

# The A28 speed limit review: Bethersden Working Group (2009/10)

## Background

- The Government's initiative to have a consistent approach to speed across the UK (Circular 01/2006).
  - To reduce the number of accidents.
  - To balance the need to travel with the need to improve quality of life.
- More accidents and deaths occur on rural roads.
- Bethersden Parish Council (BPC) formed a working group to review Jacobs report.

## Working Group

Activity since JTB meeting in January 2010:

- Surveyed villages: similar villages have: 30mph as standard, interactive speed signs, and prominent gateways.
- Met KHS to discuss their action from the January JTB meeting. KHS confirmed the following:
  - Measuring speed and number of vehicles.
  - Only interested in reportable accidents in last 3 years.
  - Not interested in non-reportable accidents.
  - Focus on cost of schemes, but not the associated benefits.
  - Ignoring vulnerability of residents of Bethersden and road users on this stretch of road.
- Arranged for Police to conduct speed checks within the existing 40mph.
- Requested information from Kent Police on the number and cost of attending non-reportable accidents.

## Key Findings of the Working Group

- Bethersden is a fully integrated and active community.
- 22% of the adults in the parish of Bethersden live along the A28.
- 44% are vulnerable based on age and mobility.
- A28 bisects Bethersden.

### 1. Accidents

- Seven **fatalities** (DfT: @ £1.6m)
- 29 **reportable** accidents in the five years ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 (DfT: serious injury @ £185k, slight injury @ £14k)
- Over 100 major **non-reportable** accidents last five years (DfT: @ £5k)
- BBC selected Bethersden for a day-long news report in December 2009, as identified this is an accident hot spot.

### 2. Nature of Road and Density of Traffic

- The A28 is a major through road, linking Ashford to Tenterden, bisecting Bethersden.
- Road has numerous hazards, such as severe bends, poor visibility, junctions.
- The density of traffic along the A28 at a rate of one vehicle every 4.8 seconds during peak periods.
- 8,000 vehicle movements generated by the residents and local businesses per week.

### 3. Vulnerability, risk and quality of life

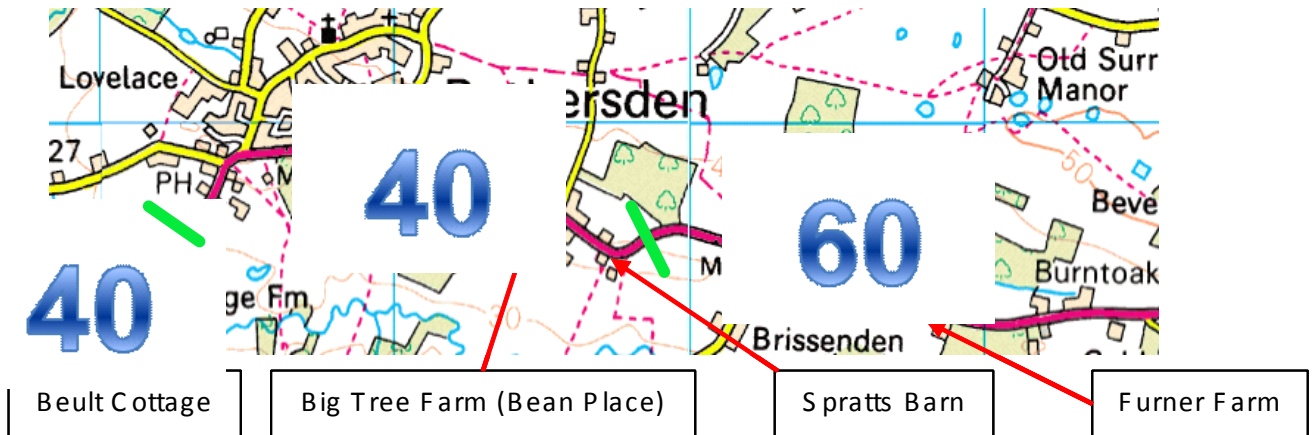
The Jacobs report identified use by vulnerable road users is low. The findings from the Working Group contradict this. In addition to the volume and speed of traffic and accidents, other key factors are:

- Narrow road (A28).
- Poor visibility.
- The lack of safe pedestrian crossings.
- Pavements are narrow or non-existent.

