

# AMENDED AGENDA

## MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD MEETING



Date: Wednesday 15 April 2009

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore, English, Hinder,  
Marchant, Parr, Mrs Parvin, Robertson,  
Ross, J.A. Wilson, Hotson (Chairman),  
Carter, Chell, Chittenden, Curwood,  
Daley, Mrs Stockell and Wood

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1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Notification of Visiting Members
4. Disclosures by Members and Officers

**Continued Over/:**

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**Issued on 14 April 2009**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact JANET BARNES on 01622 602242**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit [www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk](http://www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk)

**David Petford, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,  
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ**

5. Disclosures of lobbying
6. Minutes of the Meetings held on 28 January 2009 and 24 February 2009
7. Questions/Statements by members of the public
8. Report of the Head of Countywide Improvements - Highway Improvement Schemes 2009-10
9. Report of the Director of Kent Highway Services - Clapper Farm Lane, Marden - to follow
10. Report of the Head of Transport and Development, Kent Highway Services - Integrated Transport Programme for Maidstone 2009/10 and beyond
11. Report of the Head of Transport and Development, Kent Highway Services - Update on Petitions submitted to Kent Highway Services
12. Report of the Interim Director of Kent Highway Services - Clapper Farm Lane 35 - 40

#### Registering for Public Speaking

In order to book a slot to speak at this meeting of the Joint Transportation Board please contact Janet Barnes on 01622 602242 by 3.30pm on the day of the meeting. You will also need to inform us of the topic you wish to speak on. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis up to a maximum of ten speakers.

## **Clapper Farm Lane – Marden, accessibility**

A report by the Interim Director of Kent Highway Services to the Joint Transportation Board

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### **Background**

1. Clapper Farm Lane is a rural “green” lane within the Parishes of Marden and Staplehurst, the majority of the Lane being in Marden.
2. For a number of years, the lane has not been used and has since become overgrown and inaccessible. This has been further exacerbated by the depositing of a variety of vehicles at the western end, the depositing of a large amount of soil and rubble, again at the western end and the more recent installation of gates adjacent to a property known as Springfield Cottage.
3. Kent Highway Services (KHS) were approached in 2006/2007 by both Parish Councils and a number of local residents requesting that the obstructions be removed, the vegetation cut back and the lane re-opened for access to the exception of motorised vehicles.
4. A number of enquiries were made internally and externally and the residents of the lane objected to the re-opening because of their fears regarding flytipping and loss of privacy. There were indications that clearance works were imminent in March/April 2008 however, budgetary constraints meant that funds were diverted following serious flooding in the Mid Kent area and the resultant high priority works. No works were therefore carried out on the Lane.

### **Current position**

5. Following the re-organisation of KHS, Officers have completely reviewed the file on Clapper Farm Lane and entered in to further dialogue with both Parish Councils and colleagues within Kent County Council. KHS has also been contacted by a number of external organisations such as the Marden Footpath Society and the British Horse Society and also the local Member of Parliament requesting that action be taken to re-open the lane.
6. Site meetings have been held involving the Police and the owner of Springfield Cottage regarding the removal of obstructions and although the discussions appeared to be positive, the obstructions remain. There has also been a claim of Great Crested Newts in the area and a report provided to KHS. A subsequent report on behalf of a local resident has also been submitted to KHS which counters the claim and suggests that any works undertaken would not be detrimental if there were newts in the locale.
7. Clapper Farm Lane does not serve any real Highway purpose and a suggestion that it be stopped up was challenged and rejected by Marden Parish Council. A meeting was then recently convened to discuss options. This meeting involved the following Officers:

Community Delivery Manager  
Community Delivery Team Leader  
Community Delivery Engineer  
Senior Public Rights of Way Officer  
Transportation Engineer  
Kent County Council Solicitor.

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8. It was agreed that the works and clearance of the obstructions should be co-ordinated in order to be successful and that a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) be introduced to restrict access to motorised vehicles. The enforcement of the TRO would be assisted by the installation of bollards to form a “Kent Carriage Gap” which is detailed in **appendix 1** of this report.

### **Short term measures**

9. The Community Delivery Manager proposes that, providing the Board accept and approve this report, that a TRO is introduced which will take approximately 10 weeks depending on any objections received. During this time, residents of the Lane will be notified of the intention to carry out works and requested to remove any obstructions or property currently within the Highway boundary that would prevent access by the workforce, by the date to coincide with the TRO coming in to force.
10. The installation of the Kent Carriage Gap would also coincide with this date and should address the inevitable objections concerning access by motorised vehicles and flytipping.
- ~~11. At the recent Officers meeting, the cost of forming a suitable surface to the Lane was~~ discussed. To clear the vegetation and provide a suitable surface would be in the region of 30K. This work would involve the grading of the existing surface, laying a permeable membrane to limit weed growth and laying a crushed stone surface layer that would require compacting. This treatment is considered appropriate in order to provide a suitable surface for walkers, equestrians and horse drawn carriages as the existing surface is rutted and could be unsafe.
12. Operational budgets are not used for this type of construction work. It is therefore proposed that simple regrading of the existing surface is carried out (approximately 2M – 3M swathe) and warning signs placed at both ends of the Lane, adjacent to the carriage gap bollards, advising the public of the uneven nature of the surface ahead.
13. These short term measures are proposed in order to bring the Lane in to an accessible condition provided that due care and attention is given considering the uneven condition of the surface. Consideration also needs to be given to the current season and the disturbance that these works may cause to nesting birds. Assuming that the 10 week timescale for introduction of the TRO commences from the date of this Board, implementation of the works would be approximately early July so, to limit the disturbance factor, only minimal clearance and grading as mentioned in item 12 can be considered.

