

Safety Meeting

May 11th 2023

Chair: Irene Collins

This meeting was called to discuss the safety issues in Chipstead Lane

Residents from Barnfield Road, Bullfinch Lane and Chipstead Lane were invited.

- The Chair clarified the position of the Parish Council and the authority it has over decisions made about Chipstead Lane. All the Parish Council can do is back the residents of Chipstead Lane to improve safety.
We have in the past written to KCC but they try to pass the buck to us.
Our aim is to have a safe ending to the problem.
Car insurance for the residents is expensive, pets have been killed.
In the past there have been meetings which have ended in a shouting match
- Our aim is to go forward.
To this end, representatives from all three roads and Chevening Parish Council, have been asked to speak for only three minutes to state their cases and suggest ways forward.
- Kim Bayley, Nick Chard and Graham Clack representing Sevenoaks District and KCC, joined the meeting.
- RPC was aware that if this plan went ahead Bullfinch Lane could have more problems. we would suggest that to help alleviate these problems, the exit from Bullfinch Lane to London Road could be left turn only. This would mean a longer journey but would be safer.
- Bullfinch Lane was represented by Russell Thomas. He felt that by making Chipstead Lane restricted access would add to the congestion in both Bullfinch Lane and Witches Lane. He also felt that turning the direction of the traffic flow would not work. It was pointed out that although this was on the plan given out it should have been omitted. Both these roads have a large number of children walking to and from the schools.
The solution he suggested to help Chipstead Lane was to put greater width barriers, the lower the speed limit and have more signage.
- Barnfield Road was represented by John Purdy. He discussed the difficulties of Barnfield, especially the junction with Chipstead Lane. One of his concerns was the enforcement of any changes. He felt it was rare that regulations were enforced.

The solution he suggested was double yellow lines on the corner. To reduce the speed limit to 15mph. Pinch point barriers at the junctions of the roads and much better signage.

- Chipstead Lane was represented by Colin Croucher. He showed the video that a resident from Chipstead Lane had put together. He then stated that the situation in Chipstead Lane had to change as children were at risk. He stated that most of the damage to cars and property in Chipstead Lane was caused by cars not HGVs who have ignored the width restriction signs. KCC have a vision zero for road safety and Chipstead Lane's problems must be addressed.

The solution for Chipstead Lane was to reduce the number of vehicles using the Lane as well as better signage. There should be Restricted Access for both Barnfield Road and Chipstead Lane.

- Nick Chard stated he wanted a solution that was fair and equitable. His role was not to impose something on a community. There will be consultation at KCC and JTB. He wanted to support Chipstead lane without impacting on surrounding roads. He stated there needed to be a degree of flexibility and residents should not be dogmatic. He said he was committed to making Chipstead lane safer for residents without too much of an impact on Barnfield Road and Bullfinch Lane.
- Irene then opened the debate for questions or suggestions from the floor. Initially there was some confusion as the plan that had been circulated included that of reversing the traffic flow, which has been rejected.
 1. The volume of traffic was the problem.
 2. Having restricted access will cause difficulties.
 3. There was need for better signage and whatever solution was adopted there was a need for enforcement a real issue as there is an expectation to abide by rules.
 4. Shirley Stewart (SS) had met with community police and there is not enough resources, however they will support enforcement especially at the start of any changes. Police will give a presence and the changes would become a habit.
 5. Should there not be width restriction signs at the start of Witches Lane. Could the area be designated a Low Traffic Zone?
 6. Access only could solve problems, but would satnav be updated?
 7. SS explained the access only regulations and the exceptions that could be put in place around school times.
 8. John Purdy again stated the need for pinch points at the top of Chipstead Lane and not just at the Barnfield Road/Chipstead Lane junction.

- **At this point the Chevening Parish Council representative stated there was not a problem In Chipstead. This caused uproar in the hall. Irene called for order and he did not continue.**
9. A suggestion from the floor asked if there could be barriers that could be locked and unlocked to facilitate large vehicles, i.e removal vans.
 10. Russell Thomas said that Chipstead Lane wasn't just a rat-run but a highway. The consequences of diverting traffic to Bullfinch Lane need to be thoroughly assessed.
 11. Colin Croucher said that things could not remain as they are.
 12. Nick said he would get the bones of improvements before the formal consultation.
 - Access only for CL and BR
 - Physical bollards
 - Double yellow lines
 - No right turn from BL into London Road
 - Low traffic zone
 - Figures on the amount of traffic that would be displaced.
 - Parking on CL.
 - Speed limits
 - An exhibition for people to study first.
 13. Nick gave a time frame commitment to have some communication by July 2023.
 14. Why has this taken so long? Because there was no consensus
 15. Colin Croucher asked if there ever was a point where the right thing to do was to do it. Restricted Access was the only way forward and it must be done.
- Irene summed up the meeting, thanked people and closed the meeting.