

## **TRAFFIC CALMING KINGSTON, LEWES**

Where we are and where we want to be.

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to:

- List the objectives to be achieved by Phase 2 Traffic Calming measures.
- Summarise existing Phase 1 traffic calming measures.
- List those parts of Ashcombe Lane/ Wellgreen Lane (C324) identified by KPC as likely to benefit from further traffic calming measures.
- Summarise the findings of the feasibility study into potential traffic calming measures for the Ridge/ Ashcombe Lane junction and the study being carried out in the vicinity of The Avenue/Ashcombe Lane junction.
- Propose the use of camera technology as a means of controlling average speeds and traffic volumes.
- Propose setting up a Traffic Steering Group to promote and drive Phase 2 of traffic calming for the village.

### **Objectives**

Around 10,000 vehicles per day use the C7, of which between 4000 and 5000 vehicles per day pass through Kingston using the C324, i.e. the Wellgreen Lane-Ashcombe Lane route. The majority of the vehicles pass through the village at the morning and evening peak times – around 8am and 9am in the morning and 4pm and 6pm in the evening. More than 15 percent of the traffic exceeds the 30mph speed limit.

The objectives of Phase 2 Traffic Calming is therefore to :

- 1: Reduce the volume and
- 2: Reduce the speed of traffic passing through the village.
- 3: Create a safer and healthier environment for residents, pedestrians and cyclists, encourage more active travel and make Kingston a better place to live.

### **Phase 1 Traffic Calming Measures - what has been done and those areas where more needs to be done.**

Concern about both the volume and speed of vehicles passing through the village is not new and this lead to the installation, around 10 years ago, of the present traffic calming measures, referred to in this paper as Phase 1. Those measures, which comprise a combination of speed bumps, chicanes, speed tables and a mixture of 20mph and 30mph zones, are centred on the school on Wellgreen Lane. In the absence of funding from ESCC, Phase 1 was funded by KPC using a loan from the Public Works Loan Board.

Whilst Phase 1 has been effective in controlling speeds over the length of its installation, significant problems with the volume and speed of vehicles remain both within this zone and throughout the rest of the village. The following locations have been identified as likely to benefit from further traffic calming measures (Details and discussion of the items are appended to this report):

1. The transition from the A27
2. Access from Ashcombe Hollow footpath across the C324 to the bus stops on the A27.
3. Oversize/overweight vehicles
4. Erosion of the sides of the C324 along Ashcombe Hollow
5. Dangerous junction C324 with Kingston Ridge and Juggs Way
6. The carriageway between Kingston Ridge and The Avenue
7. The junction of Ashcombe Lane with The Avenue
8. The junction Wellgreen Lane and the Street
9. Junction C324, Wellgreen Lane with the C7

## **Feasibility Studies**

ESCC operate a community match funding scheme for road safety improvements that, in the first instance require a feasibility study to be undertaken. The funding is aimed at specific projects, rather than village-wide schemes. Two feasibility studies have been commissioned from East Sussex highways (ESH). The first, as summarised below, relates to Item 5, above. The second, which is still in progress, concerns improving the safety of the section of road extending from the western end of the existing 20mph zone, along Ashcombe Lane to beyond the junction with The Avenue.

### **Feasibility Study into Traffic Calming Measures at Kingston Ridge (see report [ABSL-1215] Feasibility Appraisal C324 Ashcombe Lane, Kingston, Lewes)**

There are a number of features obtaining at the junction between Kingston Ridge and Ashcombe lane that would make any form of physical intervention, such as realignment or regrading, both very difficult and prohibitively expensive (in excess of several hundred thousand pounds) for KPC to undertake. The features referred to above include offset alignment of Ashcombe lane and Ashcombe Hollow from one side of the Ridge to the other, high retaining walls on either side of the junction, narrow approach roads and poor sight lines. In light of the physical restrictions identified the feasibility study proposed the following measures for consideration:

- Enhancement, by means of the introduction of red coloured surfacing, of the existing 30 roundel markings;
- New or re-located 30 roundel markings, together with the introduction of red coloured surfacing;
- Re-establishment of both sets of badly worn yellow 'rumble strips';
- The laying of new yellow 'rumble strips' north of the junction;
- Enhancement and re-location of the Kingston village name board to form a village gateway feature. It should be noted that the standard white fence village gateway features and similar gateway features would not be funded by the Community Match initiative. If the Parish wish to consider the installation of this type of gateway feature this would have to be by separate agreement between the Parish and ESCC.
- The introduction of edge-of-carriageway road markings from the commencement of the existing 30mph speed limit at the northern end of Ashcombe Lane to Juggs Corner Cottage;
- The introduction of give-way markings at the Kingston Ridge / Juggs Way junction laid so as to visually narrow Ashcombe Lane and provide awareness of the presence of the two side roads, together with the introduction of red coloured surfacing;
- Re-location of the pedestrian warning sign on the northbound approach;
- The installation of a new pedestrian warning sign on the southbound approach.

