

Stutton Road Safety Review – interim findings

Background

Stutton Parish Council agreed terms of reference for this review at their meeting of 11th May 26. A report outlining evidence and findings concerning speed limits was agreed by SPC on the 10th August 26 and concluded that we should not pursue any change to existing speed limits.

The Review

A major part of the review of road safety was to conduct a physical inspection of all roads and pavements and identify hazards and faults which could be resolved. This review led to identifying 62 issues. These can be broken down into:

- 35 relating to road signs ranging from inadequate to dirty but concealed by foliage and requiring adjustment being the most common issue.
- 12 relating to pavements which did include dangerous issues due to width and extremely uneven surface but overgrown by foliage or accumulated dirt being more common
- 7 relating to road markings and often related to faded markings but also insufficient in the vicinity of the school
- 5 related to the road surface but four of these related to where overgrowing foliage was blocking lines of sight for motorists.
- 3 related to trees or branches or other obstacles reducing pavement widths or a risk of falling branches onto the pavement or roads

Whilst this was a considerable number of issues the vast majority have been resolved by a combination of action by Suffolk Highways following reports from the project team, DIY fixes from the project team itself or persuading residents and landowners to remove excessive foliage. Some of this activity is ongoing and will continue to be monitored by the project team until complete.

SUBSTANTIAL ISSUES YET TO BE RESOLVED

Narrow pavement outside Roban House

This narrow pavement has been a significant issue for many years and tentative negotiations with the house owners have been made in the past but no progress made. At the narrowest point there is only 700 mm of pavement making it unusable for anyone

using a motorised buggy or an adult to walk with a child or disabled person at their side. Even able-bodied pedestrians find themselves uncomfortably close to vehicular traffic. The boundary at the property is a low brick wall which is falling down in places and has been hit by vehicles in the past. Suffolk Highways are well aware of this issue. Fresh negotiations have been made by this project team. The owners have agreed in principle to give up a small stretch of their garden in return for the wall being reinstated in a position further away from the pavement. The detail of exactly what type of wall and gates etc is yet to be agreed. This would require the boundary to be legally changed with the Land Registry. The reason it has to be formalised is so that any future owner could not reinstate the boundary and to ensure the owner of the property would have no public liability in the event of an incident on the footpath. The result would give a minimum pavement width of 1200mm. Suffolk Highways have agreed that, if the project were to proceed, they would meet all legal costs and fund the reinstatement of the pavement surface. Two local builders have been asked to quote for rebuilding the wall. Suffolk Highways have been asked to make a contribution to the costs of rebuilding the wall and Stutton Parish Council will certainly be required to make a contribution.

The area surrounding the school

Generally, the measures in place around the school were found to be “tired” and inadequate. The “School – keep clear” yellow road markings are faded and the school safety zone signs are damaged and hardly noticeable. Numerous road signs around the school were covered in dirt and algae and some had been hit by vehicles and were at an angle making them not visible. The parking of cars at peak times of opening and closing of the school creates chaos and danger for both pedestrians and drivers alike. Pedestrians are forced to cross roads using narrow gaps between parked cars.

Proposed New Road Markings

Following discussions with Suffolk Highways a new suite of road markings is proposed. Existing yellow “School keep clear” markings would be removed and replaced with fresh similar markings. These would start where the metal railings end, several metres further along the road towards the Post Office corner than the existing markings. They would be extended to the maximum length permitted by regulations. A new set of white painted H markings would also be added at the school pedestrian entrance. Further H markings would be placed to deter parking across vehicle entrances and where kerbs are dropped to facilitate pedestrians crossing. Existing H markings, such as at the entrance to Wheelwrights would be refreshed and extended as far as regulations allow. (See plan of road markings as an Appendix to this report). It is accepted that these H markings are not enforceable per se but experience has shown that most people will not park where it

has been made clear they should not. Also, we have the advantage that the vast majority of cars causing the problems are those of people who are delivering children to or collecting children from the school. The drivers of these cars are identifiable to the school and if individuals do not comply with these road markings, the school must be prepared to engage with them to explain why their behaviour is causing risk to others. The school will erect their own signs to ensure the parking spaces in the lay-by are available for drop off and collection and not used by staff to park there all day. Our Suffolk County Councillor will be asked to fund some of the costs but the majority of the costs will fall to SPC.

New School zone flashing signs

The recommendation is for the current school safety signs to be replaced with new more visible signs with flashing lights operating at peak times. They are programmable remotely and solar powered. Various companies have provided quotes and the project team is still trying to work out the most reliable and best value for money.

Oak trees next to footpath alongside school

A further issue at the school relates to the two large Oak trees growing between the tarmac pavement and the school fence. These severely restrict the width of the pavement. The tree closest to the Old Post Office restricts the pavement width to 1100 mm whilst the other tree restricts the pavement to 900mm. However, the roots also cause an adverse camber towards the road. The Project team met with Suffolk Highways on site and resurfacing by making the pavement rise and then fall, effectively bridging the roots was discussed. Crucially the kerbs at the roadside would also have to similarly rise and fall to prevent the adverse camber.

To complicate matters further, a large branch has recently fallen from one of these trees onto the road, pavement and the school playing area. The trees are the responsibility of Suffolk Highways and SPC are liaising with the school and Suffolk Highways to ensure the trees are assessed for safety and any necessary removal of branches is completed without delay. Depending on the result of the assessment of the trees it could be that diverting the footpath around the trees and onto the current school playing field must be considered. SPC are prepared to facilitate such discussions between The School, the owners of the land (which is believed to be the Church) and Suffolk Highways. SPC are not expecting any of the costs associated with this matter to fall to them.

