

# **Beech Road Safety Working Group**

## **Interim Report - June 2020**

### **Executive summary**

This interim report on the work of Beech Road Safety Working Group has been prepared at the request of Beech Parish Council. Speeding traffic remains a major concern for most villagers. Volunteers formed BRSWG following a meeting in January 2020. Having adopted terms of reference based on a schedule of work developed by BPC, the team has diligently researched options for feasible solutions to the issue of speeding traffic.

The working group divided its efforts into four workstreams in order to focus activity and make progress across all areas of inquiry. Reference to the workstreams is made throughout the report. They are: 1: Pathways 2: Speed management 3: Campaigning and lobbying 4: Funding.

The working group adopted a two-fold strategy, one designed to move pedestrians off the road; the second designed to reduce traffic speeds. Three options were considered for moving pedestrians onto footpaths; four options were considered regarding reducing traffic speeds.

It was recognized at the outset that failure to enforce the speed limit arose from lack of police resources which appear to be particularly acute in the Alton and Rural sector. Furthermore, officers from Hampshire County Council frequently cite police resistance as a reason for not considering traffic calming schemes that have demonstrably saved lives elsewhere in the country.

Police resistance to speed limit reductions arises again from lack of resources. In order to break the vicious circle of blame laying, the working group decided that it should support a campaign targeting Hampshire Constabulary and the Police and Crime Commissioner calling for fairer allocation of resources locally. Paradoxically, with money now available for police recruitment, the number of local officers has actually declined. The campaign is ongoing and has received front page coverage in the Alton Herald after a letter was sent to the Chief Constable with support from the chairs of eighteen towns and parishes, along with six district councilors, all based in Alton.

In response the Chief Constable has promised that concerns raised in the letter will be reviewed by the Assistant Chief Constable and encourages engagement with the district police commander. Our voice is being listened to and the working group intends to follow up these opportunities.

Funding is a key consideration but it is proving difficult to identify available funds during the current health crisis. Worse, given the impact of Covid-19 on the economy it is likely that finding funds externally will not become easier in the coming months. We are focusing on what is feasible.

The report makes a number of recommendations. A summary of these is included at page 15.

The working group aims to deliver a final report in Autumn 2020 though hitting this target will be largely dependent upon council officers returning to their offices where key information is stored.

The team's membership commands a wide range of skills relevant to the delivery of this project. They remain willing to carry out the role for which Beech Parish Council asked that they volunteer.

**Sir Charles Cockburn Bt.**

Chair, Beech Road Safety Working Group

*21 June 2022*

## **1. Background**

1.1 Since its inception in 1999, Beech Parish Council (BPC) has been aware that the speed of traffic through Beech represents villagers' greatest community-related concern. Medstead Road is narrow and winding with occasional high banks. It often lacks sufficient road width to accommodate two vehicles and a pedestrian. The same description applies to Kings Hill

1.2 Apart from a well-maintained short section of footpath at the eastern end of Medstead Road, leading to the A339 junction, there are no footpaths. The footpath is the road and pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians all feel very vulnerable due to speeding traffic.

1.3 BPC has made two previous concerted efforts to address this problem. Both resulted in action being taken (eg, white lines being painted on the road margins to give motorists the appearance of a narrower road, in hope of reducing speeds; more recently, white lines were painted on the carriageway to create sections of virtual footpath: one alongside Bushy Leaze Wood; the other on Kings Hill; both on the South side of the carriageway.

1.4 Concern among vulnerable road users has not diminished. Villagers continue to drive 150 metres to the Village Hall rather than take the risk of walking along Medstead Road.

1.5 Speeds through the village have been subject to measurement using a SID camera and the data analysed. Speeds have not diminished, though they are below the national average.

1.6 Beech is an active community with a well-established Neighbourhood Watch (NHW). As speeding vehicles remained an issue, a Community SpeedWatch (SW) was established in 2016 and run by volunteers over two years. SW is about education, rather than enforcement.

1.7 The volunteers unanimously decided to cease activities after two years when data showed the percentage of drivers speeding through the village at over 35mph, the lowest figure SW was allowed to record and report, remained unchanged at 35%.

1.8 The SW volunteers concluded that their educational efforts were having zero effect. They advised they would only recommence their activities when something substantial changed, ideally regarding enforcement or construction of physical traffic-calming infrastructure.

1.9 In June 2019 a proposal was put to BPC to allocate expenditure of £12.5k to the consultancy arm of Hampshire Highways to produce a study on roads and footpaths. Its aim would be to identify, consider and cost potential solutions to the speeding issue while seeking options to move pedestrians off the road. BPC rejected that proposal.

1.10 In January 2020 BPC held a well-attended public meeting at Beech Village Hall with the aim of finding villagers willing to take on the work of producing the study. Dissenting voices suggested no progress could be made unless money could be found to pay for any solutions; others believed that finding feasible solutions which could command the support of villagers would help drive the process of fund raising for an agreed solution.

1.11 Volunteers agreed to form a Working Group (WG) to develop and deliver the study.

## **2. BRSWG - terms of reference; aims, objectives; membership; reporting**

2.1 In February 2020, the first meeting of Beech Road Safety Working Group (BRSWG) was held. A Chair and Secretary were appointed. No Treasurer was appointed, as no funds would be held. BPC instructed that no money could be spent without prior agreement.

2.2 It was agreed that the Schedule of Work (SoW) proposed in the slides shown at the BVH presentation would provide the WG's terms of reference. The SoW included:

- a) Establish ownership of land bordering the full length of Medstead Road and Kings Hill. Where such land isn't controlled by Hampshire County Council (HCC), establish with the owners whether their land may be included in any footway scheme.*
- b) Devise an ideal road safety scheme (traffic calming measures and/or roadside footways), or one or more options, for the full length of Medstead Road and Kings Hill.*
- c) Consider whether any footways should include provision for other users (e.g. cyclists), and so set an outline specification for footways.*
- d) Establish whether any existing or new off-road footpaths can play a part in the scheme.*
- e) Consider what physical traffic calming elements are required.*
- f) Obtain outline costing for all scheme elements.*
- g) Narrow down and refine feasible options, including checking acceptability with HCC.*
- h) Determine the definitive scheme, probably to be delivered in phases over time.*
- i) Establish available sources of funding.*
- j) Establish a combined funding and delivery project plan.*

**2.3 Aim** - our prime aim would be to produce a report for Beech Parish Council setting out feasible options for dealing with the issues of vulnerable road users sharing the roads with speeding traffic, supported with costed recommendations for action.

