

## **Ashover Parish Council meeting: 19 September 2023**

Minutes for the above meeting aren't yet available though the agenda of what was discussed can be found here on the parish council's website.

<https://www.ashover-pc.gov.uk/uploads/agenda-19092023.pdf?v=1694518743>

The following is just a summary of the main topics discussed:

### **Public speaking**

Members of the public spoke on application 23/00609/FL

Safety issues relating to the A632 were then discussed at some length, prompted by a member of the public who spoke at the meeting. The question posed by the resident was to ask how people living at the bottom of Slack Hill can safely walk from there to Kelstedge Village to access the bus service and other facilities without a designated footpath. For their part, DCC's Highways team say this section was specifically intended as a grass verge, not a footway and they would not wish to encourage any pedestrians to walk along this route given the danger associated with it being a high speed carriageway. It was observed that the siting of the bus-stop at the bottom of Slack Hill does seem to be a contradiction to these sentiments.

Long-standing concerns about traffic speeds were voiced which were carried forward to the Parish Maintenance item of the agenda.

### **Parish Maintenance**

#### A632 Road Safety

Data on speed monitoring was discussed and it seems that respect for the 50 mph limit is lacking. Noted that a police presence on the A632 is occasionally being seen but the mooted creation of lay-bys for safe speed monitoring by the police will be a step forward. Training up of some residents in the use of hand-held cameras is to be progressed.

Installation of average speed cameras on the A632 from Chesterfield to Matlock would be welcome but given the cost (£3m) and timescales (5 years?) associated with the recently announced installation on the Via Gellia road it seems it'll be a challenge to gain traction on a scheme for the A632.

Meanwhile, installation of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) is imminent and hopefully this will have a positive impact on motorists who are unaware of their speed as they travel along the A632. Plans are also being drawn up to introduce more prominent rumble strips on Alicehead Road, to alert drivers to their approach to the Span Carr crossroads.

Overall, however, there continues to be widespread concern about A632 safety issues and the Parish Council will be making arrangements for another public meeting where the various issues can be aired in front of representatives of the various bodies.

#### Resignation of Tree Warden

After many years of valuable service to the community Linda Stephenson has resigned.

### **River Amber**

A letter, dated 3 August, from Liv Garfield, CEO of Severn Trent was recently posted on the News page of the Parish Council's web-site and our Facebook page. Ms Garfield was responding to long standing local concerns about pollution in the River Amber and a specific request that she commission the installation of additional holding tanks and an extension to their existing reed bed to create additional treatment capacity.

In her detailed response she says that there are eight Reasons for Not Achieving Good (RNAGs) along the River Amber with only one attributable to Severn Trent overflow. Ms Garfield goes on to say that their response to the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) is subject to final agreement and sign off by Defra / Environment Agency. Once they (Severn Trent) have sign off they will be investing to meet a new phosphorus limit for the Ashover site and at this point they will make a final decision on the technology that will be used to meet the new permit level - it may be

additional tanks or an additional reed bed but they say all options will be evaluated to ensure the most appropriate solution.

Meanwhile, water sampling upstream of Kelstedge continues and the outcome awaited.

Over the past 18 months, the parish council has worked with Lee Rowley in pressing our concerns with Seven Trent and this will continue. In responding to Liv Garfield's letter we have asked Lee to make clear our disappointment at the limbo we're in and given the level of local concerns we're asking for a point of contact so we can lobby for regular updates in the coming months.

### **Proposed Bus Stop Clearway, Ashover Primary School**

DCC proposed the siting of a Bus Stop Clearway immediately outside the school. This was supported by the Parish Council and the work is expected to be carried out during one of the school holidays in the next 6 months.

### **Voluntary and Working Groups**

#### Footpaths & Bridleways Group

With 50+ miles of footpaths and bridleways around the parish for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, the group has been looking at the adequacy of the maintenance regime which keeps the routes clear in the summer months. A paper submitted by the group recommended changes to the designated Rights of Way maintained by DCC, an uplift of allowances in the Minor Maintenance Agreement budget and creation of a provision in the 2023/2024 budget which the group could draw from to help catch up on overdue footpaths/bridleways clearance.

Work on preparing the 2024/2025 precept will begin shortly and the group will contribute its recommendations.

Specific reference was made to FP144 – a link footpath between Kelstedge lane and Amber Lane which will hopefully be re-designated as a bridleway so that horse-riders can emerge more safely on the A632.

#### Climate Change Working Group

The group are due to meet on 28 September when the agenda includes dialogue with the school on future projects, a review of progress in the local habitat review and scope for liaison with DCC on their Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

### **News items**

Publication of the series of articles relating to the Commonwealth War Graves has now been completed. An update on progress at Jim's Field is in the pipeline while development of other ideas for articles progresses.

### **Neighbourhood Plans**

Recent correspondence relating to an appeal decision by the Planning Inspectorate, for a case in Newcastle under Lyme, had been passed to Lee Rowley MP for guidance. It was concluded that a 5 year housing supply in the District's Local Plan is imperative in supporting the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Plans.

### **Future Projects**

Proposals included submission of an expression of interest form, under a government initiative, for provision of a chess table – it would be located outdoor in a green space in the parish.

Also, ideas for an anti-litter poster campaign will be developed.

### **Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2022/2023**

The external audit was satisfactorily completed with no points arising.