

## Progress on Road safety initiatives

This is a longer version of the article that appeared in the Parish magazine in August 2010.

This initiative has gathered momentum of late and is beginning to yield some real results, through various different avenues.

Firstly, some general comments and over-arching principles.

We need to recognise that Slindon is regarded by West Sussex Highways as a safe area and as such we are NOT a priority. Moreover, the way they look at things is defined by Dept of Transport guidelines which are sometimes rather odd. A key difference in their perspective is their responsibility for keeping traffic flowing and driver safety, not simply the safety and concerns of residents!

Add on budget constraints (which are of course even more acute after the cost of repairing the damage caused by the extreme winter) and its remarkable that we've managed to get *anything* out of Highways.

All of this means other ways of addressing our concerns are particularly important.

A useful distinction emerged in our discussions concerning differing potential objectives for all of our efforts

- Reducing traffic *volumes* would be nice but is all but impossible. It is of course the public highway - and with few exceptions there is no legal way of stopping anyone driving wherever they like.
- Reducing traffic *speed* is a realistic objective and although it isn't easy we have a variety of initiatives in hand here.
- Reducing *signage* is desirable from an aesthetic point of view and is a widespread ambition of many agencies working in this field – from English Heritage to West Sussex Highways. Additional signs not only add to visual clutter and increase the sense of 'urbanisation' of a rural area, but they can also be counter-productive as too many signs can easily create 'information overload' for drivers who then simply fail to notice *any* of them.

Another useful distinction is between *regulatory* initiatives (more or different traffic rules by Highways), *enforcement* initiatives (in conjunction with the police) and *informal* initiatives (things we can ourselves).

## West Sussex Highways activity and traffic regulations

West Sussex Highways have been very helpful and done two preliminary things

- A signage review which we are still talking to them about, but no real changes are expected – at least not for now.
- Lots more monitoring of traffic volumes and speed across the village and on the A29 took place in late June – you probably saw the rubber strips in the roads. This information forms the basis of two new Traffic Regulation Orders
  - The first concerns 'tidying up' the A29 and Shellbridge Road speed limit inconsistencies. This involves extending the 40mph zone so it will start on the brow of the hill near the Spur, and reducing the current 50mph limit on Shellbridge Road down to 40mph. This has been designated as a county priority although at the time of writing we don't know exactly when the work is scheduled to be done.
  - They are also planning a 20mph zone for the whole of the 'flint village' including the school safety zone. However this is not on the current list of priorities and in any case we have exciting plans for an alternative

approach to *designing* speed out of the roads and lanes. See below for an explanation of this alternative approach.

Later this year they will also develop designs for a 'pedestrian refuge' at the A29 cross roads so pedestrians can cross the road in two stages. This will still be a very expensive job and is unlikely to happen any time soon, especially given budget cuts! (And remember, our preferred option of a pelican crossing has no hope of being agreed, as previously reported).

### **Policing and enforcement issues**

All the regulations in the world are of no use if people simply break the law. We have had constructive discussions with the police and will be sharing the Highways information with them – this will allow the police to target places and times where we know we have problems. They have undertaken to site the mobile speed camera van on the A29 at various times, and undertake a programme of random, high visibility highway patrols, with the aim of providing a deterrent. (Be warned!). We are also taking their advice on the best way of addressing persistent offenders. Further discussion on this are scheduled for later in August.

### **An alternative approach to traffic management**

We were alerted to an imaginative scheme in the village of Buriton near Petersfield where a road design consultancy (Hamilton Baillie) have helped Hampshire Highways create a road layout that seems very effective in slowing traffic, improving pedestrian spaces *and* dramatically *reduces* signage and all the inappropriate and ugly clutter of conventional traffic calming schemes.

In effect the philosophy behind the approach is 'design' led, rather than simply 'engineering'. The aim is to create an attractive (but somewhat unconventional) road layout where the driver only *feels* confident when driving at slower speeds.

Look at <http://www.hamilton-baillie.co.uk/index.php?do=projects>

for more explanation of their general approach and the details of the Buriton scheme. Its also worth looking at some of their other schemes – for example the A32 at West Meon and Porlock for example.

We have had discussions with both the National Trust and the South Downs Joint Committee (the National Park body-in-waiting about this approach and they are very interested and have agreed to fund work by Hamilton Baillie to develop a suitable scheme for Slindon. Ideally, we will benefit from being a 'case study' example of best practice that both the Trust and National Park Authority can apply in other places in the region.

A detailed public consultation will be part of the project – scheduled for 27 September.

### **Informal and DIY measures**

We have had some success in identifying nuisance vehicles and behaviour and, through the judicious use of a quiet word in the right ear in the right way, we seem to have quashed at least one regular problem. If you can help us identify other specific problems we can aim to deal informally with those too.

Thanks to all those who contributed to 'Lorry Watch' in July – it's too early to say what the outcome of that will be, but without 'evidence' of this nature to convince Highways that we have an issue, nothing is likely to be done. We all need to play our part on this kind of initiative.

Next term we hope to enlist the help of the schools to encourage parents to play their part in making the school run times safer.

We are also exploring the 'sat nav' issue and here the newer systems that encourage users to give feedback 'on line' to the sat nav companies may give us an opportunity. There may well be things we can all do to stimulate the sat nav companies to amend their information especially on route guidance for larger vehicles. However, it will be some long time before this bears fruit.

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