

WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Held on Tuesday, 28 September 2021

At 2.30 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor A Coles (Chair)

Councillors:	A Prosser	J Aitman
	T Fenton	Oxfordshire County Council
	D Enright	Oxfordshire County Council
	H Eaglestone	West Oxfordshire District Council
	M Johnson	West Oxfordshire District Council
Others:	T Bayliss	Stagecoach Oxfordshire
	K Hickman	Windrush Bike Project
	A Lyon	West Oxfordshire Comm Transport
	D Miles	Parish Transport Representative
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Witney Town Council
	Claire Green	Witney Town Council
	Odele Parsons	Oxfordshire County Council
	Kim Sutherland	Oxfordshire County Council
	James Wright	Oxfordshire County Council
	Will Barton	West Oxfordshire District Council
Others:	5 members of the public.	

T799 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the position of Chair for the municipal year.

It was proposed and duly seconded that Cllr Andrew Coles be elected Chair. There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved:

That, Cllr Andrew Coles be elected Chair of the Committee for the municipal year.

T800 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Liz Duncan, Chris Hulme from Thames Valley Police, Mark Upton from the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind and Maria Wheatley from West Oxfordshire District Council.

T801 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for Public Participation.

Jan Van de Helvang addressed the Committee concerning agenda item 10 on behalf of the Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group (WiVTAG).

Richard Stevens & Rae Cather addressed the Committee concerning agenda item 11 on behalf of residents of Church Green, Witney.

Charlotte Tremain addressed the Committee at a later juncture concerning agenda item 12 (d).

T802 **SCHOOL STREETS - CHURCH GREEN**

The Committee received and considered documentation from residents of Church Green, Witney concerning potential options to increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Members welcomed the document and praised the residents on the professionalism and scope of the options presented. The suggestions were sensible, would amend the current access and make the area a safer, less noisy and less polluted place for residents and schoolchildren. The Committee heard that the document was not necessarily setting out solutions; these were what had emerged from what residents had said and was open for discussion.

It was agreed there was scope for these proposals to be considered as part of the County Council's developing LCWIP. In addition, there were further possibilities to interact with other immediate areas such as Corn Street and the Market Place.

Resolved:

That, County Council officers consider the suggestions included within the document provided by residents and report back to the next meeting.

T803 **BURFORD A361 - EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER (ETRO)**

The Committee had received an update on the Burford A361 ETRO scheme through public participation which was reiterated by the Chair.

Members heard the County Council had agreed to continue with the Order until January 2022 and were engaging with parishes and gathering as much data as possible to make an informed decision at that time. Further information was needed on air quality, which was already poor in the Bridge Street area. Upcoming traffic surveys, with traffic nearing pre-covid levels, might offer more evidence.

The Committee agreed that the interim data in June had shown an impact on areas of Witney and it re-affirmed its earlier resolution to continue asking that the order be withdrawn and alternative options explored.

Resolved:

1. That, the update on the Burford A361 ETRO be noted, and

2. That, Witney Traffic Advisory Committee supports the cessation of the order at the earliest opportunity, and
3. That, Witney Town Council considers re-affirming support for the Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group through its committee process.

T804 TO ADOPT AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 JUNE 2021

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 8 June 2021 be approved and signed by the Chair.

T805 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED IN THE ACTION PLAN OR SUBSEQUENT ITEMS

T795 – Hailey Road/Farmers Close Safety Concerns – A member advised that the hedge in this area which was hindering visibility had been cut down since the last meeting which had been welcomed by residents.

There were no further matters arising from the minutes of 8 June 2021.

T806 ACTION PLAN

The Chair advised several issues were covered under later agenda items.

T762 – Ducklington roundabout – The Chair advised he would look at this issue with officers and the County Councillor for Ducklington before the next meeting. Ducklington Parish Council had also been active on this issue and discussions on the potential installation of barriers had not been successful due to safety concerns.

T807 WITNEY HIGH STREET - SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

The Committee received a verbal update on the Witney High Street social distancing measures from the District Council's Business Development Officer.

Members were advised that a public survey, run by the District Council had taken place and the responses on how to move forward with the measures were split. Options would be prepared and debated at the District Council in the coming weeks and would include, continuing the current measures until January, keeping the measures without walking barriers in the road, or supporting the County Council on more permanent restrictions.

Members were asked their thoughts and the consensus was that the restrictions had made shoppers feel safer and less polluting environment. A shift had been made towards walking, cycling and improving pedestrian access and that business had not suffered due to the lack of thru traffic. There was optimism that permanent restrictions could help breathe new life into the town centre. Comments made from the public on reduced footfall did not seem to be borne out by the evidence.

There was some concern in recent weeks, due to an improving national situation, that restrictions were being adhered to less than they were and if permanent measures were to

remain, the Corn Street/High Street junction would need to be re-considered and the planters may need to be relocated further down the road in the interests of safety. There would also need to be some thought given to enforcement of any new regulations.

The Committee also discussed how the future of the town centre could be looked at as a whole, all three tiers of local government were stakeholders on how to bring about improvements.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update provided by West Oxfordshire District Council's Business Development Officer be noted.

T808 WOODSTOCK ROAD - TRAFFIC ISSUES

The Committee received and considered correspondence from a resident of Woodstock Road concerning road safety.

Members were sympathetic to the concerns and were disappointed no reply had been received from Thames Valley Police who were responsible for traffic speed enforcement. County Council officers were asked if the epicormic growth at the zebra crossing could be looked into and members agreed this area could be considered as an area of interest for Community Speedwatch.

