

Report to Broadbridge Heath Parish Council

Cnty Cllr Christian Mitchell
Monday, 20 July 2020, 7:45pm

Sargent Way

The opening of the A281 from Tesco to Sargent Way on 17 July 2020 caused issues the following morning as articulated lorries and HGVs in addition to more traffic generally are now coming down Sargent way trying to get to the Newbridge side of the A281.

Further to a the Parish Council's contact to the police, WSCC Highways sent an operative to place interim signage to resolve the immediate issue on the morning of Saturday, 18 July 2020. Thank you to all those that helped.

On Saturday I asked Mr Mike Thomas (Highways Manager) during the day today to prepare a report to email to the Parish Council's Clerk and myself on this and ensuring this doesn't take place again and for an urgent solution.

Update on works in the village

A number of defects have been noted by the WSCC team around landscaping and tree planting and these will be addressed by the Contractors in due course (which will now be in the autumn planting season). Walker construction are due to complete their works for Countryside Properties in the next week or so and this will remove a lot of temporary signs and construction materials. The bus gate roadway will remain closed as there are currently no scheduled bus services along the C622, but it will be open to cycle use along the route, final layouts and signing is being discussed between the developer and Highway Officers. Please note that some works within the estate will be taking place with their own local restrictions in the Wickhurst Green area.

The grass meadow areas are currently left long to support local ecology flora and fauna but at some point discussions on their use and maintenance of these areas with WSCC and the Parish Council would be expected to take place. I accept there may have been delay on this due to the completion of the Neighbourhood Centre works, as well as the current ongoing health pandemic. I understand that the Parish Council have a number of projects they are trying to complete at the moment (e.g. playground upgrade).

'Bus gate' at Broadridge Heath community centre, Broadbridge Heath

Countryside are not willing to amend their design and make the 'bus gate' two way despite requests that they reconsider this by myself, WSCC and HDC's Officers. (NB it is their road scheme and not WSCC's and built to an extant planning permission granted by HDC). I have proposed a further meeting with HDC, and Mr Adam Chalmers has agreed to this. This will be set up soon on video link.

Business of the County Council

WSCC meetings have place upon the introduction of HM Government's Regulations (4 April 2020) to allow local government to meet and vote remotely. The Regulations continue until

May 2021. Full Council met on 17 July 2020 remotely. Other committees continue to meet remotely.

Horsham Enterprise Park

The public procurement process for a development partner for the Horsham Enterprise Park project commenced on 3 July 2020. See attached document.

Libraries

Following the Government's announcement (Tuesday, 23 June 2020) Libraries are beginning to reopen and plans to achieve Library opening in West Sussex are:

- **Select and collect:** libraries in West Sussex started a phased reintroduction of services on Monday, 6 July with a Select and Collect option from the front doors of all 36 buildings
- WSCC have re-opened the library catalogue for reservations of specific titles, but realise that not everyone knows exactly what they want to borrow and so are offering two different free services:
 - **Customer Select** – using the library catalogue for customers to reserve specific titles in the usual way online or by phoning their nearest large library. This includes existing reservations made before Monday, 23 March 2020.
 - **Staff Select** – allowing customers who may not know exactly what they want to borrow to ask for a more general selection of books chosen by one of our expert staff. Customers can complete a simple online form, or phone their nearest large library.

Whichever selection option is chosen, when items are available the customer will be informed in the usual way by phone or email and it will be arranged for them to collect their items during our library opening hours.

Browsing in the library is not yet available; however restoring customer access to IT is a high priority whilst still enabling staff to have time to complete their jobs in safety.

West Sussex Library staff have also been delivering books to customers over the last three months via our Essential Delivery Service. This service is still available for anyone who cannot visit the library and would like to borrow a selection of stock or request specific items.

There are currently no overdue charges for outstanding items, so customers do not have the worry if they are unable to return their books at this stage.

Library staff really have been fantastic over these last few months and I'm sure everyone will be supportive as they start to provide a service from our Libraries once again in these challenging circumstances.

A24 Worthing to Horsham Corridor Feasibility Study

WSCC has commissioned a feasibility study of the A24 Worthing to Horsham corridor, which has been identified as a priority for the County Council Strategic Transport Investment

Programme (STIP). The corridor has been identified as part of the Government's Major Road Network and the study will inform future funding applications.