### **Long term measures**

14. As previously stated in this report, the Lane provides no real Highway purpose and would be more suitable for walkers and equestrians. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to reclassifying the Lane as a bridleway/Public Right of Way and maintained as such with a more substantial surface.
15. Consideration also needs to be given with regard to more substantial clearance of vegetation i.e overgrown/overhanging trees to ensure that the surface is unobstructed and users are not hindered. Officers will reconvene during the coming months and a further report can be brought to a future meeting of this Board if so wished.

## **Conclusion**

16. This report sets out a practical and pragmatic approach to dealing with the opening of Clapper Farm Lane, whilst considering the realistic timescales for implementation, the needs and opinions of residents, requests from the various external organisations and importantly, the correct and justifiable use of public monies.
17. This can be achieved by introducing the short term measures as described but the Board's attention should be drawn to the fact that the long term measures will need careful discussion/consideration and funds will need to be bid for as part of the Countywide schemes consideration process. At the time of writing, it should be noted that such a scheme may not receive priority.

## **Recommendation**

18. That the Board approve the implementation of the short term measures and the introduction of the Traffic Regulation Order to enable limited access for walkers, equestrians and horse drawn vehicles.

Accountable Officer:                      Andy Moreton 08458 247 247



## The Kent Carriage Gap

*Anne Rillie reports on a pioneering project which permits horse drawn vehicles but defeats off road motor vehicles*

Carriage drivers must be among the most vulnerable road users, yet of all non-motorised users we have the least off-road routes as nearly all the old by-ways and green lanes have long since been tarmacked over. We therefore need to be able to use every bit of path that we have a right to.

Some by-ways are not suitable for motor vehicles so a local authority may impose a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) worded to "prohibit motorised vehicles", unfortunately this is sometimes enforced by a barrier which unintentionally also prevents horse drawn carriages.

Many bridleways are physically suitable for carriages and although we may have no legal right to drive on bridleways, land owners can give permission for this, but they may need assurance that motor vehicles will not use the path too.

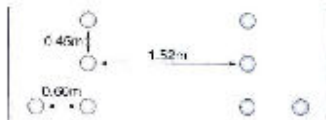
In either of these cases the Kent Carriage Gap can provide a solution as it is designed to allow horse drawn carriages to pass while preventing 4-wheel-drive vehicles.

### The Design

The Carriage Gap consists essentially of one pair of smooth concrete bollards 0.33-0.38m (13" 15") high and 1.52m (5') apart with a clear space at least 0.6m (2') wide beside the bollards on one or both sides.



These bollards may be backed up by two further pairs of identical bollards (only necessary where 4WD vehicles are likely to attack the arrangement) and any remaining space between banks or fences can be restricted with taller bollards.



Back-up bollards make the barrier more visually imposing and less easily destroyed.

The bollards must be very solidly planted and the ground surface must be hard and level right up to them.

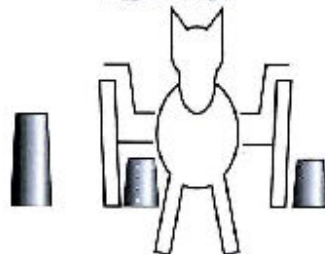
### In Use

Any horse drawn carriage less than 1.5m wide can pass between the pairs of bollards. Big wide carriages, if they have a high axle, can pass one wheel outside one line of bollards (this requires care but is not too difficult provided a straight approach is possible).

Most Carriages



Bigger Carriages



Thus a very large majority of carriages in use today will be able to pass.

### Disadvantages

This does not stop motorbikes, but the fairly smooth tracks suitable for carriages are not much fun for bikers. Very small cars might be able to pass between the bollards, but these are not much use for off-road driving. A few carriages over 1.5m wide would not find it passable.

- those based on car wheels and axles
- those with a low fixed horsestep
- a pair or team of horses to a big carriage would probably find it very difficult to negotiate too.

A trial Carriage Gap was installed by Kent County Council at Boasley Hill, near Madsone, in January 1995, and it seems to be "working". The old stone bridge at Aylesford, Kent, has recently been closed to motorised traffic and Carriage Gaps have been built at each end of the bridge,



Most carriages will pass through the 1.52m gap.

allowing a short but very welcome "non-motorised" section for carriage drivers using the busy roads in this area.

Before presenting the Kent Carriage Gap as a solution to your Local Authority or land owner you may have to explain what a modern carriage is - in my experience they either think that carriage drivers were extinct long ago, or that we drive something out of "Wells Fargo" - a team of huge fierce galloping horses, a danger to everyone. In fact they should realise that the vast majority of turnouts today consist of one rather small pony jogging along with a lightweight modern gig, carrying two people. It is useful to point out that many drivers are of "mature" age, and carriage driving is also increasingly popular with disabled people.

Contact: Anne Rillie,  
Anchor Farm, Rochester Rd,  
Aylesford, Kent, ME20 7EA.



Big carriages can pass one wheel outside one line of bollards - this requires care and a straight approach.

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