



**Introduction by Bryan Harrison, Facilitator for the Beech Roads Group, Autumn 2011:** the following 9-page report is a serious attempt by **Ian Gibson, Beech Parish Counsellor and a Civil Engineer with Highways experience**, to represent the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of the people of Beech regarding your roads; also the road condition, maintenance, road drainage, the roads in winter, understanding where all the water comes from, speed limits, safety, signage, parking, some traffic calming, and a proposal for how a footpath of varying nature could, over the years, be built alongside the main Beech Road from Alton Abbey to the A339. In addition, he considers Village Gateways, Village Hall/Road interchange landscaping, Street Lighting and Public Transport. Above all, he has been mindful of the safety of non-vehicular traffic – pedestrians (of course including children), cyclists, equestrians – in our village.

To discuss this Working Document, please contact me, Bryan Harrison, on **01420 88220**, [BryanHarrison@thedden.com](mailto:BryanHarrison@thedden.com) or write to me at **3 Thedden Grange, Beech, Alton, GU324 4AU**, so I can establish convenient times in November and December to talk together.

Proposed structure for the final Parish Plan:

Executive Summary

1. Introduction: about Beech & what is purpose of document
2. Methodology: how we consulted & reached conclusions
3. Key issues: by topic, including conclusion and action plan for each
4. Financial Implications & next steps

Acknowledgements & references

Appendices

The original proposal was for five separate Topics of which Topic 2 is “Transport, Traffic and Roads” with following coverage. Some of these could probably be combined for the final PP document.

**Original suggested Topic Coverage**

**2. Transport, Traffic & Roads**

- Bus service, public transport, travel tokens
- Road safety
- Traffic / weight/ frequency / access times
- Devices to “control” speeding
- Drainage problems in Medstead Road
- Repair water mains & maintain drains
- Street lighting (or not)
- Road repairs, potholes, maintenance
- Road margins
- Pavements, kerb stones
- Grit bins, snow clearance, gritting
- Unsafe/inconsiderate parking
- Pedestrian safety zone

**Proposed Parish Plan Sections**

- Miscellaneous
  - Verges and Footpaths
  - Traffic Calming and pedestrian safety
  - Traffic Calming and pedestrian safety
  - Road conditions and Maintenance
  - Road conditions and maintenance
  - Miscellaneous
  - Road conditions and maintenance
  - Verges and Footpaths
  - Road conditions and maintenance.
  - Road conditions and maintenance
  - Traffic Calming and pedestrian safety
  - Verges and Footpaths
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**1. Road Conditions and Maintenance**

Proposals	Comments Received
<p><u>Promote a better understanding of the problems of surface water disposal and support improvements.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village does not have a piped surface water drainage system and provision is not practical. The capital cost of a piped system serving Kings Hill, Medstead Road, and Wellhouse Road would be prohibitively high. The ultimate disposal of the water from such a system would require attenuation for which land is unlikely to be available.</li> <li>• However should these limitations be removed the Village would support provision of such a system.</li> </ul> <p><u>Promote regular maintenance of grips for disposal of surface water.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing grips need frequent and regular maintenance which is not currently being provided at sufficient frequency. The employment of a lengthsman would enable this situation to be improved.</li> </ul> <p><u>Promote dialogue with landowners to limit runoff from private properties onto the public highway.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main contributors to flash runoff are the adjoining major landowners; Thedden Farm, Forestry Commission etc.</li> <li>• Whenever possible actions should be taken to promote the construction of attenuation features to limit runoff rate. This may include partial funding from public Authorities (incl Beech Parish Council) to benefit the Village.</li> <li>• Require a condition on all new development to dispose of surface water runoff within the curtilage of the property.</li> </ul> <p><u>Employ a lengthsman for regular maintenance on and adjacent to the Highway.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The present maintenance is not sufficient proactive, constrained by public sector funding.</li> <li>• Duties would include cutting back vegetation, maintenance of surface water drainage.</li> </ul> <p><u>Promote resurfacing for Kings Hill, Medstead Road, Wellhouse Road, and Snode Hill.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The condition of the road surfaces is deteriorating due to age and lack of maintenance.</li> </ul>	<p>Comments on condition summarised as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance is poor</li> <li>• Add kerbs to reduce grit etc, cut hedges back.</li> <li>• Resurface throughout</li> <li>• Roads edges poor condition; Kings Hill noted in particular</li> <li>• Potholes are an on-going problem</li> <li>• Reduce road signage and road furniture (though at least one suggested more signage).</li> </ul> <p>Comments on maintenance summarised as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water mains bursting frequently and need replacing.</li> <li>• Development is seen as increasing flooding</li> <li>• Flooding on Wellhouse Road noted particularly</li> <li>• Winter conditions a concern; suggestion of hire/purchase of tractor based gritting?</li> <li>• More grit bunkers though differing views on how visible these should be.</li> </ul>

