

TRAFFIC IN HAWKLEY

CAUKILL SPEAKING BRIEF 1 Nov 2017

Everybody who lives here is concerned about the speed of traffic in the Parish. A large vehicle passing close by a pedestrian on a rural road feels at best uncomfortable even at a modest speed – a normal car travelling at 30mph past the pub during opening hours is positively dangerous - particularly in warm weather when people congregate outside.

The issue of speed limits has been raised from time to time but there has never been a consensus around taking action. We last looked at it in detail while developing the Parish Plan published in 2014. It observed: *“We are blessed with roads free of traffic signs and other street furniture. Residents put a high value of the lack of clutter and the rural feel of our roads and verges”*. It addressed the issues of horses, horse boxes and agricultural vehicles as a safety hazard to be dealt with by discussion with the perpetrators – as we have from time to time.

That Parish Plan was the product of widespread consultation over two years, views from the public were sought at several stages culminating in a widely publicised public meeting to discuss the plan. And in the absence of any objections, its conclusions reflected then prevailing opinion.

By the end of that year, the welcome transformation of the business at the Hawkley Inn had brought with it a new challenge. The additional parked cars narrowed the road raising safety issues that were a cause of public concern. We invited HCC Traffic here and in fact drove with them round Upper and Lower Green for about two hours looking at a number of pinch points and discussing possible solutions. Even in 2015, we were told: *“What money there is, is going toward national priorities: bypasses, highway improvements and maintenance. Rural traffic calming is just not going to get funded.”* It was clear that we were in self-help mode.

We discussed establishing a speed limit with HCC. HCC was sceptical whether it would make much difference in the long run - without enforcement support (aka speed cameras). It would likely be ineffective in slowing local traffic who know the roads and will likely not observe the limit. Assuming the limit covered just Upper Green through Lower Green HCC Traffic then estimated a cost of the order £15-20,000 for a meaningful speed limit scheme (about £200 for every household across the whole Parish – just for Upper and Lower Green). Even then HCC's advice was that, *“without enforcement support (aka speed cameras) this would likely be ineffective in slowing local traffic in the long term.”*

I produced a paper for the Parish Council summarising the visit and proposing a number of other actions for consideration. These were discussed with the residents most directly affected. That paper did not propose any speed limit in the light of its potential cost and the conclusions of the Parish Plan the year before. There was no agreement about how to deal with the pub, but two were implemented, improving sightlines where Uplands Road emerges into Hawkley Road and on Church Lane the hedge was cut back to improve visibility approaching Upper Green.

Last year, a resident suggested that safety would be much improved if a street light were erected outside the entrance to the Parish Hall. There was public support at the meeting at which it was raised and we canvassed those directly affected by email; the responses received were wholly positive and so we invested considerable effort – well, Sue did, in engaging with HCC and EHDC to make it happen. By the time we had a practical proposal costed, funded and ready to implement

earlier this year, sentiment had turned against (including people who had initially been in favour) and the subject was dropped.

All of this is by way of saying that the Parish Council is sensitive to the issue and open to ideas as to how to make the parish safer. And so we welcome this group of residents here tonight and if this process builds consensus more to the good.

Even today, however despite this turn out, I know that there is by no means unanimous support for a speed limit per se. I have received representations to the effect that:

- The issue is one of pedestrian perception on a narrow road. A vehicle traveling close by a pedestrian at 25MPH is perceived to be travelling much faster - I need data and evidence before I will support any change
- The real culprits are local residents – sometimes named - a speed limit will not change their behaviour, they have behaved like that for years.
- The law requires a driver to drive at a speed appropriate to the conditions. In most residential areas of the Parish even 30mph is too fast. To impose a 30 Mph limit would simply legitimise dangerous driving – particularly past the pub.
- 20 MPH is a laughable waste of money without chicanes and speed bumps to reinforce it

..... and so on.

So there are people clearly committed to doing something - some are here this evening – there are those who need to be convinced. We are going to need widespread support among the electors of the Parish if the Council is going to commit resources to a traffic scheme and so there needs to be debate, information sharing and a consensus to emerge. It is for that reason I propose that we establish a working party which I suggest should be six or seven people, geographically representative of the parish and comprise two or three councillors and the rest from the electorate.

