

Update on Traffic Proposals – September 2017

The Parish Council would like to thank all of those Villagers that have taken the trouble to put forward their views following the exhibition at the fete in June.

Following the publication of the three options which the Parish Council has been working on to alleviate the issues of speeding, congestion, parking and safety in the village, a great deal of useful feedback has been received. Many residents have raised similar points which the Parish Council will cover below in this update.

1. Speeding

The 20 mph zone was implemented earlier this year across the village and final works completed in Pepper Street on this first stage. There now has to be a traffic survey completed to monitor the results of this new limit? This will be done by CWAC Highways Department at the same time of year as the previous survey, November.

This survey will allow us to see the speed, size, numbers and direction of vehicles for each hour of the day for a 7 day period on the following roads: Plough Lane, Pepper Street, Village Road, Rowton Bridge Road and Birth Heath Lane.

It is anticipated that that the survey will show that the speed of traffic will not have been reduced to meet the new limit and will therefore justify the installation of speed cushions on these roads spaced 75 – 100m apart. The cost of installation of these cushions is currently £1,200 per pair and would be funded through the precept.

Installation of speed cushions would need to be put to a referendum and if approved would probably be installed late in the 18/19 financial year.

1.1 Speed Cushions

‘Speed cushions’ differ from ‘speed bumps’. Surveys have shown that vehicles have to slow to a crawl to negotiate ‘speed bumps’ and this can cause additional pollution. The Parish Council is considering ‘speed cushions’ which don’t require vehicles to slow right down as they can be safely negotiated within the 20 mph speed limit. This will not create additional pollution.

1.2 Speed Indication Devices (SIDs)

Under current CWAC policy, permanent signs which indicate the approaching vehicles speed are not allowed, only speed limit signs which illuminate when the vehicle exceeds the speed limit. These are currently deployed on the A41.

The police currently deploy mobile SIDs in places where CWAC has approved their deployment. These have proved effective in reducing vehicle speeds and it is possible for the Parish Council to purchase and operate their own SID as Littleton PC has recently done.

The Parish Council is currently looking into this as part of a Villages Ward Speed Group (VWSG) to share the limited resources across all the villages.

1.3 Speed Cameras

The Parish Council looked into the installation of speed cameras in great detail as part of addressing issues on the A41. Unless there are 3 or more serious accidents or fatalities in a 3 year period on a particular stretch of road, cameras will not be considered. They also cost about £100,000 to install and another £10,000 a year to manage. None of the fines revenue is returned to the Parish Council. Therefore, this is not a financially viable option either.

The VWSG has already identified Plough Lane, Village Road and Birch Heath Lane to the Police as roads upon which speed enforcement is required. This could be carried out using SIDs and potentially mobile speed cameras. Police resource is a key factor in carrying out this activity.

2. Parking

Many of the problems the village faces are the result of a severe lack of parking. Currently vehicles are parked on the road by residents and people who come to work in the village centre. The following pictures were taken at 9.30 am on Wednesday 23rd August.



Many of these vehicles are parked in places where they restrict traffic flow through the village, i.e. far too close to junctions or in places where they restrict site lines. When traffic volumes increase at school drop off and pick up times this then causes severe congestion.

This is further exaggerated on a Thursday afternoon when the 'Bridge Club' meets and cars are parked all of the way along Village Road.

Parking is available at the 'toast rack' on Village Road. The following photograph was taken at the same time as the others and shows only 4 spaces vacant.



The Parish Council has also considered installing another 'Toast Rack' by utilising the grass verge area outside the primary school. However, this could be quite expensive if services need to be moved.

The Ring o' Bells has allowed some people to use its car park but this is limited and as a very popular venue its spaces should be available to its patrons.

The High School's car parking spaces are used during the day by the school and outside of these hours the vast majority are assigned to Brio for its customers. This causes further parking problems when the school holds open days and parents' evenings. These problems occur all the way along Plough Lane, Village Road and into Woodfields and Quarry Lane.

At the request of the Parish Council, the High School has looked at the cost to install a second entrance off Birch Heath Lane so that traffic could be diverted from coming through the centre of the Village. This was £385,000 and funding is not currently available.

The Sports Club, located behind the Pit, can also generate car parking problems when they hold events. The Parish Council has allowed cars to be parked on the King George V playing field when the Sports Club car park is full and the playground car park is also at capacity. Drivers are then parking on Little Heath which causes problems for residents trying to access their properties.

