



25th March 2008

Councillor Keith Ferrin
Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste
Heatherbank
Woodsgate Lane
Maidstone Road, Borden
Sittingbourne
Kent ME9 7QB

Dear Councillor Ferrin

Requirement for Safe Road Crossings in Royal Tunbridge Wells

During the last Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum meeting held on the 6th March 2008 we were given a detailed account of the need for a safe road crossing on Frant Road between St Mark's Road and Forest Road. Following this talk it was agreed by unanimous vote that a safe crossing should be constructed in the immediate future.

You should be aware this urgently required crossing is exactly where many school children need to cross a most busy and dangerous road to get to school. Since the introduction of the Kent Freedom bus pass the numbers of secondary school children using the bus stop, on the opposite side of the road from the school, has increased. The impact of the free national pass will simply make matters worse from April. Further to this pressure there is a rugby club and recreation ground.

I suspect you will be aware that it is stated in certain KCC documents that the introduction of the national scheme has been rather disorganized and therefore prone to further problems, which shall include under resourced bus services due to perceived inadequate funding. While it may seem a contradiction it is an unfortunate fact that many parents of children going to school at this point on Frant Road are now resorting to taking their children by car to school again, as it is simply too dangerous for their child to walk along a pavement, which is either overgrown with shrubs or in fact non-existent while having to also walk with their backs to the traffic in many cases.

This road, a connection road between Kent and East Sussex, is a heavily used road by motorists at the precise time school children are expected to play "Russian roulette" with their lives crossing a wide busy road without a safe crossing or refuge of any type. The vehicles being driven at that time, at speeds above 30 mph, include HGVs from this country and the continent (who cannot see past parked busses), motorbikes and cars. It is by pure fluke that children have not been severely injured, although statistics do confirm accidents, but never "near-misses", which have been often.

In a letter dated 22nd November 2007 from Mr. & Mrs. Miles and their son Matthew, to your employee David Bond, it states "He felt the force of vehicles passing him which felt as if he was being blown over and on a couple of occasions, one has actually clipped the curb where he has been walking." The letter then goes on to say that Matthew has to be escorted to school. I enclose a copy of this letter, which refers to other most dangerous aspects, and, would advise that to date this letter has yet to be answered, which I believe is due to Mr. Bond departing and nobody bothering to communicate that fact.

Further to this letter I am aware that others have been sent by Mr. Victor Whitworth to Mr. Andrew Smart on 26th February 2008, various letters and emails from Mr. David Miller since 10th September 2005 to Kent Highways Services and also Mr. Andy Smart, letters sent to and from Mr. R A Smart (Andy) to a certain Mr. S D Wood plus other correspondence to Mr. Smart dating back to the end of 2004 from Mr. Wallace, another extremely concerned resident.

Of particular interest is the letter sent to Mr. S D Wood dated 23rd February 2005 from Mr. Smart where it makes reference to a pedestrian refuge, which by some amazing coincidence is then further confirmed as a way to progress by Mr. Smart at the Tunbridge Wells Joint Transport Board (JTB) meeting of the 21 January 2008 section 6(G) – 2 refers of relevant documentation. Following this (JTB) meeting you should be aware that the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Cabinet formally received the minutes of the (JTB) meeting and after careful consideration a letter was sent to you dated 4th March 2008 from Mr. Richard Powell, Director of Community Services, which highlighted the serious concerns of this lack of an adequate crossing and the fact they strongly supported the introduction of a safe road crossing on Frant Road (A267) at this point.

We, as the resident's voice of Royal Tunbridge Wells, ask you to ensure action is undertaken with urgency and without any further delay. We fully support this important and pressing need and ask you to kindly confirm what actions you will be taking to resolve this long outstanding serious issue.

I would also ask you to advise me why there appears to be no current Kent Road Safety Plan for the period 2006 to 2011 as per your Local Transport Plan (Section 5.6 refers) http://www.kent.gov.uk/static/local-transport-plan/section_131312443468.html

Although it appears a formal working group has been established, which includes key partners and stakeholders I do ask who these entities are? I would certainly hope that key partners include talking to Community Police Officers, one of which supports the Frant Road safe crossing. Perhaps you could advise me who is steering this group as we have heard nothing from any employee of KCC Highways about such an activity, which is perhaps why there are so many aggrieved residents around Royal Tunbridge Wells who are concerned for road safety.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Thomas
Chairman

