

Notes to report on Highways matters to the Annual Parish Meeting April 2016  
Janet Melson

I will be talking mainly about highways but will also touch upon related issues of traffic, speed, parking and transport.

Firstly, with reference to Highways, the constraints that were outlined at this Annual Parish Meeting last year remain but for newcomers or those attending for the first time I will restate:

1. There is little scope for change to an A road
2. There are insufficient recorded accidents to meet the threshold for action (that's partly a positive!)
3. There are national constraints on measures that can be taken;
4. Last but definitely not least, FUNDING.

I am hoping that in the near future and after the local elections we can convene a meeting of our City and County Councillors and representatives of all relevant departments of both Winchester and Hampshire Councils to clearly define what, if anything, we can do. This will not be easy and to explain why, I would like to outline some of the issues already raised and the responses:

Traffic Survey –Traffic volume is unlikely to decline and ever-larger vehicles pass through the village at what appears to be excessive speed. The PC would like to conduct a traffic survey, using local volunteers which can, at the very least, establish a baseline for perceived future increases. Guidance was sought regarding methodology, presentation of findings and even viability in order for this to be meaningful at the higher council level.

The response was that the City Council doesn't have any traffic speed or volume detecting equipment and without accurate data any surveys will not be all that useful as evidence to support

traffic management/speed limit/weight limit changes. Having details of the number and type of vehicles could be useful to see if the volumes change in the future, but I'm not sure it would be all that worthwhile.

Parking – we know this is becoming an increasing issue at various points in the village. A number of residents in The Park are concerned at the appearance of the area where verges have become increasingly chewed up and they would like to see the creation of additional designated parking spaces. The informal view of WCC was sought.

The response was that Highway maintenance is carried out by HCC, so any damage to the verges, etc needs to be reported to them. Construction of new parking spaces would also be down to HCC Highways, but I doubt they could justify the costs given the pressure on their budgets.

A further example of parking at St Mary's Close – It has been suggested that the parking bays on the A32 to the east of the St Mary's Close were, in the past, designated for residents of St Mary's Close only and that the Parish Council requested the redesignation in order to make them available to anyone parking near to the Post Office which at that time was just south of there on the A32. I asked whether any reversal to assist the mainly elderly residents there would be possible.

Response - It is not possible to reserve the highway for specific residents, so I doubt there is much I can do to assist with the parking problems being experienced at St Mary Close.

Resident's Parking – Given the examples of The Park and St Mary's Close, I asked whether there was any merit in exploring the option of resident's parking

Response - The only way of overcoming this would be through a residents permit parking scheme, but the costs involved would be

prohibitive.

Incidents - there have been a couple of incidents recently on the bend in Hacketts Lane which is also part of the Wayfarer's Walk. Both resulted in ambulance attendance.

I sought confirmation that when the emergency services are called, relevant information is fed back to Highways to enable re-assessment of risk on that stretch of road.

Response - Accident details are sent to HCC Safety Engineering Team, but only those where there is a physical injury.

They will look to see if there are patterns of accidents, but I believe their intervention level is 5 or more accidents (excluding fatal/potential fatal) before they will investigate.

I have cited these examples, not to criticise City and County Councils, who I genuinely believe have continued to provide a reasonable level of services despite significant financial cuts, but simply to highlight why progress is frustratingly slow and limited.

The Parish Council has decided to take a more holistic and strategic approach to matters relating to highways, traffic, speed and parking, linking this where appropriate to potential development sites within the parish. Rather than trying to deal with each issue in isolation, we are attempting to consider long-term improvements and both the positive and negative impacts of any initiative, but we have to acknowledge budgetary constraints and fully understand the parameters within which WCC and HCC are working.

On the related subject of transport, we regularly attend Hampshire County Council's Passenger Transport Forum, usually held twice a year. Clearly we have a very limited bus service, but other initiatives are discussed and as a Parish Council we consider it important to be informed and engaged with these. We do have the Meon Valley Community Bus,

partly funded by HCC with contributions from a number of Parish Councils, including ours. This provides regular runs to Fareham, Winchester, Waterlooville and, new this year, Petersfield. Average no of passengers is 6.1. It is a lifeline to some so do please support it – if you have a bus pass it's free.