic Operations at Bedford Borough Council

Borough Councillor: John Abbott **(JA)**

Parish Councillors: Peter Fisher **(PF)** Chair; Janet Day **(JD)**; John Strutt **(JS)**; Richard Taylor **(RT)**

Parish Clerks: Kevin Papworth **(Clerk- outgoing)**; Rosemary Plum **(Clerk- incoming)**

Stevington Traffic Action Group (STAG) Geoff Lawday **(GL)**

Village residents In Attendance (circa 50)

PF (SPC Chair)

- Welcome to you all and thank you for attending tonight's meeting

Purpose of Meeting

PF (SPC Chair)

- To give residents a chance to hear about the traffic management initiatives that have already been put in place.
- To hear about plans for the future
- To discuss issues and concerns.

Welcome to Charles Royden, Deputy Mayor & Portfolio Holder for Environment, Highways and Transport and Andrew Prigmore, Manager for Traffic Operations at Bedford Borough Council who are here to tell us about the Borough Council's traffic management plans for Stevington moving forward.

Summary of Key Highways Deliverables & Opportunities 2022 & 2023

RT (SPC Highways portfolio holder)

Already delivered:

- August 2022; 7.5t weight restriction Silver Street (with 12 month Borough review)
- August 2022; 20mph speed limit in Village centre (with 12 month Borough review)
- Speed Indicator Device (SID) purchased and presently mounted in Court Lane
 - The SID indicated vehicle speed and also logs vehicle speed data for later analysis.
- A number of white lines and centre lines renewed.

Planned:

- West End; 30mph and 40mph restrictions moved further out.
- Park Road; introduce 40mph restriction at the end of the village.
- White entry gates and dragon's teeth (road markings) at village entries

Other possibilities:

- Court Lane; Pavement extended around bend into West End
- Long Term; Average Speed cameras

Stevington PC maintains a log of traffic incidents. Please report these to the Clerk (clerk@stevington-pc.gov.uk)

Bedford Borough Council's Local Highways Programme (including maintenance/renewals)

JA (Borough Councillor)

- In terms of Traffic management Stevington punches above its weight
- There is a continual programme of highways work additional money each year
- Average speed cameras cost £80k per pair (approx.)
 - Oakley paid £100k towards average speed cameras paid for by increasing the precept for a 4 to 5 year period.
- There is some frustration that police monitoring is not as frequent as we would like.

CR Deputy Mayor & Portfolio Holder for Environment, Highways and Transport

- A wish the Borough had more money to spend on highways. £3m has been allocated for the next financial year
 - An additional £1.1m has been allocated for Summer 2023 resurfacing work on the Paula Radcliffe Way (this work is now critical).
- Any savings will go towards road and pavement improvements
 - Some pothole repairs are marked with a 'T', this denotes a temporary repair.
- Average Speed Cameras are a good deterrent but are very expensive.
- 20mph limits are not yet being enforced by the Police
 - The Council does not have any powers of speed enforcement.

AP Manager for Traffic Operations at Bedford Borough Council

- The 20mph restriction in the village centre is intended to calm traffic.
 - The extent of the 20mph zone is what the police were willing to support.
- The weight restriction in Silver Street will take time to 'bed in'. Its effectiveness will be reviewed in August 2023.
- Speed limit extensions are planned for Park Road and West End.

Community Involvement

(GL) Stevington Traffic Action Group (STAG)

- STAG a village wide residents group formed one year ago and supported by the Parish Council with aims including reducing speed in Stevington.
- The number of residents involved in STAG shows that residents care about this issue.
- There are concerns that the measures introduced so far are not working
- Reporting of incidents is crucial. We have had some success in how we report incidents and residents need to get behind this initiative.
- There are recent anecdotes of residents being threatened by drivers who they have challenged including one incident where a resident was threatened with a gun.
- At present the Borough Council can not afford to install average speed cameras.
- The Department of Transport recommends that consultation with residents takes place to prevent anger building up

PF Consultation has taken place

GL Some feel that residents views haven't been listened to

RT observed that good work has been done in getting community speed watch up and running by STAG.

PF The purpose of logging traffic incidents and having the SID is to have data to support improvement opportunities.

Open Discussion Forum

JD These are the views of some residents who weren't able to attend tonight

- Consultation is important
 - Stevington Parish Council wants and supports consultation.
- There can be conflicting or contrary views from people who are in a similar space.
 - Parking is an example, some see it as a problem others see it as traffic calming.
- Drivers are speeding up excessively well beyond 30mph after leaving the 20mph zone and at the ends of the village.

Questions from the floor

Silver Street Resident House has been hit on multiple occasions by lorries. The length of lorries is more of a problem than the weight. Vehicles mount the pavement and have caused cracking in the walls of the house

- Is it possible to put bollards on the pavement to prevent vehicles mounting it?
- **JA** It was the Barton Coach company, they have been contacted by the Borough Council who have requested that they don't use Silver Street.

Silver Street Resident Why is damage in Silver Street not being considered? House was hit as recently as last Saturday. Last year a coach hit my house breaking the windows of the coach. Can we have bollards on the corner of Silver Street Please?

