



## **Traffic & Pedestrian Safety Problems in the Village.**

Traffic Action Group (TAG) and the Parish Council

### **Village-wide Consultation Event**

#### **Consultation Evaluation Report**

#### **Contextual Notes**

##### Village Centre traffic management potential changes

The range of proposals displayed during the consultation process at The Fleur public house i.e. those across the High Street, Bell Hill and Farleigh Road emerged as a result of the content of a report independently commissioned by the Parish Council concerning traffic management in the context of continued and potential new build plans for the village. The report, entitled "Transport Assessment on behalf of Norton St Philip Parish Council", was completed by Paul Greatwood, Director, IMA Transport Planning Ltd in December 2013.

This report was submitted to Somerset County Council Highways department who rejected its content. The Parish Council commissioned a rebuttal to the rejection which itself was also rejected. As a result Bob Hewitt of Stuart Michael Associates was asked to take the Transport Assessment report and create a series of suggestions as to how the concerns set out in that report could be mitigated.

With a draft traffic management plan in hand, and in light of an extraordinarily well supported "stop the HGV's" village petition, the Parish Council and Traffic Action Group (TAG) Chairs attended a meeting with the Leader of Somerset County Council organised by David Warburton (prospective conservative MP for Somerton and Frome) to place the various NSP traffic concerns before him. As a result of the visit Linda Oliver and David Smallacombe were asked to carry out a village consultation to identify the views of the wider community in Norton St Philip to the draft possibilities for increased pedestrian safety and better traffic flow management. The consultation process was therefore born in the context of these various activities which had emerged via the Parish Council and its related TAG.

##### By-Pass

At the outset of the consultation process a number of people who had previously been involved in the TAG group made it clear that the 1974 plan, put forward by Somerset County Highways Department, to build a by-pass was, in their view, the only useful suggestion to counter the traffic problem in the village. The TAG

chair, in conjunction with the Parish Council, agreed to its inclusion on the basis that for a consultation to be proper it must include a range of views, even if those suggested were unlikely to be fully supported by the residents of the village and/or the District or County Council.

In light of this agreed position David Smallacombe asked Bob Hewitt of Stuart Michael Associates to create a replica plan of the 1974 drawing to put alongside the drawings of "real time" possible changes to traffic management and pedestrian safety across the village plans he had already drawn up. Though the by-pass idea was floated by Somerset Highways, it was not adopted by the County at the time, nor has the replica been shown to them or to Mendip District Council.

During the consultation process at The Fleur and in subsequent meetings David has made it clear that the inclusion of the by-pass drawing in the consultation has been to set an "historical context" and act as a comparison with the other suggested changes and in particular to set out the financial viability of one set of possibilities against the other. Neither Lochailort nor Stuart Michael Associates has ever suggested a bypass or expressed a view or opinion about the presence of the by-pass plan being part of the consultation process.

Since the consultation process got underway it has come to our notice that people in the village have become concerned about the possibility of a by-pass being developed in an attempt to mitigate the volume of traffic using the village as a cut through route. People appear to have taken the view that this element of the consultation was added by Stuart Michael Associates on behalf of Lochailort. As has been explained above this was not the case.

If any offence, concern or worry has been caused by the inclusion of the by-pass plan we offer a heartfelt apology to all those who have been affected. We confirm that the evaluation results of the overall consultation (which we believe to have been useful) will be in the public domain via the Parish Council website shortly.

## **The Consultation Results**

### Introduction

Each point from the questionnaire used for the event is noted below in the order in which they appeared on the consultation document. 110 questionnaires were printed and either handed out during the event or emailed to participants to complete and return.

The Excel spread sheet added as "**Appendix One**" to this report contains the figures which reflect whether people indicated "yes", "no" or "maybe" to the individual sections of the questionnaire.

The scores per question have been counted and appear on the sheet both as numbers and as a % for each question asked. So for the sake of clarity and transparency if you look at question one (20mph gateways) you will see that of

the 86 people who returned questionnaires all 86 answered this question. 75 indicated they were in favour by ticking the "Yes" box, 4 ticked the "No" box and 7 used the "Maybe" box to indicate their preference. To reach the "yes" box % figures we divided 75 by 86 and then multiplied the result by 100 to achieve the 86% figure for those who indicated yes. We used the same model for the "no" question. We then joined the yes and maybe numbers together, divided those by 86 and again multiplied the answer by 100 to achieve the 95% who either indicated yes or maybe to the question. This model was replicated for the remaining 10 questions.

