

Pluckley Transport Plan

Transcript of the First Public Meeting, 7th September 7pm, Village Hall.

1. Information

1. Pluckley Parish Council (PPC) has obtained grant funding from Kent County Council to develop its own transport plan for the locality. This is unique. Professional advice is being commissioned from John Elliott and partners. The product will be a Transport Plan that becomes part of the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan.
2. The PPC wants to start with a consultation on the Station end of the village and that is what this first meeting is about. Further consultations are planned for other parts of the village. Council is acutely aware that there are transport issues that affect the whole village.
3. Public transport is inadequate with the complete loss of bus services. This makes rail connections even more important. PPC is concerned about the reduced current rail service, currently only 1 train an hour in each direction during the daytime compared to half hourly before Covid, as well as the closure of the waiting room, toilets and ticket office. PPC is trying to find out from Network Rail and Southeastern what their intentions are for the future of this station. Any plan for the station must address the infrastructure that is needed by our growing population as new housing goes up in Pluckley, neighbouring villages, and the massive development of Chilmington.
4. The shortage of parking places at the station restricts railway access and passenger traffic. It may impair the future viability of the station. PPC have been trying to get Network Rail to open up the former Coal yard area on the north side of the track for additional parking for the station. Network Rail, under its charter, should use their land for the benefit of railway users. However, we understand that the yard is earmarked for other uses or disposal. Currently it is up for rental. The PPC could not afford to take up the rental to provide added parking by itself.
5. Because of inadequate parking at the station many cars park on the verges in and around Station Road. Midweek the station car park (capacity 44 cars) is typically full and another 25-30 are in the lanes. These are a danger to both motorists and pedestrians. There are no paths along Station Rd and the verges are broken. It is a matter of public safety that this problem is addressed as it is dangerous for pedestrians to walk to and from the station, especially after dark. If we can safely increase the parking spaces more people will use the railway and the viability of the station will be improved.
6. An NCP carpark was set up in a former siding on the south side of the station, but was never used and has since closed. This is not surprising as the access to that site is too hazardous. The gate between that site and the London-bound platform was welded shut by the railway for safety reasons. Any pedestrians would have to walk in the road over the railway line to access the station. This is a hazard, see below.

2. Proposals and Discussion.

1. Restricting parking in Station Rd and the first part of Chambers Green Rd. This might be using double yellow lines or a single line and notice that parking is prohibited at a

certain time in the day. This stops people parking for longer periods. Yellow lines will not mean street lighting – we are a dark skies village. It will be important that the no parking area extends far enough not to simply displace parking problems further away in our lanes.

2. A pathway from the Station to the junction with Chambers Green Rd is essential. It would fit better on the west side of Station Rd. There would need to be a kerb so that vehicles could not drive onto the path. This ties in with the need for parking restrictions above. The path would allow walking from the Station area into Chambers Green Rd and on to public footpaths that are popular and practical in summer. Not so in the wet.
3. All agreed that speed is a major issue. Speed limits are often ignored and poorly policed. The 30mph zone should be moved back to include the housing in the eastern end of Chambers Green Rd and in Station Rd north of the junction with Chambers Green and Dowle St. A further reduction to 20mph in Station Rd should be considered. However, build-outs on Station Rd are likely to be needed to slow traffic and provide refuge for pedestrians, and preserve verges.
4. The road bridge over the railway is a dangerous feature in itself. The brow of the bridge is blind and narrow. Present signage is inappropriate. For example, a central white line leading up to the bridge gives the false reassurance of lane width. The bridge is only wide enough for a single carriageway. There is no refuge for cyclist or pedestrian on the bridge. While only really suitable for tidal traffic flow, the options to achieve that are difficult.

3. Parishioners written comments on reviewing Figures 3.1 and 3.2 (Verbatim)

1. *20mph limit would help. Rumble strips will make drivers slow to protect their cars.*
2. *20mph and chicane*
3. *White gates and 30mph speed limit should be extended to “Newhaven” Chambers Green Road.*
4. *A priority has to be filling in potholes and creating safe verge on at least one side of Station road to Chambers Green Rd*
5. *Concerned about destruction of verges through volume of traffic and heavy lorries in Chambers Green Rd being used as a rat run 6am to 6pm daily.*
6. *If roads cannot be maintained now, pavements will be unfit in a few years’ time through poor maintenance. The land is clay and it moves!*
7. *Re foot way Does it have to be this wide?*
8. *Footway land take would be supported by most property owners.*

9. *Is there any way of formalising the front of Dering Terrace? People walk along front of gardens to avoid the road. Could that area become a pavement with cross over from driveways to road?*
10. *Who owns verges that will be used to create pedestrian footway. Need natural diversity assessment, great crested newts use ditches and verges.*
11. *How would the extended 30 mph area be policed? Speed watch slowed vehicles while in action but not after that.*
12. *Parking restriction up to Chambers Green needed to -save verges-create a safer route to Station on foot. Further speed restrictions will be needed.*
13. *Network Rail could open up coal yard and monitor usage to see how popular just using the existing hard standing is with no investment.*
14. *Parking restrictions will naturally move parking issues and verge damage further up the road.*
15. *Need to conduct serious research into station use and how people travel. Without station parking nothing (???) should be done and if car park goes ahead need to see use and impact of how transport changes.*
16. *Narrowing the bridge without traffic lights is an accident waiting to happen.*
17. *The only way the bridge scheme is going to work safely is a full footpath and traffic lights. Otherwise, it is an accident waiting to happen.*
18. *Road restrictions either side of the bridge may not be visible at night. Cannot see vehicles on other side of bridge when you stop at a road restriction.*
19. *What if the priority lane over the bridge causes tail-back. Which way will get priority?*
20. *Not sure priority lane will solve danger.*
21. *Farm vehicles. Combines ???bridge be too narrow.*
22. *Build outs are popular but can be dangerous. Unlit they need signage and glowing/lit bollards. Over and around bridge there is no sign for oncoming traffic. To suggest cars reverse as a matter of course is ludicrous.*
23. *The buildouts on Station Rd over the bridge are dangerous putting vehicles on the wrong side of the road with no sight lines and are not spaced far enough apart for tractors and lorries.*
24. *Is an HGV really expected to reverse to allow a car with right of way to cross the bridge? Serious risk of accident.*
25. *One way system into Station approach? In next to Pub, out next to Bridge.*
26. *Not wide enough for turning if the triangle is blocked.*
27. *I don't think there is enough room by Station Cottages for kerb plus two cars passing in and out of the Station.*
28. *People still moan. When is the questionnaire being done?*
29. *We need to be mindful of what the effect of changes will be and realistic. May well end up in worse situation. There will be more development, plus we need more development to keep the station. A comment from an employee; Pluckley (station) will close in 5 years.*
30. *All this is crap and unworkable for businesses and farming that has been going on for far longer than any of you have lived in Pluckley.*