

WOODBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

PUBLIC BRIEFING NOTE

SUMMARY OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT & PARKING BEHAVIOUR IN WOODBOROUGH

This briefing note is provided by Woodborough Parish Council, and is designed to draw together some successes of the past and summarise how ongoing problems may be mitigated.

Background

For most of the last twenty years or so there has been a slow but consistent increase in the problems caused by traffic - both commercial, farm and residential - through the village. There are two significant highways serving the village – the C261 that runs east from the Smithy Lane crossroads through the village towards Pewsey, and the C38 that runs north/south to the east of the village from North Newnton in the south to Alton Barnes in the north.

It is accepted that both the volume and physical weight/size of traffic has increased year on year, and is likely to continue increasing. One lives in hope, rather than in expectation, that the rate of increase may slow!

A Truism

Whilst a majority of road users will tend to be influenced for the better (and some may even obey) by infrastructural changes (hard engineered traffic calming measures) and local legislation (20mph zone), there will always be the occasional anti-social maverick (or complete idiot) for whom it is impossible to legislate.

Improvements over the years in Woodborough

There have been a number of significant improvements in the village in the last few years, namely;

- Traffic Calming measures in the vicinity of the School (funded by the parish council and Pewsey Area Board (CATG) - Wiltshire Council)
- School Bus Layby (funded by the School, the Diocese, and Wiltshire Council)
- 20mph Zone (funded by the parish council, the Diocese and Pewsey Area Board (CATG) - Wiltshire Council)
- Pavement on the C261 at West End (funded by the parish council and Pewsey Area Board (CATG) - Wiltshire Council)
- Field Path from the Social Club to school (funded by the parish council and Pewsey Area Board (CATG) – Wiltshire Council)
- Use of the Woodborough Club Car Park for parent parking (administered by the School and Woodborough Club, and supported by the parish council)
- High Visibility Yellow Vests (funded by the School – PTA, and the parish council)

SID

This acronym stands for SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE. Until a few years ago a village could book the use of a SID from Wiltshire Council. As part of cost cutting exercises this service

was discontinued. The 30 or so devices were given free of charge to groups of villages – about two years ago Woodborough joined forces with Rushall, North Newton, the Altons, Wilcot and Manningford. The SID is moved on a fortnightly basis by an approved contractor to one of several different locations in each village. A year ago, a new SID (with a smiley/sad face!) was purchased which records traffic data (but not vehicle registration numbers!) similar to a Metrocount. Unfortunately, the lockdown in 2020 occurred before the first set of data for Woodborough could be downloaded. Whilst the data cannot be used ‘in court’ it is felt that it does provide an extremely useful trend indicator. Each village currently pays about £250 per annum to pay for the contractor and maintenance of the device. It has proved difficult to find suitable locations in the middle of the village (on the C261) for the device – but we are persevering! It is easy to find locations on the C36 between the School and The Sands.

Metrocounts/ Speed Assessments

Metrocount is the old name given to the process used by Wiltshire Council for collecting data on traffic volumes and speed and, in some cases, the category/type of traffic; the data is presented on a date/time basis.

When a Metrocount is installed a black cable is stretched across the road – the data is usually collected over a period of two weeks.

Woodborough has had a number of Metrocounts over the years, as the resulting data IS a prime criterion for determining the viability of various schemes (viz. Traffic calming, 20mph zones, CSW).

The most recent Metrocount showed that the 20mph zone had some effect in slowing the average speeds at certain points in the village by several miles per hour. It also recommended that a Community Speedwatch Scheme (CSW) would be appropriate in a certain part of the village.

The Police and the 20mph Zone

There may be some misunderstanding as to how a 20mph Zone differs from a 20mph Limit. Whereas a 20mph Limit is legally enforceable by the Police, initially a 20mph Zone (which is what Woodborough has) is designed to be ‘self-policing’ by using road narrowing and hard engineered [vertical] build-outs. This is exactly what has been installed on the C38 between the railway bridge, past the school, and towards The Sands. The Police are now required to enforce the speed in this zone.

But the Problem Still Remains?

The previous paragraphs have detailed the ‘modern history’ of the traffic problems and how, to some extent, they have been mitigated. Read again the paragraph titled ‘Truism’.

Where Next?

There are still a number of schemes that can be tried – but they are all down to the village community to get them up and running – and sustain. Here are some of them.

