



Atworth Traffic Action Group (ATAG)

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Report of a Residents' Meeting Arranged by the Organising Committee of ATAG (Meeting reference 20120222)

A Residents' Meeting arranged by the Organising Committee of ATAG was held at 7:30pm on Wednesday 22nd February 2012, at the Neston Park Farm Shop, Atworth.

The primary purpose was to ascertain and record the opinions of residents regarding the set of traffic issues identified at the Inaugural Meeting held in November 2011.

20120222/1 Present, Apologies and Welcome

For ATAG:

Kenneth Spencer (Chair for the evening), Ruth Griffin, Mavis King (Vice Chair), Lynne Spencer, Pippa McVeigh.

Residents:

Adam H Mr; Bettles E Mrs; Bettles S Mr; Bird W Mr, Braund L Mrs; Canfield G Mr; Charlton A; Clarke WR Mr; Cooke W Mr (Parish Councillor); Diamond A Ms; Dunn J; Floyd R Mr (Parish Councillor); Fuller J Sir; Fuller V Lady; Gardner J Ms; Ginn D; Harvey KE; Hunter B; Lee A Mr; Lee A Mrs; Measday B Mrs; Measday P Mr; O'Sullivan S; Paget S Mr; Robinson S; Sadia S Ms; Seabright D; Seabright N; Sharp C Ms; Tayler S Mr; Turrell D Mr; Tyler P Mr; Vincent H; Webb D Mr.

Apologies

Paul Escott (Chair ATAG), Wally Beall (ATAGOC), Maureen Weston (Parish Councillor), Arnold Snowball (Parish Councillor), Tony Jones, Fred Pooley, Judith Slee.

Welcome

Kenneth Spencer, as Chair for the evening, welcomed all attendees, and thanked the Neston Park Estate, and Lady Fuller in particular, for allowing the group to use the Farm Shop for the meeting, and for the hospitality extended to all.

20120222/2 Introduction: How ATAG Started

Kenneth Spencer showed a letter sent to the Atworth magazine in 1998 from a young girl, Elizabeth aged 7, asking for something to be done about traffic along the A365, Bath Road. He asked: "*How long must Elizabeth wait?*"

Discussions with residents, and attendance at the Police Neighbourhood Tasking Group confirmed his feeling that Atworth needed to form a group to help itself deal with this issue. He thanked Mavis King for taking up the idea with such enthusiasm.

20120222/3 Discussion on the Issues Raised at the Inaugural Meeting

Residents were invited to speak on each issue in turn, after an introduction on each was given by members of the Organising Committee.

[20120222/3 is continued over ...]

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A. SPEED

Ruth Griffin introduced the three issues relating to speed:

A1: A permanent, effective deterrent such as speed activated traffic lights, speed indicators or speed cameras.

Ruth explained that Wiltshire Council spent £m116 on traffic incidents in 2010;

A2. Speed limit reduction in village. 20mph along the school route:

Bath Rd/Bradford Road/Purlpit);

A3. Speed limit reduction on approach to the village. 50mph Wadswick Straight/40mph Keeper's Cottage to Farm Shop.

Comments

SR: Too few police are seen within the village.

If it is known that there is a speed camera, then behaviour alters.

Could the Parish Council, with help from the community buy a speed camera?

KAS: There is a regular presence of Community Speedwatch, but it is intermittent.

BH: "White gates" at village boundaries emphasise the entry into a community.

DW: Originally the speed limit was 40mph, and it was a fight to get 30mph. I do not believe we could get 20mph. Possibly Bradford Road could be 20mph, but only at the start and end times of the school.

Shell Court resident: There must be more than one speed indicator. One is also needed at Purlpit where there have been many near misses.

PT: We need publicity for ATAG to shake up Wiltshire Council. Cars can be parked on each side of the road to slow traffic - one day a week!

WB: I agree with DW. How many accidents are actually attributed to speeding?

HA: Campaign must have a strategy as to what is achievable. I would like to see extensions of the 30mph speed limit at both ends of the village. A focus on 20mph might alienate some residents.

B. IRRESPONSIBLE/UNSAFE DRIVING

Pippa McVeigh introduced the two topics relating to bad driving behaviour, noting in particular the extent of drivers' indulgence in very risky driving practices:

B1: Deter unsafe overtaking at unsafe points by double white lines at the east and west approaches, and at the Clock Tower 'bus stop;

B2: Control speed & careless parking in Bradford Road and Purlpit.

Comments

The Police camera van speed checks previously kept speeds under control.

Bradford Road parking problems with school children at risk from parking and speed. The Church Street exit has difficult visibility.

BH: The Slow signs that were on the road need to be re-painted.

