

Report on Traffic in Christleton Village

Author: Cllr Simon Kent

Date: 5th December 2018

The purpose of this report is to collate all of the data and information which has been made available to the Parish Council, to provide findings and observations and put forward suggestions and recommendation of ways to address the key issues of speeding, congestion and safety in the village.

Background

This report has been produced in response to ongoing concerns from residents over speeding, high levels of congestion and pedestrian safety in the Village.

In 2015 the residents approved the reduction of the speed limit from 30 mph to 20 mph and this was put in place in November 2016. This was simply a change to speed signage on road side poles and carriageway roundels on Plough Lane. A further survey was carried out in 2017 to assess vehicle speeds. The results of this survey have now been made available.

Speed monitoring was carried out in March 2018 using a smart SID and the results provided to CWAC for assessment. This assessment wasn't carried out until the summer of 2018 and the results sent onto the Police for enforcement activity.

CWAC have repeated expressed concerns for pedestrian safety on the S bends through the Village by the Ring o' Bells where a combination of parked vehicles and high traffic flow leads to drivers mounting the pavement in order to pass. **Double yellow lines will be deployed by CWAC unless an alternative can be agreed upon.**

Congestion is also a major problem at high traffic flow times. This is exasperated by inconsiderate parking, a lack of parking restrictions in key area and high volumes of parked cars created by the Deva Bridge Club and parents collecting from the schools.

Speed

What the data shows

The key figures we need to look at are the means speeds. These show that with the exception of Rowton Bridge Road the average speeds were less than 25 mph in the 20mph zone and therefore not at a high enough speed to justify further measures such as enforcement activity by the Police.

Observations

The surveying points used were at places where vehicles were well into the village. Many of the concerns with speeding vehicles are as they enter the 20 mph limit and are still travelling well in excess of the 20 limit.

Enforcement

The Police have stated that their own guidelines mean that they are only able to enforce in 20 mph limit areas where they effectively look like 20 mph zones. This means that additional physical measures to make drivers aware of the speed limit such as roundels on the carriageway and other traffic calming measures would need to be put in place first before enforcement could be carried out.

Mean speeds also need to be above 24 mph so the current data only justifies enforcement by the Police on Rowton Bridge Road. It is also worth mentioning that the Police only have access to a single speed gun ,Trucam, across the area but this is due to increase to two shortly.

Possible Solutions

1. Create chicanes on the main entrances to the village to make drivers more aware that they are entering a 20 mph limit and to slow them down.
2. Put in additional 20 mph roundels on Rowton Bridge Road to comply with Police requirements for enforcement.
3. Install speed cushions to reduce speeds on key roads.

Congestion

Congestion is mainly caused by on street parking. These cars are mainly owned by non-residents who are coming to the village for one of the following reasons:

- Working for or visiting a business that doesn't have sufficient car parking spaces. These account for approximately 30 vehicles at any time during the working week. In the main they park around the village triangle rather than using the toast rack.
- Visiting the Deva Bridge Club. These can number up to 60 cars and attend 6 days a week. These members park anywhere and everywhere but generally try to get as close to the Bridge Club as possible. This means that large sections of Village Road are effectively reduced to one carriage with traffic then trying to pass in both directions. This results in vehicles mounting the pavements in order to pass one another.
- Dropping off and picking up from the Schools. Parents collecting their children each day account for approximately 350 vehicle movements in and out of the Village with some short term parking whilst parents wait for children. These tend to affect Village Road, Plough Lane, Quarry Lane and the road leading up to the Little Heath Play area.
- High School parents evening and events. After 17:00 the majority of the car park at the school is contracted to Brio for use with the leisure centre and football area. These are used 5 nights a week and the car park is extensively used. If the High School holds a parent's evening the only place for parents to park is on the street. If the Bridge Club is also meeting, this means that the only places to park are on Quarry Lane, Wood Fields and Plough Lane. This once again turns these areas into single carriageway roads with the resulting congestion and in some cases gridlock.

Possible Solutions

1. The obvious solution would be to create a car park. However, there aren't any potential sites in the centre of the village or close enough that people would park and then walk to the centre of the village. The only potential site could be created by moving the Primary School to a more suitable site and redeveloping the area for car parking and housing.
2. Create further 'toast rack' type parking by the Primary School. This would be a useful addition but is too small an area to provide a total solution.
3. Introduce parking restrictions on the main routes through the village to prevent 'problem' parking. This would increase traffic flows on the main routes but would result in parking moving to other places in the village which may result in simply moving the problem. The parking restrictions would need to be double yellow lines so that enforcement could take place immediately by CWAC.
4. The High School have been approached in the past to look at putting in an additional entrance from Birch Heath Lane with car parking. This had been discounted on cost grounds. However, we have now learnt that due to pressure to provide additional school places funding may be available to create this car park as part of an expansion of the school. This would greatly ease traffic flows into the village centre at peak times.
5. The Deva Bridge Club have been approached to ask them to move their Wednesday afternoon sessions to slightly earlier in the day to prevent a clash with the schools finishing earlier that day but they have refused, twice.

Safety

The main safety issues relate to pedestrians. In four key areas:

- Vehicles mounting pavements to pass one another on Village Road or parking on the pavements and making passing difficult or impossible for those with a wheelchair or pram.
- School children being able to cross Village Road safely.
- Lack of a pavement on Rowton Bridge Road from the cross roads with Plough Lane up as far as Sand Rock Road.
- Lack of a pavement and lighting on Faulkners Lane.

