



## Infrastructure Sub Group

### Introduction

The Dogmersfield Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) Vision Note issued in early August 2017 recorded an rCOH (now ONeill Homer Ltd) recommendation that in order to progress the DNP the Steering Group should set up a small number of Task Sub Groups to concentrate on specific areas. These Sub Groups should undertake further analysis and assemble evidence that is in the public domain and in the emerging Local Plan evidence base (<http://www.hart.gov.uk/Evidence-base>). The suggested scope of work for the Infrastructure Sub Group is reproduced below:

- review the utility infrastructure plans of the main providers
- review the future growth options of the school (given its currently 2/3 FTE)
- undertake a simple traffic count on the main roads into the village and a simple on street parking assessment on Chatter Alley
- review the operation of the Hartley Wintney Community Bus to determine if this model can be replicated to serve Dogmersfield, Winchfield and Crookham
- in all cases, consider any cumulative effects of the growth of Dogmersfield village
- summarise all work in a short report with summary analysis, site proposals and plans

This report summarises the work of the Infrastructure Sub Group.

### Services and Utilities

#### Sewerage

A large proportion of the houses and other premises within the designated area rely on private sewerage arrangement due either to their remoteness from a mains system or because the owners have chosen not to connect these properties to a later mains installation. All these mains systems are operated and maintained by Thames Water.

Three mains systems are in use:

The mains network discharging in the direction of Hitches Lane from a pumping station just beyond Pilcot Green North. This serves housing in Church Lane as far as the Church, Pilcot Hill including housing in Crookham Village as far as Knights Close, Chatter Alley as far as Troquhain House and the Four Seasons Hotel. The system was extended into Church Lane within the last 15 years, it is in generally good condition although it is adversely affected by

water ingress during very heavy rain and flooding. Thames Water have done work to address the most likely causes although the effectiveness of these measures has still to be proven.

Within the last 10 years the Four Seasons Hotel installed a major new lateral feeder that connected the Hotel to the mains network in Church Lane. This installation includes a large holding tank which can be used to avoid overloading the downstream network during, for example, power outages that effect the Pilcot Green pumping station. This arrangement now appears to work well after teething problems were addressed, but regular maintenance and automatic monitoring is essential to avoid unpleasant smells developing along Church Lane and in the vicinity of Pilcot Green.

A small self-contained pumping station and treatment works serves a small number of houses in Chatter Alley to the west of and including the primary school. This system is more than 100 years old and suffers from overloading due to water ingress. Thames Water have carried out surveys to identify the causes of these problems which appear to result from surface water connections to the foul system and leaking pipework. Plastic liners have been fitted in some pipework but regular pump outs are still needed to avoid sewerage overflows during other than very dry weather conditions. Thames Water are examining the possibility of upgrading the system or extending the Chatter Alley main system described above to serve this area. Any new development in the field between Troquhain House and the primary school could impact Thames Water's plans.

Housing at the far end of Chalky Lane is connected to a different mains system discharging in the direction of the A287 via a local pumping station.

#### *Surface Water drainage*

There is no comprehensive piped surface water drainage system in the designated area. Most of the newer-built housing use soakaways for roof water although some of the older properties discharge this source into the sewerage system. Surface water run-off is generally routed into road side ditches although for stretches of road this is done via short sections of underground pipework. Maintaining effective water run off arrangements requires regular effective maintenance such as ditch clearing and rodding out of pipework with responsibility divided between riparian owners and the highways authority. Any shortcomings will result in local flooding during periods of adverse weather. The Parish Council assumes responsibility for ditch clearing across areas of common land and other public areas and Hampshire Highways are actively trying to identify and address problems with underground pipework but more needs to be done.

#### *Water*

All properties within the designated area are connected to mains water. The network of underground pipework is quite old and underground failures resulting in local leakage is quite common particularly where the mains run under the highway. Reported problems receive attention within a reasonable time. South East Water are the responsible company.

