

Highways Committee Report 2014-2015

For the first time since I began writing this annual report, I can start with some good news! Tesco have agreed to pay the cost of redesigning the traffic lights, pedestrian crossings and pavements on Packhorse Road between Station Approach and Station Road. Members of the Parish Council had what I feel was the best meeting we have ever had on the subject with Tesco earlier this year to compare options for the improvements. As last year the preferred option is to rework the pedestrian areas and remove the Station Road lights, while putting back the crossing near Boots chemist. This will be done in stages so that any unanticipated consequences can be captured and appropriate changes made. James Lingard, the Store Manager in Gerrards Cross, has been a star in driving this forward with us, Bucks County Council and his corporate management. The proposed plan for changes, prepared by Tesco, went to Bucks County Council for approval at the beginning of March but so far Tesco have not had a response. Our public servants seem to be consistently slow to respond which is very disappointing.

Things have moved a little on Mill Lane Bridge, with new signs and road markings and slowly, slowly measurements and plans are progressing on Marsham Lane Bridge to make it safer for pedestrians. The second tranche of posts along Packhorse Road were erected in May as planned and parking on the pavement at Marks and Spencer's has been significantly reduced.

We are also responding to traffic concerns from pedestrians using Bull Lane, where a VAS sign will be installed at the corner of Layters Way and costs of installing a path on Highways land on Bull Lane, from Layters Way to join up with footpath that connects to Bentinck Close, will be investigated.

We arranged for hard standing to be provided for bus stops in Fulmer Road and Oxford road, where previously it was a grass/mud only option.

The Traders Association as hoped, were successful in mounting flags and flower baskets on the street lamps last year and will be doing so again this year. Again this year, street lights will need to be stress tested to see if they will take the new Christmas decorations which the traders are planning and we are supporting as the old fixtures have reached the end of their useful life. We hope to see bigger and better decorations, stress tests allowing, this year along the lines of those seen in Beaconsfield.

We have continued to substitute light emitting diode (LED) bulbs in many areas of the village in lamps as they failed and have erected additional lights in areas where residents concerns of poor lighting were justified.

The large hole that appeared in Oak End Way due to a damaged underground water chamber has been repaired by Thames Water after some considerable delay while they debated with Bucks County Council which organisation was responsible.

Following our initiative on free parking, members of the committee met with South Bucks District Council and it became clear that they do not have the funds to support

subsidising parking and it would be left to residents and traders to provide funds. Subsequently we agreed that this currently could not be afforded.

BCC renewed the traffic signals at the Oxford Road and Packhorse Road junction. Replacement was scheduled to reduce the prospect of failure associated with age. At the same time the carbon footprint was reduced utilising new technology and adaptive controls which were incorporated to make the junction more efficient for traffic. Responding to the concerns of residents, the opportunity was taken to provide pedestrian crossings across the whole complex. The complex seems to be working well and is an improvement on the old system.

We have worked with Sustrans, which is a group which promotes cycling, to assist with their Access to Stations programme, which is intended to encourage more people to cycle to public transport. Sustrans worked with Chiltern/Rail Track on the new cycle sheds at the railway station. A map has now been produced indicating preferred routes, see attached.

We were pleased to support the entry of Gerrards Cross into the Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village competition after several years. We have allocated £10,000 to support a clean-up in the village. An audit of all approach roads into the village has been completed and bent, obscured and dirty street furniture identified. The work to rectify faults and carry out cleaning will be undertaken in April. We will be organising cleaning days over the next two months and will look to individuals and groups to volunteer to help make our village a more pleasant place to live. The Fifth Gerrards Cross Brownies have already signed up.

The appearance of the embankment at Gerrards Cross station has been raised by several members of the community and this could have a major impact on the Best Kept Village judging. We are working with Chiltern Rail and Network Rail to see how this area can be improved with plantings of shrubs and trees. Some work has taken place on the level part of the ground, which has definitely improved the look. As this is a major entrance for visitors to the village, we certainly believe this can provide a much prettier welcome.

In the next year we will have new members on the Highways Committee and expect to continue in the same style, slowly improving life in Gerrards Cross. I would hope to see great progress with the Packhorse Road traffic lights, improvements in traffic management emanating from the Speed and Parking Working Group and a very festive village over Christmas with a greatly improved display of decorative lights.