Possible Solutions

1. Installation of double yellow lines through parts of the 'S' bend on Village Road to create pull in points, increase visibility and still allow some parking outside the Village Shop and businesses. CWAC are going to run a week-long trial of such a scheme in the near future to assess its impact.
2. Install a zebra crossing on Village Road.
3. Make part of Rowton Bridge Road one way in order to allow a pavement to be installed.
4. Use Community Infrastructure payments to compulsory purchase an additional strip of land from the field next to Faulkners Lane and widen the road and install a footpath and lighting.

Recommendations

These recommendations are set out in the order of priority given the information available at this point in time.

1. Install chicanes at the start of the 20 limit on Plough Lane, Birch Heath Lane and Little Heath Road with priority for vehicles leaving the village. These would help to reduce the speed of traffic entering the village and increase awareness of the reduced speed limit.
2. Install speed cushions on Plough Lane, Little Heath Road, Village Road, Rowton Bridge Road Birch Heath Lane, Pepper Street, Quarry Lane and Faulkners Lane. The latter two don't have high speeds but the introduction of speed cushions on other roads may increase traffic volumes on these roads.
3. Install a pedestrian crossing on Village Road.
4. Introduce double yellow lines around the village 'triangle' to prevent inconsiderate parking which hinders traffic flow. This may also need to include short distances of adjacent roads to prevent people parking on junctions and corners.
5. A. Install double yellow lines through the S bends on Village Road allowing for 8 car parking spaces with a waiting restriction. This would reduce congestion and increase safety but would result in the loss of parking spaces which would mean additional parking on other roads such as Pepper St., Birch Heath Lane and Wood Fields. **For this reason it is not a preferred option.**

OR

B. Create a one way system as previously set out. This would facilitate the creation of parking spaces all along Village Road and parts of Quarry Lane. Rowton Bridge Road would need to be made one way for a short distance to facilitate the installation of a footpath and additional speed cushions deployed on Sand Rock Road. A footpath could also potentially be installed on Faulkners Lane although this would probably require the compulsory purchase of land in the adjoining field to widened and straighten the road.

This will increase traffic volumes on Plough Lane, Birch Heath Lane, Quarry Lane and Faulkners Lane. However, the one way system will make using Christleton as a cut through less attractive as it will become a slightly longer route with speed cushions and chicanes slowing the speed of traffic. **See impact assessment on the following pages.**

6. Close Rowton Bridge to traffic coming from the A41. This would affect 900 vehicles movements a day and 1,200 on a Friday. This could result in vehicles using Pepper St, Plough Lane and Birch Heath Lane but it could also result in an overall decrease in vehicles using the Village to cut through to the A51.
7. In the likely even that the High School is expanded, insist upon an additional entrance from Birch Heath Lane.

One way system impact assessment.

With the data available at this time we cannot get an exact picture of where vehicles go once they have entered the village. However, we can make an educated assessment. These are as follows:

NB. All vehicle movement figures are based on the 24 hr / 7day average.

Quarry Lane

Vehicles southbound on Village Road – 1815

These currently travel on to Rowton Bridge Road (941), Plough Lane (703) or Quarry Lane (287). These vehicles would now need to go down Pepper St, then into Faulkners Lane to Quarry Lane to access Rowton Bridge Road and Plough Lane.

This volume may be reduced if vehicles chose to use Birch Heath Lane to exit the village rather than enter the one way system. For his assessment we will assume this will reduce volumes by 285 vehicles (see below for explanation).

This could also be slightly offset by the closure of Rowton Bridge Road to traffic northbound from the A41. This accounts for 903 vehicle movements, some of which may be using Quarry Lane. We will assume a 10% reduction, 90 vehicles.

After allowance for the above, an extra 1268 vehicle movements would occur on Quarry Lane if there wasn't a reduction in traffic volumes as a result of the one way system making Christleton less attractive as a cut through. Current vehicle movements on Quarry lane are 586.

Village Road

The current northbound vehicle count is 2113 a day. Closing Rowton Bridge Road northbound could reduce this volume by 900 but allowance needs to be made for these vehicles using Plough Lane instead.

The length of double yellow lines could be reduced to create additional parking as traffic will only be travelling northbound.

Plough Lane

This will probably experience an increase in volumes as a result of the closure of Rowton Bridge Road. This could be in the region of 30% for west bound traffic, so an overall 15% increase in volume. Total movements would be up from 1472 to 1683.

Consideration should be given to installing at least one short run of double yellow lines adjacent to the school to create a break in the line of parked cars and allow vehicles to pull in to pass one another.

Birch Heath Lane

We should allow for a 50% increase in traffic in volumes travelling eastbound and 30% travelling westbound. This would increase daily movements from 1294 to 1796.

Little Heath Road

We anticipate a slight drop in vehicle movements in both directions as a result of the closure of Rowton Bridge Road and the one way system with its traffic calming measures making Christleton less attractive as a cut through.

Pepper Street

This road will see an increase in traffic westbound of vehicles using the one way system but a reduction in volumes eastbound for the same reason. Overall a very rough estimate would be a 40% increase in traffic volumes.

Overall positive outcomes

1. Creation of sufficient parking to prevent congestion in the village.
2. Overall reduction in traffic volumes in the centre of the village.
3. Increased pedestrian safety as vehicles will no longer need to mount pavements to pass.
4. Additional footpaths added to improve pedestrian safety on Rowton Bridge Road and Faulkners Lane.
5. Speed cushions on additional roads will help to enforce the 20 mph limit.

Overall negative outcomes

1. Increased traffic volume, albeit still low, on Quarry Lane passed the Primary School.