**Writers note:** some people at the TAG and at the later Parish Council meeting commented that the process of joining the "yes" and "maybe" question scores to achieve an overall % placing of the various questions might seem to readers of this report as a skewing of the balance from the questionnaire. I reported to both meetings that from reading the questionnaires in full it was clear to me that those who used the "maybe" box most often did so to indicate that whilst they did not altogether agree with the suggested change they would be happy to support a different version of it. So for example for question 5 (potential road closure) some people whole heartedly agreed while some did not agree to closure but did support an alternative e.g. changing the road to a one way traffic flow.

The bullet points under each of the questions below represent a "thematic feel" for the range of points added in the "comments" boxes but do not reflect a complete listing of everything noted.

### 1) 20 MPH gateways on all village Accesses

- A most sensible suggestion
- Appropriate at rush hour but not at other times
- Should be supported by cameras and/or flashing signs
- Yes if plus humps
- No ---- I prefer traffic lights at the four extremities of the village (as per some Dorset villages)
- No --- too many speed restrictions already

### 2) Church Green Improvements

- Yes and its overdue and urgent
- Yes but alternative parking is required
- No -- not sure what this improves
- Not a priority
- No – better to discourage parents from dropping off children to school – this is a village green not a car park
- Maybe ---- but not if it supports more housing

### 3) "Build Outs" & priority outbound in Bell Hill

- Yes if no traffic lights
- Maybe ---- but check with residents of Bell Hill
- No as traffic should be kept moving as stopping & starting creates fumes and fuel emissions
- No – chicanes are dangerous
- Road humps are a better solution

- Yes this is a site where pedestrian safety is a serious issue
- Only if alternative routes are closed off to rat run traffic

#### 4) Four-way traffic signals @ Fleur/George/Plaine junction

- Traffic lights worked well during recent Rd work activity and helped traffic re-route
- Yes – this will improve safety for children and discourage through traffic
- Yes if it prevents people using NSP as a rat run
- Yes it will deter HGV's and control traffic at pinch points
- Yes but not sure about placement siting of lights
- Must have pedestrian crossings with them
- No as traffic should be kept moving
- No --- it will increase noise & pollution
- No – if it will cause traffic queues
- No --- as dangerous for pedestrians
- Maybe – might slow down traffic but might result in ugly signage
- Maybe --- more humps needed instead
- No as will spoil the look of the village
- No -- better to have a mini round about

#### 5) Potential Rd Closure between B3110 & A366

- Only if made one way
- Only if linked with traffic lights
- No – through traffic reqd for services
- No – this takes pressure off junction
- It should have yellow lines to prevent parking
- Maybe but could cause probs at cross roads
- No there is no problem at this junction

#### 6) Farleigh Rd one way priority working + improved footway

- Very much supported – this area is an accident waiting to happen
- Yes but siting is important
- Yes to improve pedestrian safety and slow traffic down
- No to chicane but yes to humps
- Yes but does not go far enough --- speed humps also reqd
- No -- traffic must be kept moving
- Yes if traffic lights not possible

#### 7) High Street formalised parking + alternative Parking

- Only if adequate alternative parking can be identified
- Maybe but it will only work if made compulsory
- Only as long as it is not an excuse for more building
- Maybe but must consult with High Street residents
- This has been needed for years
- Must allow for tractors and trailers to have room to pass.
- Car spaces should be "short stay only" for visitors and carers
- Yes -- stop thoughtless and dangerous parking
- Disabled parking is also needed
- No --- visibility will get worse and not enough spaces anyway

- No --- this would lead to traffic speeding up
- No – it will increase congestion
- No --- current system works OK
- No --- double yellow lines each side to stop parking + alternative parking
- Yes --- but needs to be contained and controlled

8) Re siting of current bus stops to Fortescue Street area

- Yes --- right now it causes road blockages
- No because Fortescue area is not the centre of the village
- No because present site is helpful to bottom of village
- If moved must be set back to keep traffic moving
- No – this is an inappropriate/mad suggestion

9) Alternative parking for High St & for new Village Hall

- No --- no need for a new Village Hall
- Only if assigned to people in the High Street
- No if it means more development in the village
- No – it will speed up traffic – more humps needed
- Yes as this will allow farm machinery to pass through village
- Maybe but would they use it?
- Strongly oppose as it may cause more house building
- Yes ---- High Street residents regularly say cars are damaged & they need car parks in the village
- Yes --- any way to help resolve High Street parking is a good idea

10) Parking for School and other Community Uses

- Definitely not
- No --- no need for a new Village Hall
- Yes – much needed
- Yes but needs footpath linking car park and school
- Maybe but siting requires more work

11) Do you support a potential By-Pass?