- The periodic filling of potholes has not proven to be effective though this must be continued pending full resurfacing.

Promote proper edge treatment of all roads to prevent damage and control surface water runoff.

- The edges of the roads are deteriorating due to age and traffic. This is exacerbated by the narrow carriageway widths which forces vehicles to drive close to the verge together with the excessive storm runoff which also follows the road edge.
- Wellhouse Road has received some edge treatment which is generally effective. This was only carried out following extreme runoff which caused considerable carriageway and private verge damage.
- Traditional concrete kerbing not recommended as the existing road widths and rural nature do not allow for such treatment

Review all road signage with a view to reducing this to a minimum.

- Beech is a rural environment; excessive road signage and road furniture is not in keeping with this character.
- Gateway signing and sensitive road design emphasises the rural village environment making additional signage unnecessary.

Improve snow and ice clearance during winter and Provide grit bunkers at strategic locations.

- Medstead Road/Kings Hill is a bus route which must be maintained. Though we wish to discourage Beech as a through route from Alton to Medstead, in practice this becomes a bypass when problems occur on the A31. If traffic cannot use Kings Hill this disadvantages Beech residents as well as through traffic.
- Beech is 'hilly' and recent winter conditions have emphasised the need for grit bunkers.

Encourage replacement of public water mains through Beech.

- Recent experience suggests these mains are aging and in poor condition.
- In addition to loss of water at affected properties, broken mains are causing considerable disadvantage to road users.

**2. Verges and Footpaths**

Proposals	Comments Received
<p><u>Encourage proposals for improved pedestrian access throughout the village.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general Beech has narrow carriageways and no specific provision for pedestrians and/or other non-vehicular users.</li> <li>• Pedestrians (and equestrians) are regularly at risk; this is a significant issue with most villagers.</li> </ul> <p><u>Promote the creation of a footpath parallel to Medstead Road over the length of the Forestry Commission land including up to the bottom of Kings Hill.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The village does not feel integrated in considerable part because there is no single pedestrian route from one end of the village to the other.</li> <li>• The Forestry Commission allows public access but there is no defined path adjacent to the road. Negotiations should be commenced to create such a route.</li> <li>• The land between the entrance to Bushy lease and the bottom of Kings hill is generally in private ownership on either side and Medstead Road is particularly narrow over this length. Negotiations for sufficient land and the costs of creating a path over this length will be a separate issue.</li> <li>• At the top of Kings Hill there is land available on the north side but this is above the road level and ownership and technical issues will need to be resolved to allow a path to be built.</li> <li>• Any paths should allow for equestrian, cycling, as well as pedestrian usage.</li> </ul> <p><u>Promote redesign of the road to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and road traffic.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing road widths within the village are less wide than current standards would require and have no verge or pedestrian footpath areas.</li> <li>• Within the built up residential areas the narrowness is extremely dangerous for non-vehicular traffic. This is unacceptable as there are no alternative pedestrian routes.</li> <li>• Medstead Road is historically very narrow. Some land presently within front gardens was previously safeguarded by the Highway authority for possible road widening but that</li> </ul>	<p>Comments summarised as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of footpaths and consequence road safety issues. Very strong response related to Medstead Road area.</li> <li>• Lack of walking/riding connection detaches Kings Hill from Medstead Road areas.</li> <li>• Village is not integrated (except by car) due to linear nature of village and lack of footpaths.</li> <li>• Existing footpaths get overgrown (Kings Hill to Wivelrod quoted)</li> <li>• One comment on NOT wanting to see pavements – too suburban.</li> </ul>

