

FARINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Faringdon Area Traffic Advisory Committee held on Monday 29th January 2024 at 10am in the Jubilee Room, the Pump House, Faringdon

Present: D/Cllr. Mark Coleman (Chair)
C/Cllr Bethia Thomas
D/Cllr. Katherine Foxhall
T/Cllr. Jane Boulton
T/Cllr. Mike Wise
Lesley Kinch, Magistrate

In attendance:

Sarah Johnson – Facilities Officer
Margaret Nairne – Town Clerk's Assistant
T/Cllr. Gene Webb
2 members of the public

Representatives from local parish councils:

Glen Yarwood, Little Coxwell Parish Council
Martin Taylor, Hinton Waldrist Parish Council
Penny Budgen, Fyfield & Tubney Parish Council
Steve Fraser, Clerk to Fyfield & Tubney Parish Council
Tony Woodward, Littleworth Parish Council
D/Cllr. Jill Rayner, Kingston Bagpuize
Alison Leigh, Parish Clerk, Appleton and Eaton Parish Council
Fiona Bartholomew, Buckland Parish Council
Mark Skipworth, Buckland Parish Council
Carol Dodimead, Clerk to Besselsleigh Parish Meeting

Online:

Chris Hulme, Thames Valley Police Traffic Management Officer
Anthony Kirkwood, OCC Principal Engineer Traffic and Road Safety
C/Cllr. Andrew Gant, OCC Cabinet Member for Transport Management
Lee Turner, OCC Highways Traffic and Road Safety Team Leader
D/Cllr. Lucy Edwards
D/Cllr. Charlie Maynard
1 member of the public

- 1. Apologies for absence**
C/Cllr. Constance
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
None

3. **Public speaking time:**

The Chair invited those wishing to speak to speak for up to 3 minutes each.

T/Cllr. Webb asked a question as to whether there is an updated version of the 2015 Local Transport Plan, specifically with reference to pedestrian crossings and parking for bus users.

Buckland parish council: a representative spoke of the community being terrified by the number of accidents at the A420 turns. As a result of the volume of traffic and the difficulty of turning out onto the A420, the villagers feel trapped in the village. Buckland also does not have any significant building development but suffers the consequences of large developments in other places along the A420 but has no means to demand funding for any mitigation.

A Fernham resident spoke about the difficulties presented when traffic is diverted off the A420 following an accident, sometimes for many hours. The lanes end up being blocked by huge lorries with subsequent damage to the roadsides and kerbs. Could the diversions be better managed? Residents of other villages agreed that this was an issue for them and another example of how villagers end up trapped. D/Cllr. Coleman suggested this be taken up as an item at the next main FATAAC meeting.

Littleworth parish council: a representative spoke about how they are seriously concerned about accidents. Feedback from a village survey they carried out showed that residents think the buses offer a great service but people are fearful of crossing the road and therefore don't use the buses. Following the precedent at Hendred, would it be possible to reduce the speed here to 30MPH and have a controlled pedestrian crossing (traffic lights)?

Besselsleigh parish council: a representative echoed their concerns re road safety and access to the buses. The railings have been removed from the refuge in the middle of the road which should be replaced, plus moving the signs by the junction would help slow the traffic flow.

Wootton highlighted the lack of a footpath or pavement for pedestrians to reach the A420 to catch the bus. They are in discussions with a local landowner about a possible permissive footpath but long-term would like an official footpath or pavement.

Fyfield and Tubney parish council: a representative raised their concerns about connectivity as their two villages are split by the A420. A survey they carried out in 2018 showed how fearful residents are about crossing the road and using the buses such that e.g. parents won't let their children use the buses for school. They asked how many bus stops along the A420 don't have dedicated lay-bys?

A Faringdon resident spoke about the A420 suffering from huge increase in volume of traffic, half of which is HGV lorries. They had also noted appalling driving standards and how they had a disappointing response when writing to the police about possible police intervention. They suggested an increase in active police presence on and around the A420.

Hinton Waldrist parish council: A representative asked if there was statistical evidence that the A420 is more dangerous than other equivalent roads.

Anthony Kirkwood, the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Principal Engineer Traffic and Road Safety responded as follows:
The A420 does have a slightly higher rate of fatal collisions
The accident rate vs the volume of vehicles (approx. 20,000 per day) is average or even slightly below average.

D/Cllr. Edwards asked, given that many of the accidents are down to driver error, whether it were possible to initiate a campaign around safer driving on the A420. D/Cllr. Edwards also asked if particular accident hotspots e.g. the Plough bend, can be improved.

