

April 2009

I've been trying to get to a council meeting for a year now but my two year old prevents me from attending. I really need to speak to somebody regarding the speed and nature of traffic problem passing through on Markeyate/Church Rd. There doesn't seem to be any plans anywhere to suggest anything is being done about sorting out the speed or volume of traffic? Or the numerous HGV's which block out the sun and rattle my house as they go by! I've lived here now for 7 years and there have been various suggestions and rumours but as yet no action. Oh apart from the airparks play with traffic calming! surely the Traffic is one of the blights on the village? no amount of planting, sticky signs, flashing signs, curb raising?? etc is going to sort this out. If I need to get someone in my front room to experience the traffic like I do then you are entirely welcome. I don't think anyone actually lives on the main road in the council?? I could be wrong. It has indeed improved slightly since the M1 has been fully open but honestly its awful and constantly effects my daily life. Please could someone contact me to discuss this further. If it means me doing anything to help the process along...gathering names etc I am willing to help in any way I can. In addition I think you should be aware of the fact that there are several young children living along this stretch of road apart from my own, whose safety as well as health is being compromised by the traffic problem in Slip End.

Thank You for your time

Angela Allaway

---

Reply by the Parish Council Chairman:

Angela

Thank you for completing the enquiry form on the website from which I was sorry to hear of the problems you are experiencing with the traffic passing your house.

Cllr Steve Fuell leads for the Council on roads and highways and has been working for several years with a view to overcoming the issues caused by speeding and the volume of traffic passing through the Village. Unfortunately, the Parish Council does not have the necessary powers to act itself, however, it can and does represent residents in bringing matters of concern to the relevant authority.

Recently a survey by Bedfordshire County Council was undertaken to establish the speed of vehicles using the four roads into Slip End at the 30mph limits. The survey was conducted over a period of time and the speed of vehicles was recorded twenty four hours per day during this period. The average speed was found to be 40 mph. The result of the survey confirmed what we have all been saying for many years that there is a speeding problem in Slip End.

In the past Steve, supported by the Council approached the County Council with a view to introducing speed calming measures. These approaches were declined for a number of reasons: cost in relation to the number of serious accidents, the effects on traffic flow particularly with regard to Markyate and Church Roads as the route links the A5 with the A1081 and M1 Junction 10a, and experience from other areas of residents objecting to the calming measures. As these reasons were a matter of policy, the Parish Council was unable to contest them, however, its objections were well aired at the time with the County Council.

Steve has pursued the other two courses of action open to us; that of enforcement and the use of street furniture which gives the illusion to drivers of the road narrowing causing them to slow down. While it is appreciated this measure will not stop the determined speeder statistics have shown these measures are cost effective in reducing vehicle speeds.

Following the result of the survey, Steve is in the middle of discussions with Central Beds to improve the visual entrances to the village and other speed restriction initiatives. For example the "poles" at Church Road will be replaced with gates which give more of an illusion of road narrowing. There has been some administrative confusion as to whether the whole of Church Road is now designated 30mph as Luton Borough Council have posted 30mph signs at the Newlands Road junction which Steve is also trying to sort out.

In addition Steve has been able to obtain posters, similar to the ones in Caddington, that can be fixed to wheelie bins regarding speeding and he has had some Speed Kills signs placed along the roads.

We are going to ask Highways if they can apply a "silent" road surface similar to that used on motorways but there may be technical reasons why it cannot be used.

Turning now to enforcement, the Parish Council has made enquiries about the installation of fixed cameras and discovered that for various reasons we are unable to have them. Over the years the Council has brought pressure on the Police for radar checks which they have from time to time conducted, however, this type of enforcement has to a great extent been superseded by the mobile camera vans.

The Council is in constant discussion with the operator of the mobile speed camera van and have asked that it stands in Church Road on alternate visits to its favoured site on Markyate Road. If you could let us have some

information as to when you have noted the worst speeding takes place we can request the Neighbourhood Police come out with their speed gun. Similarly, Airparks buses should be travelling at 30mph or less and if you have any incidents or details i.e. times and registration numbers their Management will deal with the issue. We shall also ask them if they have any intention of replacing their vehicles with quiet units or energy efficient units.

The Parish Council can hire a mobile speed reader "SID" that reads vehicle speeds and manual records are made of excessive speeds and offenders vehicle registration numbers. Would you and your neighbours be willing to assist manning the equipment i.e. doing some of the recording?

We are well aware of the fact that some young families live along Church Road and the potential danger but the classification and logistical significance of the road means that there may be little that can be achieved in the short term to reduce traffic volumes. As previously discussed Markyate Road-Church Road is a crossover route for traffic from the A5 to B1081(A6) M1 but it is hoped that this might have less significance once the northern by-pass for Luton is put in place. The Parish Council can also look into obtaining a vehicle weight restriction but the designation of the road may mean this is not acceptable to the authorities.

Unfortunately, speeding is an issue throughout this Parish and many others across the country. Putting improvements and or restrictions in place can take time and be costly but we hope from the above you will agree the Parish Council has and will continue to do all it can. Some of the above schemes mentioned are for the future and I would urge you to respond to the requests you will receive to put forward ideas of what you would like to see adopted in the Parish Plan. This plan will drive the work of be the Parish Council and the new Community Projects Group. While the Parish Council cannot do anything directly about speeding or traffic volumes, our representations to the authorities who do have the power will be that much stronger if are able to say "--% of residents support this action. The Parish Plan will enable us to have that information. Your support and that of your neighbours will be much appreciated.

Regards

Ken