**2.4 Objectives** - to fully investigate each of the issues raised in our terms of reference and to make recommendations upon the basis of feasibility, including cost.

**2.5 Next steps** - the WG's report would be considered by BPC. Recommendations would then be put to a village referendum in a formal consultation process.

**2.6 Delivery date** - the report and village consultation process to be completed by July 2021, meaning that our report should be delivered during Autumn 2020. (Delay ref)

**2.7 Strategy** - WG's strategy was two-fold: first, we would seek options for getting pedestrians off the roads, particularly in the village centre and on Kings Hill; second, we would seek options to reduce traffic speeds in the village.

**2.8 Membership** - four members attended the first meeting and in subsequent weeks five further members joined the WG. Three members have since resigned: two owing to work pressures; the third following disagreement over the design of road safety posters.

**2.9 Experience** - members' expertise and experience includes project management; data analysis; highways design; campaigning and lobbying; speed awareness course design; SpeedWatch.

**2.10 Work streams** - four distinct work streams were established enabling individual team members to focus on developing answers to questions raised in our terms of reference, thus dividing the workload and ensuring progress would be made across all the issues. They are:  
1: Pathways 2: Speed management 3: Campaigning and lobbying 4: Funding.

**2.11 Reporting** - update reports on the WG's activities to BPC meetings have been delivered on a monthly basis in person by the Chair.

**2.12 Meetings** - the WG has held face-to-face meetings in February and March and on-line meetings in April and May (two meetings). Our next meeting is planned on 29 June 2020.

**2.13 Minutes** - formal minutes have been taken and submitted to the Parish Clerk and Chair of BPC, along with supporting documents.

**2.14 Declaration of interest** - BRSWG reports to BPC. All interests are declared.

### **3. Worksteam 1: Footpaths**

3.1.1 The WG accepted BPC's view that it would be advisable to move pedestrians off the road wherever possible, so avoiding the need to share the carriageway with motor vehicles.

3.1.2 Thus far, we have looked at three possible solutions, one of which could get early approval but would require more money than is available at this point to the Parish Council. For simplicity, we think of them as 1) Kings Hill to Village Centre path; 2) the 1970s road widening and footpath scheme; 3) the South Perrott option.

3.1.3 **Option 1: Kings Hill to Village Centre** The WG's first priority was to establish whether a footpath could be created which would bring residents from Kings Hill to the village centre and Village Hall while avoiding walking along Medstead Road. (See SoW c and d at 2.2 above)

3.1.4 Such a route would involve travelling from Kings Hill through Bushy Leaze Wood (BLW) to the main entrance on Medstead Road. With good sight lines at that point, it is possible to cross Medstead Road and walk up the Wellhouse Road loop (formerly known as Grange Road) and then in relative safety along Wellhouse Road (ideally enhanced by two virtual footpath white lines) to the pedestrian entrance of Beech Village Hall and Green.

3.1.5 Inquiries with Seong Gi, owner of the privately owned woodland bordering 1 Kings Hill, Medstead Road and the woodland owned by Forestry England, revealed that he was willing in principle to allow a pathway to be constructed across his land.

3.1.6 This path would commence near the driveway to 1 Kings Hill, running through the woods, along a line roughly parallel to Medstead Road, to the main entrance to BLW on the South side of Medstead Road. The path would enable pedestrians to avoid a fairly narrow section of Medstead Road and would link to existing virtual footpaths at both ends.

3.1.7 The WG is aware of an estimate from Poulson for constructing a 1,300 metre long, 1.3-1.5 metre wide path through Seong Gi's woods totaling £53,750 + VAT. This estimate is alluded to in an email but the WG has not seen the original. (See Appendix A: estimate)

#### **3.1.8 Issues related to pursuing Option 1**

a) Though we have been informally assured of his commitment, WG is not aware of any written commitment by Seong Gi or his legal advisers to allow access to his land.

b) Seong Gi's land does not quite extend to the Main Entrance to BLW, falling some 50 metres short. It might be possible to bridge that gap using land adjacent to the road owned by Hampshire Highways (HH) but permission cannot be assumed.

c) The quality of the un-metalled surface of 'Grange Road' which is 'adopted' but 'not maintained' is very poor in places and often deteriorates following heavy rain. This could further deter those pedestrians already put off by the climb to Wellhouse Road.

d) There is no footpath on Wellhouse Road and the speed of local traffic along it has already caused concern among villagers. Sightlines are mostly better than those in Medstead Road, particularly as the latter nears the village centre East of the bridleway crossing near No. 95.

e) Though signs have been placed at the top of 'Grange Road' to dissuade drivers from following satnav, delivery drivers still sometimes use it as a through road. There is no space for both pedestrian and van, and in places nowhere for a pedestrian to go if so confronted.

f) Conversely, an improved surface designed to assist pedestrians might bring with it unwanted encouragement to drivers to use 'Grange Road' as a thoroughfare.

g) The precise line for the proposed path has yet to be established. Poulson's estimate was provided following a site visit on 11 March 2020. It is dependent upon access to Seong Gi's land being gained via the BLW main entrance, which belongs to Forestry England. Permission to use this entrance cannot be assumed and may not be forthcoming.

h) The WG arranged to view 'Grange Road' with HH officers; this was cancelled due to Covid-19.

**3.1.9 Recommendation** - The WG believes that Option 1 should be pursued further as it could help deliver SoW b,c,d,f and g (see 2.2 above). However, it would involve fund raising.

**3.1.10 Option 1a: Footpath through Bushy Leaze Wood** The Kings Hill path could be extended further East running past the main entrance to Bushy Leaze Wood parallel with Medstead Road to the point where the bridleway crosses from BLW towards Beech Recreation Ground.