Coleshill parish council: C/Cllr. Thomas spoke on behalf of Coleshill parish council, raising their concern that Coleshill may become more of a rat-run to Swindon following installation of traffic lights at the Great Coxwell turn on the A420.

Buckland parish council: a representative raised a point re driver behaviour with regard to signage, noting that when they had spoken to OCC Highways about the possibility of double white lines to indicate no overtaking, the response was that if the geometry of the road and speed limit meet national standards then they won't change them, even if observation shows that driver behaviour in this area needs to be more directed.

4. Minutes of the meetings:

Minutes of the last A420 safety meeting were available for information from Monday 23rd January 2023.

5. A420 safety

The Chair summarised all the comments and questions from the above including question as to whether speed cameras can be re-commissioned if currently not working and proceeded to look to address some of the points.

The Chair read out some extracts from an A420 Oxfordshire Road Safety Assessment dated May 2023:

- Collision reports show that the section of the A420 through Oxford city has far more speed related collisions than the rural fast section of the road running through the west of county.
- It is in this city section of the road where collisions are often speed related and often result in fatal and serious injuries to mainly vulnerable road users such as cyclists and motorcyclists.
- During the last three years there have been 49 reported KSI (Killed or Seriously Injured) collisions along the A420 through Oxfordshire which have resulted in 10 fatalities and 48 serious injuries.
- Of the 49 KSI collisions in the past 3 years, 16 have been contributed partly or wholly to excess speed for the conditions of the road. These 16 speed related KSIs have resulted in 15 serious injuries and 1 fatality.
- If the fatal collisions are examined in isolation for their main causation factors then excess speed is a main contributory factor in only one of the fatal collisions on the A420 in the last 3 years. Other factors such as fatigue, impairment and poor driving decisions feature in the vast majority of causations rather than excess speed.

Parish council meetings with OCC highways officers:

C/Cllr. Thomas suggested that all concerned parish councils could have a meeting with OCC highways officers to discuss their road safety and specific concerns re the A420.

Action: FATAC will contact parish clerks asking them if they would like FATAC to contact OCC on their behalf to come and discuss road safety on the A420 and surrounding roads. Chair of FATAC and C/Cllrs. to be copied in.

Question re volume of traffic and possible restriction of HGVs:

Chris Hulme, Traffic Management Officer with TVP, outlined that the A420 is an A-Class road and as such there are no restrictions on vehicles using the road. There is lorry signage suggesting that HGVs use the A34 and M4 but it is only advisory.

Lee Turner, OCC Highways Traffic and Road Safety Team Leader, in answer to some questions he referred people to the OCC roads strategy and the Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (link here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/connecting-oxfordshire/ltcp>) and the A420 Route Strategy document (link here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport-connecting-oxfordshire/ConnectingOxfordshire7b-A420CorridorStrategy.pdf>) and mentioned that OCC are talking about developing an A420 'corridor plan'.

In answer to the question as to whether funding for road safety improvements is restricted to funds released from local development: Lee

Turner referred to the OCC accessibility and road safety budget which can pay for e.g. central refuges and better lighting.

Anthony Kirkwood mentioned that as part of the government's Mission Zero, OCC would be receiving £4,000,000 for safety and road improvements. For example, the A420 junction with London Street, Faringdon will look to be improved.

Andrew Gant, OCC's Cabinet Member for Transport Management, thanked the meeting for sharing local information and insights, noting that there are a number of roads in Oxfordshire with similar issues. He mentioned that smaller interventions such as signage, can be funded locally through local budgets.

Accident diversion routes:

Chris Hulme explained that there are dedicated diversionary routes and signage along the A420. Following an accident, the police will close relevant sections of the road but then expect the Highways Authority to take over any management of diversions. Lee Turner stated that no one supervises the diversion routes once in place. C/Cllr. Thomas said that she has already created an action to look at updating diversion routes. Parishes may be asked to identify pinch points and raise with OCC Highways to see if they can be alleviated.

Can speed cameras be re-commissioned if out of action? Chris Hulme stated that information as to whether speed cameras are currently functional or not is not in the public domain but he will seek clarification and come back to FATAC.

Conclusion:

Parish Council meetings with OCC highways officers should be able to cover the points raised; once the problems are more clearly identified and understood, practical actions can be taken.

6. Items for Information / next agenda items:

Next Meeting Date

Monday 11th March 2024 at 10 a.m.

Meeting closed at 11.40 a.m.