

**Boughton Aluph  
and Eastwell  
Parish Council:  
Results of a  
Community  
Consultation  
Exercise on Traffic  
Management**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council sought and obtained grant funding from the National Lottery Awards for All programme in order to explore ways of dealing with a number of traffic management issues that were of concern to local residents. With that funding, the Parish Council commissioned two separate consultants:

- DHA Transport Ltd researched the issues and explored options for addressing these
- CSC Regeneration hosted two consultation exercises that allowed local residents to find out about those options and offer their views on DHA's proposals.

This document has been prepared to report back the views of those who attended the two consultation events.

### **1.1 PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY**

DHA were required to explore the following issues and develop realistic options for addressing those problems:

- Speeding and inappropriate movement of HGVs along Wye Road
- Conflicts on the corner of Wye Road, Lees Road and Pilgrims Lane
- Speeding on the A251 Faversham Road
- Commuter parking around Trinity Road (Goat Lees)
- Rat running along Sandyhurst Lane

DHA's report was presented to the Parish Council in April 2014.

### **1.2 METHODOLOGY**

Following acceptance of the DHA report, CSC held consultation events at Sandyacres, Sandyhurst Lane on 19 October 2014 and at the Iron Room, Faversham Road on 27 October. At both events, a series of posters were situated around the rooms to outline the issues to be addressed and describe DHA's proposals for dealing with them. Residents were invited to view the demonstrations and then comment on these by:

- Completing a short questionnaire
- Leaving more substantive comments on post-it notes alongside the relevant posters.

This document records the responses provided by 46 people who attended the events, and also reports back DHA's answers to questions on technical issues that were raised by the residents.

We are grateful to all those who contributed to or otherwise supported this research.

## **2. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY**

This section of the report describes the responses to the questionnaire survey and also reports back DHA's responses to the issues that they raised. A total of 46 people attended the events and completed a questionnaire.

### **2.1 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS**

It is normal practice to ask a few personal questions as part of this type of survey in order to demonstrate that those replying are broadly representative of the wider community; unfortunately, the number of respondents is too small to draw any such conclusion, but the results are provided below for information.

#### **2.1.1 AGE AND GENDER OF RESPONDENTS**

The respondents were asked to say whether they were male or female, and to say which of a series of age ranges was appropriate to them: 32 were male and 12 female, and their age ranges are shown below:

- 1 was under 18
- 0 were in the range 18 – 29
- 6 were in the range 30 – 44
- 2 were in the range 45 – 59
- 26 were in the range 60 – 75
- 9 were aged 76 or over

Two people declined to answer this question.

#### **2.1.2 HOME LOCATION**

The respondents were also asked to say which of the selected sites was closest to their home, so that we could identify the views of people who were most affected by particular proposal from the overall survey group; the results were as follows:

- Wye Road: 7
- Lees Road: 5
- Faversham Road: 6
- Pilgrims Lane: 5
- Trinity Road: 10
- Sandyhurst Lane: 10

Three people declined to answer.

#### **2.1.3 NUMBER OF CARS**

All were asked to say how many cars are owned by each household, and the responses are as follows:

- All households had at least one car
- 19 households have one car
- 16 have two cars
- 7 households have three cars
- No households have more than three cars

The households with three cars are widely spread: three live in Lees Road, two in Sandyhurst Lane and one in both Wye Road and Trinity Road.

#### **2.1.4 DRIVING HABITS**

It was also important to ask about normal driving habits, so all were first asked to say which of a number of statements was most appropriate to them:

- Twenty nine people drive every day
- Twelve drive regularly, but not every day
- Two can drive, but rarely do so
- One person cannot drive

They were then asked to say whether they drive along any of the main routes through the Parish on a regular basis, and their replies were as follows:

- 35 drive on Wye Road
- 29 drive on Lees Road
- 40 drive on Faversham Road
- 11 drive on Pilgrims Lane
- 35 drive on Trinity Road
- 22 drive on Sandyhurst Lane

This information will be cross referenced against other replies to separately identify the views of those people who are most directly affected by each of the proposals.

