

Minutes of the Ashdown Forest Villages Road Safety Partnership

1000, 19 July 2006, Ashdown Forest Centre

Present: John Gramolt (Withyham PC), Tony Allen (Maresfield PC), Graeme Beattie (ESCC), Karen Day (Danehill PC), Hanno Fry (Maresfield PC), Steve Grace (Sussex Police), Nevile Padgham (East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service [ESFRS]; arrived 1104), Hew Prendergast (Conservators of Ashdown Forest; minute taker), Arabella Sackville (Withyham PC), Keith Sinden, (ESCC), Robert Watson (Forest Row PC).

Apologies: Matt Elder (ESFRS), John Stevens (Danehill PC)

Karen Day and Neville Padgham were welcomed in the absence of John Stevens and Matt Elder respectively.

1) Minutes of last meeting

These were accepted.

2) Matters arising.

None.

3) Review of the official launch of the Slow Down – Give Space Campaign on 16 May 2006

a) media coverage

Keith Sinden said that Meridien TV had items at midday and in the evening (a three minute slot) and there were also features on Southern FM, BBC Southern Counties radio and in local papers like the East Grinstead Courier. The meeting acknowledged the contribution of Tanya Herbert (ESCC).

Keith Sinden said that Dr Jochen Langbein, coordinator of the Deer Initiative, had asked for the poster (showing a buck, still alive, on the road in front of the car that hit it) to be used nationally. The image has also gone onto the website of the Association of Road Safety Officers.

b) feed-back (schools?)

The quality of the posters produced was discussed. Graeme agreed to scan the prize-winning posters and to make them available. The scanned images will be headed by “Ashdown Forest Villages Road Safety” and “Slow Down, Give Space”.

2) Results of the Campaign

a) SID sites; b) speed loops

Keith Sinden explained a hand-out with speed figures taken from speed loops at the SID sites. The yellow columns are when the SIDs were in place.

At Wood Eaves the mean eastbound speed before the SIDs were in place was 52.5 mph, during the week it was 45.5 mph and in the week after it was 47.3 mph. The SID still had an effect in week three after the removal of the SID, and even had an effect on the speed of traffic going in the other direction.

Graeme suggested that sites should be revisited occasionally to reinforce the 'slow down' message. John said that there was a consistent downward drift in speeds recorded by the SID operators when vehicles were first detected and when they passed the SIDs.

There was some discussion about an apparent disparity between the SID data and the speed loop data, the former apparently suggesting that relatively few vehicles were exceeding the 40 mph limit. The value of SIDs in giving positive reinforcement to drivers was emphasised.

At Duddleswell the SID faced north in the morning and south in the afternoon. Again there was a drop in speed in the week of the SID operation.

At Kings Standing the arithmetic mean and 85 percentile speed figures were low, perhaps because of vehicles entering or coming out of the junction with the B2188, and also the very high visibility of the SID at the site.

At the Forest Centre, where the SID faced eastbound traffic, the figures showed a clear decline even in the third week. Keith suggested that this was evidence of the drip-drip effect of the Campaign. This site has a far lower volume of traffic than others, and is perhaps not a commuter route.

Key points are that SIDs and volunteers have an effect on speed. Keith agreed to do a simplified analysis of the overall results which will also form the basis of a press release.

The costs of the speed loops were discussed. Keith said that the loops cost £300/week/site, therefore £900 for each of the three sites over the three weeks (the loop at Kings Standing was already in place), and an overall total of £2,700. The cost has been reduced to £600/site for the three weeks (because of reduced installation and removal time engendered by having the loops in place for three consecutive weeks) – i.e. a total of £1,800 for the three sites. Dividing by eight, this means a reduced single payment of £225.00 by the six parishes, ESCC and the Conservators. These figures supersede the provisional figure presented in the minutes of the meeting of 5 October 2005.

c) no. of people signed up to the Commitment

Keith said that 163 people had signed up since the launch. It became clear that sending out the leaflets in parish magazines was not very productive. Direct contact is the most effective means of getting people to sign up. Neville said that ESFRS had handed out leaflets in car parks. He suggested that some form of 'thank you' to accompany the free car window stickers and vehicle licence disc holders would be worthwhile. He had received some negative feedback on the absence of this.

d) Sussex Police data

Steve Grace said that, although this campaign was about education rather than enforcement, on the first two days nine offenders were issued fixed penalty tickets (£60.00 and three points). From memory he thought that three offenders lived in

Crowborough, one/two in Willingdon, one in Battle and the remainder locally. From a Police enforcement point of view, however, priority areas have to be those where human casualties occur; on this basis Forest roads and villages are not a high priority. Even the A22, for example, is not nearly as high a priority as other routes in the county. He has only six staff to cover the whole of the county.

Graeme told of an example elsewhere of the positive impact of the presence of CCTV vans on traffic speed, even those that were unmanned. It was pointed out such a van has been on the Forest for much of the year in order to reduce car-related crime. There is a high correlation between those involved in criminality and those speeding on the roads.

Neville suggested that it would be useful to extend the remit of the Partnership from the Forest roads alone to include all roads within the parishes of the Partnership. John thought this should be a feature of the next meeting. The Committee thanked Steve for the Police support, especially since this was apparently the first time that speed enforcement had been done. Graeme commented that many people have now realised that the limit on the Forest is enforceable.

e) ESFRS data

Neville said that ESFRS had attended eight RTCs in May and seven in June. He handed Hew the data. [Later analysis showed that the A22 and the A26 each had three RTCs, and others were spread geographically from Groombridge to Sheffield Park. Altogether three were on roads inside the Forest, two on the A22 [Nutley, Forest Row] and one on Kidds Hill, Colemans Hatch.

3) What next?

It was agreed that the following points would be discussed at the next meeting:

- posters done by children;
- press release to sum up the results so far, and to include the enforceability of the speed limit;
- Police enforcement;
- feedback to SID volunteers;
- continuing programme;
- expansion of remit to include full parishes or not.

4) Date of next meeting

Thursday 5 October 1000-1200, Forest Centre

Not on email list: Mrs Karen Day, Pepper Alley, School Lane, Danehill RH17 7JD; 01825 790857.

The meeting finished at 1215.