

Cofton Hackett Parish Council

Traffic Safety Meeting Held at Cofton Village Hall, 23rd February 2023

Purpose

The public meeting was called to discuss Traffic Safety in Cofton Hackett with residents becoming increasingly concerned about the speed of traffic on roads in the Parish, inconsiderate and dangerous driving, and the apparent lack of enforcement by police.

In attendance were:

- John Campion, Police and Crime Commissioner
- Cllr Adrian Kriss, County Councillor, Worcestershire County Council
- Richard Cenci, Highways Liaison Officer, Worcestershire County Council
- PC Marc Ginder, Hagley and Rubery Safer Neighbourhood Team
- Cllr Roger Westbury, Chair, Cofton Hackett Parish Council
- Cllr Nick Banyard, Cofton Hackett Parish Council
- Members of Cofton Hackett Parish Council and neighbouring Parish Councils

Meeting Notes

We were delighted that more than 80 residents attended the meeting. Cllr Westbury opened by welcoming everyone and introducing the panel and their roles, he added that Paul Waterhouse, Traffic Management Advisor, was unable to attend but Councillors had met with him to gather his input prior to the meeting. Cllr Westbury spoke about the '3 Es' for traffic safety – Education, Engineering and Enforcement.

Cllr Banyard then took over as Chair for the meeting, outlining the increasing level of concern for traffic safety. Speeding on our major roads is constantly excessive, residents find it difficult to emerge from driveways and side roads, incidents of dangerous driving and the ineffective pedestrian crossing on Groveley Lane into Cofton Park. There is a lack of response to requests for speed and mobile cameras and an apparent lack of Police response to requests to address these concerns. He summarised several incidents of dangerous driving in the past 6 months, at Rose Hill Island, on Groveley Lane, Lickey Road and Ten Ashes Lane. The cost of damage to street furniture and railings often needs to be borne by the Parish Council due to uninsured drivers, and claims on insurance result in increases to premiums.

John Campion (PCC) explained that roads are the biggest killer in his area of jurisdiction and part of his role is to make sure there is a system to keep roads safe. Enforcement plays a part but is not the complete answer for traffic safety. Driver behaviour is key, many incidents occur within speed limits but are caused by poor driving. He has committed an additional £900,000 to speed enforcement, community speed watch and similar initiatives and is making better use of technology. There has been an increase in marked and unmarked patrol vehicles. There is only 1 average speed scheme in the County, these are expensive to implement but are effective. Drivers are encouraged to use 'Operation Snap' to report incidents of poor and dangerous driving captured on dashcams, these will be investigated and action taken where offences are committed.

Cllr Adrian Kriss said that part of his role is to make sure our roads are kept in a safe condition. He said that speeds on Barnt Green Road, where the limit changes between 30mph and 40mph, are difficult to enforce, there will be additional signage here to ensure drivers are aware that the limit is 30mph. Speed data collected for Barnt Green Road has shown the 85th percentile (the speed at which 85% of traffic is travelling at or below) to be 38 – 39mph, with this data being gathered in 2018. There has been an increase in traffic volume due to the new development but this is likely to result in a decrease in average speed. Incidents of poor and dangerous driving are often due to criminal activity – drunk / drugged driving or cars being pursued by police vehicles. Cllr Kriss has been campaigning for a better crossing on Groveley Lane, data indicates this may need a traffic light crossing and sufficient funding may not be available for that.

PC Marc Ginder explained his role in traffic education, community speedwatch etc. This often has to take a place behind dealing with issues of violent crime and domestic abuse.

Richard Cenci said that he works closely with Cllr Kriss, utilising tools at his disposal to support promotion of safer highways. There is never one simple solution to reducing speed. He will assist with installation of Vehicle Activated speed signs, working with the Parish Council on preferred locations.

Cllr Banyard outlined proposals from the Parish Council:

- Funding for Vehicle Activated Signs (display of speed plus SLOW DOWN / THANK YOU)
- Working with highways on community speed watch possibilities
- Identification of locations for mobile camera vans and motorcycles
 - o NOTE: Ironically, the speed of traffic on Barnt Green Road is too high for safe implementation of community speedwatch,
 - o AND currently, there is no appropriate location on Barnt Green Road for a camera van or motorcycle.
- The Parish Council will continue to work closely with the police and highways department to seek solutions to traffic problems.

Questions / Comments from the floor

- Concerns that traffic approaching the pedestrian crossing near East Works Drive is travelling too fast and is unable to stop in time for pedestrians. The view of the crossing is often obstructed by buses parked in the layby. A hit and run incident has been reported at this crossing.

Highways department agreed to look into this.

- Ten Ashes Lane is prohibited for traffic, except for access, but high volumes of traffic travel through here on a daily basis. In the past police have said the prohibition is unenforceable and was put in place during the days of Austin / Rover manufacturing.

Cllr Kriss replied that Ten Ashes Lane is due to be closed for a period, for road works. When this closure is finished he will be surveying all residents in Ten Ashes Lane and Lickey Coppice, to ascertain views on possible implementation of a permanent closure or other form of restriction.

- The exit from Reservoir Road onto Barnt Green Road is dangerous due to vehicles parked near to the junction restricting the view for drivers. Could double yellow lines be implemented there?

Cllr Kriss said that although the cost of painting yellow lines is c.£600, the cost of the legalities amounts to c.£5,400 and takes 12 months to implement.

- How accurate are Community Speedwatch devices, why can't drivers be prosecuted when captured by these?

PC Ginder said they are the same devices as used by Police, but not enforceable if used by civilians. Cllr Kriss stressed that Community Speedwatch is an effective method of lowering traffic speed.

- At the mini roundabout, vehicles go over the roundabout rather than round it.
- Rose Hill Island needs to be made safer, the approach lines are such that traffic is able to navigate the island at excessive speeds.

Highways are aware of this issue and are looking at options to slow traffic.

- The design speeds of our roads are higher than the permitted limit, the area inherited an old road system. More street furniture may not be the answer, it's just more things to hit! Engineering of traffic speed reduction is the way forward.
- Concerns regarding parked cars at the junction of Low Hill Lane and Groveley Lane together with the speed of traffic makes it impossible to pull out. Speed bumps are needed.

Summary

Cllr Banyard thanked everyone for their contributions, the Parish Council will continue to work with Worcestershire Highways and West Mercia police to try to continually improve safety on our roads. These notes will be posted on our website with regular updates beginning early May.

Cllr Westbury thanked John Campion, Cllr Kriss, Richard Cenci and PC Marc Ginder for their attendance and contribution to the meeting. Parish Council meetings are held on the third Monday of every month (excluding August) and all residents are welcome to attend.

Parish Council Contact: clerk@coftonhackettpc.org

John Campion and Cllr Kriss welcomed residents to contact them directly via email or their websites:

<https://www.campion4westmercia.com/> Email:john@campion4westmercia.com
<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/> Email:AKriss@worcestershire.gov.uk

The meeting ended at 8.50pm.