<p>widening is no longer being considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The present speed limit is 30mph. Sight lines are compromised in a number of areas due to curving road geometry exacerbated by roadside vegetation.</li> <li>• Subject to the speed limit being reduced locally to 20mph (or less), and obtaining use of some or all of the safeguarded land, there is scope for a re-design of parts of Medstead Road which would markedly improve pedestrian safety in areas where this is currently a significant concern.</li> <li>• In our opinion any redesign should consider a degree of 'shared use' between vehicular and non-vehicular traffic. This may require challenging conventional thinking so as to achieve a solution sympathetic to the rural village environment.</li> </ul> <p><u>Promote regular maintenance of off road footpaths and bridleways.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footpaths and bridleways frequently become overgrown. The employment of a lengthsman would allow the parish to carry out regular maintenance.</li> <li>• The Parish needs resources to maintain bridleways and footpaths which are damaged by surface water runoff.</li> </ul>	
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**3. Traffic Calming and Pedestrian Safety**

Proposals	Comments Received
<p><u>Continue to Promote existing measures to reduce Traffic speeds and traffic volumes.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The danger from traffic on Medstead Road and Kings Hill has been the greatest concern within the village for many years and remains so today. Those most affected are non-vehicle users though the risk of vehicle accidents remains considerable.</li> <li>• Surveys carried out in 2000, 2002, and 2009 show a reduction in traffic volumes with time but with similar percentages of vehicles still exceeding the speed limits.</li> <li>• White lining was installed a number of years ago as a preliminary traffic speed reduction</li> </ul>	<p>Comments summarised as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce level of speeding – many comments on this aspect.</li> <li>• Traffic cameras would deter speeding.</li> <li>• Suggested sleeping policemen and chicanes as Selborne</li> </ul>

measure. More recently gateway road colouring was laid on Medstead Road and at the top of Kings Hill.

- To date these initiatives appear to have had little effect in the long term and more positive measures are required.
- The Parish Council has recently negotiated SLR signs in conjunction with Medstead and Bentworth; these are in the process of being implemented. They will be moved around on a regular basis and the effects on traffic behaviour monitored.

Design and implement traffic calming measures to radically reduce vehicle speeds and driver behaviour within the immediate built up areas of Medstead Road and Kings Hill.

- We believe that more radical measures are now needed to alter driver and vehicle behaviour in particular where non-vehicle users must share the road space with vehicular traffic.
- Any proposals must acknowledge that Medstead Road and Kings Hill are bus routes and through routes serving other communities. As such 'sleeping policeman' or similar traffic calming is not appropriate.
- On Medstead Road we believe that by making use of some or all of the previously safeguarded land an improved road layout can be designed incorporating traffic calming features. This should include a speed limit of 20mph and greater provision for pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians.
- Although land has been safeguarded, the properties along Medstead Road have very steep drives directly off the present road width. These steep drives will almost certainly limit what can be achieved in practical terms.
- As a first stage a feasibility study would assess what overall road space could be made available. Following the feasibility study more specific proposals would be developed for consultation.
- Similar measures would be considered for Kings Hill. However the constraints and problems are less severe and this length should be considered separately.

though some adverse comments on latter approach.

