

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **20th January 2010**

Present:

Cllr. Burgess (Chairman);

Mr M A Wickham (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Clarkson, Claughton, Clokie, Cowley, Ellison, Heyes, Woodford.
Mr M J Angell, Mr R E King, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr J N Wedgbury.

Apologies:

Cllr Taylor, Mrs E Tweed

Also Present:

Paul Jackson (Head of Environmental Services – ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Phil Gilbert (Local Transport and Development Manager – KHS), Tara O’Shea (Transportation Engineer - KHS), Kirstie Horton (Jacobs), Gareth Williams (Jacobs), Kirsty Liddell (Member Services and Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

392 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Claughton	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – as he knew one of the speakers, Mr Williams, personally.	394

393 Circular 01/2006 – Setting Local Speed Limits

Mr Gilbert advised the Board that Kent County Council had commissioned Jacobs to undertake an independent review of the speed limits on all A and B roads in the County in regards to Circular 01/2006 Setting Local Speed Limits. The review was being undertaken by a small Speed Limit Review Team to ensure that a consistent approach was taken throughout the County. A study on the speed limit of the A28 was undertaken in March 2004 with improvements made to the road conditions in July 2004. The road was re-examined in May 2007 with further representations being made raising concern over the speed limit of the A28. A meeting between the Speed Limit Review Team and Bethersden Parish Council was held in December 2009 where the Parish Council put forward their concerns over the speed limit. He introduced Kirstie Horton from Jacobs who would provide a presentation to Members on the work being carried out on the speed limit review.

Ms Horton advised Members that she was the Project Manager of the County wide speed review that was being carried out by Jacobs. She started her presentation by explaining that the Government had demanded that a review of the speed limits of all A and B roads be completed by 2011 and she was pleased to confirm that they were on target to complete the County wide review by 2011. There was a requirement that speed limits should be obvious to drivers with consistent road signage being maintained throughout the County. New guidance had been issued which provided clear statements relating to the 'look' of a road in relation to its speed, for example a 60 mile per hour (mph) road would be of high quality and wide with few hazards present, a 50 mph road would have a few houses along it and would have junctions along it, a 40 mph road would be narrower with driveway accesses along it, a 30 mph road would be highly residential potentially with a mix of shops. 50 to 60% of the roads in the County would retain their current speed limits with some being changed downward; there were a handful of limits that might be increased but in this instance it would be where there would be clear benefits for doing so.

Ms Horton explained that there was a seven-step process to the review. The first stage was a desk top survey which was carried out by the initial review team followed by an initial site review which involved a team visiting the site at various times to ensure that they experienced the activity on the road that residents would during their day to day lives. The third step would be an adjudication review which would be carried out by someone appointed on behalf of Kent County Council who would decide if they agreed with the findings of the initial review. This was followed by a statutory review whereby the Police would carry out a similar review to that of the adjudicator. There was a Parish Council representative who 'policed' the review. The sixth step was to ensure that all Joint Transportation Boards were kept informed and consulted. The seventh step was to ensure that all Town, Parish Councils and District Councils were kept informed and consulted during the process. Once the consultations had been carried out the adjudicator would review the information alongside the initial review and make a final decision. Subject to funding improvements would be made which could include improved signage and line design and the issue of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). She concluded the presentation by explaining the timescales that they were working to, to ensure that the review was carried out by 2011.

In response to questions from Members Ms Horton advised that Jacobs were appointed as an independent adjudicator and that the use of an independent adjudicator would help to ensure that consistency was maintained throughout the County. There had been occasions where speed limits had been increased on some roads due to the limit having been set too low originally. Mr Gilbert advised that the review was a mammoth task and it was correct for it to be carried out by a small dedicated independent team which would enable consistent standards to be implemented throughout the review. He could not comment on the payment made to Jacobs as he was not aware of the figures involved. Ms Horton advised that current signage would be looked at during the review process and admitted that a more consistent use of signage was needed.

A Member felt that there was an alarming number of signs in the countryside at present and was concerned that this number would be increased and as a result

drivers would be inundated with signs and not comply with them at all. Ms Horton advised that there was a need to de-clutter roads and replace the current signage with larger signs placed further apart.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

394 A28 Speed Limit Review

Ms Buckley of Bethersden Parish Council advised the Board that the Parish Council had welcomed the opportunity to review the speed limit of the A28. They had campaigned for a reduction in the limit for the safety of the residents of the Parish. The A28 was a major through-road which consisted of 12 miles of road with several deceptive bends through the village. A working group had been formed which consisted of Parish Councillors and residents of the village, upwards of 200 man hours had been put into producing the A28 Speed Limit Review Report, and she had copies available should Members wish to see them. She introduced Mr Williams who was part of the working group and would present the Board with an overview of the report and answer any questions they may have.