**3.1.11** The WG has made contact with Forestry England to establish whether permission would be granted to put a path across its land, linking the entrance of the bridleway adjacent to 95 Medstead Road to the main entrance to BLW. **Permission was refused.**

**3.1.12** Forestry England has recently undergone a major re-structuring, added to which the disruption caused by Covid-19 may have resulted in our proposal not being given the fullest consideration. It may be possible to request a review of this decision in the future but is clearly unlikely to make progress in the short term.

**3.1.13** An alternative would be to extend a path eastwards on land owned by HH, adjacent to Medstead Road. However, the land in question is wooded, very uneven and contains a number of troughs acting as soak-aways, which capture flood-water from Medstead Road. This will make constructing a footpath a particularly tough task and potentially very costly.

**3.1.14.** A virtual footpath is already in place along the South carriageway of Medstead Road. This path takes the form of two white lines painted on the carriageway and runs along a part of the road where sight lines in both directions are quite good and the road wide enough to accommodate a pedestrian and two cars. It links the bridleway to BLW main entrance and so imitates the proposed route through the wood. However, it does not achieve the objective of getting vulnerable road users off the road and, though research needs to be done to justify this view, it does not appear to be much used, possibly because a track through BLW is available.

**3.1.15 Recommendation** - The WG does not propose to pursue **Option 1a** any further.

**3.2.1 Option 2: 1970s road widening and footpath scheme** SoW a) requires that the WG should *"Establish ownership of land bordering the full length of Medstead Road and Kings Hill. Where such land isn't controlled by Hampshire County Council (HCC), establish with the owners whether their land may be included in any footway scheme."* In the early 1970s Hampshire County Council (HCC) devised a scheme to widen Medstead Road and install a footpath on the South side of the road running through the centre of the village West to the bridleway where BLW commences; and also along the South side of Kings Hill.

3.2.2 Under this scheme the required land would be compulsorily purchased. Once it became clear that their land would be acquired, some owners entered into negotiations with HCC; in exchange for agreed compensation, the County acquired an option to build a footpath over part of those owners' properties. This option was known as a 'dedication' of land.

3.2.3 Other owners refused to negotiate. While CPOs were drawn up, it is not clear that all the refusniks, or indeed any, were actually served with a CPO, meaning that some properties have frontages that are subject neither to the ownership of, nor dedication to HCC.

3.2.4 Unaware of 'dedications', the WG put considerable time and resource into trying to establish ownership of land but, while we are now clearer about the extent of Hampshire Highways-owned land, it has proved impossible to establish with complete accuracy whether there is an unbroken line of land owned by, or dedicated to, HCC to enable construction of a footpath.

3.2.5 In early May the WG Chair received an email from Mr Colin Bengree, a villager with some insight into the history, which in effect attacked the WG's methodology. The WG had set out to establish information about 'ownership' of land, which we believed would be held by the Land Registry. With help from HH we gained access to the relevant records but were not much wiser.

3.2.6 The WG's approach was undermined by the discovery that 'dedications', or options acquired over land, are frequently **not** recorded by the Land Registry. Ownership would therefore be irrelevant where an unregistered dedication existed, since HCC would have a continuing right to construct a footpath over the dedicated land, theoretically in perpetuity.

3.2.7 Following Mr Bengree's intervention, the WG made contact with the relevant HH officer, Mr Mark Housby. He believes a footpath could in fact be built along HCC owned and dedicated land.

3.2.8 However he cannot establish the existence of an unbroken line; nor can he clarify what land is actually HH-owned (ie compulsorily acquired), what land is dedicated, and what land is subject to neither qualification, because he does not have access to the relevant documents as he is currently in Covid-19 lockdown.

3.2.9 Mr Housby has undertaken to search HH's deeds safe on his return to the office so that we can finally establish the detailed position. It is possible he will return to the office in July 2020.

3.2.10 No further progress can be made on this option ahead of Mr Housby's investigation.

### 3.2.11 **Issues relating to Option 2**

a) Dedications were supposed to be attached to the original deeds of the properties in question but quite often during the intervening years these have become detached. Some present day owners may not be aware of the dedication held by HCC over their land; nor would such dedications be revealed by a Land Registry search.

b) Other owners are aware but may have received a copy of a letter dated 1979 addressed to the owner of 75 Medstead Road from a local solicitor having obtained "...confirmation from the Hampshire County Council Estates Officer that the Council no longer wish to acquire the small piece of your frontage because the road widening scheme has now been shelved". It is possible that some property owners are relying on that 40 year old reassurance.

c) Mark Housby, in email conversation with Colin Bengree, raised the issue of relying on 40 year old dedications, particularly where land owners might be unaware of their existence and who had in some cases constructed garages and other infrastructure across dedicated land.



d) The WG's view is that we would lose support among villagers if we recommend a proposal that would result in their being forced to tear down expensively constructed infrastructure in order to build a footpath on the basis of dedications made over 40 years ago.

**3.2.12 Recommendation** - Option 2 should remain in place until clarification has been received from Mark Housby, following which a decision can be made on whether to pursue it further. Even if a continuous line of owned or dedicated land exists, construction of a footpath on the South side of Medstead Road and Kings Hill is unlikely to command the support of all villagers.

**3.3.1 Option 3: The 'South Perrott' option** This scheme comes from the village of South Perrott on the Dorset/Devon borders. The A356 runs through the village with a carriageway that appears no wider than Medstead Road and is bounded by high stone walls. For much of the route through the village there is no footpath. As with Medstead Road, the footpath is the road with no room to accommodate vehicles travelling in opposite directions and pedestrians for much of its length.

**3.3.2** This traffic calming scheme created a footpath along the road with a 20mm (3/4") raised curb and a different coloured surface highlighting the virtual footpath thus created. With the centre line removed the scheme appears to drivers to be little wider than a single track road. It is possible for vehicles to pass one another by mounting the footpath. However, it is understood that this manoeuvre tends not to happen at speed owing to the drivers' sense that they have mounted an area reserved for pedestrians, which is reinforced by the low kerb and different coloured surface.

