

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WITHERSDALE STREET TRAFFIC ISSUES STEERING GROUP, HELD AT MENDHAM PRIORY ON WEDNESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2010, COMMENCING AT 7.00PM.**

Present: Mrs S Whatling, Mrs J Williams, K Bowden, A Fox, G Lane (Parish Councillor), C Mosse (Chair, Mendham Parish Council), D Naunton

The Steering Group was set up following a public meeting of concerned villagers on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010 and the subsequent Parish Council meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

**Purpose of the meeting**

To prepare a Proposal to Mendham Parish Council ('PC') on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2010 requesting actions to be taken to address road safety, traffic calming and quality of life problems in Withersdale Street.

**Discussion notes**

1. Following the well-attended public session at the PC meeting on 20 September, it is clear that the majority of villagers want engineering solutions to traffic calming (such as chicanes/priority flow, traffic islands with bollards).
2. Enforcement by Police speed camera actions is too intermittent and needs to be much more frequent to have a lasting effect.
3. Unless the Police have evidence to the contrary, stiff letters from the Safer Neighbourhood Team are not a deterrent to speeding.
4. There are differences of opinion within the village and PC on the problems caused by HGV traffic. The PC believe that most (90%?) is local and farm-related and speeding is not a major issue except at the eastern end of the village. Villagers have evidence of HGVs which clearly are not on local journeys and want steps to be taken to discourage them.
5. It was agreed that C Mosse and one or two villagers should review the Proposal with G McGregor, Suffolk County Councillor, prior to its submission to the PC meeting on 15 November.
6. The scope of the Proposal to the PC is outlined in TABLE 1 below.
7. Actions outside the scope of the Proposal are listed in TABLE 2.
8. The PC will not seek to be involved in certain traffic-related actions, specifically 'Slow Down in Our Village' posters displayed in gardens/on wheelie-bins and complaint letters to companies whose HGVs should not be travelling through the village.

**TABLE 1: Scope of Proposal to Mendham Parish Council**

	<b><i>The Parish Council should request that Suffolk County Council Roads and Transport Department, and Suffolk Constabulary where appropriate, take action on the following items.</i></b>
1.	Lay double white lines (with 'SLOW' on road surface, 'BEND' warning signs and marker posts round the bend) on B1123 east of 30mph limit. <b>Benefit:</b> Slowing of traffic heading westwards into the village, in advance of a private drive and the 30mph limit, both of which are obscured by the bend. Discouragement of dangerous overtaking close to and on the blind bend.

2.	Continue the double white lines referred to in item 1 along the straight stretch of the B1123 within the 30mph speed limit. <b>Benefit:</b> Discourage overtaking by traffic in both directions.
3.	Install engineering features on the straight stretch of the B1123. Chicanes, priority working, build-outs and bollarded pedestrian islands should be considered. <b>Benefit:</b> Such features will encourage drivers to reduce speed in the 30mph area and improve safety for pedestrians.
4.	Add a 'Withersdale Street – Please Drive Carefully' sign to the blank white gate at the 30mph limit. A home-grown option should be considered if no joy with Suffolk CC. <b>Benefit:</b> Draw drivers' attention to the presence of the village ahead and to the immediate commencement of the 30mph limit.
5.	Request Suffolk Constabulary to step up the frequency of visits by the Roads Policing Unit and other officers (using hand-held speed cameras). <b>Benefit:</b> Increased activity and penalties will deter habitual speeders.
6.	Request Suffolk Constabulary to step up the frequency of visits by the Safer Neighbourhood Team (PCSO using Speed Indicating Devices with Speed + 'Smiley' displays). <b>Benefit:</b> Warning letters and offers of education will be issued and a regular presence will encourage drivers to obey the speed limit.
7.	Set up a Community Speed Watch scheme. Request financial assistance from Suffolk County Council for equipment and high visibility clothing costs. A list of volunteers will be provided by the community. <b>Benefit:</b> Warning letters and offers of education can be issued, but a much increased presence (perhaps one or more days weekly) will further encourage drivers to obey the speed limit.
8.	SCC to release to the Parish Council details of the traffic monitoring activity conducted during October 2010. <b>Benefit:</b> Any increases in volumes of general and HGV traffic since 2006 (the last survey) will justify the actions listed in this table.

**TABLE 2: Other Actions**

	<b><i>The following activities can take place in parallel with the Parish Council actions listed in Table 1.</i></b>
1.	Display posters (A4 size) conspicuously on posts, fences and wheelie bins throughout the whole of the village. It is noted that while Norfolk CC actively encourage such action by providing posters through their 'CARS' scheme (Caring about Rural Speed), Suffolk CC have no similar programme. Self-help is therefore required. <b>Benefit:</b> Constant reminders throughout the village that a 30mph speed limit is in place.
2.	Identify HGV movements through the village which are dangerous or appear to be unnecessary and write letters of complaint to the companies concerned, enclosing a copy of Suffolk CC's Lorry Route Network Map. Issue packs of Suffolk CC's HGV Incident Reporting Form to villagers to ensure that transgressions are also reported to the CC for action. <b>Benefit:</b> Discourage HGV operators from sending vehicles along a narrow route which is plainly unsuitable for such traffic.

## ADDENDUM

Subsequent to the meeting, attendees have agreed that two further items should be added to TABLE 1:

9.	<p>Request SCC to install permanent flashing speed indicating devices on the B1123 at appropriate positions. There is an obvious case for one at each end of the straight carriageway at the eastern end of the village. It is less clear where the most effective installation would be at the west end, given that the tight bends reduce traffic speed immediately prior to the 30mph signs.</p> <p><b>Benefit:</b> SIDs provide very clear reminders to transgressors that they are exceeding the speed limit either as they enter the village or when accelerating to overtake while still in the 30mph area.</p>
10.	<p>Request SCC to place 'Speed camera' signs (a simple camera symbol) at all entrances to Withersdale Street – on the B1123 in both directions, Pegg's Hill, Mendham Road and Mill Lane.</p> <p><b>Benefit:</b> These low cost signs indicate that there MAY be a safety camera in operation ahead and so act as a speed reducer. Suffolk CC have installed them in many other locations where fixed cameras don't exist but the mobile policing team are routinely active – which applies perfectly to Withersdale Street.</p>