2.1 Double Yellow Lines

CWAC has proposed that double yellow lines are installed on Village Road to prohibit parking through the 'S' bend sections where parked cars are resulting in vehicles mounting

the kerb in order to pass one another. This creates a safety issue with many 'near misses' having been reported. Therefore, something has to be done to solve this safety issue.

The concern that CWAC and the Parish Council have with double yellow lines is that they have to be enforced in order to be effective and CWAC do not have the resources available to carry out enforcement on a regular basis.

Disabled badge holders are also able to park for up to 3 hours on double yellow lines as long as they are not causing an obstruction.

If drivers did obey the parking restrictions this would mean that they would simply park in other areas. These would probably include Pepper Street, Woodfields, further along Village Road and Birth Heath Lane, which is already congested.

It is the view of the Parish Council that double yellow lines would not prove to be effective and simply cause issues in other areas and that village businesses would be adversely affected by parking restrictions on Village Road.

If yellow line were effective then the route through the village would become a more attractive 'rat-run' in both directions.

3. Pedestrian Safety

In addition to the above problem on Village Road, pedestrians are required to walk in the road from the cross roads at Village Road / Quarry Lane / Plough Lane / Rowton Bridge along to Badgers Close.

The road is very narrow at this point and the installation of a pavement would require the loss of one carriageway.

There is a similar issue with pedestrian safety on Faulkners Lane. This road is only just wide enough for 2 cars to pass and the installation of a pavement would require the loss of one carriageway.

Village Road would benefit from a crossing point, particularly for use at peak school times when pedestrian and vehicle numbers are very high.

4. Rat Running

The installation of the 'hamburger' roundabout on the A41 and the more recent hole in the A41 has led to a noticeable increase in the number of vehicles using Christleton village to try to bypass the congestion.

One option which has been suggested would be to make the junction of the A41 with Rowton Bridge one way with traffic only able to leave the Village. This would mean that

traffic wishing to access Christleton from the Rowton area would need to use Pepper Street or come through Waverton.

Traffic coming from the south to get to the A51 would probably use Egg Bridge Lane and then Rake Lane. If then wishing to access Christleton Village centre, Plough Lane or Birch Heath Lane would be used.

5. One Way System

The one way system currently being considered would enable designated parking areas to be created on Village Road and Quarry Lane by utilising one of the carriage ways. Parking restrictions such as double yellow lines could then be installed in key areas in the centre of the village to prevent inconsiderate parking in areas which would otherwise create obstructions or nuisance to residents.

Speed cushions would need to be installed on one way carriageways to enforce the 20 mph limit. A full width raised area could be used to create a crossing area on Village Road and Quarry Lane if there was a proven need for it on the latter.

Making Faulkners Lane one way would potentially allow the installation of a footpath and still be wide enough for buses. The bus company has confirmed that Faulkners Lane is wide enough to take buses as long as the trees are pruned back.

The volume of traffic currently using Faulkners Lane / Quarry Lane in both directions will need to be surveyed and modelled to ascertain the likely impact of the overall one way system proposal on traffic volumes passed the primary school at the key drop off and pick up times. The impact of providing dedicated parking spaces and a bus stop will also need to be considered in the overall safety evaluation.

The installation of a new pavement on Rowton Bridge Road between the cross roads and Badgers Close would require this section to be one way with traffic only able to pass out of the village.

Concerns have been raised about sending all incoming traffic from the A41 over Rowton Bridge along Sandrock Road. This issue could be solved by making Rowton Bridge one way only with traffic only able to leave the village. The section of Rowton Bridge Road between Badgers Close and the Bridge would remain 2 way. This could result in an increase in vehicle numbers from Rowton Bridge Road, Badgers Close and Skips Lane residents using Sandrock Road to access the centre of the Village. If this were to prove problematic, Sandrock Road could be made one way from Rowton Bridge Road with speed cushions deployed. This would also stop traffic using Quarry Lane taking a 'short cut' along Sandrock Road to leave the village.

In conclusion, Christleton's traffic problems go back further than anyone can remember and are an ongoing problem for the Parish Council to find a remedy.

The Parish Council has two vacancies if any residents would like to take an active role in trying to solve this problem and other issues around Christleton. Detail on how to apply can be obtained from the Clerk.