## **2.2 ISSUES AROUND WYE ROAD**

The Parish Council had asked DHA to explore two issues on Wye Road: excessive speeding and the number of heavy good vehicles (HGVs) that used it inappropriately in order to cross between the A251 Faversham Road and A28 Canterbury Road.

#### **2.2.1 SPEEDING**

Many residents had complained of excessive speeding on Wye Road, so DHA recorded the speed and volume of traffic along Wye Road by using Automated Traffic Count (ATC equipment), and concluded that the majority of drivers actually keep to the speed limits. This is contrary to local impressions, but it is understood that traffic speed will seem higher to people who live there or who walk in the vicinity.

There have been no recorded accidents on Wye Road in five years to June 2013, so there are no grounds for lobbying for a reduction in speed limits. However, it was suggested that the Parish Council could encourage drivers to slow down by painting white lines along the length of the residential areas, which will make the road appear narrower than it really is, and by having the speed roundels repainted. A total of 40 people responded to this proposition, and the results were as follows:

- 33 people agreed with the proposal
- 2 were against
- 5 said they didn't know, or had no opinion.

This proposal clearly has very strong support across the board; of the two who were opposed to this suggestion, both drive along Wye Road on a regular basis, and both live nearby: one lives on Wye Road itself, and the other lives on Pilgrims Lane.

## 2.2.2 HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES

There is a weight limit of 7.5 tonnes in operation along Wye Road, but DHA's automatic recordings on Wye Road registered that an average of eight heavy vehicles drove along Wye Road on each day of the study; however, heavier vehicles are permitted to use the road when access is required, and this will include school buses, agricultural vehicles and lorries making deliveries. It was suggested that inappropriate travel could be deterred by any of the following methods:

- **Improved signage:** Other villages in Kent have benefitted from multi-lingual signage that advises drivers—particularly those from Europe who are not familiar with the area—that a particular road is not suitable for vehicles over a specified weight limit.
- **Staggered gates:** Lockable gates situated on either side of the road and some distance apart would allow smaller vehicles to pass unimpeded and larger ones to pass with care; but the very largest HGVs would not be able to pass. Any that tried would be held up until the gates were unlocked (thus blocking the road) and would only pass upon payment of a fine.
- **Fixed gates:** Fixed gates in the middle of the carriageway close by the junction of the A28 would allow smaller vehicles to pass on either side while larger ones to a certain limit would pass through the central lane. This would require the purchase of land to allow three lanes of traffic and potentially space to allow lorries to turn around. This could also potentially delay the progress of emergency vehicles.

Visitors to the displays were asked to say which of these (if any) they would like to see implemented, and were allowed to select as many options as they wish; their replies were as follows:

- Multi-lingual signs: 18
- Staggered gates: 13
- Fixed gates: 1
- None of these, leave things as they are: 14

Residents of Wye Road were split on the issue: four people supported the multi-lingual signs, and there was one vote for each of the gates, but three preferred to leave things as they are. Similarly, there was no clear consensus among regular drivers on Wye Road: fourteen liked the signs and thirteen the staggered gates, but ten preferred to leave things as they are.

The respondents were then asked to say which of the above they most preferred, and were only asked to tick one box on this occasion; their replies were as follows:

RESPONSES TO PROPOSALS FOR DETERRING HGVs FROM WYE ROAD				
OPTION	MULTI-LINGUAL SIGNS	STAGGERED GATES	FIXED GATES	NONE – LEAVE AS THEY ARE
All respondents	14	11	1	10
Wye Road residents	4	1	1	3
Regular drivers	11	6	0	11

The shading indicates the preferred option for each group

This table shows that a very small majority of people in all categories were in favour of erecting multi-lingual signs, but almost as many preferred the “do nothing” option. Only one person left a written comment about these proposals, and s/he thought that the lockable gates would be excessively expensive and “a nightmare” to manage.

