

**Minutes of the  
Ashdown Forest Villages Road Safety Partnership  
10.00, 25 August 2009, Ashdown Forest Centre**

Present: John Gramolt (Co-opted member & Chairman), Alison Beck (Withyham PC), Jeremy Upton (East Sussex FRS), Hew Prendergast (Conservators), Arabella Sackville, Mike Colenutt. Minutes were taken by Tracy Buxton.

**1. Apologies**

**Action**

Derek Barlow (Maresfield PC), Graeme Beattie (ESCC Road Safety Trainer)

**2. Minutes of last meeting.**

The Minutes of the last meeting were adopted.

**3. Matters Arising.**

It was confirmed that Jeremy Upton had now replaced Matt Elder (ESFRS).

Hew Prendergast tabled a letter from Robin Merrett, Assistant Chief Constable of Sussex, in response to the written request for Police support during SID campaigns. There was no evidence that the letter had had any effect and the reply received was non-committal and disappointing.

Robert Watson had been written to expressing the Partnership's thanks for his contributions over the years. The letter had been gratefully received.

A map of Ashdown Forest Collisions 2006-2008, provided by Steve Grace, was tabled by Hew Prendergast and this was discussed. Background to the data had not been provided, neither had dates of compilation nor an indication as to what was included in the data. Jeremy Upton said speed was not the only issue, road engineering, weather conditions and road surface all played a part in accidents.

Hew Prendergast tabled a letter from WDC asking for the views of the Partnership on road safety. The table on the reverse of the letter was thought to be confusing. It was agreed this was a useful opportunity to make a co-ordinated response on road safety and it was agreed that speeding remained a problem on the Forest. Hew Prendergast said there were 500 deer collisions per year and that, as there was mainly damage to vehicles rather than people, they were not perhaps a major contributor to the 'slight' or 'KSI' figures. Hew Prendergast agreed to produce an analysis of the figures and draft a carefully worded response.

**HP**

**4. Autumn campaigns**

The Chairman expressed his disappointment that Neil Banks of the Safer Wealden Partnership had not tendered an apology. Alison Beck stated that volunteers were drying up because their efforts were not being supported by the Safer Wealden Partnership and the lack of Police.

It was noted that a road safety event of some sort had been planned for Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> August (with no SID). However, none of the Partnership members had been informed if it was going ahead or not, what form it would take, where it would be and if Police support was available. It was agreed that Police support was very important and that ESFR could only be involved with the education side of any road safety event. Jeremy Upton commented that he had not been approached to contribute to an event on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> but a tender and crew could be made available if needed. After a short discussion it was agreed that Kings Standing would be a good location for the fire tender. It was agreed that if the event went ahead it should be viewed as a 'bonus'.

It was felt that good communication with Neil Banks was vital but that the lack of information and response from him was very disappointing. Alison Beck said she felt the Partnership was not being taken seriously by the Safer Wealden Partnership. Jeremy Upton said he would make personal contact with Neil Banks as soon as possible and press him regarding Police involvement.

**5 SID Week – Monday 14 September – Friday 18 September**

Alison Beck reported that volunteers would be available in Groombridge from 07.00 - 09.00 and 16.30 -18.30. She went on to say the village was lucky to have a large number of number of volunteers willing to operate the SID but this was dwindling for the reasons previously stated. A

request had been made to Graeme Beattie for two SIDs calibrated at 30 and 40mph.

Mike Colenutt said that Forest Row and Hartfield had their own shared SID but Graeme Beattie's assistance was required with some technical / battery issues and re-setting the programme.

Hew Prendergast said it was disappointing that only two Parishes had attended the meeting. The Chairman said it was important to concentrate on the Partnership's strengths such as two committed Parishes, a large number of willing volunteers and the support of Graeme Beattie. He went on to say there was nothing to stop the SID Week going ahead as planned, however, digital data capture was a concern. It was agreed to go back to paper recording until the digital data capture was more reliable. Alison Beck reported that the data from the last SID Week had not been returned by Graeme Beattie.

It was agreed that SID set-up times would be defined by volunteer availability. Covering peak times as described above was preferable, as was doing it at the same time to provide data sets comparable to earlier ones.

It was recalled that Neil Banks had offered Police support for part of SID week and provide assistance to operate the SID on one day.

It was noted that PCSO Roberts had now been trained to use a speed gun but was not able to offer support to SIDs. There was a discussion regarding speed gun usage and it was noted that the location and criteria for SID and speed guns were very different.

There was a short discussion regarding the involvement of other Parishes. Buxted was now involved with 'Speedwatch' and were now out of the picture. Danehill were not involved and Forest Row and Maresfield needed to be contacted.

**It was agreed Hew Prendergast would contact Maresfield and Forest Row Parish Council regarding Partnership involvement.** HP

**In the absence of any news from Neil Banks it was agreed that Hew Prendergast would contact Steve Grace, and that the Chairman would visit Crowborough Police station to elicit Police support for SID week.** HP

**It was agreed Alison Beck would contact PCSO Roberts regarding the use of speed guns in conjunction with SIDs to ensure future joint working.** JG

**It was agreed Jeremy Upton and Hew Prendergast would both attempt to make contact with Neil Banks to find out what was taking place on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> if Police support would be available for SID week and if support with the operation of the SID on one day would be available.** JU/HP

**It was agreed Hew Prendergast would remind Graeme Beattie to deliver three SIDs to the Forest Centre.** HP

There was a short discussion regarding press coverage. Hew Prendergast said that Roy Galley had suggested the press would be interested in local people working within their communities to reduce speeds. The Chairman said it would be a good idea for someone to take photographs on the day. Jeremy Upton said that ESFRS have a press and media office and strong contacts with the Courier. He went on to say a publicity trailer (with a crashed vehicle and associated literature) was available and he would try, as it was short notice, to make it available for Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> and he would communicate with Hew Prendergast to confirm. There was an overnight ESFR initiative taking place in Crowborough between 18 – 28 September targeting drink and drug drivers.

## **6. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting would be Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November at 10.00.

*The meeting closed at 12.00.*