**3.3.3** The South Perrott scheme (see photo at Appendix B) has been in place for some 8-10 years and so may be considered a success. Its A-road status appears not to have been a bar to its design, meaning that the model should be applicable to Medstead Road with its C-road status.

**3.3.4** The WG has engaged with villagers in South Perrott to find out more about the scheme's installation and renewal, along with the initial and ongoing costs. That work is ongoing.

**3.3.5 Recommendation** - The WG believes that Option 3) should be investigated further since it offers the opportunity to fulfill SoWs b), c), d) and e). It also avoids the issues arising from SoW a); as the footpath would be built on the carriageway there would be no need to acquire private land.

## **4. Workstream 2: Speed Management**

**4.1.1** The WG's two-fold strategy is a) to get pedestrians off the road and b) to slow the speed of motor traffic along the roads, particularly Medstead Road which is a rat run.

**4.1.2** Speeds of traffic on Medstead Road are measured by a SID camera which is moved around a number of sites. Data from the camera is downloaded and analysed on a monthly basis.

**4.1.3** Data has also been gathered over a two-year period by SpeedWatch and remains available.

**4.1.4** We also have access to the traffic count and speed data from earlier 7 day surveys, dated 2000, 2002, and 2009 which provide historic trends. These surveys were funded by BPC.

**4.1.5** There are two ways of reducing traffic speeds through the village: the first would involve the installation of physical traffic calming infrastructure, such as speed humps and platforms, chicanes involving shifts of right-of-way priority, and barriers giving priority to vehicles exiting the village (as in Selborne); the alternative is to reduce the speed limit, though a combination of traffic calming and speed limit reduction is possible (as in Selborne).

**4.1.6** It is well established that physical infrastructure is the most effective means of ensuring that speeds are reduced, but this solution can be very expensive and it is known that HCC is strongly

resistant to the installation of road humps, partly due to their impact on buses (Medstead Road is on a little used scheduled bus route, and school bus route used daily in term time), partly because the emergency services don't like them. Medstead Road is a key through route.

4.1.7 The speed limit throughout the village is 30 mph from the Abbey to the junction with Snod Hill, where, inexplicably, it rises to 40 mph, just metres short of the dangerous A339 junction.

4.1.8 The WG believes that if speeds were reduced to 20 mph in the centre of the village from the existing footpath to the bridleway crossing next to BLW, and from the corner by 1 Kings Hill to Alton Abbey, pedestrians would feel less threatened by passing vehicles. On both these stretches of road there is no alternative but to walk along the narrow, winding, high-banked carriageway.

4.1.9 Should it prove impossible to construct a footpath along the narrow stretches of Medstead Road and Kings Hill, reducing the speed limit for traffic might alone provide a solution to the concerns of vulnerable road users, though enforcement would be required to ensure compliance.

4.1.10 The section of Medstead Road running from the corner below 1 Kings Hill and the bridleway crossing adjacent to 95 Medstead Road could remain at the existing 30 mph limit provided a footpath is constructed through the privately owned section of BLW.

4.1.11 Speeds along Wellhouse Road - almost exclusively vehicles belonging to residents and delivery drivers - have been of concern to pedestrians, dog walkers and equestrians, for whom the link to the bridleway from Alton to Thedden uses the road after traversing the Recreation Ground.

4.1.12 Wellhouse Road has no footpath. Unlike sections of Medstead Road and Kings Hill, there has been no historic scheme to install a footpath and it is believed that the verges are entirely owned by the respective residential landowners. Pedestrians have no right to walk along the verges, though these do offer a refuge from speeding vehicles for much of the road's length.

4.1.13 There is space along most of Wellhouse Road to construct a footpath. However, this would require either the cooperation of residents or the imposition of CPOs by HCC. In any event, the pleasing rural look and feel of Wellhouse Road would be changed by the imposition of a footpath. Furthermore, BPC would most likely have to fund the acquisition of the necessary land.

4.1.14 If a 20 mph speed limit can be achieved along sections of Medstead Road and Kings Hill, the WG believes that a 20 mph limit should also be introduced throughout Wellhouse Road too.

4.1.15 The WG believes a virtual footpath (two white lines) should also be installed, not least to remind local drivers that where no footpath exists, pedestrians have right-of-way.

4.1.16 The benefits to vulnerable road users of reducing speed limits to 20 mph in residential areas is well understood. Department of Transport Advisory 7/93 shows that a pedestrian hit by a motor vehicle at 20 mph has a 1 in 20 chance of becoming a fatality. At 30 mph the chances rise to 9 in 20; and at 40 mph, a speed at or above which 950 vehicles drove through Beech during one week in May 2020, the chances of becoming a pedestrian fatality rise to 17 in 20.

4.1.17 **Recommendation** The WG believes it should investigate the creation of 20 mph zones in the centre of the village on Medstead Road, Kings Hill and Wellhouse Road.

## 4.2. Issues relating to reducing the speed limit to 20 mph

a) HCC introduced a number of 20 mph pilot schemes in 2012. In 2018, following a review HCC decided not continue these pilots, though significantly none have been removed. Locally these schemes remain in place in Medstead and Selborne. At both sites, villagers complain that the limit is not enforced but accept that it is largely self-enforcing and that average speeds have declined.



- b) HCC's decision to drop the 20 mph pilot schemes has been attacked by "20's Plenty for Us", a national campaigning organisation. Its Head of Campaigns South, Adrian Arendt, has published a critique of the HCC decision claiming the data does not support the conclusions reached, among other major flaws. (See Appendix C) In particular, the critique attacks HCC's approach with regard to Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) figures. Hampshire Highways will not invest in speed limiting infrastructure or schemes which cannot show they will result in a reduction in KSI numbers.
- c) If there are no KSIs, then there is no problem and so no need to fix it so far as HCC is concerned.
- d) Adrian Arendt points out that the issue is not about speeds, injuries and deaths; it is about how we live and whether we choose to live in fear. The anger felt by Beech residents, particularly those who live on Medstead Road and Kings Hill, is the result of frequently being made to feel fearful by inconsiderate motorists.
- e) HCC is resistant to reducing speed limits because it is aware the police will not support the necessary enforcement. Hampshire Constabulary routinely objects to Traffic Regulation Orders, the necessary precursor to any speed reduction measure, citing lack of enforcement resources.
- f) HCC's budgets are seriously constrained which means that it is severely limited in the range of solutions that it is willing to consider. Cyclists in the locality are well aware that roads are poorly maintained, encountering frequent potholes, broken surface edging and potentially lethal loose gravel, such as that seen in Medstead Road after any downpour of rain. Following the Covid-19 emergency, HCC is unlikely to see an increase in income from Council Tax or Government grant.
- g) It is clear that HCC will continue to be resistant to 20 mph speed limit schemes. This policy is unlikely to be reviewed unless enough pressure is placed upon the County by an organised lobby.

