

Kingsley Parish Council - Article for King's World April edition

Road Safety

Road safety in Kingsley is a high priority for the Parish Council, particularly pedestrian safety. For some time parishioners have raised concerns about the dangers in crossing the B3004/Forge Road in the absence of a pedestrian crossing and the speeds at which vehicles continue to drive through the village despite the 30mph limit.

The PC currently funds a fixed speed limit reminder, which is shared with other villages, but is only available for deployment in Kingsley four times a year for one week at a time. The mobile Smiley SID (Speed Indication Display) equipment, which is operated by teams organised by Miranda Orbell, is also occasionally deployed in an attempt to slow vehicles down but requires volunteers to man it. The PC is very appreciative of the efforts of those who give their time to doing this but they are few in number and **more volunteers are urgently needed** to be able to make regular and effective use of [SID](#).

The PC is currently exploring the possibility of getting safe pedestrian crossings installed in Kingsley. In 2012, the Council attended several consultation meetings with WSP Ltd who were asked by Hampshire County Council (HCC) to gather information on existing traffic speeds and road safety issues in surrounding villages and consider what impacts the Whitehill & Bordon Eco-town development might have on these. At the meetings, the PC expressed both existing and future road safety concerns in Kingsley.

WSP subsequently produced a 'Whitehill & Bordon Eco-town Traffic Management Strategy' for HCC, which aims to address the '*long-term*' traffic management issues on the local highway network that may arise from the Eco-town development. In it, the 'B3004 to Alton Corridor' was identified as one of the key corridors that could potentially be impacted by the Development. The Corridor was assessed against a matrix of traffic management measures that could be implemented and others that were not considered appropriate. From this a proposed Traffic Management Strategy was developed for Kingsley, which includes:

1. Reducing the speed limit on the section of the B3004/Forge Road between Sleaford traffic signals and Kingsley village from 60mph to 50mph, at an estimated cost of £10k.
2. Provision of enhanced village gateways approaching Kingsley, at an estimated cost of £40k.
3. Provision of three informal crossing points and / or central islands (similar to the existing crossing points in Selborne) at an estimated cost of £45k.

The good news is, these are to be paid for out of a £2 million fund East Hampshire District Council has agreed with the Whitehill & Bordon Regeneration Company would be ring fenced to fund the traffic management measures for surrounding villages. The bad news is, they will only be implemented if and when monitoring indicates the Development has generated a need for them, i.e. at any time between January 2017 and 2033.

However, HCC's Traffic Management Strategy also clearly states: *'measures may be introduced in the short-term which help ameliorate the local concerns highlighted in this study. Taking this into account, Town and Parish Councils should continue to discuss their issues and the resolution of these with HCC in the intervening period'*. Furthermore, HCC's Traffic Management Policy & Guidance, published in January 2014, states: *'Potential traffic management issues will be considered if they meet at least one of the following criteria, although priority will be given to locations with a history of accidents:*

- *Improve road safety of all road users - changes that help achieve a reduction in casualties or reduce the potential for injury;*
- *Keep traffic moving;*
- *Address communities' concerns about traffic-related issues - addressing issues that have an adverse impact on the quality of life for local residents.'*

Cllr Karin Clayton therefore recently contacted Graham Wright at HCC Department for Economy, Transport and Environment to enquire into the possibility of getting the aforementioned measures implemented in the near future. Mr Wright informed her that HCC has limited funds due to

cutbacks and there are hundreds of towns and villages across the County who are crying out for traffic and safety measures. Cllr Clayton made Mr Wright aware of the fact that Kingsley:

- meets two of HCC's Traffic Management Policy criteria;
- has experienced 13 serious and 2 fatal recorded vehicle-related accidents in the last 10 years on the Kingsley section of the B3004 to Alton Corridor, not to mention numerous unrecorded near misses;
- is on a strategic lorry route and therefore already experiences large volumes of HGVs and freight vehicle traffic due to the number of nearby quarries, aggregate recycling plants, builders merchants and now the construction of the Eco-town relief road.
- Parishioners already face daily danger crossing the main road.

Furthermore, she reminded Mr Wright that the measures recommended for Kingsley in the Strategy are to come from the £2 million ring-fenced fund not HCC's own budget. Mr Wright replied that his hands were somewhat tied in that release of monies from the Fund is conditional upon future traffic impacts generated by the Eco-town development and that Selborne and Oakhanger are likely to be more affected and would therefore be given priority. Cllr Clayton pointed out that Kingsley's mitigation measures represent a (disproportionately) tiny fraction of the £2 million fund. Kingsley is already suffering and is not prepared to suffer another fatality before measures are implemented.

By the end of the conversation, Mr Wright was somewhat more persuaded than at the start and suggested the Parish Council submit a 'case' to him, which he will pass to one of his team. However, before the PC does this it would like to strengthen Kingsley's case by including as many letters or emails as possible from parishioners (addressed to Cllr David Lowe at councillor.lowe@kingsleyparishcouncil.org) giving details of their experiences/fears in crossing the main road and/or road accidents and incidents they've witnessed in Kingsley. If possible, please include details of location and approximate month or year. Letters will remain anonymous.