DECISIONS AND ACTION REQUIRED BY SPC AT MEETING ON 14th SEPTEMBER 26

Recognition of good work

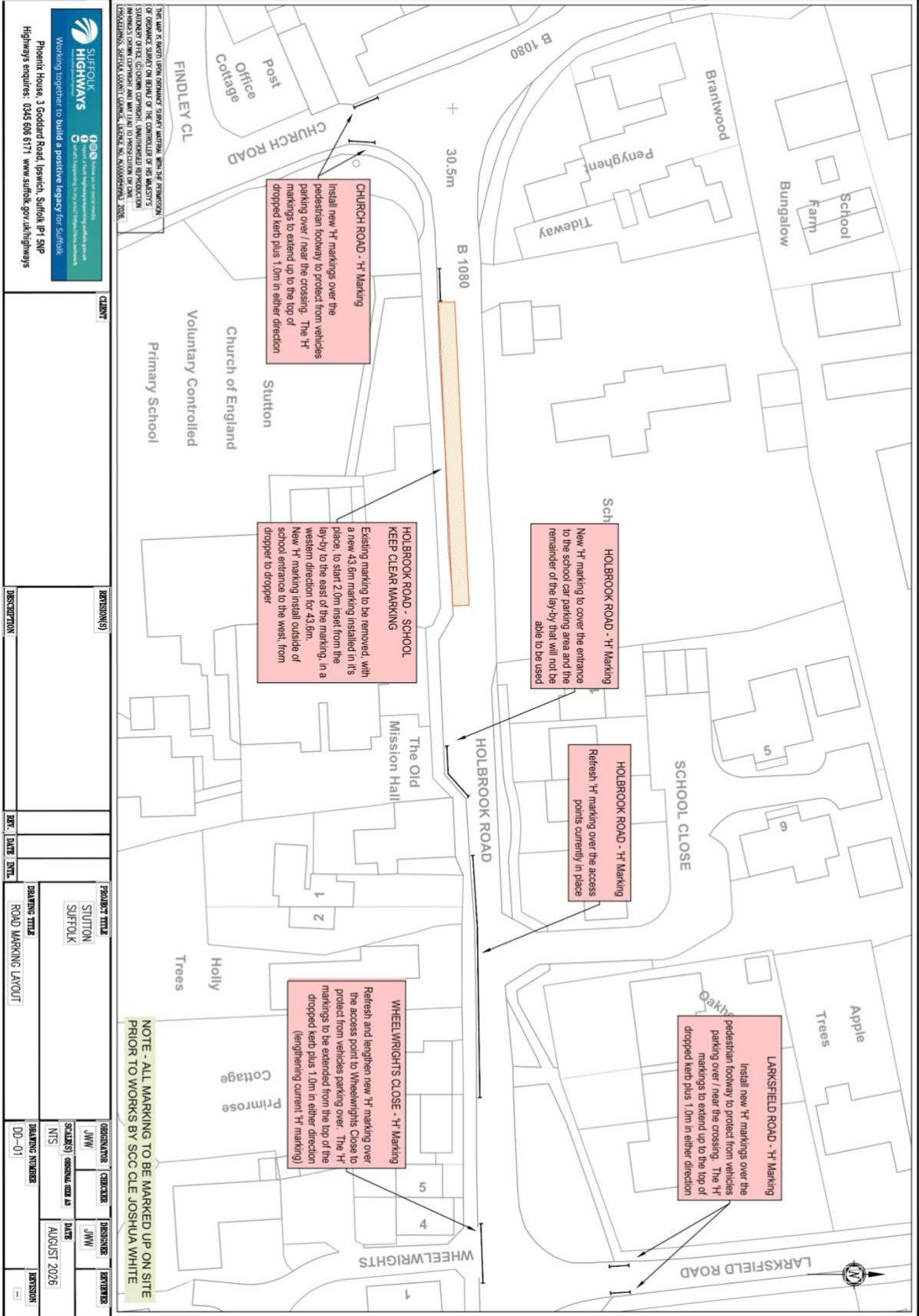
The project team has involved Anne Clarke, Siobhain Bruneau, Ian Flower and Councillors Chris Leach and John Pallant. As well as attending meetings members have been surveying the village, engaging with residents about their hedges and trees and taking DIY action themselves. Their work has been exemplary and tireless and SPC should congratulate and thank members of the team.

Agreeing Priorities

There are three parts of this project which require funding. At this point, exact costs have not been fully established but it is looking likely that the SPC does not currently have sufficient available funds to complete all three projects. Therefore, SPC should agree a priority order until further ways of funding all projects are explored. The table indicates a suggested priority order (unanimously supported by the project team):

Priority	Item
ONE	Pavement outside Roban House
TWO	Road markings in vicinity of the school
THREE	School signs with flashing lights

It is highly unlikely that the Parish Council will be able to complete all these projects immediately. With a priority order agreed the project team will continue to negotiate costs and will further report to the Parish Council with recommendations. The team will also continue to resolve the list of 62 items as discussed.



SUFFOLK HIGHWAYS
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CLIENT		DRAWING TITLE	
		SUTTON	
		SUFFOLK	
		ROAD MARKING LAYOUT	
		DD-01	
		DATE	
		AUGUST 2026	
		REVISION	