## 2.2.3 WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM VISITORS

Visitors to the two demonstrations were also invited to leave more substantive questions and comments on post-it notes, and these have been referred where appropriate to DHA; the table below reprises those comments and the traffic management specialists' replies.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS RELATING TO SPEEDING ON WYE ROAD	
COMMENT	DHA RESPONSE
Altering the alignment and changing priority is an excellent idea and could work well with the shared space in front of the Flying Horse	Noted
Shared space is very expensive and money could be better spent on other projects.	Noted
This would also create problems of standing water for the Flying Horse and residents at top of green.	The new surface would create no more of a problem than the existing road surface.
Would prefer to build out kerb at north east corner of Lees Road and retain current priority	Noted
Would prefer traffic calming measures such as raised areas along the Lees and by the pub	Noted
Cars parked on pavement in Wye Road speeds up traffic and is dangerous to pedestrians	Noted
Speed limit should be 20mph at Wye Road/Lees Road junction	Cannot implement unless self-enforcing measures e.g. speed humps etc. are provided as well. KCC are unlikely to favour this option.
Narrowest section of Wye Road approaching the green from A28 is already effectively a shared space and should be designated as such	Noted
Prefer chicane style kerbing with fixed gating to reduce speed and establish priority in one direction	This would reflect what is already happening near parked vehicles for residential dwellings which was noted as unfavourable by some residents.
Little mention of pedestrian safety at Pilgrims Way junction	This was not raised by Parish Council or on residents' questionnaires, and was not considered.
Shared space will require hedges to be cut back	Noted
Speed limits on Wye Road generally are too high	No accidents to suggest otherwise, and vehicles do travel within acceptable degree of existing limit.
Kempes Corner (at junction of A28 and Wye Road) has been omitted from survey, but is an accident black spot	This was not raised by the Parish Council who may wish to consider this.
Why no proposal to have speed bumps?	Very little of the road is wide enough to accommodate successfully over a fixed distance.

## 2.3 ISSUES AROUND THE PILGRIMS LANE JUNCTION

The staggered junction around Wye Road, Lees Road and Pilgrims Lane is identified as a problem area in view of the volume of traffic, and the fact that the poor sight lines are exacerbated by parked cars and high vegetation. In consultation with the Parish Council, a number of options for managing the traffic flow were developed, as follows:

### 2.3.1 VILLAGE GREEN GYRATORY SYSTEM

This would prohibit traffic from turning left into Lees Road from Wye Road, and also prohibit traffic turning right into Lees Road from Faversham Road. This should alleviate the safety issues at the Lees Road, Wye Road and Pilgrims Lane junction, and prevent vehicles from travelling at speed to and from the A251 and Lees Road. However, this will increase the traffic on Wye Road outside the Flying Horse, and thereby impede village events on the green.



It will also require a small traffic island as shown to allow traffic to turn right into the A251 Faversham Road from Lees Road.

This proposal was well received by those who visited the two exhibitions:

- 25 people approved of the proposal
- 14 people did not approved
- 3 had no opinion

However, residents of Lees Road, who would be most directly affected, were less convinced as four out of five people who gave an opinion were against the idea.

### 2.3.2 SHARED SPACE OUTSIDE THE FLYING HORSE

An alternative scenario would see that part of Wye Road running along the top of the green being raised and being given a new surface treatment to create a “shared space” where there is no apparent priority for vehicles or pedestrians. This will require drivers to reduce speed, and further slow down when travelling to the Lees Road junction.



The change will accentuate the village green, and create a focal point for the village that will be particularly beneficial for community events like the Summer Fayre.

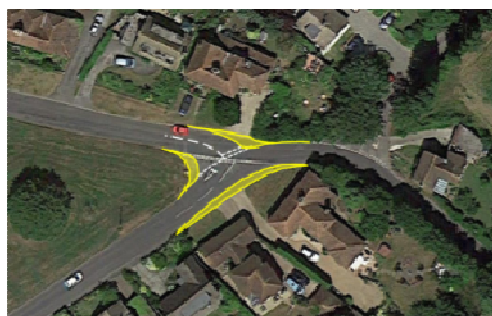
This was not a popular suggestion as twenty four people voted against and only eleven were in favour. Residents of Lees Road were marginally (3 to 2) in favour, but residents of Wye Road and regular drivers along both roads were very definitely against the proposal.