*Appropriate policies* would be to ensure that all new buildings have installed soakaways and do not put further burden on the existing drainage systems; continued monitoring of the Four Seasons Hotel/Church Lane sewage system; and continue the dialogue with Thames Water regarding the upgrading of the Chatter Alley pumping station (or the connection of those houses served to the main system);

## *Gas*

Most of the properties within the Dogmersfield settlement are served with mains gas although private arrangements such as oil are needed for the properties remote from the installed main system. The mains are the responsibility of Southern Gas Networks.

There have been recurrent problems with water ingress into the local gas mains in both Chatter Alley and Church Lane which results in an affected property having to be cut off until the problem is addressed. Southern Gas Networks have done work to address the root causes which has included isolation of an unused lateral feeder leg in the vicinity of Hitches Lane and repairs to potential ingress points in Chatter Alley in what is very old underground iron pipework. As complete replacement with plastic pipework is unlikely to be afforded. Reported problems receive immediate attention.

## *Electricity*

All properties within the designated area are served with mains electricity. In most cases this is supplied through overhead wiring at various voltages that criss-cross the area connected to a number of different largely lateral feeders from the national network. This arrangement is very vulnerable to damage particularly during adverse weather meaning that power outages are reasonably common although not equally dispersed. Properties around Pilcot Green are connected via underground cabling to avoid the adverse visual impact of overhead wires in this sensitive area. This local supply network is the responsibility of SSE Networks, who have carried out preventative work to cut down trees which could potentially fall on power lines.

## *Broadband*

From the questionnaires received back from residents at the start of the Neighbourhood Planning process, there were a number expressing the need for improved internet access/quicker broadband speeds. The demand for such will require further research, and all available options to deliver this for the whole parish will be explored.

Hampshire County Council (HCC) is working with BT Openreach to deliver Superfast Broadband (minimum download speeds of 24Mbps) across Hampshire, and has made funds available to achieve 97% coverage by the end of 2019. This programme is designed to bring superfast services to those areas that are not commercially viable for providers such as BT or Virgin. The work typically involves BT Openreach upgrading the green roadside cabinets, following which properties within 1 kilometre of the cabinet will be able to access superfast broadband.

From the HCC website, it appears that commercially funded superfast broadband is available to the East of the parish (ie Fleet, Crookham Village, etc) but that this only reaches just inside Dogmersfield, as far as Pilcot Green; this also appears to be available to the houses at the Western end of Chatter Alley. Hence the majority of houses in the parish will be dependent on the HCC programme, which is being delivered in waves. In so-called "wave 2", Chatter Alley is due to be upgraded by December 2019 but the website still appears to omit Church Lane/Chalky Lane from this programme.

HCC admit that after the programme is completed, there will still be some areas not included "because they are in locations which are difficult to reach or have small populations and are too expensive to upgrade with current funding". As a consequence,

HCC has allocated £1m of match funding to support communities that wish to help themselves access superfast broadband.

If the HCC website is up-to-date, Church Lane/Chalky Lane is being treated as one of the areas that will not be covered by the main programme and ought to be eligible for the subsidy. Funding contributions from the council will be limited to 50% of the cost per superfast premise up to a maximum of £1650 per property, so finance available from the Parish or perhaps the Community benefit Fund is likely to limit the properties that could realistically be included.

To apply for match funding, communities are required to register with HCC and with BT Community Fibre; in this instance, it would be Dogmersfield Parish Council who would register. Upon registration, they require a list of postcodes, premises and phone numbers that are to be considered for inclusion in the scheme in order to determine eligibility. HCC and BT will estimate the amount of funding required and check that the community can raise the other 50%.

For properties still not included in either the HCC programme or the match funding scheme, and which can only access a speed of 2Mbps or less, there is a "Better Basic Broadband Subsidy" scheme, otherwise known as the national Universal Service Commitment, applied for via HCC. The available subsidy is £350 per property towards the installation and set-up of a satellite or fixed wireless broadband solution. If multiple properties are eligible, the subsidies may be added together and the combined amount put towards a fixed wireless or fixed line superfast broadband.

