

Minutes of the Ashdown Forest Villages Road Safety Partnership

1000, 7 March 2007, Ashdown Forest Centre

Present John Gramolt (Chairman; Withyham Parish Council [PC]), Graeme Beattie (ESCC), Roy Galley (Maresfield PC) Jim Lusted (Hartfield PC), Hew Prendergast (Conservators; minute taker), Arabella Sackville (Withyham PC), Keith Sinden (ESCC), Vajrasiddhi (ESFRS), Robert Watson (Forest Row Parish Council [PC])

The absence of Danehill and Buxted PCs was noted.

The meeting elected John Gramolt as the Chairman.

1) Apologies

None was received.

2) Minutes of last meeting

Re. item 4f, it was agreed to delete “not the conservators for areas outside the Forest” and to replace with “The Conservators have no responsibility for deer signs”.

3) Matters arising

Keith reported (re. item 4b) that Danehill PC is refusing to pay its contribution to the speed loop installation, claiming that it had not agreed to doing so in the first place. He said that Danehill PC had been represented by John Stevens at the meetings where this had been discussed. The Danehill Clerk, Olwen Wales, has stated to him that the PC is interested in the whole issue of speeding although John Stevens would not be coming to future meetings. Graeme said that Danehill had benefited from the work of Partnership as much as other parishes.

John said (re. item 4c) that the posters had been very well received by Withyham PC.

Robert Watson (re. item 4f) said that people in Forest Row are unhappy about the new Forest signs. John said that, in his view, the new signs do stand out and without imposing themselves unduly.

Hew reported (re. item 4f) that Highways had installed new deer warning signs at Wych Cross for southbound traffic and at Millbrook outside Nutley for northbound traffic. These signs are paired (i.e. on both sides of the road) and have large fluorescent yellow backing. Other signs will be installed just north of Wych Cross and south of Forest Row. Hew said that the deer warning symbols on the old Forest signs were very small compared with the standard Highways ones: ca 18.0” along each side instead of ca 33.5” (i.e. between a quarter and a third of the area).

4) Plans for 2007

i) Communications etc. (item 2 of 6 December meeting)

Keith has shown colleagues the presentation of Mike Chapman and contacted Dutch colleagues about EU Interreg funding for engineering projects to influence driving behaviour. Dutch ideas include reducing or even getting rid of signs! Keith added that the Dutch have a very different social outlook with regard to the inter-relation between cyclists, pedestrians and motorists compared with the British. The British, he said, have a strong speed culture! Interreg funding takes a lot of work and will take years, not months.

Keith recommended that PCs attend a conference about traffic speed taking place in Uckfield on Wednesday 4 April. He also said that the Sussex Road Safety Partnership will come into being, comprising West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove. Speed management and enforcement will be primary rationale for the Partnership. This will include SID funding.

Graeme said that, whatever the future of ESCC budgets, there are still a core of trained volunteers and SIDs available for use from ESCC. News about the budgets, and the affect on teams of personnel, will be available in 2 -3 weeks.

ii) SID week 16-20 April and pre-training (11 April)

It was agreed to have the training session at Groombridge. John will ensure liaison with Graeme within the next 48 hours so that the time and venue can go into these minutes.

Graeme said that there were already a number of approved sites for siting SIDs and it was up to the parishes to choose which ones. ESCC could make three SIDs available. On the training session day, sites can be chosen and any 'loose ends' tied up. Although each parish coordinator knows which sites have been approved for the use of SIDs, Graeme could assess new sites if necessary.

Roy said that Maresfield PC has not discussed SIDs recently. He agreed to John's suggestion that the use of SIDs benefits all parishes and it would be good to have volunteers from Maresfield.

On 16 April Graeme suggested that equipment can be collected from the Forest Centre by 10.00 and returned the following Monday by 10.00. He asked if ESFRS could try to get people to sign the commitment rather than just hand out leaflets as they did year. His experience was that most people would sign up on the spot if the rationale for it all is explained. He also said that in principle he could train ESFRS personnel in the use of SIDs

PC Steve Etherington is trained to use a speed gun (not enforceable) and has offered its use during the week. John will see him next Monday. Keith said that he would ask Steve Grace if Sussex Police could enforce speed limit as they did so successfully last May.

Keith said that the head of Forest Row School was interested in doing something the same week.

The Sussex Safety Partnership Exhibition vehicle (like a mobile classroom) can be made available for the SID week. The meeting agreed that Forest Row Community Hall from 10.00-17.00 on Tuesday 17 April would be suitable. Graeme will liase with the Forest

Row Parish Clerk who will talk with the headmaster of Forest Row School while Robert will check on the booking of the Centre. The Community Centre might also be a suitable place for the re-launch. Again, it was suggested that it would be a good idea for the school to be involved. Robert will liaise on this.

On PR for the SID week, Keith said he could liaise with the ESCC press office. There would be a press release before the event and reportage during it. Key points or messages must be sent to Keith.

It was agreed that any news after this meeting would be sent to Hew who would then distribute them.

Keith described Speed Awareness Courses that are planned to start in September.

5) Date of next meeting

1000, Tuesday 12 June 2007, Forest Centre