

ROAD SAFETY IN OUR PARISH

In this, the second in our series of articles, I would like to examine the issues of road safety within the parish – and what can be done to enhance it.

First of all, let me say that your Councillors are well aware of the main issues, and have been for some time. Our problem is in motivating the relevant authorities, namely, the County Council, to act.

The County Council is the highway authority and controls all activities on the highway. The Parish Council cannot do anything directly without their approval. Generally, we can only voice our concerns and lobby our County Councillor, and we have done so frequently.

The main concerns regarding safety relate to speeding traffic, the numbers of heavy commercial vehicles (HCV's) coming through, and inconsiderate parking.

It is clear that many vehicles, both HCV's and private, exceed the speed limits. Your Council supports the activities of Speedwatch, which regularly monitors our main traffic routes. In general, most road users drive responsibly and the number of offending vehicles is a small proportion of the total. However, there will always be a few who believe the rules don't apply to them. It would be nice if more public-spirited parishioners volunteered their time occasionally to assist in this activity.

With respect to the number of HCV's, your Council has recently endorsed a proposal put forward by a cross-parish working group to seek a solution by pressing the County Council to impose weight restrictions at Earith Bridge and Haddenham Bridge at Station Road. This has been included in the new draft Transport Strategy for East Cambs (TSEC), which is expected to be released around the end of the year. Other projects included within the draft are traffic lights at the junction of Station Road/Hop Row, and either lights or a roundabout at Witcham Toll. Both of these were included at your Parish Council's insistence. It remains to be seen how highly these proposals rank within the County Council's expenditure plans. We will keep you informed of developments!

Inconsiderate parking, especially at Top Corner, has long been an issue. When combined with speeding traffic heading up the High Street and emerging traffic from Hop Row, we have a recipe for near misses, at the very least, and occasional bumps. It also makes for difficult crossing by pedestrians.

Following many discussions with the County Council, Police, and others, we have resolved to attempt to tackle this problem corner at our own Parish Council expense, with a simple proposal. The main issue is poor visibility for traffic emerging from Hop Row. If vehicles obstruct the sight lines, then traffic going up the High Street needs to slow down accordingly.

The proposal is to realign the kerb and yellow lines on the Spar side of the road to narrow the road a little. This will allow us to widen the footpath there, and install traffic bollards on both sides of the road, which will give pedestrians more protection from traffic, while preventing parking on the pavements.