

Burwell Parish Council

Minutes of the Safety Group Meeting – 9th November 2023 7.30 pm at the Jubilee Reading Room

Present: Paul Webb (Chair), Liz Swift, Geraldine Tate, Jim Perry, Ian Woodroofe, and Lea Dodds

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Brenda Wilson.

2. Approval of draft minutes of the meeting held on 22.8.2023

The draft minutes from the meeting held on 22.8.2023 were approved.

The Chair informed the group that he intended to work through the agenda in a slightly different order with emphasis being placed on the survey results and the way forward.

3. MVAS Locations/updates and Speedwatch Update

Paul Webb reported that the MVAS Units were due to be taken down on Friday. He would try to remove the data held prior to taking them back to Westotec for repair. The units would be returned by Christmas 2023, and he would arrange for training to take place for Ian Woodroofe, Lea Dodds, Jim Perry, George Rowland and Debbie Cawley.

He continued to report that it was Speedwatch Team's aim to hold two sessions in January, one in Toyse Lane and one in the middle of the village. If by any chance the MVAS units are not back, the old equipment can be used. Paul Webb will check out locations within the buffer zones suitable for Speedwatch with Jim Perry. From February 2024 the aim is to try to organise 3 sessions per month. Each session will have a Team Leader. It was noted that a number of Speedwatch volunteers have been lost.

4. Meeting with Highways

A meeting with Highways is due to take place on Wednesday 15th November 2023. The previous list of outstanding jobs may need prioritising. The entrance/exit at the Gardiner Memorial Hall will hopefully be discussed.

5. Safety Campaign – Final Report

The final report is still awaiting completion.

6. Winter Gritting

Winter Gritting will be discussed with James Broder at the meeting with Highways.

7. LHI

The window for the 24/25 LHI scheme (non 20 mph) is now open for applications and closes on the 12th January 2023.

The 20mph scheme will be running annually.

8. 20 mph/Bypass – Survey Update and 20mph Speed Application

Paul Webb informed the group that over 80 villages in Cambridgeshire had applied for the 20 mph speed limit to be delivered in their villages. 20 schemes including Burwell have been selected on merit to be carried out during the first year. Every 1 mph speed reduction equates a 1% reduction in accidents, a reduction of particulate matter and a reduction in nitrate gasses. It also improves safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Lea Dodds stated that people get distracted by compliance with the law. In a lot of places it is not possible to make a road any safer for pedestrians, for example opposite the post office, but by slowing down traffic, safety does improve. The 20's Plenty website has lots of data, but although impressive, this is mainly from London. Data given on the site from other areas more akin to Burwell shows average speed dropping from 24 mph to 22 mph and 36 to 29 mph. Compliance by all and better policing would be ideal, but even without this, you would still get a lower level of speed.

Geraldine Tate reported that she had read that schemes in the Bath and Bristol area had slowed traffic down, but people had complained about there being no hard evidence. Having had data from the MVAS signs would have been beneficial. Liz Swift also expressed her disappointment that the MVAS data had not been available and asked if it would be possible to obtain the nitrate readings from the MVAS sign that was situated in the High Street. Paul Webb reminded those present that following on from the 2017/2018 survey, where the majority of people who had responded had indicated that traffic speed was an issue in the village, the Safety Campaign had been carried out. The first few months of the campaign focused on speeding and within the handout leaflets were diagrams showing the reduction in accidents against the reduction in speed graphs.

There were 1105 responses to the survey. There had been consistent voting up until early to mid October with just over 50% stating that a 20 mph speed limit should be introduced in either all or part of the village. A County Council press release giving information that Burwell had been successful with its application and was one of the 20 schemes to be delivered in the first-year led to a massive increase in those taking part in the survey, raising the 'no' vote to 697. However, it is very clear when analysing the responses that frequently many of the responses came from the same IP addresses and within a minute of each other. Removing repeated entries from the same address brought those against the 20 mph speed reduction down to 47%.

The group then discussed how to move forward. Ian Woodroffe felt that more substantiation was needed and asked if a professional could look at the data. Jim Perry suggested that the survey could be held again, setting up the survey to allow only one entry per IP address, with any further entries from that address being submitted on a paper survey form available from the Jubilee Reading Room. Jim Perry continued to suggest that the Jubilee Reading Room could be open over a weekend with residents coming along to vote. Lea Dodds considered that the Council has given the survey a good shot, and whatever way forward is chosen, will get a lot of flak. An option could be to defer making a decision at this stage. Later more data will be available. It is also important to reach out to more groups, especially those where the speed of traffic is causing issues with or stopping them from going out. Geraldine Tate liked Lea Dodds suggestion of deferring delivering the scheme. She also felt that relying on the yes vote being made up of the whole and part village results was not necessarily appropriate. The results of the survey would need to be published. Liz Swift asked how funding would work. She continued by saying that she agrees with both Lea Dodds. It had been necessary to do the survey in a hurry and that the results are close. The Wilbrahams who have also been successful has spent 3 years in consultation with the residents on the proposal. A part of Haddenham already has 20 mph zones, they did not consult with the community, and this has now resulted in some issues. Burwell Parish Council did pledge to do a survey.

Delaying going ahead with the delivery of the scheme seemed to be a favourable option.

This would allow time for a more educational campaign with more data available.

Due to concern about the voting issues the results are not conclusive and therefore the survey results cannot be validated. External advice from an organisation such as 20's Plenty would be beneficial when planning an educational campaign. Lea Dodds to make contact with the organisation. The consultation needs to reach all groups of the community including the vulnerable.

Following a vote with all in favour, the group makes the following recommendation to Full Council:

Due to the survey results not being conclusive, the Safety Group recommends to Full Council that a through consultation is carried out for the change of the speed limit to 20 mph in Burwell.

9. Email Security

Lea Dodds to talk to the Clerk about accessing email through the Office 365 set up.

10. Pound Hill Junction

To be discussed at the meeting with Highways.

11. Parking on the Causeway/Mill Lane and Mill Close

To be discussed at the meeting with Highways.

12. Date of next meeting – 23 January 2024

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Signed

Dated