

NANTWICH TRANSPORT GROUP

MINUTES OF NANTWICH TRANSPORT GROUP MEETING ON 4TH MAY 2010

In Attendance: Penny Butterill (Chairman); Bronwyn Dean (Disability Resource Exchange); Maureen Corn (40 Millstone Lane CW5 5PE); Chris Booth of Cheshire East Engineers; Arthur Moran Councillor, Nantwich Town Council; Peter Foster of Sustrans & Acton Parish Plan; David Yorke & Georgina Ross; (Wellington Road Residents Association), John Lewis Councillor, Nantwich Town Council; Andrew Martin, Nantwich Town Council; Annie Combes (Acton, Edleston & Henhull Parish); Chris Barratt (Hospital Street Association); Cindy Biggins (Welsh Row); PC Amy Fletcher (town centre officer) and Riddell Graham (Clerk, Nantwich Town Council).

Apologies: Apologies were received from Dr Rick Appleton.

1. Welcome

The Chairman, Mrs Penny Butterill, welcomed all those present.

2. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of 9th March 2010 (with the correction mentioned in Georgina Ross's email of 18th March 2010 which had been circulated) were approved as a correct record.

3. Arising from Minutes

There were no matters arising, not already included on the Agenda.

4. Wellington Road and Signage

Georgina Ross reported that the situation was still unsatisfactory. Alterations had been made to one sign only – others were still unchanged. For example, on exiting Love Lane car park, Chester and Wrexham traffic is directed left, in a long route around the town. Georgina said that Wellington Road residents had a meeting with Chris Shields (Highway Maintenance) coming up soon and were hopeful that this would yield positive results. She also mentioned that re-signing was intended to stop HGVs passing through the town but it was not having this effect. During the week's closure of Wellington Road level crossing for refurbishment, the number of HGVs, not surprisingly, dropped – so there were alternative routes for them to take if they were properly sign-posted and restrictions enforced.

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5. Welsh Row Traffic Calming and Environmental Enhancement

Chris Booth said that the Engineers were still awaiting some signage. There had been amendments to bollards and some extra bollards added on the “build out” itself. Cast iron bollards were being used. Near Malbank School, a yellow reflective bollard, more obvious to drivers had been used. Lines to discourage parking had still not been painted, by the Chapel and further up. Double parking was taking place in front of Malbank School.

John Lewis made the point that with the commencement, from September, of sixth form at Brine Leas similar problems would arise there but there were still no double yellow lines except near traffic lights.

6. Draft Vision Statement

The Draft was discussed. Annie Coombs objected to the wording relating to the possible establishment of a by-pass. More to the point, she doubted that it would be necessary or effective in reducing traffic into the town. She suggested that a by-pass was “overkill”, expensive and unlikely, in reality, to be achieved. We should be aiming for lower-key, smaller scale interventions, such as improving junctions or encouraging pedestrians. Peter Foster agreed with these views. John Lewis considered all these points valid but felt that as a long-term objective the by-pass should be part of the Vision Statement. The Statement was approved as amended (attached).

7. Pedestrianisation on the Square

The Group Secretary (Riddell Graham) reported that Dave Chan of CEC Engineers had said that a few bollards were going to be placed on the Square as replacement for some now missing. They would not prevent access to vehicles but might discourage some of the bigger ones. They should be in place by the end of May, as should renewal and replacement of ‘Pedestrian Zone’ signs. The Engineers took the view that once the correct signs and bollards were in place they would (a) be able to assess more precisely why traffic was using the Square and (b) enforce, where necessary, regulations relating to access.

(Town Councillors had a long-term aim of traffic being strongly discouraged or even eliminated in the Square which might involve a barrier on Mill Street similar to that on Pepper Street – but this was not something which could be done without a Traffic Order and possible objections from traders.)

8. Update on Connect 2

Peter Foster of Sustrans outlined the current position on the bridleway / footpath / cycleway from Brine Leas School, up Middlewich Road, to Crewe Park. The project seemed to be on programme at the moment.

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(An extract from an email from Caroline Simpson of CEC set out below outlines the position as at 9th April 2010:-

Firstly the review of the traffic junctions located at Rising Sun and Sainsbury's has been completed by Cheshire East Highways Engineers and agreed with Cllr Menlove. It has been agreed to install signal controlled crossings at Rising Sun and Sainsbury's junctions. The reason for the review was to evaluate the effect on traffic flow and safety on the busy Middlewich Road.

Officers have been working on the project and the first phase of the scheme to complete the route from Queens Park to Rising Sun Public House has been tendered. This is programmed to start on site in July 2010. The rest of the route is currently being designed and prepared for tender.

In response to your comments regarding a project manager, Andy Buckley has been appointed. He chairs the steering group of officers including Highways Engineers, Landscape Architects, Public Rights of Way officers and Sustrans Manager Peter Foster. Design and legal issues are being resolved and the group are moving the project forward.

A stakeholder group has now been arranged for end of April in Nantwich Civic Hall.

We confirm that the £170,000 available from Department of Transport has reduced the funding gap. The S106 from Sainsbury's is still pending and will remove the funding gap when secured. A Management Plan has been prepared and submitted to Sustrans within their deadlines to reassure them that issues have been resolved and the project can move forward.

Following the response with information, we hope that it is now clear that issues over the junctions have been resolved and the project is moving forward.

A 'Stakeholder Group' to "oversee" and comment on the progress of the project was needed. Nominations were sought from the Transport Group and the Town Council.

Bronwyn Dean of Disability Resource Centre, a member of the Transport Group, was already on the Stakeholder Group as a representative of DRE.

Riddell Graham and the Chairman, Penny Butterill, were nominated from the Group. Councillor John Lewis and Arthur Moran had been appointed and would attend on behalf of the Town Council. First meeting at Brookfield Hall on Wednesday 26th May.

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8. Gateways into Nantwich

All designs completed. The signs, railings etc., were shortly to be ordered. Chris Booth had been told that the money for these features would “roll over” into the financial year 2010/11. A Traffic Regulation Order was needed for the gateway at Millstone Lane. There was discussion about the need to slow down traffic coming into the town and it was hoped the ‘Gateways’ would contribute to that.

9. Railway Station

The Railway engineers require the site for operational purposes occasionally. They have informally commented on the Town Council proposals for a 40 space car park. Because of a desire to maintain flexibility to use the land whenever they wish – albeit probably rarely – they have indicated that only land for about 12 spaces would be made available. This would make the “car park plan” uneconomic and impractical. The Town Council are going back to Railtrack to ask them to reconsider the restrictions they have suggested.

10. Local Area Partnerships

Councillor Arthur Moran reported that at the last LAP the Chairman of the Transport Group (Parish Councillor Butterill) outlined the Group’s activities. LAPs are to be streamlined. It is not clear whether the equivalent of the old “Joint Highway Committees” are to be established, but it seems fairly clear that some machinery will be put in place to replace the current system of the Portfolio Holder deciding what all priorities should be for traffic schemes. The current system was slow and not working well.

The Group decided that they were willing for their deliberations to be reported to the LAP and to act, as a Group, as part of the LAP system for consultation with the public on traffic and highway issues within Nantwich.

11. Edmund Wright Way

Councillor Moran had no progress to report.

12. Date of next Meeting

Tuesday 6th July 2010 at 4pm in Brookfield Hall was agreed.

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