Mr Williams advised the Board that the findings of the Jacobs report had been received with concern as the report stated that the use of the road by vulnerable road users was low which the working group believed to be untrue. He explained what the definition of a village was for the purposes of a speed review and advised how Bethersden compared to the definition. The A28 was a major through-road that was used by residents as part of their daily lives. He advised that during a site visit by Jacobs he had witnessed two lorries attempting to pass each other which had resulted in one having to drive on the pavement to ensure that there was enough room to pass. He showed the Board photographs of the 'hotspots' of the A28 where accidents occurred on a regular basis. The nature of the road was narrow with lots of bends and major junctions along it. There was concern over the safety of pedestrians attempting to cross the road, there was no provision for a pedestrian crossing and it was difficult to see where one could be placed.

Mr Williams felt that it was interesting to note that 15% of accidents were caused by speed alone. There had been 30 reportable crashes on the Bethersden stretch of the A28 in the last 5 years with over 100 non-reportable crashes in the same period. BBC national news had visited the village in December 2009 to do a report on traffic speed. With the aid of PowerPoint slides Mr Williams showed the Board the current and proposed speed limits along the stretch of the A28 in question and explained that alternative measures such as traffic engineering would also assist with the reduction of speed in the area such as vehicle activated signs and bus stops.

Members congratulated Mr Williams on a compelling presentation which had clearly been based on evidence not assumption. They were concerned that a review of the A28 had taken so long to come about considering the dangers presented to the centre of the village by the current speed limit. Mr Gilbert advised that they would look at the speed limit of the A28 on this particular stretch independently of the speed limit review and report back to the Joint Transportation Board in June 2010.

There was strong support for the arguments made by the working group and the Board looked forward to receiving the report of Kent Highway Services in June 2010.

Resolved:

That

- (i) the report be received and noted and;**
- (ii) the Board request a report from Kent Highway Services responding to the request for a speed limit review of the Bethersden stretch of the A28 at the meeting to be held in June 2010.**



Speed Limit Review

JTB Presentations

November / December 2009



Kirstie Horton

**Project Manager
Kent Highway Services**



Speed Limit Review

- It is a requirement for all Local Authorities to review all A and B roads by 2011 in line with Circular 1/2006 – Setting Local Speed limits.



- **Circular 1/2006**

Speed limits should:

- Be consistent across the country
- Be self explaining
- Evidence led
- Reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel
- Encourage self compliance



- **Circular 1/2006**
- Whats new?
- How are our existing speed limits looking?



What this process does:-

- Provides a snapshot assessment of the speed limit of the road
- Provides a consistent network of speed limits across the country
- Provides a clear guidance on setting speed limits on all types of roads
- Identifies additional highway works to enhance or support a speed limit

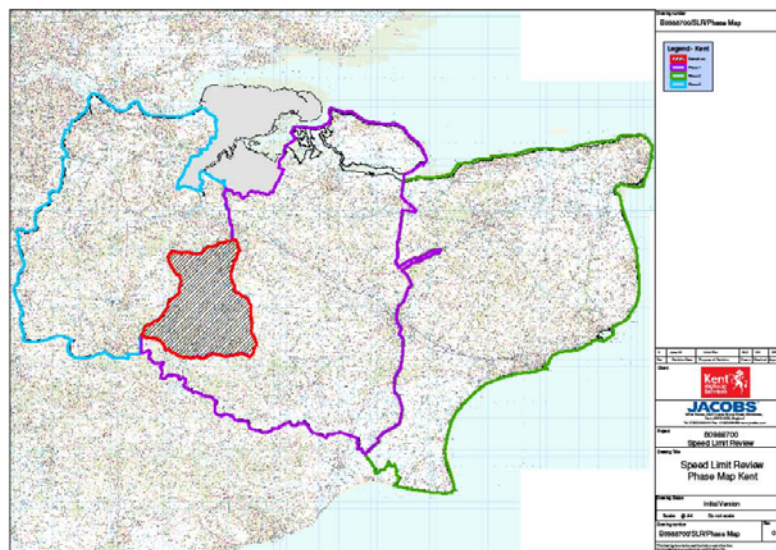


What this process does not do:-

- Target local non speed related issues
- Predict too far into the future
- Recommend speed limits that are not enforceable or achievable
- Assess roads other than A or B roads