- Yes --- best possible solution
- Yes but only part of the proposal between B3110 and A366
- Yes and the link between B3110 and A366 to be at least part funded by developers
- A resounding no as this would carve up yet more beautiful countryside
- No as it takes too long and is too expensive
- Definitely not
- Only if as well as other traffic calming measures

Any other overall comments

- Many concerns expressed that any traffic calming measures are only to support even more housing development
- There is a plea to extend the 40Mph limit from NSP to the A36 (**see Appendix Two**)
- Go with simpler measures (road humps & 20 Mph)

- Unless there is a proper plan to link the south coast with the M4 NSP traffic problems will not go away
- Village needs much more parking but any alternative sites will create disagreements
- HGV, traffic volume and parking main problems --- some radical thinking rqd to make differences
- Seems like new residents are pushing these plans --- if they didn't want to live on semi busy road they should not have bought houses in our village
- A raised pavement between the Fleur car park to join with the pavement between Long Mead Close and Upper Farm Close is vital
- The Town Barton junction with the A366 is the most dangerous junction of the village
- More detailed research is needed before any changes are made to parking in the High Street
- Please lobby the appropriate government department to revise SatNav devices to prevent HGV traffic through small villages like ours
- What about speed cameras at all four entrances points to the village
- 7.5 weight limit signs to be appropriately sited BEFORE vehicles turn in to village access roads
- Change Wolverton junction to **Right Angle Turning** to make swing into B3110 much harder and thus not an easy option for cars and heavy lorries
- It's important to make sure people realise the bypass is something from the 1970s' but that some residents still think it to be the only solution
- In favour of improvements but not at the expense of more house building
- Let's draw upon the experience of other villages (Freshford for e.g.) – some of the measures suggested will help but a balance needs to be "brokered" within the community
- Pedestrian crossings needed
- Speed humps on Farleigh road please
- Bigger humps in centre of village would help slow traffic
- High street could be "access only" from Wolverton to centre of NSP
- Close through road south of village
- The village needs a good size car park ---- could be Bell Hill site or Laverton Triangle but both would be contentious
- Perhaps 30mph flashing signs in some places?
- Feel strongly that the character of the village must be maintained
- Some of these plans are workable and some are not ---- they need to be seen in a wider context i.e. linking the south coast with the M4
- Please don't change the current parking arrangements in the High Street - -- they have worked for a number of years
- The SCC "finger sign post" must stay
- A raised & railed pavement from the Fleur car park to join the new pavement between Longmead Close and Upper Farm Close is vital
- Install a more complex system in Farleigh Road to promote doubt as to who has right of way thus slowing traffic in both directions
- Make the High Street from the George/Fleur to the shop a "different" zone – perhaps a different colour road, bollards indicating parking, municipal type boxed plants etc. ----- this would deter speed in an "intelligent" way
- Explore a range of one way systems in and out of the village

- Install traffic signals at the outskirts of the conservation area
- Erect a barrier outside No 1 Cottage in High Street to stop car owners parking on the bend thus restricting vision for incoming traffic
- Traffic lights will cause "rat runs" elsewhere in the village
- There is scope to improve access to Branch Road at Hinton assisting Bath to Wolverton traffic to go via A36 and avoid Hinton and NSP
- Check the "potentially" planned major trunk road between Southampton and Avonmouth Docks ----- this would pass west of NSP ---- explore in detail
- This is pseudo democracy --- who invited Lochailort to undertake a survey of our village ---- what might one ask is their interest in our opinions?
- A round about at the 4 cross way is better than traffic lights

### **Conclusion**

The consultation seems to have been successful in encouraging people who live in Norton St Philip to participate in a cross village process. This has been useful. Some 300 houses were leafleted, over 110 questionnaires handed out at the consultation event of which 78% have been completed and returned.

The questionnaires contain a wealth of information and in particular a range of suggestions under the "other comments box" which could become useful additions to the already suggested traffic management changes. The Parish council will be exploring how the information gleaned via this process can best be used to enhance the pedestrian safety and traffic flow management in Norton St Philip and is mindful of the fact that any further development of this process would benefit from an independent approach – see point 4 under next steps below.

### **Next steps**

1. Report and its findings to be presented to the Parish Council and Traffic Action Group I (completed)
2. Parish Council to agree delegation to meet with SCC Leader and Head of SCC Highways Dept. (currently Linda Oliver and David Smallacombe but others welcome)
3. David Warburton (prospective conservative MP for Somerton and Frome) to be asked to set up the SCC Leader meeting
4. Report and appendices to be uploaded to Parish Council web site.
5. Explore how/whether to source an independent evaluation of the consultation responses with a view to suggesting which elements of the feedback should be taken forward.
6. In light of outcome from point 2 above and the consultation itself a wider list of proposed changes to be "worked up" for further consultation



David Smallacombe  
Parish Councillor (Highways) and TAG Chair  
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