The study corridor includes the A24 between the A27 at Worthing and the A264 near Horsham (the A280/A27 junction and A280 Long Furlong are also being considered as inter-dependent links).

The feasibility study aims to understand the problems and identify potential solutions that could form part of a package of future investment. This would be subject to demonstrating deliverability and value for money through a business case and securing funding for implementation. The study will consider improvements across different transport modes, including public transport, walking and cycling.

Adapting the highway network

There is a great deal of interest about Government funding and proposals to reallocate parts of the highway in response to significantly increased numbers of cyclists and pedestrians.

On 9 May 2020 the Government published advice to boost greener active transport to encourage cycling and walking. The advice is that people should choose to cycle, walk or drive, to avoid overcrowding the transport network and to take account of the social distancing rules as well maintaining an active lifestyle. To support this, the Government is providing funding and issuing new statutory guidance to encourage local authorities to reallocate road space for significantly increased numbers of cyclists and pedestrians and to encourage councils to widen pavements, create pop-up cycle lanes and re-allocate other road space.

The first stage of the £2bn investment announced by the Government is the £250m emergency active travel fund to support the temporary reallocation of road space for walking and cycling, which itself is part of the wider £5bn was announced in February 2020.

As further funding becomes available, WSCC will look to develop permanent schemes from our existing strategies and local cycling and walking infrastructure plans – which have been extremely successful.

The Government advice is that re-allocating road space is to allow for social distancing and active travel. Measures could include (but are not limited to):

- pop-up bike lanes with protected space for cycling
- wider pavements
- safer junctions
- cycle and bus-only corridors
- changes to signal and crossing timings
- enhanced signing
- space for queuing outside of shops
- improved cycle parking
- enhanced park and ride / park and walk facilities

Whilst there will be demands to see such measures in place across the county, they will need to be focused in urban areas where problems are most acute. For WSCC, as the highways authority, the key driver in determining options will be public safety. There should therefore

be a proven space limitation where people need to congregate and / or clear evidence that active travel is occurring and needs to be supported.

An intervention criteria has been developed to guide the prioritisation of any proposed scheme. These are:

- there is road space available - where road space is not available there needs to be an overriding public safety concern
- there is evidence of active travel
- there is a direct relationship to accessing business, public transport, school or work
- there is revenue funding available given these are temporary measures, and
- that each scheme is subject to review and an exit plan (i.e. what is the criteria for removal)

To enhance resources and local knowledge, WSCC are working closely with district and borough councils as they lead on the development of Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Programmes.

WSCC do have to maintain traffic management responsibilities to ensure safe passage, amongst other matters, and will have the final say on any changes to the highway.

Temporary cycleway schemes

WSCC have received full allocation of funding for all the schemes proposed in tranche one of the Emergency Active Travel Fund. WSCC are still awaiting details from DfT regarding Tranche 2. Funding for all 7 temporary cycleway schemes in West Sussex has been approved by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Design work on the schemes is ongoing and started as soon as the Government announced potential funding for this first phase of emergency measures to support active travel. Details could be subject to change up to and including the construction stage and plans are all indicative and could change as scheme designs are more fully developed.

The link below is where the indicative proposal for Alboin Way is

https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/UKWSCC/2020/06/30/file_attachments/1485215/2.Albion%20Way%20Horsham.pdf

Recycling Centres

Since Saturday, 23 May, vans and pickup trucks have been allowed to enter HWRS. Permits are still required for these vehicles.

Local government finances

The financial impact of COVID-19, which has been substantial and sudden, has raised concerns that without adequate government support councils may have to take action to reduce expenditure to avoid finding themselves in this position.

WSCC and others (district and boroughs and the LGA etc.) continue to push Government for additional funding and financial flexibilities that build on the billions of pounds in funding councils have already successfully secured.

We know from national press that some council chief finance officers might be considering issuing a s114 report (pursuant to Local Government Finance Act 1988) on their council's financial position. This s114 places a duty on a council's chief finance officer (s151 officer) to report to the full council if, in the words of the Act, it appears to them that the council's expenditure in any year is likely to exceed its resources.

On 17 June 2020 the County Councils Network (CCN) published a report by Grant Thornton which sets out starkly the challenge that County Councils face. The best case scenario is a huge £2.5bn funding gap for County Councils across 2020/21 to 2021/22. The link to the full report is [here](#).

The Leader of WSCC has written to the West Sussex MPs asking them to raise this issue with Ministers.

ENDS