

Dear Members

On 4th March 2019, John Sayer and I attended a meeting chaired by Peter Aldous MP to review the effects of opening the Beccles Relief Road. Present were County Councillors Mark Bee, and Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, together with representatives of Suffolk Highways Dept., Parish Councillors from Weston, Ringsfield and Ilketshall St.Andrew, Beccles Road Safety Group and Beccles Society. This is a summary of the meeting, following the agenda:

- **Signage.** SCC Highways have completed the road sign changes. It was pointed out that the main road sign at the Urban Jungle roundabout still does not show the relief road as the A145 route to Norwich, there is only a small roadside addition resembling a sign to a local destination. The Highways Officer only commented that the main sign cannot be modified. Adrian Simpson James of Beccles Road Safety Group urged him at least to add A145 to the small sign; otherwise there is no obvious link to Norwich from there.
- **Weight restrictions.** In the town and Worlingham SCC Highways are going to carry out a traffic survey late in March, reporting back mid-May. Their decision on weight limits will be informed by that survey.
- The effect of the new road on traffic through surrounding villages became a major point for discussion. Parish representatives are very concerned about cars and HGV's using them as a rat run from Bungay to the A145 through their villages, not least because of the damage they cause. It was agreed by Officers that any new development in part of the area will have knock-on effects on other areas and this is what has happened. Mark Bee suggested that the parish concerns might merit a separate meeting.
- **Traffic in the town centre.** It was agreed that the number of HGVs passing through the centre has decreased considerably, but there are still those ignoring the relief road. Peter Aldous said he would be happy to write to any Company we think is doing so, through names collected by Paul Fletcher.
- **Future proposals.** Mark Bee introduced the concept of 'Shared Space', whereby pedestrians have the highway, but vehicles may use it for parking and passing through, rather like the New Market area on market days. A proposal for a 20mph zone in the town was suggested, which he and Peter Aldous agreed should be considered as part of a whole package of measures that would contribute to improving the safety of the town centre.
- **Naming the new road** has become a contentious issue and Mark Bee proposes to re-run the opinion poll through the District Council, where he is the Chairman.
- The Highways Officers did not respond directly to all the points raised, but the inference was that our MP expected to take them all back for consideration to be brought to a future meeting once the traffic surveys results are in. A future meeting will include representatives of Beccles Business Association.

Joint report from Adrian Simpson James (Beccles Road Safety Group) and Paul Fletcher