

Cllr Mike Taylor
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HIGHWAY MATTERS

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17 October 2020

Dear Mike

I do recall the correspondence you had with Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation, and his deputy Michael Payne, at the time of the hedge problems on Sevenoaks and Wrotham Rd in 2017. As you know I have also been party to many meetings between yourself, Senior KCC Officers, the Highway Manager and Steward, and various KCC Contractors on many different Highway Matters.

I can reaffirm that KCC Highways are happy for Borough Green Parish Council to continue to act as its agents, in such matters as hedge and grass cutting, road sign cleaning and repair, PROW clearance, Gateway installation and maintenance, in liaison with your local Highway Manager and Steward.

For obvious reason we must exclude:

1. Any works involving construction works on the Highway
2. Any works that would involve a Traffic Regulation Order
3. Any works requiring your people to have Streetworks Accreditation
- 4 Any works outside Borough Green and its immediate environs.

It is quite clear that the increasing level of highway responsibility that BGPC have taken on over the years puts you in the position of a KCC agent, and the work you do is carried out under those auspices. Of course any work must be carried out under cover of your own Employers and Public Liability Insurance. At a time when our finances are extremely stretched, KCC are extremely grateful your Council takes such a pro-active stance

Harry Rayner
Member for Malling West

Email from Matthew Balfour KCC Cabinet Member Authorising BGPC as hedging agent

[Sent on behalf of Matthew Balfour](#)

Dear Mike

Thank you for your recent email dated 9 June regarding cutting back vegetation along Wrotham Road, to the rear of properties on Tolsey Mead.

I was a little disappointed to hear that the Parish Council was not able to carry on with their good work so I asked our Soft Landscape Asset Manager to check the status of the hedge. I am pleased to confirm that the vegetation in question is actually private and does not form part of the publicly maintainable highway. Streetworks accreditation is therefore not needed unless traffic management or excavation is required. I am happy to say that I believe the Parish can continue their good work at this location. Please check with Mark Simmons your Local District Manager if you have any concerns re traffic management requirements.

If you feel you are not able to continue to trim the hedge then please again contact Mark Simmons and he will arrange for contact to be made with the private hedge owner to remind them of their responsibilities and to ask them to make arrangements for trimming work. We would be very pleased to enlist the Parish Council's help in reminding all private hedge owners in Borough Green that they should be regularly checking and trimming hedges where they begin to overhand the highway and cause obstruction. They can either do this themselves were they are able and it is safe to do so, or engage a suitably competent contractor, who may need a Streetworks permit if traffic management on the highway is required.

Please do liaise with Mark Simmons on other matters like this as he will be more than happy to offer advice or support. Alternatively I would encourage you to report any problem using our dedicated highway fault reporting system at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/highwayfaults>. You will be provided with a unique reference number that enables the subsequent tracking of your enquiry's progress. This also has the benefit of providing an auditable trail with a record of correspondence. The relevant Highway Steward for the area will then address your enquiry and you will be able to liaise with Mark if any problems occur.

With regard to the overgrown vegetation adjacent to the Red Lion development and the Village Hall I have asked our highway teams to inspect these sites for any obstruction and we will either arrange for cutting (and add to our regular treatment plan) if the asset is ours or send notices where it belongs to the adjacent land owners.

Once again thank you for your email and I trust your concerns have been addressed.

With best wishes

Matthew Balfour
Member for Malling Rural East
Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste
Kent County Council

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Email KCC re A25 Gateway & Hedging

Hi Mike,

It appears we may have got our wires crossed today during the site meet. We mistakenly presumed the agreement for hedge cutback on the A25 south side was through KCC's internal Soft Landscapes Team (SLT). Once we have

confirmation of the Dark Hill Road situation, it will likely fall to our Soft Landscapes Team to obtain quotes from their contractors to carry out cutback works.

This also means the siding out (being quoted for by our SLT) on the A25 won't necessarily be undertaken on the same date as the hedge cutback by Mark from Landscape Services. I can however, do my best to provide you with the date for siding out works as soon as I am informed in order that these works may still be able to be combined as far as dates/clean-up are concerned.

Sorry for the mix up and I hope this helps to clear things up.

Many thanks,

Adam Starbuck

Tonbridge & Malling Highway Steward

Kent County Council Highways, Transportation & Waste

Aylesford Highway Depot || St Michaels Close || Aylesford || Kent || ME20 7BU

Tel: 03000 412909 || Mobile: 07850 915820

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From: Mike Taylor [<mailto:mike.truck@btconnect.com>]

Sent: 08 November 2017 11:10

To: 'Fairway, Mark - CS Landscape Services'

Cc: Massy, Jez - GT HTW; Starbuck, Adam - GT HTW

Subject: Hedge cutting A25

Hi Mark

Just to confirm that BGPC accepted your hedgecutting quote on Monday night.

I met Jez and Adam from KHT today regarding the hedge on the northside of the A25 Borough Green/Sevenoaks Road, where they have had a complaint from a bus company about overgrown hedging. We have looked at it and decided it is marginal, a few millimetres. The land is in private ownership, but the Parish Council have an arrangement with the landowner to cut back when overhanging occurs.

I was wondering: if you are carrying out two passes on the southside, whilst you are turning round and returning to make the second cut, could you make a pass at truck mirror height on the north side, just from the brow of the hill to where we have dug the new village gateway? And what sort of extra cost are we talking about?