Phasing of review





The process – 7 key stages

1. Desk top review
2. Initial site review
3. Adjudication review
4. Statutory review – Police
5. Parish Council Rep – John Wilson
6. Transportation and development
7. Parish and Town councils



Consultation – The role for Parish and Town Councils

- Parish and Town Councils are the key contact
- Responsible for informing local residents
- Responsible for collating feedback and presenting this to the adjudicator.
- The adjudicator **does not** enter any consultation with individuals



Training for Parish and Town Councils

- Training Sessions
 - Understanding the concept of setting speed limits*
 - What comments you can make*
 - How to put together a response*



Final review

- Responses received from the Parish and Town Councils
- Adjudicator assesses if any valid comments have been made
- Sites are revisited
- Any changes to the original recommendations are assessed by the review Panel
- Revision Report issued to Parish and Town Councils



What's Next?

*Subject to funding

- Signs and Lines design
- Traffic Regulation Orders
- Installation



Timescales

Demonstration Area

- TROs advertised
- Signs and lines installed by end of March 2010

Area 1

- Review Panel meeting – Final report before Christmas
- TROs to be advertised by end of March 2010



Area 2

- Initial review complete
- Adjudication review currently taking place
- Police and Parish Council Rep consultation before Christmas
- Available to Parish and Town councils after April 2010

Area 3

- Initial review to commence April 2010

A28 speed limit review: Bethersden



Bethersden Working Group

Presenters: Graham Williams, Caroline Buckley

January 2010

Jacob's report

A28 Site 5 (Bethersden):

'Use of the site by vulnerable road users was identified as low'



Survey and research

1. Density of traffic
2. Questionnaire, to identify:
 - i. Profile of resident
 - ii. Number of vehicle movements
 - iii. Deliveries
 - iv. Social activities, e.g. Horse riding, walking
 - v. Use of village: amenities, shops, pub, churches, etc
 - vi. Businesses and associated vehicle movements
 - vii. Comments from residents
3. Photographs
4. Movements relating to schools
5. Accidents
6. Previous action by residents

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Government directive on speed review (DfT Circular 01/2006)

Balance the need to travel with the need to improve the quality of life:

- Reducing road traffic collisions and injuries
- Overcome social exclusion and strengthening rural communities
- Develop safer environments for all road users

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Methodology

Speed limits for single carriageway roads in rural areas (DfT Circular 01/2006)

Speed limit (mph)	Characteristics
60	For most high quality strategic A and B roads with few bends, junctions or accesses.
50	For lower quality A and B roads which may have a relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses. Also where mean speeds are below 50mph, so lower limit does not interfere with traffic flow.
40	Where there is a high number of bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, strong environmental or landscape reasons, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users.
30	Norm in villages.

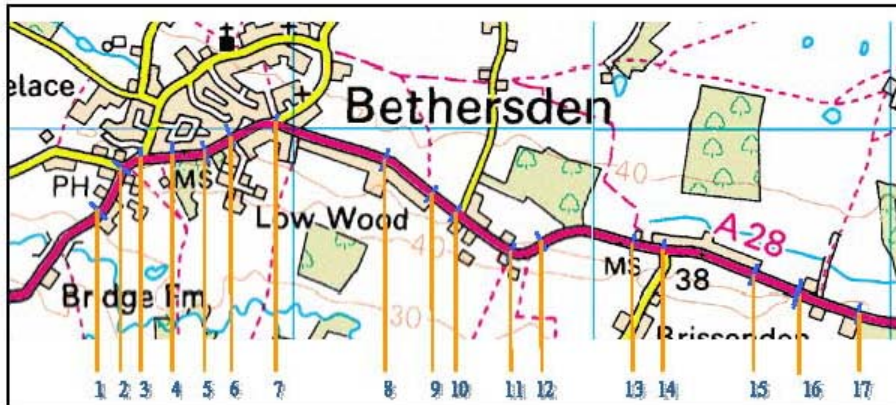
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A village

- A village is a community of people living in a group of houses in a rural area which has a church.
- A community is a group of people with common interest, interacting and sharing.
- Per Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/04 (DfT, 2004), a village is:
 - 20 or more houses (on one or both sides of the road), and
 - a minimum length of 600 metres.