#### **4.3 Enforcement of existing 30 mph speed limit**

4.3.1 The 30 mph speed limit is enforced in two ways: first, through the use of a SID camera reminding drivers of their speed, though vehicle registration numbers are not recorded; second, through the occasional, rare visit of a police enforcement van equipped with camera, which can and does lead to speeding motorists being ticketed and fined along with points deductions.

4.3.2 Data provided by the SID shows that the visits by the police enforcement van, which does not operate during the rush hours, are not sufficiently frequent to deter speeding drivers.

4.3.3 Enforcement was provided by two other means, now no longer available to the village. First, a number of 30 mph reminder discs were removed from their posts on the instructions of Hampshire Highways (HH). Second, SpeedWatch operated over a two-year period between 2016-2018 when volunteers quit because data showed their efforts were not having the desired effect.

4.3.4 The WG has established that the reminder discs were removed because where a 30 mph speed limit is in place purely due to the existence of regularly positioned street lighting (as it is Beech) such discs prevent police enforcement. It is considered that the existence of the street lights alone should be sufficient to remind motorists that they are in a 30 mph area.

4.3.5 The WG asked HH officers for evidence of what appears to be a nonsensical ruling. None has been forthcoming, only an assertion that the rule is of "long-standing".

4.3.6 The WG has photographed Medstead Road/Kings Hill. Street lights are placed at the correct intervals but lamp posts are mostly invisible, buried within hedges; so the 'reminder' effect is lost.

4.3.7 The SW team might be persuaded to recommence activities, but only if either police enforcement is improved or physical traffic calming infrastructure is installed to reduce speeds.

4.3.8 SW's enforcement role was very limited. The team was allowed to use its camera to record the speed of a passing vehicle but not the vehicle registration, which had to be written down by hand in the event that a vehicle was travelling at 35 mph or more up to a maximum of 49 mph. The team believed that some vehicles were travelling faster than 49 mph but the camera did not show any higher speed. Drivers travelling at between 35 and 49 mph were reported to the police.

4.3.9 Drivers were sent a letter by the police informing them that they had been seen speeding and warning them as to their future behaviour. A second offence followed the same process. A third offence resulted in a visit to the driver by a police officer with a personal warning. No fines were issued, nor points deducted. The WG has learned that those who receive a visit go onto the police computer and if caught speeding by a police officer are more likely to receive a ticket/fine/points deduction because records shows they have 'previous'. This is not widely known.

4.3.10 Once drivers realised that they would receive no more than a slapped wrist after receiving notification from SW, they continued to speed through the village, with one woman giving the finger to SW volunteers as she passed by, often at the maximum speed shown by the camera.

4.3.11 The cost of going through the SW enforcement process is £300. It is not clear who pays.

#### 4.4 Encouraging Speed Compliance - Posters

4.4.1 Recently it has become possible to erect posters (semi-permanent signs with a life of 4-5 years) encouraging motorists to be aware of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

4.4.2 Both the design of posters and their positioning is subject to approval by HH and, if positioned on private land, subject to planning approval by the local planning authority, EHDC.

4.4.3 The WG saw an opportunity for early progress and having agreed poster designs at a special meeting held on 7 May 2020, submitted them for BPC approval in relation to a request for a £600 allocation of funds to purchase both posters and two additional posts, having established that posters could be mounted to existing posts provided they were not speed limits or stop signs.

4.4.4 Unfortunately, the agreed posters were not those submitted to the 20 May BPC meeting.

4.4.5 It has since become clear that the positioning of the new posts is subject to HH approval.

4.4.6 The poster designs originally agreed have now been submitted both to BPC and HH. It has since become clear that HH's process for approving posters is not yet fully in place. At the time of writing it is not clear when approval of the re-submitted designs will be granted.

4.4.7 Consequently, the hiatus caused by the submission of the wrong designs is unlikely to have resulted in any additional delay to the installation of the posters, which are awaiting approval.

4.4.8 Once HH has approved poster designs, volunteers will help install the posters and new posts. BPC has confirmed with its insurers that volunteers are covered to carry out this work.

4.4.9 Once installed, six posters will be moved around four sites. The SID will track their impact.

4.4.10 **Recommendation** The WG believes the poster campaign and SID tracking should go ahead.

#### 4.5 Encouraging speed compliance - ANPR cameras

4.5.1 Though the risks arising from pedestrians and other vulnerable road users sharing the road with motor vehicles moving at 30 mph (see above at 4.1.15) carriage are well understood, the WG considers that even if no reduction to 20 mph could be achieved, persuading motorists to observe the existing speed limit would represent a good outcome, responding to *SoWs b,d and e* (at 2.2)

4.5.2 Prior to the establishment of BRSWG, BPC had been asked to consider the replacement of its SID camera with an ANPR camera. The latter is more sophisticated in that it records registration numbers as well as the speed of the vehicle concerned. The price of the hardware rises from around £2.5-3.5k for the SID to £5-6k for the ANPR. There are additional costs related to the movement of cameras to different positions around the village and the downloading of data.

4.5.3 At the price quoted it is believed BPC could cover the costs from its own resources. BPC has not committed to the purchase of an ANPR camera.

4.5.4 The WG was made aware of cameras that appeared in May 2019 along Heathrow Airport's perimeter roads. These are ANPR cameras mounted on posts with a sign warning "average speed camera". The effect on motorist behaviour was immediate and on-going. Average speeds remain well below those experienced previously on a route much used by cabs and delivery drivers.