## **Proposed Use of Camera Technology as a Means of Achieving our Traffic Calming Objectives**

The feasibility study already received suggests a number of physical measures for consideration as possible means of achieving traffic calming and, whilst not yet received, it is expected that the second study will suggest similar physical solutions. An alternative to physical signage, road marking, humps and narrowing that could be considered is the use of camera technology, including number-plate recognition (NPR). KPC asked ESH for this approach to be considered as part of the second feasibility study but the following, very negative response was received:

*Thank you for your email. I thought it best to respond to the points that you raise separately rather than cover these in the feasibility report on the extended 20mph speed limit through Kingston*

*Average Speed Cameras are an enforcement tool and are managed on behalf of Sussex Police (the enforcement authority) by the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP). The criteria for enforcement by cameras follows the guidance issued by the DfT. This requires that they are only used to address a crash problem that relates to excessive speed where other engineering measures have either been tried or are impractical. The SSRP's basic criteria for an average speed camera to be considered are that the length of road must be over 1 km, have a collision points score of 65 per km (where a fatality scores 15 points, a serious 10 and a slight 5) and that speed surveys indicate at least 15% of vehicles are proceeding at speeds equal to, or above the NPCC (National Police Chiefs Council) enforcement threshold for the posted speed limit (above 35 mph for a 30mph speed limit).*

*The latest crash data for the 1.5km length of 30mph speed limit through Kingston indicates that there has been 1 slight PIC recorded in the past three years. This equates to 3.3 points per km, nowhere near the 65 that would be required before we undertake any further investigation.*

*Charging a Toll – A public highway, by definition, is a way over which the public have the right of passage at all times "without let or hindrance" and it is the Highway Authority's duty to 'assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are the highway authority, including any roadside waste which forms part of it'. The 'Let' part of the public right refers to a charge and a 'hinderance' covers the obstruction. In short, ESCC would not support the introduction of a toll through Kingston.*

*I hope the above explains ESCC's position on the introduction of average speed cameras and tolls through Kingston.*

The response was very disappointing and a number of arguments can be made against these assertions, such as the following received from a Kingston resident:

*He may be correct in his quotation from the DfT guidance on cameras, but it does not account for the use of average speed cameras on many major roads during roadworks for the purpose of "protecting the safety of highway workers" (as is often quoted in signage).*

*Our desire to see them utilised in Kingston relates to "public safety" and "improved air quality" more than accident prevention. The volume and speed of traffic passing through Kingston presents a safety risk which leads to many people (especially parents during the school run) using a car rather than active travel (walking, cycling, wheeling). If speeds were reduced more*

*people would feel able to walk etc. which would be better for their health (and the public purse) and contribute to reduced carbon emissions.*

*ESCC has policies that relate to these issues and it is what they should consider too, rather than strict adherence to “DfT guidance” – the clue is in the name; it is guidance to be applied with intelligence – it is not a requirement.*

*As for the justification for not applying a “toll” – again, the examples are selective. A speed limit, road narrowing and speed bumps are all examples of “hindrance”. The width restriction at Ashcombe Hollow, with oversize traffic directed to utilise an alternative route is a “let” which is applied to facilitate the free flow of traffic along a narrow road. The former are utilised for the purpose of public safety; the latter for highway safety.*

*We are asking for the “toll” to be considered to promote both public and highway safety and for through traffic to be directed along the A26 and other suitable roads with a “toll” to be applied to those drivers who choose not to follow this advice.*

An alternative proposal comprising the use of speed controlled traffic-lights has been suggested by the Village action group (KAG) as a means of controlling traffic speeds. This has not been proposed to ESH, but given the response to the camera controls suggestion, a similar reply could be anticipated.

It appears therefore that ESCC approach to the use of technology as a means of traffic control is similar to their approach to carbon reduction, promoting active travel (walking/cycling), reducing car usage and safer streets i.e. they are not complying with either their own policies or government guidance and are out of step with many parts of the country. Something needs to change and it seems to me that the only way to effect this change is by changing the mind-set of the policy makers.

