

## Spatham Lane – Reduction in Speed Limit

### Report from Ditchling Parish Council's meeting held on the 29 March 2021

Ditchling Parish Council wish to update residents on the current situation regarding the proposed reduction in speed limit to 40mph in Spatham Lane. The reason for this is that some misinformation has been circulated with regard to the Council's financial support for this project. This was discussed at the Parish Council meeting and it was felt that it would be a good opportunity to publish the factual information and the outcome of the decision at the meeting so residents understand the position of the Council on this issue and are in possession of the facts.

Therefore, we have detailed below the minutes from the meeting relating to this matter, which are also available to view on our website

*The Chairman welcomed members of the public and prior to the meeting opening read out a statement regarding item 11.2 on the agenda as noted below:*

*The Parish Council are aware of correspondence that has been circulated regarding the reduction of the speed limit in Spatham Lane involving potential funding and in view of this I would like to provide some clarity on the current situation before inviting members of the public to speak.*

- *A feasibility study was completed by ESCC Highways in February 2019 for the Beacon Parish Traffic Group. This group is made up of members of Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat Parish Councillors together with other representatives. It has no authorised powers to allocate funds from Ditchling Parish Council and reports back to the full Council.*
- *The conclusion of this report stated 'A scheme of measures to introduce a 40mph speed limit is therefore recommended, including new '40' terminal signs, '40' roundels, repeater signs and possible coloured surfacing. Further consultation shall be carried out by BPTG to ensure that the community are fully supportive of this scheme and that key stakeholder groups are accepting of the proposals prior to making a formal Community Match application.*
- *The estimated costs for the scheme are £35,000.*
- *An application for match funding to ESCC Highways was submitted in February 2019 by Westmeston Parish Council. No decision has been made on this application and we understand that this will not be considered until later this year, possibly December due to the impacts of COVID.*
- *Ditchling Parish Council agreed at its full Council meeting on the 29 April 2019 to 'support the reduction in speed limit scheme in principle subject to funding being available'*
- *Ditchling Parish Council have never agreed to any financial figure despite being quoted by Westmeston Parish Council as agreeing to support the project with £8,750 in February 2019.*
- *No money has been allocated in the Council's budget and therefore would have to come from Ditchling Parish Councils general reserves or earmarked CIL funding.*
- *The Council today will therefore consider the best way they can support this project moving forwards and understand and acknowledge the concerns of residents in Spatham Lane about the speed of traffic along this road and the issues of safety to walkers, horse riders and cyclists.*
- *To put this in perspective, we as a Council also have traffic problems on the Bostal, in Beacon Road, through the entire Ditchling village centre and the whole length of the B2112 as far as Wivelsfield; all of which require specialist consideration, time, communications and funding.*
- *Recommendations were made in a Local Area Transport Scheme Report by East Sussex County Council Transport Strategy Team bank in 2006, updated in 2010 and 2017. As far as I am*

*aware none of the recommendations contained in that report have been implemented. It is stated in LATs 2010 'introduce measures to slow traffic in Spatham Lane, such as traffic calming, priority working, narrow the lane, introduce more warning signage, and reduce the speed limit to 40mph.'*

Rob Mills Chairman of Westmeston Parish Council noted his concerns about the danger on Spatham Lane to walkers, cyclists and horse riders and residents. Following the feasibility study no discussions should be required that Ditchling PC put in the share of £8750 as Westmeston PC have raised the sum of £8750 thinking that DPC was doing the same. He advised that they needed to be in a position to advise ESCC that they have the funds so that they can move forward with the project which was started over 10 years ago and hoped for a positive outcome

A resident of Spatham Lane spoke about the incidents with horse riders and how a horse had been killed and raised concerns of possible further fatalities if the speeds were not reduced on the road.

A resident noted that there are traffic problems throughout the Parish and other areas have needs as well and there is only a limited amount of money available.

A representative from the Ditchling Village Society noted that the Beacon Parish Traffic Group had been working towards moving forwards with the traffic issues as a complete picture by engaging a Traffic Consultant and working with ESCC Highways.

## **11. Beacon Parish Traffic Group**

**11.1 Update on funding and traffic consultancy study.** Cllr. Orme confirmed that he had received an email from Jon Wheeler (ESCC) confirming that S106 funds of £18,129 are in the process of being transferred to Ditchling Parish Council. LDC hold some of the S106 funds so this will need to be transferred to ESCC first. The Clerk noted she would speak to Emma Kemp at LDC to see if she could get an idea of timescales. Cllr. Orme felt that by the April meeting we should be in a position to appoint the traffic consultants and obtain the feasibility report in report in late summer/early autumn, once we had control of the S106 funds which would be put together with the £5,000 from Ditchling Parish Council 2020/21 budget allocated for this purpose. It was noted that this would fit into the timelines regarding the match funding application that would be discussed in item 11.2. It was noted that prior to the April meeting the Beacon Parish Traffic Group need to meet and perhaps should be made into a more formal group in order to provide further input for the consultant's brief. The previous 2006/2010/2017 LATs reports were discussed and it was noted that these appeared to be a statement of intent, rather than proposals that were shown to be actually viable measures.

**11.2 To discuss support for the Spatham lane 40mph speed limit restriction and associated costs.** It was noted by Cllr. McBeth at the start of the meeting that Ditchling Parish Council have never agreed to any financial figure despite being quoted by Westmeston Parish Council as agreeing to support the project with £8,750 in February 2019. Prior to the meeting the Clerk had circulated a report, which included 3 emails and 5 letters from residents of Spatham Lane and the Chairman of Westmeston PC supporting the project for the speed restriction.

The Council discussed the issue and the following was noted:

- that the whole village had traffic issues and it was difficult to argue as to which areas were more important;
- the whole problem should be looked at together as the B2112 also has major issues;
- a concise report that looks at the whole of the village should assist with the Council making informed decisions on what the best way forward would be;

- if no decisions are made at the moment on the funding, it has little implication on the Spatham Lane project moving forwards as the match funding application will not be decided until later in the year, possibly December;
- the wording in ESCC feasibility study raised concerns of the Council committing funds of £8,750 as it stated 'It is their view that the impact of a 40mph speed limit in terms of speed and casualty reduction would be minimal and would therefore not be considered a priority to fund from the County Council Road Safety Budget. With this said they have however confirmed that they would not object to the introduction of the lower speed limit along Spatham Lane.'

The Council resolved to defer making a decision on the funding for this project which has been requested by Westmeston Parish Council in the sum of £8,750 and to proceed with obtaining the traffic consultant's report. Once the consultant's report has been received, they will be in a position to make an informed decision on the funding request prior to the deadline for the match funding application.

It was noted that information circulated by Westmeston Parish Council was incorrect in relation to the facts of the situation with funding and the Clerk was asked to write formally to request that information was corrected. An article would also be published in the Parish Magazine to inform residents of the current situation.

The full minutes of the meeting is available on the Parish Council website [https://www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk/Full\\_Council\\_34344.aspx](https://www.ditchling-pc.gov.uk/Full_Council_34344.aspx)

**ADDITIONAL NEWS: Since the meeting held on the 29 March 2021, it has been confirmed that Section 106 funds will be available for the consultancy stage of the Beacon Parishes Traffic Project. This will cover Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston and will include proposals for mitigating traffic impacts with sketch plans and approximate costings. The report should be available in late summer/early autumn 2021 and will be used for consultation with residents, ESCC Highways, South Downs National Park and Lewes District Council.**

Sarah Mamoany

Clerk to Ditchling Parish Council

13 April 2021