- **AP** The Borough will look into bollards on the corner of Silver Street **Action**
 - Now that there is a traffic restriction order (7.5t weight limit) the route will be taken off of commercial SATNAV's

Speed Limit on Silver Street (the road from the A428). Can the 40mph speed limit be extended to the bottom of the hill?

- **AP** Yes this is happening **Action**

Silver Street Resident There will be lorries on the upper part of Silver Street making deliveries to Farms etc.

Weight Limit signage needs improving at the top end of Silver Street

- **JA** This is restricted by the land available (Borough owned land) on which to put the sign. It is not possible to have a large sign.

Silver Street Resident Speed and weight restrictions don't seem to be working. The restriction was put in place in August 2022. Why does the review have to wait 12 months.

- **RT** The 12 month period was chosen to take account of the agricultural cycle.
 - Where speed is concerned human nature is a key factor. We are only as safe as the worst driver.
 - The national guidance level of enforcement for speed limits is 10% over plus 2mph, e.g. 35mph in a 30mph limit (source: National Police Chiefs Council guidance).
- **AP** The review process will take feedback from the PC as well as borough data. We have data from speed measurements taken at the side of the road. Recording is vital. This information takes time to gather.
- **PF** The SID will be moved around the village and will gather data and pole sites become available.
- **JA** This comes down to driver safety. If you as residents maintain the speed limit it will force those following adhere to the limits too.

GL Are you (Borough Council) willing to talk to residents again?

- **AP** Yes.

Court Lane Resident I believe that there is conflation between actual and perceived speeds. Will there be a review as to whether or not the 20mph limit is being adhered to? Will the 20mph limit be reviewed?

- **RT** Over the past 8 months speeds have anecdotally dropped to the mid 20's in the 20mph limit. Outside of the 20mph zone drivers then speed up and are often well in excess of the 30mph limits.
- **PF** We have the SID, we have speed measurements from the Borough Council and STAG community speedwatch will do speed monitoring.
- **Church Road Resident** Will the SID record Data? **PF** Yes.
- **AP** This is good. Feed data back to the Borough Council

Silver Street Resident Inconsiderate parking in Silver Street is a problem. Is it possible to have white 'H' Bars to restrict parking?

- **JA** Yes but residents would have to pay for this.
- **CR** This is a problem across the Borough. If drop-kerb 'H' bar parking occurs phone Borough parking services to report it.
- Put a link on the SPC website to Borough Council reporting **Action Clerk**

Silver Street Resident We'd be very happy for cameras to be mounted on street furniture to record damage.

- **CR** It is very disappointing that damage has occurred. It should be reported to the Police.

Silver Street Resident My front door opens onto a very narrow pavement and due to inconsiderate parking I am sometimes unable to safely exit.

- **JA CR** 'H' bars or yellow lines might be appropriate in this very restricted area.
- **PF** Take photos if vehicles are parked on the pavements and send these to the police.
- **CR** If there is parking on the pavement we can do something about this

CR We will work with residents to do whatever you want.

- 20mph is becoming the norm within some community types across the Country.
- If you want to establish a 'no verge' parking area we will support this where appropriate.
- If cars are parked on the roads it helps to slow traffic down.

JA Be aware of urbanisation. Do you want to live in a rural or urbanised environment? You don't have excessive street furniture in Stevington.

- Bollards must be illuminated
- No verge parking must have signs.

Silver Street Resident If average speed cameras is the answer will these other measures be redundant?

- **CR** Bedford has more average speed cameras than other parts of the Country.
- **Church Road Resident** I don't think that Average speed cameras are the answer. Cars still speed in Church road where you'd never put an average speed camera.

Cars parked on the roads reduces speed. Our problem is that parking on blind corners causes risks.

- **JD** Inconsiderate parking is a big problem.
 - Can STAG take this on. Possibly putting flyers on offending vehicles?

Silver Street Resident Slowing traffic down definitely helps. Our problem is a narrow twisting road (Silver Street beyond the 20mph zone). Traffic drives in the centre of the road. Can we put white lines on the centre of the road?

- **JS** There is barely enough room for two cars to pass at some points.
- **AP** We can look at white lines **Action: Clerk to follow up with AP**

The state of the roads is a concern. In parts of Silver Street the kerbs are eroded and so drivers are forced to drive in the centre of the road.

- **CR** The Borough is in the top quartile of the Country for road repair.
 - We deal with the worst roads first.
 - Report the whole of Silver Street for repair if necessary. **Action Clerk**
 - **JA** Report to the Borough via the website.

JA It is clear that there are many different issues.

West End Resident We have to walk on the road in West End. Last week I was run off of the road because there wasn't room.

Does the Parish Council have a comprehensive plan? Are we wasting money on piece-meal work?

- **PF** No we don't have a 5 year plan. The Parish Council can not do anything on its own and we have to work piece-meal as resource dictates.
- **GL** It may be possible to look at raising money via grants (example of a Borough in Yorkshire who did this to help fund a 20mph zone).

Church Road Resident Would having a standard reporting system help?

Comment (from ex-police officer) Incidents should be reported the police. For example, it is illegal to park on a cross road. If there are 10 complaints then the police must take action.

Closing Remarks

Thanks were expressed to all those present for their time and contributions during this constructive meeting.