

## **SALC - Babergh Area Forum**

17th June 2019

1. Representatives from thirteen parish Councils present plus the Area Chairman (Adrian Osborne) and the SALC Chairman (William Sargeant).
2. Chairman re-elected but no nominations for Vice-Chairman.
3. Main speaker for the evening was Mary Evans, SCC Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs. Main topics discussed were:
  - Changes to verge cutting policy - Likely to be more emphasis on maintenance at junctions (higher perceived safety risk) and less cutting along open stretches of road. Some areas to have no cutting and may be designated as 'Roadside Nature Reserves'.
  - Reporting of road defects - New systems to be put in place to help speed up process. Threshold values for potholes likely to be reduced. New technology currently being trialled along with a commercial operation that identifies locations that require maintenance. This system compares 'before and current' imagery of the carriageway using a vehicle mounted camera system.
  - Highway Maintenance 'Self Help Scheme' – Much publicised scheme to allow Parish Councils to undertake some of the highway maintenance work themselves. Strict limitations on what PC staff can do. No work in live carriageways or verges adjacent to roads with a speed limit higher than 40mph. All potential PC staff would need basic NRSWA (Chapter 8) training. Although training would be paid for by SCC, the cost of necessary equipment, signing and clothing would be met by the PC. Seems to promise a lot but delivers very little! Better and safer option may still be to use an external contractor that have the necessary training and equipment.
  - Policing of Roadworks – This is currently under review with particular emphasis on Traffic Management and time over-runs on schemes.
4. Considerable discussion regarding the best practice for preparing Neighbourhood Plans but thought that the two most important aspects were:
  - Working closely and positively with the relevant District Council.
  - Ensuring that the Plan included a sensible set of 'Designated Sites'

5. Babergh District Council Local Plan should be published for consultation in July with a desire to be finalised by October. Hope to have someone from BDC at the next meeting to discuss issues.