

NANTWICH TRANSPORT GROUP

MINUTES OF NANTWICH TRANSPORT GROUP MEETING ON 23RD JUNE 2009

In Attendance: Rob Welch of Cheshire East Engineers; Paul Griffiths of Cheshire East Transport and Re-generation; Penny Butterill (Chairman); Chris Booth of Cheshire East Engineers; Arthur Moran Councillor Nantwich Town Council; Peter Foster of Sustrans & Acton Parish Plan; David Yorke; Georgina Ross; Rachel Shenton; (all three of Wellington Road Residents Association), Tony Wheeler of Disability Resource Exchange; John Lewis Councillor Nantwich Town Council; Rick Appleton (Hospital Street Association); Andrew Martin Councillor Nantwich Town Council; Cindy Biggins (Welsh Row) and Riddell Graham (Clerk, Nantwich Town Council).

Apologies: There were no apologies for absence.

1. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of 23rd April 2009 (which had been emailed to members of the group first on 7th May and again on 17th June) were approved as a correct record.

2. Membership of Group

Members noted the conventions adopted by the Group as to its membership. Broadly speaking, a member had to be a representative of a relevant residents association, community group or pressure group and be prepared to give consideration to traffic and transport issues affecting the whole of the town.

3. Signage

Georgina Ross, Rachel Shenton and David Yorke, all from Wellington Road, were in attendance to speak about the new signs erected by Cheshire East Council for vehicles visiting Nantwich. They were concerned that a heavier volume of traffic was being directed along Wellington Road than in the past. Georgina Ross emphasised that they were not looking for a more favourable approach to traffic flows in Wellington Road compared to other routes into the town, but simply equitable treatment. The representatives of Wellington Road felt the new signs meant that more traffic was being directed along the road. A report had been prepared by the Wellington Road Residents' Association. It had been copied by the Clerk and was circulated.

Rob Welch, Engineer with Cheshire East, said he understood and was addressing some of the concerns. Specifically:-

- Alternative routes needed to be clearly illustrated on signs, bearing in mind height restrictions on the aqueduct on Welsh Row. A revamped sign was at 'quote' stage.

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- Existing redundant signage which meant traffic went down Wellington Road was to be taken down. The contracting team had been instructed.
- Town Centre traffic is not currently signed down London Road. A decision on altering this would be made based upon the traffic flows (currently being measured) and the formal views of the Transport Group (since the original decision not to signpost had been made after consulting the Group).
- Rob also agreed to examine the Report prepared and to respond in writing to Georgina Ross. (There had of course been previous correspondence and discussion with Georgina regarding the issue).

In the course of the discussion on this item, which became more general, the following points were made:-

- * This was not necessarily a completely new problem – Councillor Lewis had referred to letters he had written dating back to 2005 about traffic volumes in Wellington Road.
- * Would weight restrictions be possible to keep all traffic from the town centre. Rob Welch felt they were likely to be impractical, possibly illegal and the police would not enforce them.
- * There was a need for a wider vision. What was necessary was a by-pass to the south-east of the town. However, this was unlikely without a developer's financial contribution.
- * It was important to try to influence matters of this kind at an early stage. The Local Development Framework would be prepared following an Issues and Options Consultation, probably in 2010. This was the stage to influence.
- * New sign posts should not reduce or obstruct the pavement, bearing in mind mobility scooters, prams and partially sighted people.
- * Signs for the Church View Clinic would be helpful.

As a result of discussion after the meeting, David Yorke (who was, before his retirement, Head of Engineering at Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council and knowledgeable and experienced in traffic matters) agreed to attend the group as an independent member. Georgina and Rachel agreed that one representative of the Wellington Road residents association would probably join the Group.

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4. Nantwich Station

Councillor Lewis outlined his actions regarding Nantwich Station. Its appearance had been significantly improved and Councillor Butterill (from the Chair) congratulated Councillor Lewis for that. The next stage was to try to achieve a use for the adjoining land – probably car parking. However, efforts to get Network Rail to address the issue of land use or leasing the site were extremely frustrating. Councillor Lewis reported that Edward Timpson MP had indicated he may be able to help progress matters. Paul Griffiths of Cheshire East said that he was leading on Railway strategy in the new Borough and had identified a small pot of money to help work up possible schemes and costing. It was agreed that if the MP was not able to make progress fairly quickly, Paul Griffiths would attempt to further matters through the Cheshire East Legal Department. In the meantime, he would arrange for costing of the scheme. Points were made about the need for an accessible toilet and the possibility of a taxi rank.

5. Welsh Row Traffic Calming and Environmental Enhancement

Rob Welch reported that the Welsh Row scheme was 90% complete. Road markings and weight limit signs were needed. There had been two accidents reported, both involving 'build-outs'. The point was made that 'highlights' might help here, so traffic approaching could see warning of a potential hazard over vehicles ahead. Regrets were expressed about lack of soft landscaping. Rob Welch explained the limitations of funding.

6. Recent Planned Developments

(a) Sainsbury's

Councillor Moran said he was against the extra development and expansion of the store which he felt would ultimately damage trading in the town. However, given it was likely to be approved (due for hearing on 8th July in Sandbach at the Strategic Planning Board) he felt that some points about traffic should be made. The two roundabouts into the site already caused congestion and were inadequate. The effect of 180 additional car parking spaces and a bigger store had not been properly considered. Peter Foster expressed concern about the development on the 'Connect 2' scheme and cyclists.

(b) Brine Leas

Again Councillor Moran spoke about his concerns at the additional traffic. While welcoming the extra educational facilities, there would inevitably be increased traffic flows on an already busy road. It was highly desirable that another pedestrian crossing be established with a 'lollipop person' in position at school opening and closing times. Also a 20 mile speed limit. He had made both suggestions at the Council committee when the plans were approved, and they seemed to have been sympathetically received.

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(c) Other developments

No further comment on planning applications.

7. Gateways into the town

A late Paper had been circulated by Rob Welch, concerning Gateways into the town. Assuming funding could be established, he wanted to provide, at reasonable cost, some features to show people they were “entering Nantwich.” Some sort of change of surface or structure to give a distinctive welcome and signal that you were coming into the town. He produced maps and asked members to identify the points where they felt Gateways should be established. It was agreed that this should form an item for the next meeting.

8. Items for the next Meeting

The following were suggested:-

Gateways
Wellington Road
Railway Station – short update
Long term vision for the future
Update on ‘Connect 2’

9. Date of next Meeting

Tuesday 1st September 2009, at 4pm in Brookfield Hall, Shrewbridge Road, Nantwich, was agreed.

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