**County Council Issues**

**Digigo**

Digigo are reaching out to parishes within the operational area to introduce a series of in-person app support sessions called 'Enhance your Digital Confidence with DigiGo.'

They are eager to collaborate with Parish Councils to explore the possibility of arranging session. Some residents and parish representatives have expressed interest in using the app but are unsure how to do it.  The sessions specifically focus on providing digital support for those less digitally inclined, guiding them through the process of using the TravelEssex app and making DigiGo bookings via it. They envision hosting these sessions either in conjunction with existing parish meet-ups or coffee mornings or as standalone events at a parish or community building. Parish Councils can organise an event in February/by emailing digigo@essex.gov.uk . More information about the DigiGo service itself can be found at:  [www.digigo.uk](http://www.digigo.uk/)

**Army and Navy:**

The Planning application for  [Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/_3v7C31W2t2nWAfgesZw) have now been submitted and the drawings are live on the Essex County Council planning and development website..

The planning application reference numbers are as follows:

* Army and Navy Junction – [CC/CHL/108/23](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/YTx4C5yY9t6Bwjsy00UZ)
* Sandon Park and Ride – [CC/CHL/109/23](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/Zp5SC68ZRty5ZOF5MNlN)
* Chelmer Valley Park and Ride – [CC/CHL/110/23](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/0rvgC734LsZDnptqkhvS)

This marks another important milestone for the project and follows the Department for Transport’s approval of the Outline Business Case in October 2023.

To coincide with the submission of the planning applications, we have also published a series of [visualisations](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/QrcIC8246CYoBvsw3LKq) of the proposals and these are available on the Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package webpage.

For more information about the Army and Navy Sustainable Transport Package, to view the visualisations and sign up for the project e-newsletter, please visit [www.essex.gov.uk/armyandnavy](https://protect-eu.mimecast.com/s/pQtsC0RQVim1Yosrf81t).

**Essex Highways crews tackle Storm Isha:**

Highways crews worked throughout the night dealing with flooding, wind damage and fallen trees as Storm Isha arrived. They received 70 reports for weather-related incidents, including reports of flooding and fallen trees.  Working with partners Essex Police and UK Power Networks, 20 serious issues were dealt with quickly by crews overnight to help get the roads across Essex moving again.

**Ford End Average Speed Cameras (ASC)**

I arranged for GWPC to meet with the Highways Cabinet Member (Cllr Cunningham) on 12th Feb. Highways Design and Operations were in attendance, along with SERP.

The main question to Cllr Cunningham was whether he would support an ASC in FE, even if they weren’t willing to part fund.  Cllr Cunningham stated that it does not meet the required criteria for an ASC, but he did say that didn’t mean that he didn’t recognise that there wasn’t a problem in FE, but the criteria was not met.

An ASC also needs SERP to fund the operation and maintenance of the system, and their representative at the meeting did not agree to this. Before the meeting I had asked them to consider the question and be ready to provide an answer at the meeting – below is their written statement to me:

*“The proposed site at Ford End does not meet the existing ECC criteria or the draft SERP policy. As the SERP currently operates and maintains all highway authority safety camera systems in Essex, it is essential that the operation of the total camera network provides sufficient funding to operate and maintain the systems as well as being able to cover any accidental or intended damage. The number of systems in Essex has reached the point at which maintenance costs are exceeding the income intended to fund it. This position can change so it would be appropriate for the SERP Board to review each request against the SERP finances however, the draft policy recommends that each new system must be supported by a 10 year maintenance bond which would be provided at the time of commissioning and be held by the SERP to ensure maintenance provision.”*

Cllr Cunningham did state that the ECC Highways Road Hierarchy Review and Speed Strategy Review was underway and that criteria may change. I pushed for a forecast on when such reviews would be published and managed to extract the answer that these would not be available for 3 years (18 months each).

However, myself and GWPC did question as to what could possibly change that would remove all the previous barriers, and we did not get a comforting answer!

**Ringtail Green**

I put GWPC clerk in touch with the EHC team for a direct funding of the Quiet Lane scheme. EHC responded that the scheme had not been validated (even direct funding via EHC has to first go through LHP Validation – I have previously complained that this is a bottleneck). I have questioned this and been told that it does meet all the criteria, but validation also need a costing. I have requested that this is done.

**City Council Issues**

Ref - 23/01787/FUL - Field North of Montpelier Farm Main Road Little Waltham - Retirement Village Proposal - this was for 58 bedroom care home, 45 care suites, 100 care apartments + facilities – on land between GW, LW and Broomfield, just north of the approved new developments.

I asked that this go to Planning Committee if there was any possibility that it might get approved. However, Officers’ recommendation is for refusal which has gone through.

ECC Highways objected on traffic issues, and City Council turned it down for 11 separate reasons (that’s a lot!) I did warn Opus that such an application, which added to the traffic in the area (staff, supplies visitors, etc), and the fact that it was not in the Local plan, would likely mean refusal.

Of course they can appeal!