### **Proposal to Establish a Traffic Steering Group**

At the present time pursuing Traffic Calming is the sole responsibility of myself, as the lead member from the council, with valued support from our retiring Vice Chair Chris Moulder. However, in light of the foregoing, it is clear to me that there is too much work involved for just one or two people.

I propose that a Traffic Steering Group should be established to promote the cause of the Village to our local politicians and policy-makers. Both Chris and I are willing to volunteer for this group and we have already had the offer of help from a village resident. However, assuming the council is in agreement with this proposal, I think it would be beneficial to widen the call for assistance to the village as a whole, and particularly to those residents who may have contacts or expertise in this field.

Councillor John Bewick

Lead for Traffic Calming

1<sup>st</sup> March 2023

## Appendix A: Locations identified by KPC as likely to benefit from further traffic calming measures

**1. The transition from the A27** a major trunk road and through route, to the C324, a rural road. Currently this road has a national speed limit (60mph) extending from the A27 roundabout to the 30mph restriction at the parish boundary on Ashcombe Hollow, just to the north of Kingston Ridge. The road is largely rural in character with nothing to warn motorists they are approaching the village or to encourage them to modify their driving. *How can this be better managed to slow traffic and encourage safer driving?*

**2. Access from Ashcombe Hollow footpath across the C324 to the bus stops on the A27.** Currently there is no safe crossing point. This deters use of public transport. *How do we remedy this?*

**3. Oversize/overweight vehicles** regularly ignore the access restrictions. This occurs in spite of signage on both east and west bound carriageways of the A27 and on the C7. *Can the signage be improved to ensure the restrictions are adhered to? Can a physical width restriction be installed? This contributes to point 4 below.)*

**4. Erosion of the sides of the C324 along Ashcombe Hollow** (i.e. from the railway bridge to the junction with Kingston Ridge) caused by overrunning the carriageway on both sides, threatening the stability of the banks and creating a potential hazard. It is gradually undermining the rural character of this previously narrow lane and is also eroding a natural traffic calming device. *Can kerbstones be installed to deter further erosion and unintended widening of the carriageway?*

**5. Dangerous junction C324 with Kingston Ridge and Juggs Way,** a cross roads on the brow of a hill with curving roads and poor sightlines, shaded by trees. This is a major access to the Southdowns Way and is heavily used both by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. It is dangerous for them as there is no safe crossing point. It is also dangerous for vehicles as sight lines are poor and traffic speeds are high. *Can the junction be redesigned to slow traffic and create a safe crossing point? Would a village gateway buildout at this point help reduce traffic speed and improve safety?*

**6. The carriageway between Kingston Ridge and The Avenue** is wide and curving, which encourages traffic speeds. The pavement is narrow and feels hemmed by a high kerb and the high retaining wall on its eastern side. This deters pedestrians using the footway as it feels very intimidating and dangerous. This deters walking, which in turn impacts on the use of public transport as this is the main route to the bus-stop on the A27 (see point 2, above). *Can the footway be widened and the road narrowed to single lane? Is this road suitable for conventional chicane width restrictions?*

**7. The junction of Ashcombe Lane with The Avenue.** Currently vehicles speed down the hill to this junction. With the proposed development at Castelmer (12 houses) there will be more traffic feeding into this junction. This is a relatively complicated junction with the access to Castelmer offset from the Avenue, together with the presence of household driveways. *Can the junction be redesigned to slow traffic and create a safe crossing point?*

**8. The junction Wellgreen Lane and the Street.** This junction is within the existing traffic calming and is in the Kingston conservation area. The recent Conservation Area Appraisal

(SDNP - out for consultation) identified that there is little to indicate that people are entering a conservation area and suggested that this junction could be improved to create an entry point to the historic village. It is also the crossing point for the village school and the bus turning point. *Can this junction be redesigned to achieve these ends? Would some form of 'Public Realm Enhancement' (e.g. benches, improved landscaping/signage) be suitable for this location?*

**9. Junction C324, Wellgreen Lane with the C7.** This is a busy crossing point for both walkers and riders to and from the village to the new footpath/cycleway on the eastern side of the C7, as well as to the nearby garden centre. There is no safe crossing point on a very busy road. *Can an island/junction be installed to provide a safe crossing point, as well as a pathway to the garden centre?*