

Agenda item no.11	
Report to:	Burwash Parish Council
Subject:	Traffic Strategy report
Meeting date:	10 th July 2018
From:	Councillors Natalie Crabtree & Betty McBride

1. Summary

The residents of Burwash Parish are increasingly calling on their Parish Council to address the danger they experience every day from the traffic on the A265 running through the three villages of Burwash, Burwash Weald and Burwash Common.

The Authority with primary responsibility for the A265 is East Sussex County Council (ESCC). Over the years it has been reluctant to engage with residents concerned about safety, speed and road conditions.

Accepting that the Parish Council itself has few powers¹ here, the Council nonetheless committed in May 2018 to devise a traffic strategy as a way to bring about the changes demanded by residents.

At the same time, the Council wrote to the Leader of ESCC setting out a series of actions urgently needed to reduce speed and improve safety. The letter sought an urgent meeting and supported a local residents' group in presenting a 600-strong petition calling for action.

ESCC's Lead Member for Communities and Safety will be considering a report about the petition at a meeting on 26 July. Councillor Crabtree will have an opportunity to address that meeting, which will also be attended by Councillor McBride. The report itself will be made available to Burwash Parish Council on 18 July.

In addition, ESCC Leader, Councillor Keith Glazier, in his response to the BPC letter, has prompted Burwash Parish Council to consider a community led project to deliver improvements in the village. Said project would be informed by an ESCC feasibility study.

Previous responses from ESCC to Burwash Parish Council and residents have not been helpful. The latest suggestion of a feasibility study notwithstanding, this paper recommends the Council should not lose momentum and should act to identify measures that the Parish Council can **DO NOW** (or plan to do) to ameliorate the situation.

2. Making Choices

The options given below have been informed by residents who attended an EGM in May 2018 which considered safety on the pinch-point of the A265 in Burwash Village, and the community surveys and consultations that have taken place in formulating the Neighbourhood Plan.

¹ <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/publications/801-good-councillors-guide/file>

This paper does not consider car parking – which is a contentious issue on Burwash Village High Street. Put simply – where ESCC views a parked car at the pinch-point as a traffic calming option, residents witness it as a prompt to encourage vehicles, including HGVs, to mount the pavement, directly outside front doors.

The focus of this Paper is solely on reducing the speed of traffic for the safety of residents and pedestrians. It is about what Burwash Parish can do for itself. It will inform the feasibility study, and give the clerk permission to act within agreed boundaries and budget constraints to investigate options, and explore funding opportunities.

Councillor Crabtree and Councillor McBride will continue to work in partnership with residents and Neighbourhood Plan volunteers to ensure that Council and community efforts are closely coordinated.

3. Aim

Burwash Parish Council will do all it can to reduce the speed of traffic on the A265 so that residents can safely walk out of their homes and use the pavements without fear. We will confront the issue directly by adopting a policy to pursue reductions in speed limits at every opportunity.

4. Speed

“A safe speed on roads with possible conflicts between cars and pedestrians, cyclists or other vulnerable road users is 30km (20 miles) an hour.” The World Health Organisation.

Residents at the pinch-point of the High Street, backed up by the 600-strong petition, recently highlighted their fears to an ITV news reporter. An older woman spoke of “clutching the window sill” outside her home. A young mother described crossing, then re-crossing the road to avoid using the pavement at the pinch-point. We need to protect residents from cars and vans and lorries that regularly mount the pavement by slowing the traffic down.

This paper recommends that we pursue a 20mph limit for High Street, Burwash and consult (and then champion) Burwash Common and Burwash Weald residents’ views on appropriate speed limits for the A265 in their areas.

Partnering with residents’ groups, we will get advice from the ‘20’s Plenty’ campaign to achieve our aim.

5. Speedwatch

The Community Speedwatch programme in Burwash is currently logging speeding motorists on the A265.

The programme started in July 2016. Since then volunteers have recorded 1425 speeding vehicles, with the fastest going at 65mph in a 40mph zone and another traveling at 63mph in a 30mph zone. Volunteers, who work within a national system, regularly log multiple offenders (speeders recorded many times). After the third offence, drivers receive a visit from the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

Organiser Councillor Natalie Crabtree reports that the number of vehicles speeding has dramatically reduced since starting the campaign. “Throughout July – December 2016 we were averaging 15-20

vehicles each 30 minute session. We are currently averaging three-to-five vehicles. We have also had a rise in volunteers and currently have 9 active volunteers.

“We have seen that Community Speedwatch does make a difference. Working alongside the Community Policing Team we are helping to keep residents safe.”

It is proposed that we expand the programme, by adding an additional speedgun, enabling us to cover both ends of the village - Burwash Common to Burwash Village – more effectively. An extensive recruitment campaign will be initiated **before** the purchase is made and training completed to ensure that the speed gun will be used to full capacity.