The Town Council was supporting 20mph zones and the County Council were taking the lead, but enforcement would be an ongoing issue without speed cameras and required resources from the police.

Resolved:

1. That, the resident correspondence be noted, and
2. That, the Town Council writes to Thames Valley Police on behalf of this committee regarding the speeding issue in Woodstock Road and lack of response thus far, and,
3. That, County Council officers investigate the visibility around the zebra crossing adjacent to Wood Green School, and
4. That, this area be referred to the Community Speedwatch task and finish group.

T809 CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The committee was notified of bi-annual reports and regular bulletins which are issued to residents from West Oxfordshire District Council containing the latest climate updates.

Resolved:

That, the climate update reports provided by West Oxfordshire District Council be noted.

T810 **REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL OFFICER - TRAFFIC SCHEMES AREA OPERATIONS (NORTH) - OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Principal Officer concerning updates on several projects underway in Witney.

Members were updated on the Active Travel scheme which was nearing the completion of its implementation. It was still early days and several snagging issues on lining and positioning of 20mph signs would be addressed as soon as possible. The exit from Corndell Gardens would also be investigated further. Members were advised that lighting near to the Town Council's allotments would be considered moving forward into the next funding phase to improve safety.

Further updates were provided on the Windrush Bike Project Barriers Report, Windrush Place s106 contributions, Public Transport at Centenary Way, the emerging Local Transport Connectivity Plan, and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. A planning application was expected early in 2022 in relation to the Shores Green junction. To implement a Low Traffic Neighbourhood Scheme at Burwell, members were advised traffic surveys would need to be undertaken and the County Council had no budget in place for this. Usually carried out through numberplate recognition, there was discussion on whether volunteers could be used to carry this out but it was agreed there would need to be some end product.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted; and,
2. County Council Officers carry out a road safety visit on exiting Corndell Gardens; and,
3. That, options on a traffic survey at Burwell are brought back to the next meeting – whether it could be included as part of the LCWIP; and,
4. Whether volunteers could be used to carry out traffic surveys.

T811 **COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH**

The Committee received and considered the report and an update bulletin concerning Community Speedwatch.

The Chair advised that progress on the project had been slow but there were offers of funding for the equipment and several areas of interest had already been identified.

It was agreed that a task and finish group should be established to progress the project between the quarterly meetings of this committee to avoid further delay.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and Speedwatch Bulletin be noted, and
2. That, a Task & Finish Group of this Committee be established to progress the project consisting of Cllr Andrew Coles, Cllr Joy Aitman, Cllr Ted Fenton, Cllr Mark Johnson and Chris Hulme (TVP).

T812 SAFETY CONCERNS - WEST END, WITNEY

The Committee received and considered correspondence from a resident of West End concerning road safety.

County Council Officers advised they had already looked at the issues of concern, including accident data on this stretch. While there were no direct funds to address these immediately, the developing Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan would address issues raised and it was possible a 20mph speed limit may be extended into this area in the future. In addition, the committee agreed this area should be looked at by the Community Speedwatch task and finish group.

Resolved:

1. That, the resident correspondence be noted, and
2. That, the response from Oxfordshire County Council officers on this issue be noted, showing both mid and long-term solutions, and
3. That, this are be referred to the Community Speedwatch task and finish group as an area of interest.

T813 ROAD SURFACING ISSUES

The Committee received correspondence from a resident of Chestnut Close/Vanner Road concerning the deterioration of the road surfaces there.

Members were advised by County Council Officers that there was a very limited budget for road repairs which was stretched; areas had to be prioritised on safety. There was sadly no current capacity to carry out repairs of a lesser nature.

Resolved:

1. That, the resident correspondence be noted.

T814 VERGE PARKING IN DANGEROUS LOCATIONS

The committee received correspondence from Cllr Enright concerning verge parking at dangerous locations including Crawley Road and Madley Park.

Members agreed this was a problem, emanating from the growth of Witney and the number of car users in each household. There was a possibility posts or planters could be installed in these areas, possibly funded from Councillor Priority Funds, but it was felt this might exacerbate the problem by shifting it to other areas.

The consensus was that residents and members should continue to contact the police and the committee would write to Thames Valley Police stressing the problem.

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence from Cllr Enright be noted, and

2. That, the Committee contacts the police regarding the issue.

T815 ITEMS RAISED AT THE MEETING

A member brought an active County Council parking consultation at Avenue Two, Station Lane to members' attention. The Proposal, tied to an adjacent planning application being considered by the District Council would introduce no parking along the road leading to Witney Lake & Country Park. Members agreed on opposition to this proposal as the County Council policy was to promote walking and cycling and this appeared to be a step in the wrong direction, the area providing disabled, pedestrian and cycling access to this important amenity and beyond.

A member raised road surfacing at Edington Road on the Deer park estate and asked that if Valence Crescent was being re-surfaced, that the top area of this road was included.

Resolved:

That, the Town Council writes to oppose this consultation on behalf of this committee.

T816 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING(S)

Members were advised the next scheduled meeting of this committee would be on 11th January 2022.

Members were generally in favour of making this an in-person meeting but asked whether there was a possibility of holding this in a hybrid way, perhaps even at the District Council Offices. The Town Council hoped to be able to hold hybrid meetings in the future, but it was unlikely this would be available from January.

Resolved:

1. That, the date of the next meeting be noted, and
2. That, this meeting should be held in person subject to any restrictions pertaining to, or prevalence of the Covid-19 virus.

The meeting closed at: 4.42 pm

Chair