It also became apparent in our discussions that the hedge on the southside of Darkhill Rd from Hazelbourne Avenue to Darkhill roundabout is now a Kent Highways responsibility, and there may be some synergy in tying in this requirement with our job on the A25. The hedge has been the subject of complaints as a pedestrian hazard

Appreciate your thoughts

Regards

Mike

From: Kent County Council [<mailto:kcc.corporate@email.icasework.com>]

Sent: 31 July 2020 11:10

To: mike.taylor@boroughgreen.gov.uk

Subject: Highway Boundary (ref: 15437735)

Dear Mr Taylor

Thank you for your enquiry received on 24 July regarding the extent of the highway and our responsibilities.

Unfortunately there is not a simple answer to your query and in most cases there is a need to look at the highway boundary on a case by case basis. Across the county there are pieces of land next to private homes and gardens that do not look like roads or pavements but are actually part of the road. This is called 'highway land'. Some of this land is owned by The Kent County Council (KCC) whilst some are owned by third party owners. Irrespective of the ownership, this land may have

'highway rights' over the topsoil. In most cases the edge of the highway is defined by a fenceline, centre of a hedge line, bottom of a slope, where the slope supports the adjoining land etc.

If you are interested in information relating to land ownership, we would recommend you contact the Land Registry direct as they hold the register of ownership of land and property in England and Wales. Please go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry>.

Whilst we do not hold of land ownership our Highway Definition Team deals with matters relating to the considered extents of highway rights. However there is charge for the formal research and provision of a plan. If you would like a copy of a plan setting out the extent of the 'highway maintainable at public expense' the standard cost is £90 for an A4 size plan. Your payment would need to be submitted prior to any response being issued along with a plan of your area of interest. You will need to pay by cheque made payable to:

Kent County Council. Please send your request and the cheque for the correct amount to: Highway Definition Team, Ashford Depot, Javelin Way, Henwood Industrial Estate, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8AD.

Further details can be found on our website via the following link:

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/highway-land>

In terms of private vegetation that overhands the highway then our local Stewards would normally carry out small scale work when they are on site or issue a notice and ask residents to clear it to the edge of the 'highway' if the work needed is more extensive. This is often the case where hedges over and obscure streetlights or signs. This duty is covered in the Highway Act.

I hope that the above information helps.

Yours sincerely, Business Team

BOROUGH GREEN PARISH COUNCIL

Acting as Agents for TMBC and KCC

For many years KCC and TMBC have suffered severe cuts in Rates Support Grants from Central Government, and this began long before "austerity". This meant that neither Authority was able to fulfil its legal and moral responsibilities, and our village and residents suffered.

Borough Green has always been a pro-active Parish Council, and slowly took on more and more of these tasks with the blessing of these Authorities. We also own land in the village, the Recreation Ground, Potters Mede Sports Centre, and recently amenity land at Harrison Rd, and in the near future, Isles Quarry East & Crowhill Knob.

Salt Bins and Gritting

KCC have a legal responsibility to grit roads in bad weather. This has now become restricted to Primary Road Network Routes. Side roads and estates get no grit at all. Starting in 2009, BGPC began a program of saltbin installation across the Parish, and now have twenty such bins, we hold salt stocks, and grit High St pavements and the (KCC) Library access as well. We entered into partnership with Wrotham Parish and purchased a tow-along salt spreader, and do all side roads in both villages. We are acting as agents for KCC in this task, but also grit the TMBC Carparks in liaison with KCC.

Salt Bin Map Borough Green



Gritting continued:
Towalong gritter



Restocking Saltbins



Footpaths and PROWS

BGPC has slowly assumed responsibility for numerous footpaths and plots of land in the village, the responsibility of KCC and/or TMBC

The land on the A227 below left is KCC on the left, and Robert Body Landfill on the right. This is the site of the Northern Gateway. KCC have Highway Rights of Access on both sides of the road. AONB sign to be installed on left fence



A25 Sevenoaks Rd. (below) The land on the left of the right hand picture is owned by the Stone Family. The Gateway bank work was undertaken by BGPC with road signs installed by KCC.



Landscape Services contracted to BGPC cut A25 southside hedge 2017



BGPC, by arrangement with KCC and other landowners manage the land above, and the PROWS listed below:

Crowhill to Maidstone Rd

Griggs Way to Sandy Ridge (Crowhill Nob TMBC)

Village Hall carpark to Maidstone Rd
Wrotham Rd to the Horsefield
Thong Lane access to Isles Quarry East amenity land
Horsefield Gate (PROW)



Crowhill PROW access steps



Thong Lane Amenity access (Crest/KCC)



Tollgate Bench (Circle/KCC)

Station Road to High St
Rock Rd to Staleys Rd
Basted Mill PROW access



Downlands Walk Wrotham Amenity Area access steps



Crowhill Bench (TMBC/PROW)



Crossroads Bench KCC Footway



HIGHWAY WORKS

New road sign installed Red Lion Junc (KCC)

New One-way sign Station Rd (KCC)



New Traffic Island/Tree Quarry Hill Rd (KCC)

War Memorial Red Lion (KCC)



Hanging Baskets multi (KCC)

Fallen Tree Thong Lane (KCC)

