

29 January 2025

Traffic & Transport AGM Meetings – Chair's Report

Background

I have now Chaired the Traffic & Transport Forum and Steering Group for 2 years.

The first year (2023) was supported by the Town Council's Sustainability Officer, prior to her departure. During 2024 we have had support for:

- Circulation of Agendas and Minutes for the Forum and Steering Group Meetings;
- Minute taking for the Forum Meetings.

Current assessment - Challenges

During 2024 we tailored meetings to take account of the reduced admin' support, mostly holding Forum and Steering Group meetings on the same evening.

Our meetings in 2024 have been well attended and, thanks to overtures by our County Councillor, have led to engagement with 3 adjoining Parishes.

However, the workload generated in 2024 is unsustainable for our volunteer leadership team and, importantly, holding Forum and Steering Group meetings on the same evening has not worked as well as I had hoped - very much squeezing the time for Steering Group discussion in particular.

We need to:

- Reduce and/or find a way to share the workload;
- Avoid unnecessary duplication between Forum and Steering Group Meetings;
- Ensure that each meeting focuses on what it alone can do;

and

- ***Still make a difference***, as a result of our work.

A new approach

Discussing this with senior councillors and staff has led us to conclude:

- Forum meetings need to provide an opportunity for the public (and members of the Steering Group) to:
 - Engage with our County Councillor, as the member of the Highways Authority, so we can receive and discuss her report; and
 - Raise community matters for consideration by the Highways Authority.
- Steering Group meetings need to allow members to:
 - Focus on agreed Topics, maintaining an appropriate balance between the Important and the Urgent;
 - Support each other in seeking progress on agreed Projects; and
 - Monitor the context within which work is undertaken;

while also undertaking those roles which support the Planning Committee.

To implement the new approach

A new approach requires us to re-jig our meeting Agendas, an outline for which is shown on a Year Planner, which is issued with this Report.

Also the Steering Group will need to:

- **Agree Projects** – The Projects which emerged during 2024 are proposed as a starting point, for consideration by the Forum and the Steering Group, ***subject to amendment / development.***
- **Establish Project leads** – who would drive the search for positive outcomes.
- **Receive Project Reports at each Steering Group meeting** – reports to include details of any issues arising, so the meeting can provide support by generating ideas and possible contacts in support of future actions.
- **Give ‘sign off’** - where Projects require funding and/or formal adoption by the Town Council, to ensure coherence across the workload.
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It is hoped that this way of working will increase the chance of achieving positive change, share the workload, and combine members’ enthusiasm, support and bring mutual learning.

Programming of meetings

The Year Planner, issued with this Report shows:

- Steering Group Meetings held quarterly - so that Projects aren’t ‘lost’, while having sufficient time between meetings for action to be pursued;
- Forum Meetings held every 6 months.

This proposal gives Steering Group Meetings more time to get into necessary detail, especially when the SG meetings don’t coincide with a Forum meeting.

The hope is that this will keep the admin workload to a minimum, while retaining responsive community engagement, and also maintain a focus on action to achieve positive change.

Recommendation

Our **recommendation** is that the AGM agrees that:

- For a trial period of a year, and subject to report back at the 2026 AGM;
- The Steering Group proceeds on the basis set out in this report and attached Year Planner; and
- The Steering Group revises the Forum’s Terms of Reference so as to be consistent with this report and Year Planner.

ATTACHED to this report is a Year Planner, to show how the meetings could work across the next year.