*An appropriate policy* would be to ask residents to complete a questionnaire about their broadband service to determine demand for superfast, and to then work with the Parish Council to plan how this might be delivered.

## **Roads**

The village is accessible by three roads, and with the exception of a small number of properties on the A287 (Odiham to Farnham road), all housing has been developed along these routes.

From the direction of Fleet and Crookham Village to the East, the village is accessed via Pilcot Hill; from Winchfield to the West, via Chatter Alley; and from the A287 to the South, via Chalky Lane (which becomes Church Lane at the bridge over the Basingstoke Canal). Pilcot Hill, Chatter Alley and Church Lane converge at Pilcot Green.

For the most part, these three roads are little more than rural lanes, with grass tree or hedge-lined verges, and very narrow in places, particularly where Chalky Lane/Church Lane crosses the canal bridge and later (going North) where it passes by the church, and where Pilcot Hill crosses the bridge which spans the river Hart.

There are only relatively short stretches of pavement for pedestrians: from the village school to Pilcot Green (where parents of children attending the school are allowed to park in the pub carpark at drop-off/pick-up times); and at the Southern end of Chalky Lane. Only two respondents to the questionnaire indicated a desire for more footpaths, regarded as referring to the possibility of extending Crookham Village's footpath (which runs down Pilcot Hill) across Pilcot Green to connect to the footpath in Chatter Alley which leads to the

school, in order to improve road safety. This is not considered feasible given the narrow width of the road bridge over the River Hart, and the construction of a new footbridge alongside the road bridge would be both prohibitively expensive and unsightly.

Chatter Alley has broken white lines from the Dogmersfield village sign up to within 30 meters of the school, and there are broken white lines at the Northern end of Church Lane and along a 100 metre stretch of Chalky Lane before the junction with the A287. There are no street lights and no yellow lines.

Traffic calming measures are in place in Chatter Alley and in Church Lane, and heart of the village is subject to a speed restriction of 30mph. At the Southerly end of Chalky Lane, there is a sign restricting access to HGVs over 7.5 tons, but there are no corresponding weight-limitation warning signs for the two other roads into the village.

In summary, therefore, Dogmersfield's road network is one of rural lanes.

From the surveys of residents undertaken, the vast majority wish to preserve the rural look and feel of the village and to see these rural lanes remain in their current form. However, they have genuine concerns about the dangers to safety from the ever-increasing flow and speed of traffic, and consequently about the impact on the quality of life in the parish. Through traffic using Dogmersfield as short-cut between the A287 to Western side of Fleet is increasing as housing developments in Fleet and adjoining areas bring with them many more car journeys.

Traffic issues are particularly acute in Chatter Alley and arise from the parking of vehicles along the Southern side of the road in two principal "hot spots": outside and along the road from J&J Motors and outside the car sales section of Foster & Heanes garage; and outside and along the road from the school.

J&J Motors is the first property on the Eastern end of Chatter. For six days a week, there are generally a number of customers' cars parked on the road side (often quite close to the blind bend at the foot of Church Lane), as well as the company's breakdown truck which is permanently parked outside the garage owner's house (itself adjacent to the garage premises). Vehicles entering Chatter Alley from Pilcot Green round the blind bend have reduced visibility (sometimes none) of traffic coming in the opposite direction, thus there is the constant danger of a road accident there.

There is very limited parking available for the school within the school grounds, and this results in staff having to park their cars on Chatter Alley. A vehicle count at mid-morning each day for two weeks in July 2017 and again for a period between the start of the new school year to the end of September, revealed that the average number of cars parked outside and along from the school was 13 (the largest number counted was 15), which had the result of turning Chatter Alley into a single lane road for 200 metres from the end of the broken white lines to beyond the furthest traffic calming pinch point. This causes delays and consequent frustration to drivers using Chatter Alley. This issue is further exacerbated by the cars parked outside J&J Motors, and outside the car sales section of Foster & Heanes garage: combined numbers vary between 4 and 12 when monitored in September.