4.5.5 The WG approached the suppliers of the Heathrow ANPR cameras and requested fuller details on their operation and enforcement. The suppliers were well known to the WG having supplied BPC's SID camera along with, more recently, quotes for standard ANPR cameras.

4.5.6 It was established that the 'average speed' cameras at Heathrow work along the same lines as SpeedWatch - ie, two warning letters, followed by visit from a police officer. Enforcement is the joint responsibility of Heathrow Airport Limited and the Metropolitan Police.

4.5.7 A key benefit of an average speed system is that ANPRs can be recalibrated to reflect altered speed limits and could take into account differing speed limits through the village.

4.5.8 This appeared to be a promising solution which could be achieved within BPC's existing financial resources without the need for further fund raising. However, it is available to Heathrow largely because the roads concerned are not public but owned by Heathrow Airport Limited and special rules apply. It is not clear whether such cameras could be deployed on public roads.

**4.5.9 Recommendation** - The average speed camera option requires further research.

4.5.10 The supplier put us in touch with a police officer in County Durham, Ellis Hutchinson, who has mounted an ANPR in a van run by SpeedWatch. Occasionally, PCSOs are deployed too. The benefit is that the camera records the registration numbers, which means there is no requirement for writing down numbers - it seems many errors were made in transcription and letters were sent to the wrong people, with predictably unhappy results.

4.5.11 This system does not have Home Office approval and, again, enforcement follows the same lines as SpeedWatch with letters being sent by the police. Driver education remains the chief aim, but it has been very effective in reducing speeds locally since its first deployment in August 2019. Ellis Hutchinson believes that people get used to static signs and that the van-mounted ANPR camera is effective because its deployment is random and because of the van's SpeedWatch sign.

4.5.12 The £26k cost of purchasing the van and camera was met by three participating villages. Durham Constabulary paid for the vehicle's on-going insurance and running costs.

4.5.13 The WG believes that a system such as that deployed in Durham could be equally effective in Beech with the cost shared around a number of villages, though SW would have to be involved.

4.5.14 As of January 2020 there are no longer any PCSOs in the Alton and Rural sector, which includes Beech and neighbouring villages. It is unclear whether a van-mounted ANPR would be supported by local police as it is in Durham. This should be raised with senior local police officers.

4.5.15 Crucially, a van-mounted camera would require the re-establishment of Beech Community SpeedWatch and for that team to work in close coordination with SpeedWatch teams in other local towns and villages. It is unclear whether this solution would meet the SW team's stipulations.

4.5.16 Representations have been made to the Chief Constable of Hampshire Constabulary, stating dissatisfaction with the paucity of the local police presence. The CC's response suggests now may be an opportune time to raise the question of police support for a van-mounted camera.

4.5.17 **Recommendation.** The WG believes that both the possibility of installing an average speed ANPR system, which might be achieved at a cost of around £20k, and the possibility of acquiring a van mounted system should be the subject of further research. It will also be necessary to establish whether the move from hand-written records of the registration number of speeding vehicles to camera records represents sufficient change to persuade the Beech Community SpeedWatch team to recommence their activities on the basis that enforcement will be improved.

## 5. Workstream 3: Lobbying and campaigning

5.1 The WG understood from the outset that if we were to recommend an ideal solution (*SoW b*) this would likely run into difficulties, owing either to the lack of funds, or due to HH officers being confronted with policy restrictions which limited their ability to support preferred solutions.

5.2 It became clear that any ideal solution that involved speed limit enforcement, or reduction, would also require the support of Hampshire Constabulary.

5.3 It was decided the WG should engage both with relevant council officers and with councillors. Research was conducted to establish who wields sufficient power or influence to bring about the changes that might be required by an ideal solution and contact established with them.

5.4 It was also understood that the WG might have to lobby for preferred outcomes and money to fund them and that a campaign would involve delivery of consistent messages to all audiences.

5.5 It was also recognised that reducing speeds of traffic through the village would involve much greater enforcement, and/or the installation of physical traffic calming infrastructure. Increased enforcement would in turn require the active support of council officers and senior police officers. Similarly, as police resistance to imposing lower speed limits due to lack of resources is often cited by council officers as a reason for not adopting a particular scheme, so it became clear that the targets of any campaign to deliver change would need to include both policy makers and police.

5.6 Beech has a well-run and well-supported Neighbourhood Watch. In January 2020, in the face of rising crime levels locally, Beech NHW learned that the Alton and Rural sector was to lose its three remaining PCSOs. Two full-time police officers were left to provide community police services for some 35,000 residents, demonstrating that police resources are seriously stretched.

5.7 Paradoxically, the recruitment of 20,000 police officers promised by central government at the 2019 general election has made matters worse. Two of the PCSOs applied for full-time posts. It is known that once their training is complete they will be posted elsewhere. The remaining very experienced PCSO was posted to the troubled families programme, one of Hampshire Constabulary's four priorities. Resources for local speed enforcement are similarly stretched.

5.8 It recently emerged that EHDC funds paid for the cost of the three PCSOs. This arrangement was unilaterally abandoned by the police, who stated they could no longer support the structure. Neither officers nor councillors at EHDC have offered an explanation for the police action and appear to be in the dark themselves. It seems clear that EHDC would have continued the scheme.

5.9 The WG decided that the concerns around the removal of the PCSOs could be exploited to develop a local campaign to press for greater resources to be delivered to Alton and Rural both with regard to crime prevention and detection and, crucially, around speed limit enforcement.

5.10 The object of the campaign was to raise the issue of very low local police numbers and poor levels of resourcing, including speed limit enforcement on rat runs locally, including in Beech.

5.11 A second objective was to open up conversations with local SpeedWatch teams and Chairs whose Parishes had particularly problems with rat running vehicles. This would facilitate joint representations both to council officers and police officers with a view to improving enforcement.

5.12 A key longer term objective is to establish BRSWG as an influential voice in driving policy change, which will be important in persuading council officers to agree to support our approach to speed reduction and enforcement, once our ideal scheme has been agreed. This will take time.