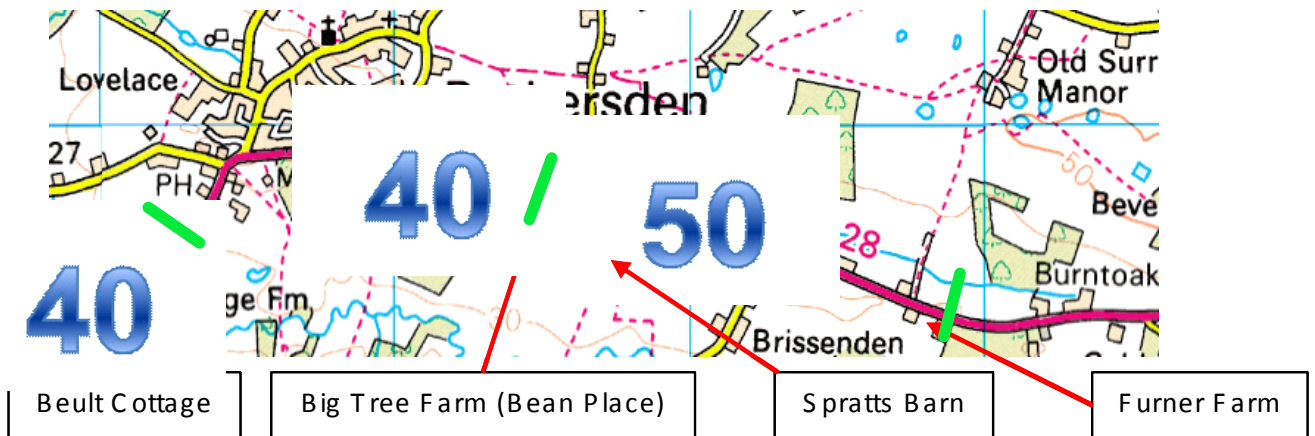
## Conclusion

- Bethersden is a fully integrated and active community bisected by the A28.
- Bethersden conforms to the definition of a village and qualifies for a 30mph speed limit.
- The high level of accidents impacts on the quality of life and sense of vulnerability, and are costly.
- Risk needs to be mitigated by reducing the speed and implementing appropriate engineering solutions.

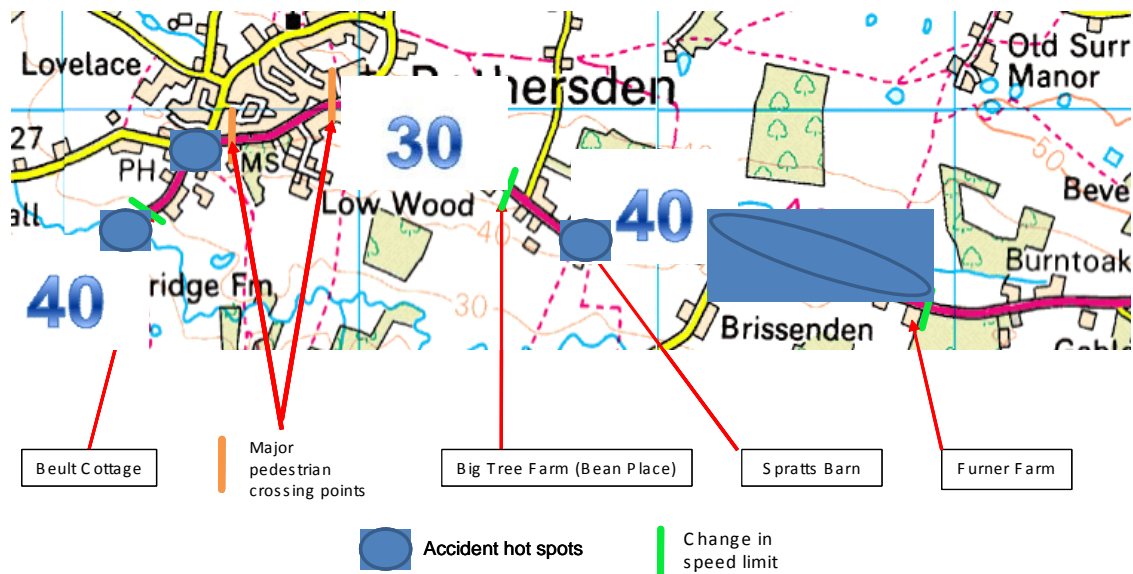
## Current speed limits



## Jacobs proposed speed limits



## Bethersden Parish Council proposed speed limits



## Comparison to other villages where an "A" road passes through

Village	Road	Speed limits			Prominent Gateway	Interactive Speed Sign	Comments
		30	40	50			
Bethersden	A28		✓				Narrow pavements, windy road, 30mph on road past school and church etc (not on A28)
Barming	A26	✓	✓			✓	
Bearsted	A20	✓				✓	Street lighting, very wide road
Biddenden	A262, A274	✓	✓		✓	✓	Slippery road signs on bends
Boughton Aluph	A251	✓	✓				Small village
Challock	A251, A252	✓	✓	✓			
Charing	A20, A252	✓		✓		✓	Large village
Chorley Wood	A404	✓			✓		Hatched strip in middle of road, Cricket field
Flimwell	A21, A268	✓		✓	✓		
Goudhurst	A262	✓	✓			✓	
Hawkhurst	A229, A268	✓	✓		✓	✓	Traffic lights at crossroads
Headcorn	A274	✓		✓	✓	✓	Single yellow lines, traffic lights
High Halden	A28	✓	✓			✓	
Houghton Regis	A505	✓	✓				Hatched strip in middle of road, pavements on one side, dual carriageway
Kingstone	A415	✓					
Langton Green	A264	✓	✓		✓	✓	Double yellow lines
Leighton Buzzard	A4146	✓				✓	Pavements on one side, slow down sign, hatched strip in middle of road
Leverstock Green	A4147	✓				✓	Pavements on one side, cricket ground, hatched strip in middle of road
Little Chalfont	A404	✓					Pavements on one side, fixed camera signs
Newenden	A28	✓	✓				Solid lines on bend
Redfern	A5183	✓					Pavements on one side
Rolvenden	A28	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Sandhurst	A268	✓			✓	✓	
Sissinghurst	A262	✓			✓	✓	
Staplehurst	A229	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Double yellow lines, traffic lights at cross roads
Sutton Valance	A274	✓	✓		✓	✓	40mph area has limited development - does not meet the criteria
Teston	A26	✓	✓		✓		
Wateringbury	A26	✓	✓			✓	

Of these 27 villages:

- All have 30mph speed limit.
- 63% have interactive speed signs.
- 44% have a prominent gateway.