### 2.3.3 CHANGES TO THE JUNCTION OF LEES ROAD AND WYE ROAD

Two options for improving the traffic flow at this point were put forward: the first suggested that the kerb at the north east corner of Lees Road should be built out, which would cause traffic turning left from Wye Road to slow down substantially.



The second proposal was that the road alignment should be changed, so that priority would be given to traffic travelling to and from Lees Road to Wye Road towards the A28, rather than along the length of Wye Road as at present; the kerbs at this junction would all be extended in order to deter drivers from taking that corner too quickly.



ATC data shows that the majority of vehicles using the junction travel along Lees Road and into Wye Road or vice versa, so this option would optimise the traffic flow and improve visibility.

The views of all respondents, residents of the two roads and regular drivers in the area to these two suggestions are summarised in the table below:

RESPONSES TO PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING WYE ROAD/LEES ROAD JUNCTION			
	BUILD OUT KERB	REALIGN JUNCTION	NEITHER
All respondents	10	21	7
Lees Road residents	2	3	0
Wye Road residents	3	3	1
Regular drivers	8	16	5

The shading indicates the preferred option for each group

This table demonstrates clear support among the respondents as a whole and regular drivers for the proposal to realign the junction; residents of the two roads were also supportive, but the sample is too small to conclude anything other than an acknowledgement of the need to change – the “do nothing” option was roundly rejected by all categories.

### 2.3.4 WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM VISITORS

Six written comments were made on these proposals, and these are shown below with the response from DHA.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PILGRIMS LANE JUNCTION	
COMMENT	DHA RESPONSE
Will changing the traffic priority mean that cars will speed into Lees Road from Wye Road?	Not necessarily, the design will include other build-outs to make vehicles slow before turning.
Hedges need to be cut back to achieve safe sight lines	Noted
Consideration needs to be given to pedestrian safety	Noted
Gyratory: agree no right turn into Lees Road from A251, but not no left turn from Wye Road	Noted
Gyratory would be very difficult for camper vans and larger vehicles to turn left from A251 into Lees Road	This is why it is proposed that the junction is widened.
Why not a one way system around the green? (West – East alongside pub and NE – SW along Lees Road)	The proposed design followed consultation with the Parish Council and sought to prevent vehicles speeding along Lees Road and entering the A251 at they do at present

## 2.4 ISSUES AROUND THE A251 FAVERSHAM ROAD

DHA were asked to explore the problem of drivers speeding in both directions through the residential areas of the A251 Faversham Road. Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) recordings demonstrated that excessive speeding was indeed an issue, and that the flashing reminder signs were being routinely ignored; DHA's suggested remedies and the responses to them are summarised below.

### 2.4.1 REDUCE SPEED LIMIT

Despite the evidence of the ATC measurements, there had been very few recorded accidents along this stretch of the carriageway, and it was difficult to prove that speed was a factor in any of those incidents, so it would be very difficult to mount a convincing case for the reduction of speed limits. Nonetheless, this was an option presented to the community.

### 2.4.2 TRAFFIC ISLANDS

One relatively simple option would be to introduce traffic islands at relevant points within the residential section of the Faversham Road, where the 40mph limit is in place. This will result in a slight narrowing of the carriageway, which will impact on drivers' perception and make them feel the need to lower their speeds as they navigate past the islands. A similar scheme has been introduced at Challock, and this has reduced the overall width of the carriageway by around 1.5 metres.

### 2.4.3 REALIGN THE JUNCTION WITH LEES ROAD

This proposal is intended to reduce vehicle speeds at the junction and deter HGVs from using Lees Road. At present, the junction layout encourages drivers to enter and exit at speed, and can also be misinterpreted by HGV drivers. Redesigning the junction as shown in yellow would produce a more conventional format and reduce collisions by lowering speeds and deterring inappropriate traffic. In addition:



- The footpath at the edge of the carriageway would be retained
- The existing road (shown in red) would be retained as access to properties on Lees Road
- The current junction (shown in green) would be grassed to produce a natural barrier between the A251 and the properties on Lees Road.

### 2.4.4 REDESIGN THE JUNCTION WITH LEES ROAD

Another option would be to retain but redesign the existing junction in order to reduce the speed of cars turning into Lees Road and also reduce the number of HGVs using the Lees Road and Wye Road. This could be accomplished by building a raised table junction with a differently coloured surface, which would effectively form a large speed bump; this is shown in yellow.



