

# ARDINGLY TRAFFIC APPRAISAL

## Initial Open Meeting held 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 2012 at Hapstead Hall, Ardingly

Present: Colin Davis, lead consultant  
Ben Hamilton-Baillie, consultant  
Audience of approx 140

Don Walker welcomed everyone and explained that the issue of traffic speed and pedestrian safety has been identified as the key concern of residents over the last decade.

Colin Davis introduced the project which had been the subject of competitive tenders. The purpose of this meeting was to explain their approach to village traffic calming and to hear about problems and opportunities with regard to traffic issues.

The timetable is to introduce draft ideas in the New Year, with a draft report published in the spring. West Sussex CC is a key partner in view of their responsibility for the road network.

### Local representatives

Cali Sparks outlined the role of WSCC in working with the parish council and consultants. They will assess deliverability of proposals. There are a number of different ways of commissioning work, and they will be happy to look at any proposals.

Adrian Todd, resident of High Street, explained that junction in centre of village is particularly tricky. 7.45 to 8.30am is the busiest time, and large trucks and tractors cause disturbance.

Foreign trucks try to follow their satnav around his property.

Glynn Wilson, resident of College Road and chair of governors of primary school, considered northbound vehicle speeds had reduced since extension of 30mph zone past College. Having been held up in High Street, southbound traffic speeds up as it goes down College Road. Many parents and children are anxious to walk along narrow pavements.

Simon Lee, National Trust, owners of Wakehurst. He hopes they are a good neighbour but is conscious that Wakehurst generates a lot of traffic. The NT has contributed to the funding of this project as well as other studies such as at Slindon.

He urged the study to think as broadly as possible and concluded: 'Do think about the sort of village you want to live in.'

### Presentation by Ben Hamilton-Baillie

He commenced his presentation by outlining a few background principles and examples from elsewhere that may be relevant to this debate. Ardingly has enormous character that is worth protecting but is under threat from the traffic that divides it. Traffic is seen as a major issue for many rural communities.

Seven Dials, Covent Garden- drivers negotiate it very carefully as the streets serve a multitude of purposes- where people meet, movement, transport, exchange, interaction, trade, encounters.

Traffic in Towns published 1963 by Colin Buchanan proposed the segregation of civic life from traffic. Things are now starting to change and for the first time policy recognises the place function of streets as well as movement.

There is a mismatch between the characteristics of place and highway solutions. Chicanes often add to aggressive behaviour by drivers.

Hans Monderman stated: "If you want to create safe roads, never treat drivers like idiots."

Evidence has shown that the less regulated the environment, the more carefully people behave. There is increasing recognition that there is greater scope in trying to recognise normal protocols. Lots of activity will influence driver response.

The highway: regulated, impersonal, linear, single purpose, consistent, predictable, systematic, state controlled, many signs and markings.

The public realm: culturally defined, personal, spatial, multi purpose, constantly changing, unpredictable, contextual, cultural/social rules, eye contact.

The street can be seen as a sequence of spaces rather than continuous highway.

Highway engineering needs to reflect 'place'. The transition points between countryside and village is difficult. Need to identify whether this is part of village or countryside. A number of county councils have started to experiment with removal of white lines in villages, eg A32 in Hampshire. In West Meon speeds have been reduced by 3 to 4 mph.

The lineality of streets can be changed by simple devices such as visual narrowing. In Ardingly there are lots of opportunities to create stronger links between street and place.

Place making- need to consider how to break down the street into a series of places, eg from Bath. Another example of a village in Cheshire sliced in half by busy traffic. Traffic signals have been removed and road narrowed. Junction now works more efficiently. Clear definition of parking spaces and keep visual road as narrow as possible. Try to change emphasis away from the highway. The presentation aimed to explain a series of points and the potential for change.

'Ultimately it is your decision about what sort of place you want Ardingly to be.'

### Questions

David Hadden: Is it easier to work with Dorset CC rather than a series of individual villages?

BHB: Things are changing fast due to localism and fiscal changes. The Dorset Toolkit tries to pass decisions to parish councils so that we can have a more informed debate about what is possible. If the village can reach a consensus on what you want, then WSCC will support you. Cali Sparks agreed that there has been a huge change in approach, they are trying to encourage local people to find solutions and define place. WSCC still has a duty of care in respect of proposals affecting the highway.

Colin Davis suggested we can make contact with parish councils in Surrey and East Sussex.

Question: What is the problem? What is the purpose of this?

BHB: It seems to be difficult for events to happen in the village due to traffic. Need to be bold in redressing the current balance in favour of vehicles.

Steven Doer: Mentioned narrow road at Avins Bridge.

BHB: agreed that we have difficult decisions to make. One of the most interesting aspects is the transition points between village and countryside.

Dionne Flatman: would like to see 20mph speed limit in High Street.

BHB: suggested we need to decide what speed we would like traffic to move through the village. Drivers will drive at the speed the road is designed for.

Simon .... :We can't solve these problems. There are already 30mph zones, we need the Police to enforce them.

### Conclusion

Colin Davis asked if the meeting supported the approach that Ben had outlined, and there was an overwhelming show of hands to indicate that they did. When asked, no one indicated that they opposed the approach.

Will Meldrum, Chair of Ardingly PC, thanked everyone for attending and the consultants for their contributions and presentations.