At the start and end of the school day, not only are there staff cars there, but Chatter Alley becomes "full" of cars parked by parents dropping off or collecting their children. There have been numerous instances when traffic has become gridlocked as a result, and drivers become agitated/angry at delays experienced along the road and there have been

instances of verbal abuse and dangerous driving. The school has recently started to position a staff member in a high viz jacket at the busy times in the afternoon in an attempt to discourage speeding. It has also recently negotiated for parents to be able to park at the Crookham Village Social Club, encouraging parents to avail themselves of this and to walk their children to the school from there, in the hope that this will alleviate some of the traffic congestion at busy times.

We have concluded that the road infrastructure is barely able to cope with present levels of traffic, that matters will get worse if and when proposed developments in Crookham Village and in Fleet/Hitches Lane go ahead, and that it will not be capable of accommodating increased journeys which would arise as a result of any large scale development in the village. The alternative, a substantial upgrading and widening of the roads, would destroy the rural look and feel of the village, and would be unacceptable to all residents.

*Appropriate policies* would be to ensure that any new developments provide for off-street parking/garaging so as to minimise further parking on the road side; to work with all relevant parties/authorities to arrive at a permanent solution to the parking problem at the school; to consult with HCC on traffic calming and speed reduction strategies; request that HCC install weight restriction (reminder) signs at the entrances to the village from Pilcot Hill and Chatter Alley and signage at the road bridges to warn of narrow passageways.

## **Village School**

Dogmersfield's primary school is Church of England voluntary-aided and was founded in 1912. It is small, teaching around 130 pupils aged 4 to 11, in 5 classrooms, and was rated "good" in the June 2016 Ofsted Report. The capacity of the school is 140 and there is a wait list for each year group. The size of the school is a big attraction for parents and as a result it is very popular with parents, but pupils are mainly from outside the village (Zebon Copse, Crookham Village and even a few pupils from Elvetham Heath and Fleet), hence the majority of children are taken to/from school by car.

The school is on quite a small site, and though it does have the use of an adjacent playing field leased on an annual tenancy from the owners (Dogmersfield residents), this is not a long-term arrangement.

The school does issue guidance to parents on delivering children to and collecting them from school, encouraging quick "kiss and drop" in the mornings and sensible parking in the afternoons. However, many parents do park in ways which obstruct traffic and driveways.

Because the school is small, it anticipates that new Government Funding Formula for schools will have a big impact on them, hence the long-term future of the school may increasingly be in doubt.

Currently the school has limited additional capacity and, in the event of large scale development in the village, it would not be in a position in the short term to offer many places to children of incoming residents.

## **Public Transport**

There is no bus service currently available in Dogmersfield, following the axing of the Buzz bus route in [ ], and hence residents rely almost entirely on cars to travel outside of the village. The same applies to the neighbouring village(s) of Winchfield and Crookham Village and until the establishment in 2013 of a Community Bus service in Hartley Wintney, they too were without a bus service other than a very limited weekday route (No. 100) to Camberley and Hook.

In the case of Hartley Wintney, with a considerably larger catchment area, the estimated cost of their scheme (£325,000) over 5 years was partly funded by a substantial s.106 contribution of c.£250,000 with the balance to come from fares. We understand that fares broadly do cover costs, with Hart DC reimbursing the scheme for bus pass and concessionary fare usage.

The scheme operates only 1 minibus, adapted for carrying mobility-impaired passengers. 4 drivers are employed (3 full-time, 1 on some sort of retention basis who covers when necessary) and 1 administrator. There are a further 2 drivers (both unpaid volunteers) and all drivers are qualified. When the minibus is off the road for servicing, HCC generally are able to lend a suitable replacement from their Hook transport depot, subject to HW insuring it and paying for fuel.