5.13 A letter to Hampshire's Chief Constable (CC), copied to the Police and Crime Commissioner, was drafted and sent for approval and signature by the Chairs of 18 local town and parish councils.

5.14 All eighteen Chairs signed. In following up the drafts to encourage Chairs to sign, contact was made with local SpeedWatch teams, whose experience mostly echoed that of Beech.

5.15 The draft was sent to 14 District and 2 County Councillors whose wards lie in Alton and Rural. Six signed, all with wards in the town of Alton, whose Town Council also supported the draft. Of the remaining 8 district councillors, 2 declined to sign and the rest did not respond. Of those who declined to sign, one was the district councillor whose ward includes Beech. Neither County Councillor responded, including the Councillor whose ward includes Beech.

5.16. It took eight weeks from the distribution of the draft letter to its despatch to the Chief Constable, which provided time for Parish Council Chairs to consult with colleagues. District and County councillors were given two weeks to respond, having been informed that all 18 Town and Parish Council Chairs had put their names to the draft letter of complaint.

5.17 The Chair of BRSWG has now received a response from the Chief Constable, which accepts that rising crime rates and speeding traffic causes legitimate concern in rural communities.

5.18 The response tasks the Assistant Chief Constable, who leads on local policing and is also responsible for the Strategic Rural Crime Board, to give consideration to the concerns set out in the letter of complaint. There is no commitment to increasing community police numbers locally.

5.19 The Chief Constable's response invites the WG Chair to make contact with the District Commander, while stating that rural crime is a priority for his command, with a new Rural Crime Tactical Board established to 'bring communities together' to share information.

5.20 In effect, the response encourages engagement with the established consultative framework between the police and local authority representatives. This could prove helpful in opening doors.

5.21 The WG understands that the relationship between EHDC, HCC and police is very good. However, the concern is that if relations become too cosy, those involved will be increasingly reluctant to refer to the elephant in the room. Insufficient resources are being allocated locally.

5.22 No amount of consultative machinery can disguise the reality that the PCSOs have gone and Alton and Rural has only two full-time community police officers to police some 35,000 people.

5.23 Meanwhile, there is next to no speed limit enforcement. Only continuing pressure will result in more resources being allocated to deal with problems such as burglary, speeding, and anti-social behaviour, which the Chief Constable accepts has a "devastating impact on the quality of life and confidence of all our communities."

5.24 **Recommendations** The WG should continue with its campaign which has seen early success in achieving its stated objectives: delivering clear, consistent messages; engaging with others who share our concerns; demanding and obtaining a review of priorities; developing a position of influence among those who have the power to make policy changes, which will help deliver an ideal solution for the speeding traffic problems confronted by villagers in Beech. In essence, it's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease and we should maintain pressure for better enforcement.

5.25 The WG considers that a long-term campaigning goal should be to seek a review of HCC's existing 20 mph policy. Police support will be essential in a successful campaign for a 20 mph limit.

5.26 Villagers can help by sticking to the speed limit and travelling at 20 mph in the village centre and Kings Hill, thus helping to educate speeding drivers using Beech as a rat run.

## 6. Workstream 4: Funding

6.1 This is the least developed of the four workstreams, reflecting the WG's view that we should conduct the research to establish feasible options first and seek ways of funding them thereafter.

6.2 Wherever possible, the WG has sought to cost options as its work has progressed.

6.3 Consideration has invariably been given to whether any solution could be paid for directly from BPC's limited funds. The Parish Council is now in its 21<sup>st</sup> year of operation and therefore does not have access to the substantial reserves which might have built up by a longer-lived parish.

6.4 BRSWG understands that some money remains available in the developers funds held by EHDC but these are limited and would not support any solution which involved expenditure of more than tens of thousands of pounds.

6.5 BRSWG is aware that in the past villagers have been willing to contribute their own funds for example for the building of an expanded and renewed village hall. If an ideal solution proposed by the WG could command the support of the village at a referendum, then it may be possible to tap this potential source of funds. It is understood that no referendum can be held before May 2021.

6.6 Some of the WG's work has reached a hiatus owing to the Covid-19 lockdown with displaced officers unable to provide advice or precise and detailed responses to questions. The impact of Covid19 on public funds is likely to be substantial and long lasting. It follows that any ideal solution that relies heavily on public funding is likely to face severe difficulties.

6.7 **Recommendation** The WG should continue its work to identify an ideal but feasible solution. Whether the solution is capable of attracting funds will to a large extent determine its feasibility. Equally, if no solution is proposed, there can be no question of attracting funds. Money is unlikely to become available for a project whose details have not been fully costed and thought through.



## 7. Summary of recommendations

7.1 The WG believes Pathways Option 1) should be pursued further as it could help deliver SoW a, b, c, d, f and g (see 2.2 above). However, this option would involve substantial fund raising.

7.2 With a view to delivering Pathways - Option 1) the WG should seek a written in-principle commitment to the construction of a pathway across Seong-Gi's woodland. See Appendix A for an estimate of costs. Note, the estimate includes an added sum for an eastward extension from Bushy Leaze Woods entrance to bridleway.

7.3 The WG should engage with Hampshire Highways to establish if in principle it is willing to allow the construction of a path on land owned by HCC, either to bridge the gap between the path through the privately-owned woods and the BLW main entrance; or alternatively to run along the section of Medstead Road running from the corner near I Kings Hill to BLW main entrance.

7.4 The WG recommends that Option 1a) eastwards extension to bridleway adjacent to 95 Medstead Road should not be pursued.

7.5 The WG considered that Pathways Option 2) should remain in place pending clarification, about owned and dedicated land on the South side of Medstead Road and Kings Hill, has been received from HCC, following which a decision can be made on whether to pursue it further.

7.6 The WG believes that Option 3) South Perrot scheme should be investigated further since it offers the opportunity to fulfill SoWs b), c), d) and e). It also avoids the issues arising from SoW a); as the footpath would be built on the carriageway there would be no need to acquire private land.

7.7 The WG believes it should investigate the creation of 20 mph zones in Medstead Road and Kings Hill.

7.8 If a 20 mph speed limit can be achieved along sections of Medstead Road and Kings Hill, the WG believes that a 20 mph limit should also be introduced throughout Wellhouse Road.