- Signs warning about Pedestrians and Equestrians - Snode Hill noted
- Vehicle width and weight restrictions suggested.
- Improve signage and layout of A339 junction – considered an accident risk.

#### 4. Miscellaneous

Proposals	Comments Received
<p><u>Promote Village Gateway Signage to Demarcate the Extent of the 'village zone'.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 'village zone' would comprise the main built up area of Kings Hill and Medstead Road, not just the Settlement Policy Boundary(s) as set out in the LDF.</li> <li>The gateway details should be of a permanent nature and not appear as temporary measures. Regular maintenance arrangements would be included in the final proposals.</li> <li>In practical terms this would require one gateway on Medstead Road close to the junction with the A339 and a second gateway near the Abbey at the top of Kings Hill.</li> </ul> <p><u>Promote Village signage on other entry roads to the village.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The only other road entering the village zone is Snode Hill. A subtle sign referring to Beech (not full gateway) will be provided to advise road users of the commencement of the village area. This would be either one sign at the top of Snode Hill or alternatively two signs, one on the Bentworth Road and one on Wivelrod Road to encompass Thedden Grange within the village area.</li> <li>A length of the A339 (approximately 2.2km) lies within Beech parish. This includes access to residential properties at Warren Farm, Tollens, Hillside Nurseries and Wyards Farm. No additional signage is proposed for this length of road as sufficient information signage already exists.</li> </ul> <p><u>Encourage landscaping measures to 'open up' the area around the village Hall to emphasise a centre for the village.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A more open environment around the village hall will assist in emphasising this asset as the centre of the village. The designs would have to respect the existing physical boundaries of the village hall. Limited tree removal would be considered.</li> <li>The landscape proposals would consider improved vehicle access to the village hall; this is presently poor and potentially dangerous.</li> </ul>	<p>Village Gateways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few in favour none against; would demarcate village and could help reduce traffic speeds as well.</li> </ul> <p>Village Hall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve vehicular access as safety issue</li> <li>Reduce hedges around hall would open up this area and emphasise it is the centre of a village – could reinforce slower traffic speeds.</li> </ul>

- Pedestrian access improvements should also be considered but must take account of the fact that the Hall and grounds are not public property.

Maintain the present levels of street lighting with improved and positive maintenance arrangements.

- The present level of street lighting is generally considered adequate albeit there are some conflicting minority opinions that it should be increased or removed.
- The lighting columns are generally not visible. Aesthetically this may be welcomed but for traffic speed control these lights need to be visible. Pending any major road improvements the present lighting must be maintained visible to road users.

In conjunction with proposals for road improvements, Promote new lighting arrangements that offer reduced light overspill to adjoining properties and the environment generally.

- New lights must be more energy efficient.
- All lighting must be designed to avoid 'light pollution' that would take away from the rural nature of the village.
- The rural nature of the village must be respected and lighting schemes be designed to provide the minimum lighting consistent with adequate safety for road users.
- Additional Street lights beyond the present extent of the built up area will not be supported.

Investigate alternative public transport initiatives with view to providing a practical alternative to the private Car.

- At present public transport has limited relevance as the service only operates from 7am to 6pm on approximately 2 hour cycle and only stops near the village hall.
- Public transport in the evenings would be beneficial, particularly for the younger generation who are disenfranchised by living away from social venues.
- Transport connecting with train services would be welcomed.

Street Lighting

- Votes For and against; improve for safety; reduce to retain rural dark sky.

Public Transport

- Lack of public transport for the younger and older members of the village.
- I would like to see better public transport eg a shuttle into Alton.
- Restoration of travel tokens as an alternative to the bus pass?

Current Services

- Stagecoach operates a 2 hourly Service 28 from Basingstoke to Alton with additional buses morning and evening to cater for school times.
- No services in the evenings after about 18:20.
- Currently no CANGO Scheme serving Beech.
- Alton College have a new dedicated service to the College which doesn't take other passengers.