Now, before I canvass the Council's views, I should report that since I saw Gina's article, I have re-engaged with HCC Traffic to find out the lie of the land.

I have established that, even more than in 2015, we are in self-help mode. Since last year, County Policy is give priority to those sites where there are existing injury accident problems in terms of numbers of accidents, accident severity, common contributory factors and identifiable patterns and **expressly** does not support any traffic management measures that do not clearly demonstrate a casualty reduction benefit - particularly not the more cost intensive measures (such as lower speed limits, physical traffic calming measures (speed humps, chicanes etc.) unless these are required to support casualty reduction.

Recognising the continuing demand for measures that are not directly linked to casualty reduction, HCC has recently developed its Community Funded Traffic Management Initiative whereby a Parish Councils can fund the provision of straightforward minor traffic management measures. In other words - if we want to do anything in Hawkey, we will need to pay for it ourselves.

However, establishing lower speed limits and implementing physical traffic calming measures are **outside the scope** of the community funded initiative. Establishing a speed limit requires a statutory process culminating in a "Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)". This process is time and resource consuming for HCC. It requires widespread consultation and is expensive for HCC and so a decision to pursue TRO is subjected to the same tests as other County expenditure; policy would not support a TRO unless it was demonstrably required to support casualty reduction. I was told that this process cannot be funded by the community – any such process needs to come from County budgets.

What CAN we do through the Community Funded Initiative.

I have attached a copy of HCC's community funded initiative pamphlet and introductory notes.

HCC suggested the following actions might have some effect on speeds and can be funded by the community:

- 1 White Gates at various points, perhaps with signs delineating different parts of the Parish. Eg. "Upper Green, Please drive carefully", [*Apparently, these tend to be effective for the first couple of hundred yards then need to be supported by some other measure*].
- 2 White lines on the sides of the road, essentially narrowing the road in from the verges [*this can be quite effective*].
- 3 Eliminating the give way markings at all junctions (*makes people think*)
- 4 The word "SLOW" painted on the road at appropriate points [*has a localised but significant influence when new – diminishes as it fades*]
- 5 Signs/markings relating to cycles and horses using the roads.
- 6 HCC apparently is a great supporter of the "20isplenty" scheme and we would be free to pursue that if thought fit.

I should say that there are a few questions I have asked that remain unanswered because of HCC staff holidays over half term.

How does one get round policy?

In all cases where there is a policy, there is someone with the authority to go outside policy. This is normally the policy maker: in this case the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor Rob Humby. I am told that, to date, Humby has been resolute in staying within policy. (I should mention at this point that Humby is due to be at an EHT&PC Meeting later this month – I am minded to attend this meeting with Jo).

So all of the above said, I'd like the Council's thoughts on this topic – again, let's try to avoid repetition a duplication..... and in particular about the proposed working party.

PARISH OF HAWKLEY
TRAFFIC WORKING PARTY

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. To finalise and agree these Terms of Reference
2. To encompass the “Parish of Hawkley” but focussing on encompassing the “settlements” of Snailing Lane, Empshott, Empshott Green, Upper & Lower Green and Oakshott. That is our electorate and they are the people whose views we need to canvass before we commit resources.
3. Ideally to source data about daily traffic volumes, actual speeds in different parts of the Parish and an idea whether the ‘offenders’ are a) locals, b) deliverers and contractors or c) through traffic. *[I possess a “radar speed gun”; we need determine how it can be used safely, I have approached HCC to source an inductive loop laid in various places to gather volume and speed data].*
4. Use this data to develop the right traffic calming plan (HCC would like this kind of data in order to recommend an approach). Further, hard data also would lend credibility to any grant application (i.e. If we are going to need external funding (e.g. Aviva do a matched funding programme for rural projects) then we will need to build the case.)
5. Test again the public appetite for speed limits and the HCC attitude to helping us
6. Different settlements may have a different appetite for calming measures. We need to talk to them, talk to HCC and then make a recommendation.
7. Each proposal will need individually to be tested with the community and costed with HCC.
8. Consider how the project will be funded and sound out sourced of funding.
9. Bring all this together into a coherent presentation at (at least one) a public meeting fairly early next year?