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The village of Bethersden



From Western to Eastern Gateways (1 to 12):

- 69 houses (on both sides of the road)
- 1.7 km
- 4 junctions
- Numerous bends
- Accident hotspots
- Limited visibility

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Use of the road

A28 passes through an integral part of the village



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Character of the road – hot spots



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Character of the road - vulnerability

- Narrow A road (6.85m)
- Numerous sharp and deceptive bends
- 5 major junctions
- Poor visibility
- High density of access points
- Bridleways, footpaths and pavements



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Travelling to School

- Local village schools
 - 150 attendees
 - 34% walk, many from A28
- Secondary schools, pick up and drop off points on A28



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Impact of speed

- Fatalities: 62% occur on rural roads
- 15% of accidents are caused by speed alone
- 85% are caused by speed plus another factor
- Government figures: 40mph speed limit results in an average speed of 43mph
- Pedestrian hit by car
 - At 40mph has 9 in 10 chance of being killed
 - At 30mph has 2 in 10 chance of being killed
- Reduction in the quality of life for a local community and a sense of vulnerability

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Hazardous – impact of speed

Accidents

- 30 reportable in last 5 years
- Over 100 major non-reportable at key places
- Fatalities and life changing accidents
- BBC national news (Dec '09)



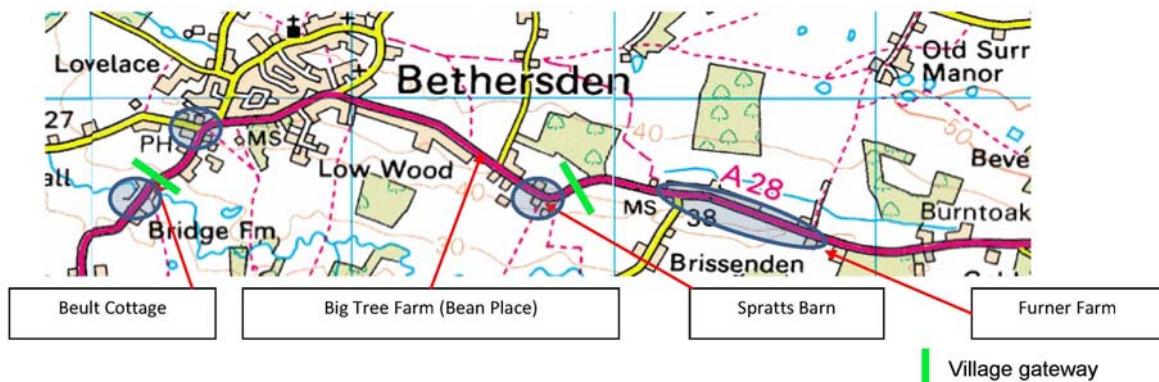
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Reportable accidents



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Non-Reportable accidents: Hot spots



Accident hot spots, from left to right (shaded in blue):

- Beult bridge
- Bull Lane / School Lane junctions
- Spratts Barn corner
- "The Bungalows"

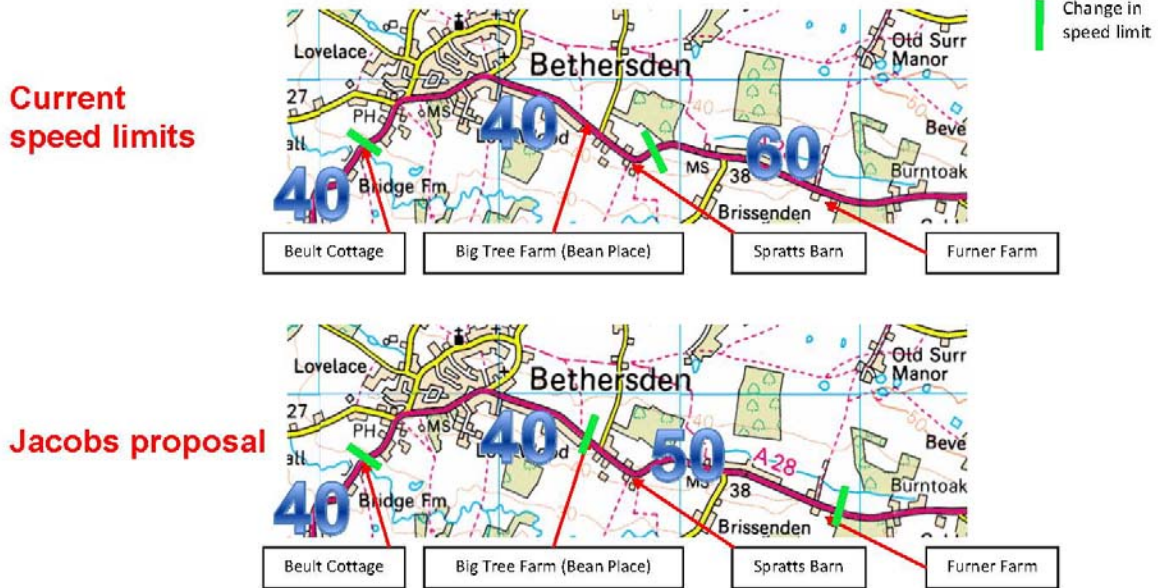
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Selection of the findings from the Working group