In addition, we will use a ‘slow down’ flashing tripod speed sign alongside our speedguns

The proposal is to:

- Purchase a second speedgun for Burwash Weald/Common (£295.00)
- Purchase five CSW lamp post boards (30/40mph @ £7.50 each. Total cost: £37.50)
- Borrow an Automated ‘slow down’ flashing sign for use around the Parish
- Launch a volunteer recruitment campaign.

6. Bollards

Time after time, residents on the pinch-point have called for bollards to protect them from vehicles that mount the pavement outside their homes. Repeated letters from ESCC, including the latest from Councillor Glazier, reject the use of bollards. They claim they would preclude people with pushchairs or wheelchairs from using the pavement. It’s a Catch-22-style communication – for in truth no mother with a child or wheelchair user would use that pavement now, but residents leaving their own homes are totally vulnerable. Bollards and a safe crossing to the North side of the road would keep young, old and those with disabilities safe.

This paper recommends putting 15 bollards along the south side of the High Street (the pinch-point) from Novar to the boundary of Longstaffes. The cost varies – from £1,125 for sprung boundary-style posts; £1,650 for blade bolt-down hazard markers to £2,000 for the more traditional heavyweight bollards.

7. Crossings

Crossing the A265 in Burwash Village to attend church, go to school or join an activity in the Village Hall can be perilous. The school ‘lollipop’ patrollers have nightmare tales of people actually speeding up as they shepherd children across the road.

Pedestrian behaviour at the pinch-point is another concern. Parents and carers from Highfields, walking their children to school, elect to cross and the re-cross the road to avoid the pavement, which is regularly mounted by lorries. Children and young people catching the bus do the same.

We need pedestrian crossing points at both ends of Burwash Village - near School Hill (for the school and St Bartholomew’s) and at the western end of the village, for the Village Hall and Christ the King Church car park - and to support people from Highfields crossing the road to avoid the South Side pavement.

8. Village Gateways



Gateways carrying a village name or other signage introduce drivers to a community, help to create 'a sense of place' and are designed to encourage drivers to respect speed limits.

Synthetic, bought-in, maintenance-free white Gateways cost between £487 and £645, with accompanying signs between £50 and £100 each. The overall cost for 16 Gateways would be between £8,000 and £11,250 depending on the design chosen. It would cost much less to use a local contractor to make and paint the 'Gateways'. These, however, would require maintenance and re-painting every year

We recommend seeking the necessary permissions for Gateways at the four main Burwash Village entry points – East, West, Shrub Lane and School Hill – and the entry points to Burwash Common and Weald – East, West, Stonegate Road and Willingford Lane. Once permission is obtained, we will work with residents to identify funding opportunities, and ways to add welcoming flower troughs and signage.

9. Signage and road markings



There are a wealth of signs and road markings that could be utilised to signal an impending change in road conditions. Neighbourhood Plan volunteers and residents groups are currently designing signs to support and promote the safety of residents, pedestrians, drivers and property in Burwash.

The signs will warn people of approaching pinch-points, advise on traffic priorities and call on drivers to slow down.

There is also a proposal to involve Burwash children in designing signs.

10. Culture – and conclusion

At an individual level, as the Community Speedwatch volunteers will attest – many of the speeding vehicles picked up by their equipment are driven by Burwash, Etchingam and Heathfield residents. We all have a responsibility to heighten our awareness, watch our speed and respect the rights of our friends and neighbours to walk on the pavements and cross the road in safety.

At a community level, the only way we will succeed in making a real difference to traffic speed and perceptions of safety in the three villages will be by the residents and the Parish Council working TOGETHER to make changes.

11. Council is asked to RESOLVE

11.1 To commission a feasibility study on measures to reduce speeds and improve resident and pedestrian safety on Burwash High Street. Cost: £500

11.2 To make it Burwash Parish Council's aim to achieve a 20mph limit for Burwash Village, working with residents on a coordinated '20-is-plenty' approach.

11.3 To consult with residents on preferred speed limits in Burwash Common and Burwash Weald

11.4 Expenditure of up to £350 to purchase a second Speedwatch device, lamppost signs and automated flashing signage. There is money already set aside for this so it would not be an additional expenditure.

11.5 Seek permission to erect and then explore funding options for:

- a) 15 bollards along the south side of the High Street (the pinch-point) from Novar to the boundary of Longstaffes. (Cost £1,125 to a maximum of £2,000)
- b) Pedestrian crossing points at both ends of Burwash Village - near School Hill (for the school and church) and at the western end of the village, for the Village Hall and Catholic Church car park and to support people from Highfields crossing the road to avoid the South Side pavement
- c) 16 Village 'Gateways' on each of the four main entry points into Burwash Village and Burwash Common/Burwash Weald. (Cost between £8,000 and £11,250, depending on design. The initial cost would be cut substantially if we used a local contractor.)
- d) Appropriate signs and road markings, as identified by residents and the feasibility study and following discussion with road safety experts.

Councillors Natalie Crabtree and Betty McBride, 4 July 2018

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