7.9 If no 20 mph speed limit can be introduced on Wellhouse Road, the WG believes a virtual footpath should be installed to remind local drivers that where no footpath exists, pedestrians have right-of-way on the road.

7.10 The WG believes the poster campaign and SID tracking should go ahead, subject to approval.

7.11 The average speed camera option requires further research.

7.12 The WG believes that both the possibility of installing a) an average speed ANPR system, and b) acquiring a van mounted system should be the subject of further research. Beech SW should also be consulted about their willingness to recommence activities using a van mounted ANPR.

7.13 The WG should continue with its campaign, which has seen early success and we should maintain pressure both for better police enforcement and police support for SpeedWatch.

7.14 The WG considers that a long-term campaigning goal should be to seek a review of HCC's existing 20 mph policy. Police support will be essential in a successful campaign for a 20 mph limit.

7.15 The WG believes villagers can help by sticking to the speed limit and travelling at 20 mph in the village centre and Kings Hill, thus helping to educate speeding drivers using Beech as a rat run.

7.16 The WG should continue its work to identify an ideal and feasible solution, recognising that identifying and attracting sufficient funds for an ideal solution will impact on its feasibility.

7.17 Let us get on with our job.

## 8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The WG has produced a large amount of work in a short time in the current health emergency.
- 8.2 The WG membership contains an appropriate range of skills to enable it to complete the task it has been set by Beech Parish Council and remains willing to carry out the necessary work.
- 8.3 The WG's campaigning workstream has produced an early success, which will open doors to senior police officers enabling us to lobby for better enforcement and better support for Community SpeedWatch. This success must be followed up.
- 8.4 The Covid-19 emergency has resulted in some options not being fully explored. Once the lockdown has relaxed we expect to get answers to the questions raised with council officers.
- 8.5 Once the designs have been approved by Hampshire Highways the recommended poster campaign and SID tracking scheme opens up an early opportunity to demonstrate to villagers that the WG is active and taking opportunities to educate drivers, encouraging them to comply with the speed limit. The support of the village will be needed to drive the installation and funding of an ideal solution. The poster campaign will instil confidence that BPC is going down the right track.
- 8.6 Questions have been raised concerning the future of BRSWG with suggestions that the study should now be put back into the hands of Hampshire Highways. The WG considers that while there is merit in continuing to liaise with HH who are acting both in a regulatory and advisory role, it is generally unwise to ask people to mark their own homework. Solutions will inevitably be based upon an analysis of what officers see as HCC's policy at that time, which will restrict their vision. In the view of the WG, paucity of vision was not what Beech Parish Council was seeking when making its appeal to villagers at the village hall meeting in January. We have good ideas and have only just got started. Delivery will pick up speed as officers return to work. As this report demonstrates, there are worthwhile options well worth pursuing.

**Recommendation** Let us get on with our job.

## Appendix A - Estimate to construct path through woods

On Fri, 13 Mar 2020 at 10:57, Katy Poulson <[katy.poulsonplant@gmail.com](mailto:katy.poulsonplant@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Dear Tony

Following our site meeting on Wednesday, I am pleased to provide you with the following estimate to create a new footpath inside the woodland shown. The woodland is mainly privately owned with a smaller section belonging to the Forestry Commission  
Measurements given 1.3 km x 1.5 wide footpath

To clear the footpath line of trees and overhanging vegetation

To provide all plant, labour and materials.

To set up compound within the FC section

To excavate path tray and cast neatly aside arisings

To supply and lay a Geotextile membrane

To lay 100mm depth of chalk base and consolidate

To overlay 100mm depth of Fittleworth Sandstone and consolidate

To supply and install Twin wall UPVC culvert pipe in ditch line that delineates FC property and the private wood

Please note the above will be in line with the HCC footpath specification (attached)

To leave site tidy.

Price £53,750.00 + VAT

Appendix B - South Perrott, Dorset: before and after



# Appendix C - 20's Plenty for Us: Summary Critique of Hampshire Policy

**20's Plenty for Us calls for Hampshire County Council to withdraw its report on the 20mph Pilot Programme and to press ahead with rolling out 20mph in residential streets across the county.**

## Introduction

20's Plenty for Us has conducted a detailed review of the report dated 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018 into Hampshire County Council's 20mph Pilot Programme<sup>1</sup>. We draw different conclusions from the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment. Rather than rejecting 20mph, HCC should recognise the benefits that the pilot schemes have already brought to local communities in Hampshire and extend 20mph to all residential streets, including narrow residential rural lanes and town and village centres in the county.

## Summary conclusions

The report itself has a number of failings:

- draws the wrong conclusions from the data provided;
- local community support for 20mph schemes ignored;
- latest research on 20mph not considered;
- inaccurate references to Department for Transport's guidelines on setting local speed limits; and
- success criteria of the schemes not set out clearly, making it hard to judge "success"

Most Local Authorities that have introduced 20mph have seen major benefits in terms of community support and engagement, lower speeds, casualties reduced by around 20%<sup>2</sup> and increased levels of cycling and walking. It is clear that the pilot schemes are supported by the community and have brought benefits. However, if HCC has not seen the same level of benefits of 20mph as other Local Authorities, then it needs to examine the pilot schemes in detail and learn lessons about how to achieve greater benefits. These could include:

- ensure that the schemes are sufficiently wide and in appropriate places;
- more education to drivers and enforcement, including promoting Community Speedwatch;
- assessing whether more signs or road engineering measures are required; and
- whether there is sufficient budget.

None of the matters are explored in the report.

## Recommendation

- Withdraw the recommendations to cancel further 20mph schemes;
- Council officers to investigate lessons learned from the pilot schemes;
- Council officers to report back with recommendations about how 20mph schemes can be implemented more successfully; and
- Use the findings to roll out 20mph across all residential streets and in town and village centres.

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<sup>1</sup> "Review of Residential 20mph Pilot Programme"

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Bristol (casualties down 14%); Calderdale (22%); Edinburgh (24%); Newcastle (25%); Portsmouth (20%)