The current timetable comprises a "shopper" service on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, which serves Hook, Yateley, Frogmore and the Meadows superstores in Camberley as well as Hartley Wintney itself. There is a Monday--to-Friday service to/from Winchfield station on a timetable which caters for peak travel times. A Saturday service runs from Hartley Wintney via Yateley and Frogmore to Camberley as well as the Meadows. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, a door to door service (to Fleet) is available for limited mobility users, who have to register and pre-book, and once a month on a Friday, the service goes to the Meadows in Camberley and to Basingstoke. Fares are £1 per single journey within the parish, £2.50 outside, and concessionary fares are available except on the station route.

Although the aims of a Community Bus scheme are laudable and intended to make public transport available to all residents on a value-for-money and not-for-profit basis, we have explored whether Dogmersfield could support a Community Bus of its own, and have concluded that the parish has too few residents to make such a service viable and self-funding, and that in any event, the parish does not have the funds to kick-start such a scheme.

However, qualifying residents in Dogmersfield could avail themselves of the door-to-door service to Fleet, and we understand that they do already pick up in Dogmersfield (one resident in Chalky Lane). This service should be communicated to residents of the village.

There is a community transport operation in the Fleet area called "Fleet Link" with a minibus service that operates Monday to Saturday, with passengers (regardless of age) being picked up from their home, and taken to Fleet (operates each day), Farnborough (Tuesdays), Camberley/The meadows (Wednesdays) and between the parishes (each day). Fares are £3 for local journeys, and £4.50 to destinations beyond Fleet (concessionary fares apply).

Parishes wishing to join the "Fleet Link" scheme and make this service available to their residents must pay a contribution. Church Crookham belongs to the scheme and is budgeting £8,000 for this for next year.

Dogmersfield might also consider launching a “voluntary care group” similar to the 100 or so such groups operating in Hampshire, and which are supported by the Good Neighbours Support Service which itself is funded by the Dioceses of Portsmouth and Winchester and by Hampshire County Council and Hampshire’s NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups. Volunteers use their own vehicles to take residents to medical appointments, do home visits and (if they have the necessary skills) do odd jobs.

*Appropriate policies* would be advertised to residents via a Parish Council newsletter the availability of the Hartley Wintney Community Bus scheme; and also to undertake a survey of residents in Dogmersfield to determine demand for using the Fleet Link service, though this would require the Parish Council to contribute and the necessary funds are very unlikely to be available..

## **Local Plan Policies and Background Evidence**

The relevant sections of the National Planning Policy Framework are reproduced below by way of background

### *Core planning principles*

17. Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These 12 principles are that planning should: • be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date, and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than local issues. They should provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency; • not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;

### *Promoting sustainable transport*

30. Encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.

### *Supporting high quality communications infrastructure*

42. Advanced, high quality communications infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services.

43. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband. They should aim to keep the numbers of radio and telecommunications masts and the sites for such installations to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network. Existing masts, buildings and other structures should be used, unless the need

for a new site has been justified. Where new sites are required, equipment should be sympathetically designed and camouflaged where appropriate.

## References

Hart policies which are relevant to those aspects of the Development Plan covered by this report are:

### *Hart Saved Policies*

- T1 Land Use and Transport
- T2 Public Transport: General
- T5 Highway Network
- T14 Transport and Development
- T15 Development Requiring New or Improved Access

### *Emerging Hart Local Plan*

- NE4 Managing Flood Risk
- NE5 Water Quality
- 11 Infrastructure
- 13 Transport

The following sources of evidence have been used:

- HCC and BT websites
- HCC Superfast Broadband Community Match Funding Scheme
- NPPF
- Hart District Council's draft Local Plan
- Traffic counts of parked vehicles in Chatter Alley over two periods, in July and September 2017
- Hartley Wintney Community Bus website and a discussion with the scheme administrator
- Fleet Link website and a discussion with the Clerk to Crookham Village parish council
- School website and a discussion with the Chair of the Board of School Governors