

## **Extract from Ardingly Village Plan 2010**

### **7.3 Traffic /road safety /parking**

Road safety/ traffic speed was the issue that generated most comment in the household questionnaire as had been the case in the 2003 Plan. Eighty one percent of responses said there are major danger spots in the village and this issue was overwhelmingly the largest response to the question: "*Please list the three issues that you think are most important*"

The responses to the household questionnaire on Traffic and Road Safety are shown in Tables 6 and 7 of the Appendix. They include the amalgamated comments on traffic issues drawing on both the Traffic & Road Safety section of the questionnaire as well as the concluding comments. This was done as there were linked issues in each section and so a view across the questionnaire was appropriate. A number of responses to the questions on personal safety also identified traffic as the greatest danger.

It is clear from the consultations that there is widespread alarm about road safety issues and traffic speeds. The need to shift the balance in favour of pedestrians and away from through traffic has become a critical issue. There was general agreement that traffic was travelling too fast through the village and a wide range of methods for dealing with this were suggested. A desire for more parking was expressed and also that currently there is a good deal of inconsiderate parking obstructing roads and pavements. The connection was not made between alternative transport solutions and a reduction in car ownership thus relieving parking pressure, but this is complex and the questionnaire was not tailored to explore this matter.

#### **Traffic flow**

Responses to the household questionnaire show a great degree of concern that traffic is travelling too fast throughout the village, focusing on the most communal areas where people walk, although this should not suggest that speed does not pose a danger in other areas. The sphere of concern runs outside the village onto Selsfield Road to Wakehurst, Lindfield Road to Burstow Hill and Street Lane on to the reservoir.

One junction that does stand out as not being part of the main thoroughfare and is seen as particularly tricky is the exit from The Close onto College Road. This requires more specific investigation.

#### **17Parking**

There is some desire for increased parking in the centre of the village. This is split between the need for residents' parking, free parking and yellow lines on the High Street. This is complex as the parked vehicles act as natural traffic calming, but they also reduce visibility and make pedestrian crossing more dangerous. A similar situation is found on College Road where the parked cars do also act as natural traffic calming, whilst some people view them as obstructions that cause traffic jams.

A principal focus is at Holmans where there is a significant conflict of usage with residents using it throughout the day for private parking whilst at drop off and pick up times parents wish access to the school and many use cars to achieve this.

## **Aims**

### **Improve safety through traffic calming initiatives.**

The impact of this issue is intrinsic to the nature of our village. Fast traffic and obstructed pavements reduce the willingness of people to walk along the streets, damaging the community spirit that is developed through everyday meetings, something that is highly valued by a good proportion of our respondents.

Attempts have been made in the past to try to find ways to reduce the impact of fast and heavy traffic on the village. The 2003 Parish Action Plan identified the issue of traffic/highway matters as the most important topic for residents. That document stated:

*“Traffic matters to Ardingly residents and is the cause of greatest concern. The main problem is excessive traffic speed particularly on College Road and the High Street. As a result there were many requests for traffic calming measures and several for pedestrian lights and a zebra crossing to help those trying to cross the High Street.”*

The Mid Sussex Local Plan, adopted in 2004, highlights the adverse effect of the volume, nature and speed of through traffic on the village. It comments on the need for controls on heavy goods vehicles, junction improvements and pedestrian crossings.

Given the strength of feeling of residents, the long standing nature of these issues, and the previous work that has gone in to seeking to resolve them, it is clear that a fresh approach and independent expert advice is now required. The success and speed of delivery of a solution will depend upon the extent of community involvement. The scope of the traffic review will start with the conclusions of this Plan and draw on past experiences and those of other parishes, with a view to developing a more detailed project scope including costs, timescales, deliverables and uncertainties.

To underpin this work it is imperative that the findings are regularly and frequently communicated to the village through the most effective channels, both to encourage engagement with the Parish Council, and to ensure the involvement of the community.

### **Improve pedestrian safety: accessible pavements**

Obstructed pavements, primarily by parking but also by domestic waste bins, were the third highest concern in this section. This issue should be raised with the local PCSO and the importance of keeping the pavements clear should be effectively communicated.

In order to keep pavements in good condition residents should be encouraged to report hazards (damaged pavements or utility covers) so that the responsible party can be contacted and make appropriate amends.

### **Improve parking provision**

This issue has two strands. Firstly to review current parking facilities and to identify whether there is potential for further development. Any development, however, has to be held in balance with the character of the village and the value of the green areas that exist within it.

Secondly parking needs to be reviewed in and around Holmans to establish whether there might be alternative parking provision for school users and also to look at the pattern of journeys to the primary school. Preliminary meetings between the school and West Sussex County Council have occurred as part of an initial review

## **7.8 Priority issues**

The household questionnaire ended with the statement “Finally, please list the three issues that you think are most important”. The issues mentioned most often were in the following order:

- Traffic and road safety
- Anti-social behaviour/ youth engagement/ policing
- Support for local retailers

### **Traffic and road safety**

This comprises a number of linked factors. Primarily the general concern is that traffic passes through our village too fast making it dangerous to cross or walk along roads. There is also a broader conclusion to be drawn which is that it deters people from walking and building community through daily contact with neighbours. In addition to this there are associated issues of lack of and inappropriate parking. As discussed previously, parking on roads can act as natural traffic calming, but due to the risk of damage to the parked vehicles is naturally a concern for those who have to park on the street. Inappropriate parking again limits people’s ability to walk around the village as it frequently forces them to walk into the passing traffic.

Other more distantly linked concerns include improved public transport which is no small concern in its own right. If this were to be improved to a sufficient level it could impact on people’s car ownership, although we are starting from a very low base and sufficient improvement is unlikely in the foreseeable future. Encouraging car sharing may provide some relief if it becomes a part of the village culture.