

Minutes of the Ashdown Forest Villages Road Safety Partnership

10.00, 18 June 2008, Ashdown Forest Centre

Present: Bob Beard (East Sussex FRS), Graeme Beattie (ESCC SID Co-ordinator), Roy Galley (Maresfield PC), John Gramolt (Co-opted member), Hew Prendergast (Conservators), Arabella Sackville, Robert Watson (representing Forest Row PC). Minutes were taken by Tracy Buxton.

Action:

1. Apologies received.

Alison Beck (Withyham PC), Jonathan Blake (Danehill PC) and Matt Elder (East Sussex FRS). There was no representation from Hartfield, Buxted or Maresfield parishes. It was noted that Keith Sinden had now retired from ESCC.

2. Election of Chairman

Hew Prendergast nominated John Gramolt and this was agreed by a show of hands.

3. Minutes of last meeting.

The minutes were adopted.

4. Matters Arising.

It was noted that the missing data were found by Graeme Beattie. There was no press release.

It was noted that Keith Sinden did indeed contact the Police to enlist their support and they were involved on the SID day (23 April). It was noted that Mike Taggart at ESCC Press Office has now left.

Hew Prendergast had made contact with Buxted PC regarding their parish representative. He reported that Buxted wanted to focus their activities on the A272. The Partnership expressed their disappointment that Buxted did not feel able to attend. The Chairman stated that he would make contact and arrange a personal visit to put across the Partnership's message. JG

It was noted that the completed SID data sheets were forwarded to Alison Beck at Withyham as agreed. As yet there had been no feedback.

It was noted the Police had been invited to this Partnership meeting. However, Mr Beard commented that, as it was Uckfield Road Safety Week, staff were likely to be tied up with other things.

Graeme Beattie reported that there was a planned Road Safety Week, starting on 15th September, at Groombridge. There would be traffic monitoring using SIDs and he hoped to call on all the communities to have SIDs on all the approach roads to the village. The planning will be taking place through July and August. Hew Prendergast thought it was important to communicate to the wider community that the villages on the Forest were getting special treatment from ESCC, four to-date, due to the work of the Partnership. Graeme Beattie commented that it was also due to the enthusiasm shown by the participating schools and that there were only four road safety weeks across the whole county in a year. There was a short discussion regarding involving other local schools in the Road Safety Week. Graeme Beattie said he would discuss the feasibility of this with Withyham School and PC Steve Etherington.

There was a short discussion regarding on the National Speed Review. New speed limits would be rolled out at Danehill, the A275; the A272; Chelwood Gate / Beaconsfield Road; Piltown / Newick and Batts Bridge. Hew Prendergast stated that he had no idea that this was happening and wanted to know why it had not filtered through to the Partnership. Roy Galley commented that ESCC Highways department were prioritising the process based on accident figures and other parts of the County would be rolled out next year.

5. Results of SID day 23 April 2008

The Chairman stated that data had been successfully collected but there had been some technical difficulties. He went on to say that he and Graeme Beattie had a data collection/download pilot day and with the help of the Forest Centre computer advisor, Liz Gentles, the SID had automatically collected data for the very first time - this reduced the need for manual data collection. The SID recorded data of vehicles approaching and passing the device. This process eliminates human error and the recorded data is 100% accurate (see attached summary chart). Data sheets were tabled and discussed. It was noted that at even the highest speeds drivers slowed down at the SID. It was noted no AM data were collected at Forest Row and no data for most of the day at Maresfield - all due to technical difficulties. Hew Prendergast thought emphasis in any media release should be given to the fact that this was the first time in the County that there had been successful data collection from a SID.

On the day the Police were in support giving verbal warnings and handing out 11 fixed penalty notices. ESFRS also talked to 22 drivers passed on to them by the Police and were also signing up drivers to the speed commitment.

6. What next?

There was a discussion regarding retrieving data from the strips that had coincidentally been placed across roads by East Sussex Highways at Gorsey Down, Lye Green (below Greengate), near Friends, near Piglets and by the Forest Centre. Graeme Beattie stated he would find out the purpose behind the placing of the strips and find out if the data being collected could be shared. He went on to say that there were permanent loops under the road at King Standing and data would be available all the time, which the Partnership could have access to, and direct comparisons made. Hew Prendergast commented that there had now been four successful SIDs campaigns and these new loops were in place almost exactly two years after those installed by the partnership in May 2006. This was therefore a great opportunity to see if there had been an impact on traffic speed.

Graeme Beattie to find out the purpose behind the placing of the strips and if data could be shared.

The Chairman commented that a great deal of data had been gathered and it was time to take stock, sort it out and audit it. **GB**

Bob Beard said that ESFR did not have a bottomless pit of funds and campaigns need to fit station and borough action plans with the focus towards mobile phones, seatbelts, motorbikes and young drivers rather than speed. He went on to say that driver engagement, raising awareness and education was thought more important than fines. He also said that in some locations engineering solutions were required such as rumble strips at the point of danger. After a short discussion it was agreed that SIDs required the presence of a person in a fluorescent jacket and this made a difference to driver behaviour as shown by data. The presence of yellow coated operators emphasises the presence of the

roadside team. Automated data collection of speed data frees up team members to collect other data. There was a short discussion on the potential effectiveness of this and it was agreed it would be a valuable exercise. Robert Watson also commented that 'speed cameras in operation signs' also seemed to be effective.

There was a short discussion regarding the number of people who had been signed up to the making a commitment. Graeme Beattie reported this to be 501. Bob Beard commented that he was unaware of the number signed up on SID day but would find out. Hew Prendergast stated that over 1000 commitment papers would be sent out with the Forest rate. Graeme Beattie commented that the forms were running low and a re-print was now required.

Graeme Beattie to arrange reprint of the commitment forms.

Engineering solutions across the Forest were discussed. Hew Prendergast described the Conservators Executive Committee idea of smaller roads on the Forest being converted to single track roads with passing places allowing animals to graze and wander freely. He stated that engineering was one way to change driver's behaviour but that a sounding out exercise supporting evidence and a discussion paper was required. Bob Beard stated that fire appliances are now wider and taller than they had ever been, and whilst he could appreciate the idea, did not think it was feasible from the point of view of the emergency services. The safety of riders and pedestrians was also discussed. **GB**

There was a short discussion on the work, with the focus being kept on the Forest, needed before the next meeting and action points were:

It was agreed a press release from the Partnership was required.

The date for the next SID day was agreed to be 17th September and technical operational checklists for the machines were required. There would be a training/refresher session on Monday 8th September with SIDs to be collected from the Forest Centre by Friday 12th at noon. **GB/HP**
JG/GB

A form for the collection of vehicle classification/demographic data needs creating for possible future use. **JG**

Other points alluded to were:

- **Increasing the numbers of commitment sign ups.** **GB/HP**
- **Greater liaison and strengthened links with the parishes by visiting meetings and/or liaison with parish representatives.** **JG**
- **Road engineering solutions across the Forest.** **HP/parishes**
- **Data audit meeting was required as soon as possible.**

There was a short discussion regarding the new deer casualty signs on the A22. These were made of corex and would be updated very two to three months with new figures. **JG/HP/GB**

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 8th October at 10.00

The meeting finished at approx 12.00.