- Density of traffic
 - One vehicle every 4.8 secs
 - Major junctions used every 18 secs
 - Narrow A road, full of bends, limited pavements
- Use by villagers and businesses
 - 22% of residents
 - Of which 90% use village facilities
 - Generate 8,000 vehicle movements per week

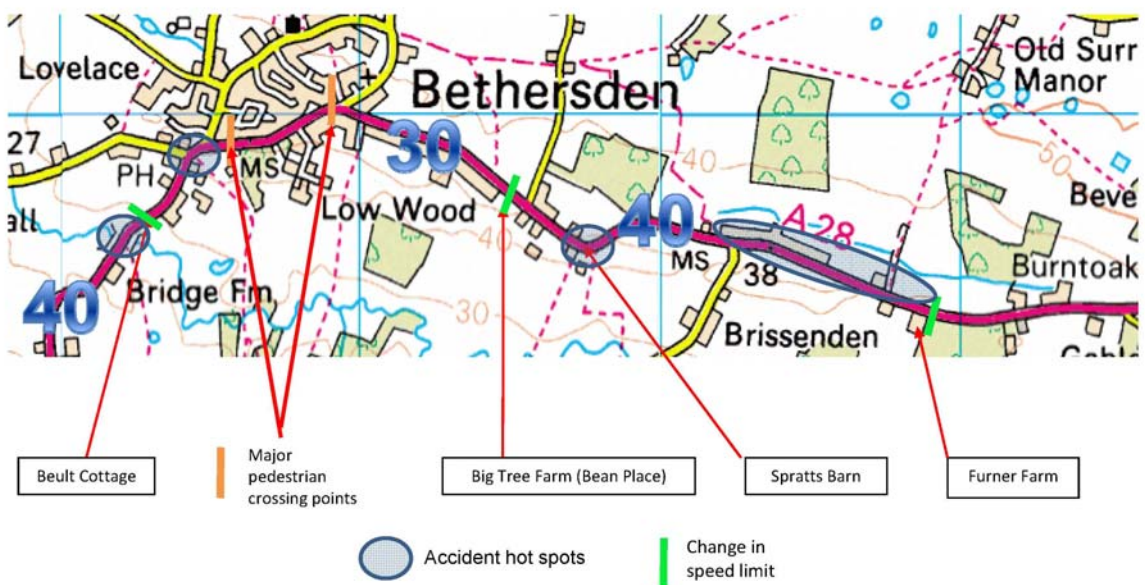
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Current and proposed speed limits



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Suggestion from Bethersden Parish Council



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Alternative engineering measures

- Vehicle-activated sign
- Centre hatching
- Pedestrian crossing
- Road island
- Narrowing
- Pavement
- Signage
- Gateway
- Bus stops
- By-pass

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Core findings

- Jacobs recommendations do not take adequate note of:
 - Character of the road
 - Use of the road
 - Vulnerability of residents
- Bethersden conforms to the government definition for a 30mph area.
- High level of speed and accidents impacts on vulnerability.
- Risks need to be mitigated.
- Reducing the speed is a cheap option.

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Any questions?