This would reduce the speed of vehicles leaving Lees Road travelling towards Ashford, thereby reducing accidents by changing perceptions of a quick exit and entry. This would accentuate the rural nature of the

village, and would neither require any realignment of the footpath nor affect access to adjacent properties.

## 2.4.5 COMMUNITY RESPONSES

The views of all respondents, residents of Faversham Road and those who regularly drive on the A251 are shown in the table below. They were invited to nominate as many options as they wished.

RESPONSES TO PROPOSALS FOR REDUCING SPEEDING ON THE FAVERSHAM ROAD					
OPTION	REDUCE SPEED LIMITS	TRAFFIC ISLANDS	REALIGN JUNCTION	REDESIGN JUNCTION	NONE
All respondents	32	27	13	12	3
Faversham Road residents	5	3	1	1	0
Regular drivers	29	21	11	10	0

The shading indicates the preferred option for each group

Although the problems of making a case for a reduction in speed limits was explained to residents, this was nonetheless their preferred option. However, the table below shows their single preferred option, and this is perhaps more revealing.

RESPONSES TO PROPOSALS FOR REDUCING SPEEDING ON THE FAVERSHAM ROAD					
OPTION	REDUCE SPEED LIMITS	TRAFFIC ISLANDS	REALIGN JUNCTION	REDESIGN JUNCTION	NONE
All respondents	9	20	7	2	4
Faversham Road residents	3	2	1	0	0
Regular drivers	8	17	5	2	4

The shading indicates the preferred option for each group

This table shows that the idea of establishing traffic islands as a means of reducing speeding traffic is the preferred option for the majority of respondents. The written comments on these proposals and DHA's response are shown below.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS RELATING TO FAVERSHAM ROAD PROPOSALS	
COMMENT	RESPONSE
Strongly dislike fragmentation of the green – much prefer raised surface which is likely to slow traffic more effectively	Noted
Does not mention that the corners of the road and the adverse cambers mean that HGVs and cars can cross the middle of the road, risking another accident	Vehicles can cross other side of road anywhere where there are no physical restrictions realistically. No evidence of accident black spots caused by construction of road
Realignment of junction could work	Noted
Traffic islands need to be physical barriers, and not just painted on to the surface	Noted
Strongly against taking up a section of the green to create another road	Noted
Realignment of Lees Road junction is a good idea, especially if coupled with one way system around the green. Also like the idea of traffic islands.	Noted
Speed hump option is possibly extremely dangerous – traffic turning from A251 onto Lees Road needs to cross across speeding traffic, so slowing them down exposes them to greater risk.	Vehicles are required to slow when undertaking manoeuvres anyway. The hump will have a smaller vertical deflection than a standard speed hump.
Banning parking in Lees Road around the junction would help move traffic more quickly.	That would also increase speeds along the road and leave residents with no parking amenity.

Would chicanes along Lees Road help reduce speed?	Cannot implement due to residential parking
Suggestions for reducing speeding along A251 from Sandyhurst Lane: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Double white lines to reduce overtaking</li> <li>- Speed limit of 40mph or less</li> <li>- Speed cameras along long straight section</li> <li>- Traffic island to reduce road width at start of straight section</li> <li>- Warning signs alerting drivers to bends</li> </ul>	Points 1, 2 and 3 need to be justified by high number of accidents, and that is not the case.  Would need a series rather than just one unless needed for pedestrian safety Noted

## 2.5 ISSUES AROUND TRINITY ROAD

At the time when this combined research project was first developed, residents of those roads adjoining Trinity Road in Goat Lees were unhappy with the volume of commuter traffic being parked outside their homes by workers at the nearby Industrial Parks. Although some action has been undertaken to alleviate this issue through the addition of more parking space and by parking restrictions in the residential areas, DHA nonetheless undertook parking beat surveys at 05.30 and 10.00 at sixteen locations, so that the amount of residential and non-residential parking could be established by comparing number plates. Although this revealed that 42 cars not belonging to residents were parked, there was a net reduction of 18 cars at the later time, which shows that there appears to be no overall lack of parking amenity available to residents.