SS: The Farm Shop entrance is extremely dangerous. A large Farm Shop sign is required on the south side. Double white lines would be favoured.

VF: The county planning regulators would not permit double white lines nor the extension of the 30mph speed limit.

HA: I suggest that we contact the Churchfields and Stonar Heads regarding the parking and speed problems in Bradford Road.

DW: People don't take 30mph limits seriously.

SP: Motorcycles are a problem on the national speed limit (60mph) section from Fiveways to the Keeper's Cottage. There is too much noise and risk taking.

Young lads race at night and do not keep to the left. A slower speed limit on this stretch will help reduce speeds in Atworth village.

BH: Let's have a banner across the road, announcing village and the speed limit!

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C. THE PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

Mavis King introduced issues which had been raised regarding the pedestrian crossing.

C1. Too many vehicles do not slow down and stop at the crossing.

Raising the crossing/installing pedestrian controlled lights will help.

The crossing installation was linked to the school travel plan and the 'walking bus', but it is in the wrong place!

Comments

PT: I understand that it is not actually in a legal position because of the narrow pavement, the bend and the entrance to Godwins Close.

There was more general concern expressed about bad behaviour from traffic at the crossing, as elsewhere.

Jessica, aged 15 years, had written in about being terrified to cross because cars do not slow or stop - even when she is in the middle of the crossing!

MK: The lack of safety regarding the crossing means that the recreation ground is not as readily available to children as it should be.

Others: Pedestrian controlled lights are needed on the crossing, as well as a second crossing in the village.

From 156 Bath Road: I do not have difficulty crossing - not a high priority for me.

GC: Outside Shaw School the beacon has a halo, which means it is much more easily seen.

KAS: The crossing could be raised, although this would make HGVs noisier.

PT: I would favour making the traffic slower even if raising the crossing made it a little noisier.

BH: I favour installing sleeping policemen and other calming measures.

D. TRAFFIC VOLUME/QUALITY OF LIFE

Kenneth Spencer introduced discussion on the impact which the volume and mix of traffic have on the quality of life of residents:

D1. Resolution of traffic issues will improve quality of life for residents.

These effects included noise, which reduces the use which residents may make of their gardens; fumes, noxious gasses and particulates which cause respiratory damage; rain spray; and vibration which damage listed buildings in the village. It is unjust that urban communities are now implementing traffic controls whilst rural communities must carry on suffering.

DfT statistics show that in 2010 a daily average flow of 6547 vehicles traverse the village, including 906 Goods and 251 Heavy Goods vehicles - our recent metro-counts have shown rather more traffic flow than this.

Comments

RG: As 15% of these 6547 vehicles exceed 38.5mph, 847 vehicles are travelling near to or above 40mph!

SR: Take a leaf out of Bradford-on-Avon's book - the "*Watch that Truck*" scheme! Apply Tonnage and time control restrictions along the Bath Road.

WB: If we stop the HGVs along the A365, they will simply go somewhere else(!)

[20120222/3 is continued over ...]

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E. PAVEMENTS/FOOTPATHS

Lynne Spencer introduced the items raised by the Inaugural Meeting relating to Footpaths & Pavements:

- E1. Widen pavements to reduce threat by HGVs
- E2. Footpath along Purlpit
- E3. Footpath to Neston Park Farm Shop
- E4. Provide dropped kerbs where missing

Comments

PT: The narrow pavements are not of legal widths, but the council reported that widening them may adversely affect the road width.

PM: In his opinion items C, D and E are closely related to health and safety issues, and that perhaps we could explore legal action on those grounds.

20120222/4 What Happens Next

4.1 Public Meeting

A Public Meeting will be held in May. As well as this meeting being open to all residents, invitations will be issued to our MP, highways and local authority officials and elected representatives, to the police and other officials so that residents can put their issues and complaints about these traffic issues directly.

4.2 Assessment of Resident Opinion and Action Sub-Groups

The Organising Committee will review the results of residents' views as expressed on the Priority sheets, and pull together a number of groups of residents to tackle each of the prioritised issues.

The organising Committee will also review any other suggested issues which emerge from the sheets.

Kenneth Spencer thanked all residents for attending and for participating so fully in the discussion.

He also thanked Sir James & Lady Venetia once again for their kind hospitality.

Finally: the meeting closed at 9:30pm.

A note for readers: At this meeting, all attendees were invited to complete a Priorities Sheet, giving their personal view of which issues residents might consider to be the most important for action and resolution by ATAG. The analysis of these sheets is now complete and is available on this website.

The ATAG Organising Committee is:

Ruth Griffin, Wally Beall, Alan Lee, Paul Escott (Chair), Mavis King (Vice Chair), Lynne Spencer (Secretary) and Kenneth Spencer (Communications)