- **Scarecrows/Flowerpot Men (and Women)**

This has been tried in both Lockeridge and Urchfont with some notable success. The models look great, colourful and lots of fun. There are some Highway Regulations that MUST be observed, such as

- Not too close to the highway (don't forget – the verge is part of the highway)
- Must not cause a distraction to drivers, but must obviously be noticed
- Must not obstruct drivers' visibility
- Must be static (firmly fixed – no 'moving' parts)

The parish council has all the necessary contacts at Wiltshire Highways to ensure that this idea could be a huge success.

- **Rumble Strips and Speed Humps**

These are known in trade as 'vertical traffic calming measures, and are NOT an option in or close to rural residential areas in Wiltshire. This is strict Wiltshire policy; in villages the noise created by heavy farm vehicles (especially empty trailers) is unacceptable. The parish council has investigated this several times previously, and the policy is strictly maintained!

- **Community Speedwatch (CSW)**

As previously mentioned, this has been recommended in one of our recent Metrocount reports. However, the parish council has already been in touch with the police authorities and all new CSW activities have been suspended until after the lockdown restrictions have been lifted as there is training to undergo. CSW has to be undertaken under the aegis of the parish council, so a recruitment programme will be started quite soon in order that we can start training and get our scheme up and running as soon after the current restrictions are lifted as possible. (see UPDATE below)

Urbanisation v Rurality? – That is the Question

There are one or two suggestions that could be made, that in some camps would raise the blood pressure.

For example, in the area of West End / Smithy Lane Crossroads the use of double yellow lines could, arguably, help to alleviate the problem of parked cars opposite the new pavement and parked far too close to the actual crossroads.

Generally, throughout the village on the C261, more of the 20mph roundels could be painted on the road (and kept in pristine condition) – and not being painted out by disgruntled residents!

Any Other Suggestions?

The parish council frequently discusses road safety issues – and not just in the vicinity of the school. It always attends meetings of the Pewsey Area Board and the Community Area Transport Group (now known as the LHFIG – Local Highways and Footpaths Improvement Group) and, in the face of county-wide village competition, it has successfully bid for funding from a central Wiltshire fund the SHSF (Sustainable Highways Scheme Fund) on several occasions, and receives great support from our Unitary Wiltshire Councillor, Paul Oatway.

About five years ago, the parish council commenced a Neighbourhood Development Plan when some land adjacent to the School, suitable for a 100-car parking area became

available. Sadly, the land then became unavailable and the NDP was terminated. Was this the silver bullet we had been seeking – very possibly. However, it was not to be, so any suggestion (however off the wall it may be) is welcomed by the parish council at any time.

PARKING UPDATE - Parking on the C261 at the Smithy Lane Crossroads

After at least two years to-ing and fro-ing the parish council has at last got both the recommendation and approval from the police and Highways to place a number of ‘No Waiting’ bollards on one corner of the junction of the C261 and the C36 (namely opposite the Smithy Lane crossroads).

This is to discourage vehicle owners (believed to be mainly school parents at the peak drop-off and pick-up times) parking on the C261 into the village too close to the actual crossroads/junction with the C36. On many occasions, vehicles approaching from the north on the C36 (The Sands) have turned left/east into the village, and have been faced with a parked vehicle immediately in front of them. With the use of the bollards, the incidence of this happening has been greatly reduced, if not eliminated. The parish council bears the cost of replacing bollards which are frequently destroyed by careless drivers in this location.

ROAD SAFETY UPDATE - Extension of the Pavement on the C261

Currently, the parish council is seeking further funding from the SHSF to extend the kerbed footway from ‘Leabinloch’ to the Milkhouse Water Bridge (‘Water Meadow’), and possibly as far as the entrance to ‘Post Office field’. Not only would this reclaim all the verge that has been lost due to large and heavy commercial and farm vehicles, but would enhance greatly the safety of children and parents parking on the C261 at peak school drop-off and pick-up times, not mention all other pedestrians walking towards the only bus stop in the village at the Smithy Lane crossroads. Success in achieving this objective depends entirely on funding from the SHSF, together with a significant contribution from the parish council (carefully amassed over the last few years) and the LHFIG (already committed). The result of the SHSF bid should be known by the end of 2023.

COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

CSW is now well into its second year of operation, and has proved to be most effective. A small but highly efficient team of between 8 and 10 trained villagers have carried out very frequent sessions in a single location on the C261 that has been approved and safety assessed by the police. The police Enforcement Officers have attended on at least occasion. Nearly a thousand vehicles have been reported; several hundred first warning letters and a good number of second warning letters have been issued by the police. A second operational site is currently being sought (eg on the C36 at The Sands). We are extremely lucky to have such a well organised and dedicated CSW team!

First published in June 2020

Updated in November 2023