Even so, residents of the Goat Lees area were asked to say whether they thought that new parking arrangements had improved the situation for them. Even in a very small sample, the response to this question was inconclusive: two people thought that things had improved, four thought not, and four others had no opinion on the issue.

The views of those who regularly drive along Trinity Road was no more revealing, as two people thought that things had improved, seven thought not and twenty four had no fixed view. There were no written comments left on this issue.

## 2.6 ISSUES AROUND SANDYHURST LANE

The final issue to be addressed was the perceived problem of drivers rat-running along Sandyhurst Lane in an attempt to travel between the A251 Faversham Road and the A20 without using the busy Drovers roundabout.

DHA therefore analysed the number plates of cars at either end of Sandyhurst Lane in order to establish how many vehicles were entering, leaving and passing through. This revealed that well over half of the traffic using Sandyhurst Lane in peak periods passed right through, and so could be said to be rat-running. However, the level of traffic was low (average of 4 vehicles per minute), and there were no severe issues of congestion. A total of seven traffic accidents have been recorded there over five years, none of which involved serious injury.

Residents' concerns can be addressed through the introduction of speed bumps along those sections that are covered by a 30mph speed limit. Most properties have off-street parking facilities, and so this is not likely to impact on residential parking. Similar measures have been introduced on Ulley Road and The Street in Kennington, and they have reduced rat running without impeding emergency vehicles.

The views of all respondents, residents of Sandyhurst Lane and those who drive in the area are shown in the table below.

<b>RESPONSES TO PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH SPEED HUMPS ON SANDYHURST LANE</b>			
	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>DON'T KNOW/ NO OPINION</b>
All respondents	13	22	6
Sandyhurst Lane residents	7	1	1
Regular drivers	9	10	2

The shading indicates the preferred option for each group

This suggests that the proposal is popular with residents of Sandyhurst Lane, but less so with others in the area.

### 2.6.1 WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY

Seven comments were left on this issue, and these are again replicated below with the response from DHA.

<b>COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS CONCERNING RAT TUNNING IN SANDYHURST LANE</b>	
<b>COMMENT</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>
Can chicanes be installed rather than speed humps?	Potentially, yes. Speed reduction methods are subject to public consultation and detailed design.
Dislike the idea of humps, but raised areas across the road would be effective and less disruptive	These are more disruptive to cyclists and prevent emergency vehicle access. No longer accepted by KCC.
Speed humps damage tyres, hurt people with bad backs and add to noise and pollution	Only if people speed over them
Speed bumps can damage vehicles and also restrict cyclists	Only if vehicles speed over them. Cyclists can manoeuvre around the inside or outside of the humps
Some sections of Sandyhurst Lane have no pavements so pedestrian access should not be compromised by humps	Speed bumps only affect vehicles.
Speed humps would restrict speed but have other calming measures been considered?	Yes, but bumps allow free flow of traffic at a slower speed. Other methods require vehicles to give way, and can increase speeding in some circumstances
Speed humps would be an advantage and hopefully deter rat running	Noted

### 3. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Despite extensive advertising and promotion by the Parish Council, only 46 people attended one of the events out of a population of 2,490 (2011 Census), and the Council is considering ways of building on this level of input; we should be happy to explore ways whereby we might co-operate in meeting that objective.

Despite the limited information available, there appears to be a widespread acceptance that action is required, and a willingness to accept new approaches that might change or moderate driver behaviour. It is obviously impossible to draw any hard and fast conclusions from such a small sample, but the following comments are offered as observations which we hope will be helpful:

- There is no evidence as yet that suggests support for investment in gates to keep HGVs away from Wye Road, but a “quick win” could be secured by adding white lines and renewing speed roundels
- The evidence to date suggests that residents are very open to changing the management of traffic around the village green, but are not convinced by solutions that involve any loss of green space
- Residents of Sandyhurst Lane appear to be keen on the introduction of humps (or other solutions) that deter rat running, but others are against their introduction, which could suggest that these would be a significant deterrent to those who use the road as a short cut to and from the A20.