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Working Group findings in detail

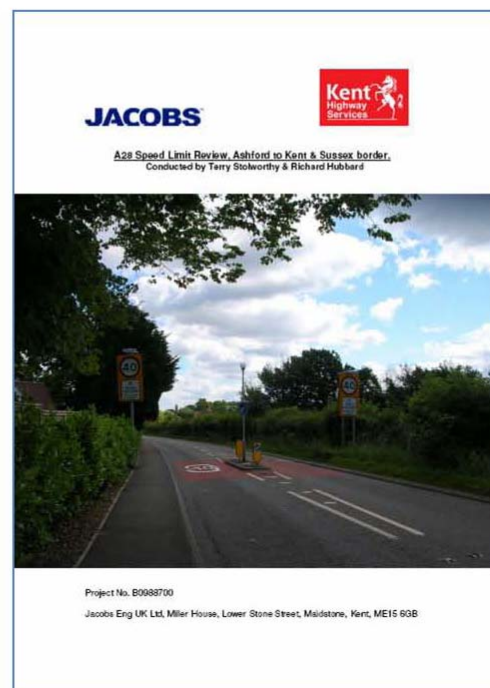
Working group

Formation at request of BPC

- 7 residents of the A28
- 2 parish councillors

Purpose:

- Review Jacobs proposals re the A28 through the Parish of Bethersden relating to Site 5 (all), and part of Sites 4 and 6.
- Produce a response, either:
 - Supporting the proposal, or
 - Counter proposal.



Major thoroughfare

- A28 passes through an integral part of the village
- Joins Kent with East Sussex



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Findings: Density of traffic

- 9 x 1 hour counts of the traffic movements.
- Identified types of vehicles.
- Included number of crossings by pedestrians at Forge Corner
- The vehicle movements entering Forge Hill, School Road and Bull Lane

The general results relating to density of traffic per hour were:

- Total vehicles **749.4** (One vehicle every **4.80** seconds)
- Vehicles using Forge Hill **85.8** (One vehicle every **42.0** seconds)
- Vehicles using Bull Lane **194** (One vehicle every **18.5** seconds)
- Vehicles using School Road **198** (One vehicle every **18** seconds)
- **15%** were artic lorries, rigid lorries or large vans

The junction of the A28 with Forge Hill (Forge Corner) is of significant concern as this is a major crossing for pedestrians.

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Findings: Questionnaire (1)

- 302 occupants in 116 houses
 - 133 **(44%)** are “vulnerable”:
 - 62 under the age of 18
 - 64 over the age of 65
 - 7 disabled
- 322 vehicles,
 - Generating **3,979** vehicle movements per week, i.e. 35 per occupied house per week
- 26% of properties without facility for vehicles to turn round within the grounds
- 53% of properties do not have facilities for visitors/delivery vehicles to park off-road

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Findings: Questionnaire (2)

- Poor visibility for vehicles entering / exiting properties:
 - **75% on exiting**
 - 43% on entering
 - 3 properties have installed mirrors on the road side to facility leaving their properties
- Post is delivered by bicycle to 56% of these properties
- Doorstep deliveries:
 - 24% have regular deliveries from supermarkets
 - 22% have regular milk deliveries
 - 10% have regular newspaper deliveries: all by bicycle

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Findings: Questionnaire (3)

- Support for the village amenities is high:
 - **89% use the village shops**
 - 51% walk to the shops
 - 43% use the shops daily
 - 61% use the pubs
 - 58% use the village hall
 - 44% use the recreation ground
 - 28% use the churches
- 17 houses have children at the village schools (Primary or Play school)
 - **59% walk to school**

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Findings: Questionnaire (4)

- Social habits of these residents indicate enjoyment of their surroundings:
 - 69% enjoy walking
 - 42% enjoy cycling
 - 40% enjoy dog walking
 - 10% enjoy caravanning
 - 7% enjoy horse riding
- Businesses along the A28
 - 13 residential properties run businesses from them
 - 1,230 additional vehicle movements are generated from these
 - 7 other businesses
 - 2,925 additional vehicle movements are generated from these

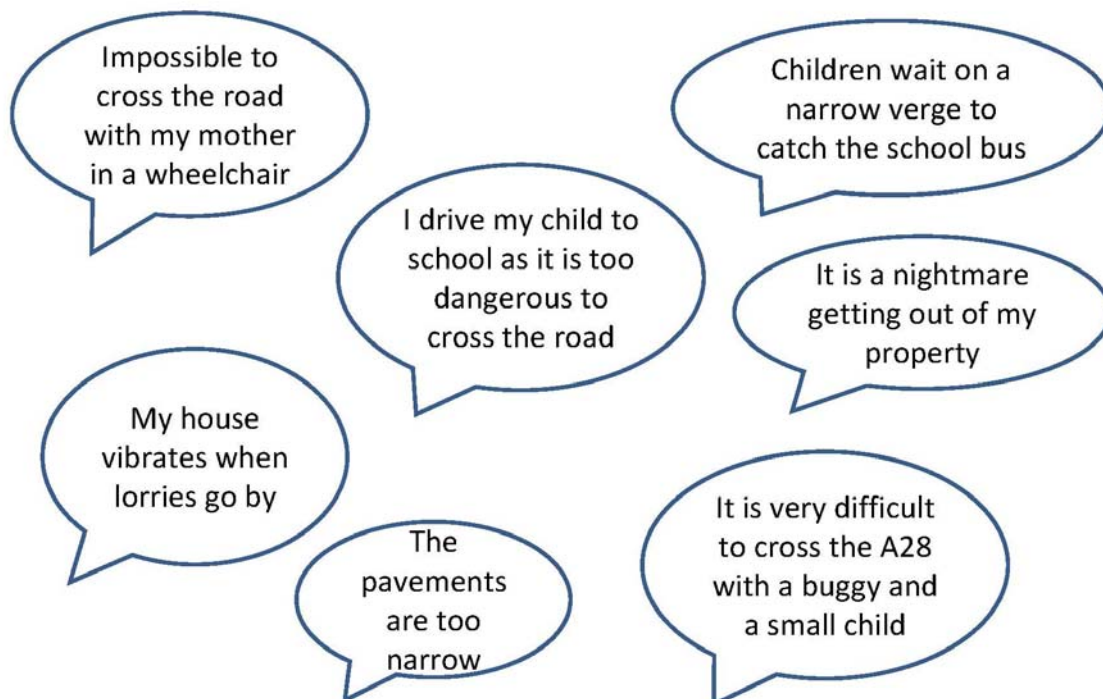
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Findings: Questionnaire (5)

- 73% of the residents made a comment concerning the A28 and the impact it has on their lives:
 - **43 are concerned by the speed of the traffic**
 - **27 residents were concerned about crossing the road**
 - **26 expressed concern over the number of accidents**
 - 18 have issues when entering/exiting their properties
 - 16 believe the density/speed of traffic on the A28 has impacted their quality of life
 - 14 had concerns on pedestrian safety
 - 3 have written directly to the KCC/police/local MP
 - 1 petition has been raised asking for reduced speed in the vicinity of “The Bungalows”

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Testimonies



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Findings: Photographs

- From Little Surrenden workshops to Bull Bridge
- Clearly show the issues that residents and users of the A28 face on a daily basis.
 - Their quality of life is impacted by the traffic on this road.
 - Residents feel vulnerable: from crossing the road as pedestrians or on horse-back; driving into/out of their properties; and, deliveries, such as the postman cycling on the pavement.
 - Residents risk their lives each day!

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Findings: Accidents

- Numerous accidents, including
 - Over 30 reportable accidents from last five years
 - 27, mostly non-reportable, at Spratts Barn since May 2004
 - 31, mostly non-reportable, at “The Bungalows” in vicinity of Woodchurch turning, including four fatalities in recent years
 - Bull Bridge: various including three fatalities
 - Beult Cottage: eight in 18 months
 - Gascoigne Corner: 32 in a four month period

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Findings: Movements relating to schools

- Bethersden Primary and Play Schools
 - High proportion travel from outside the parish
 - Children living along the A28 walk to school where possible
- Homewood Comprehensive School, Tenterden
 - Bus takes children to school
 - Several stops along the A28 and either side of the church
- Ashford secondary schools: Highworth and Norton Knatchbull
 - 2 buses take children to school
 - Several stops, all along the A28

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Findings: Other information

- 124 houses in Bethersden are on the A28
- 302 residents live in the targeted houses
- Correspondence with KCC / KHS / Police / MP
- Joint Transportation Board meetings 30th June 2009, 20th January 2010
- Site meetings with KHS and Jacobs

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Working group findings

- Previous actions by residents
 - Petition
 - Letters to MP/KCC/Police
 - Parish Council
- Reason
 - High level of accidents
 - Fear
 - Negative impact on quality of life

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