



Traffic Consultation - 28th January 2023 **(and online to 17th February 2023)**

SUMMARY

Shinfield Parish Council first set out its objectives regarding traffic in the Shinfield Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (specifically Policy 4: Accessibility and Highways Safety – <https://shinfieldparish.gov.uk/your-parish-council/mission-aims/>). This document was submitted to a formal referendum of all residents in December 2016 and was supported by 87% of voters. These traffic measures are therefore not something new but are the long-term established policy of the parish council.

We are putting forward proposals now as we see, on a daily basis, the impact on traffic of all the developments that were anticipated in 2016 and have now been built.

Shinfield Parish Council knows that our residents are concerned about traffic speeds and the volume of traffic on our roads. We sincerely believe that there are practical measures that must be taken:

- To divert traffic that doesn't need to use roads in the parish which make life better for all remaining road users
- To reduce speeds within the parish
- To encourage more people to walk, cycle or use the bus

The council believes these measures will make the roads in the parish safer and less congested for residents and others who must use them.

There appears to be a majority view that traffic is an issue but relatively low support for the traffic calming measures put forward and in particular, Arborfield style traffic chicanes. Shinfield Parish Council will only propose chicanes where there is no effective alternative.

Consultation is only viable if the council is prepared to listen and respond appropriately to the feedback provided. We feel the actions set out below show that we have done just that.

We will adopt a phased approach as follows:

Short-term (in the next 12 months)

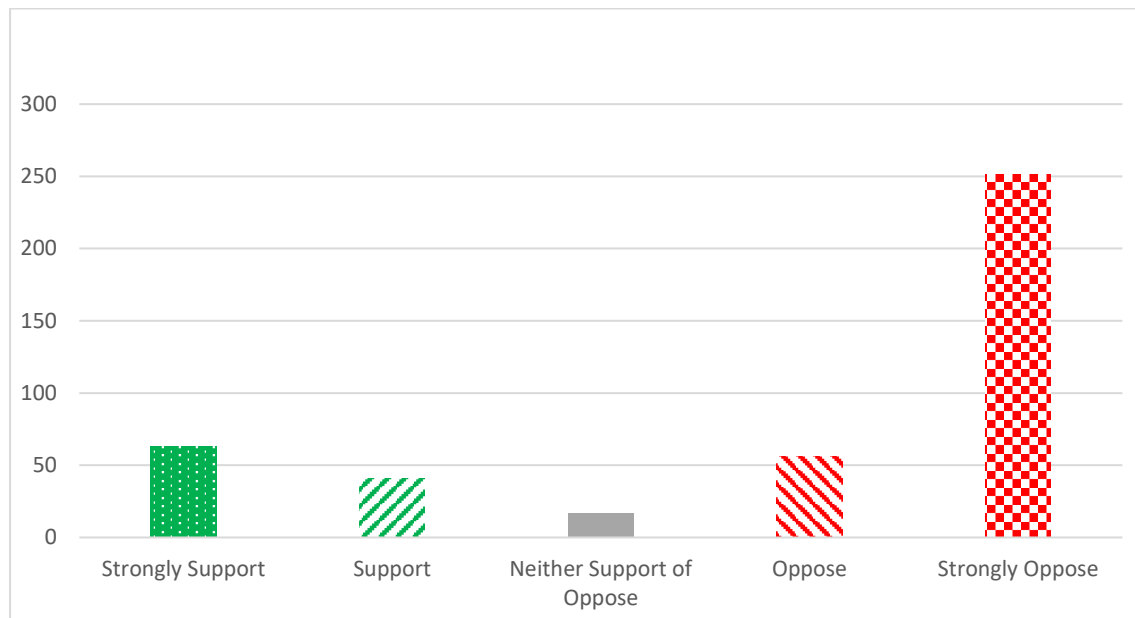
- Push for the speed limit reductions proposed
 - But accepting that this may need to be done on a road-by-road basis
- Push for controlled crossings at
 - Beech Hill Road
 - Hollow Lane (southern end)
- Encourage Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Thames Valley Police (TVP) to bring the existing speed cameras on Hyde End Road back into use
- Push for four enforceable yellow box markings on the Black Boy roundabout
- Conduct a formal consultation with residents of Church Lane between Brookers Hill to St Mary's Church about measures for this section of road
- Discuss further with Grazeley residents and WBC about traffic calming to slow vehicles arriving in the village
- Continue to promote local bus services to help increase passenger numbers and ensure the routes remain financially viable
- Continue to push for the reinstatement of the bus gate proposed for Beke Avenue
- Provide village gates at key locations
- Review our consultation process to improve it for the future

Medium term (in the next 36 months)

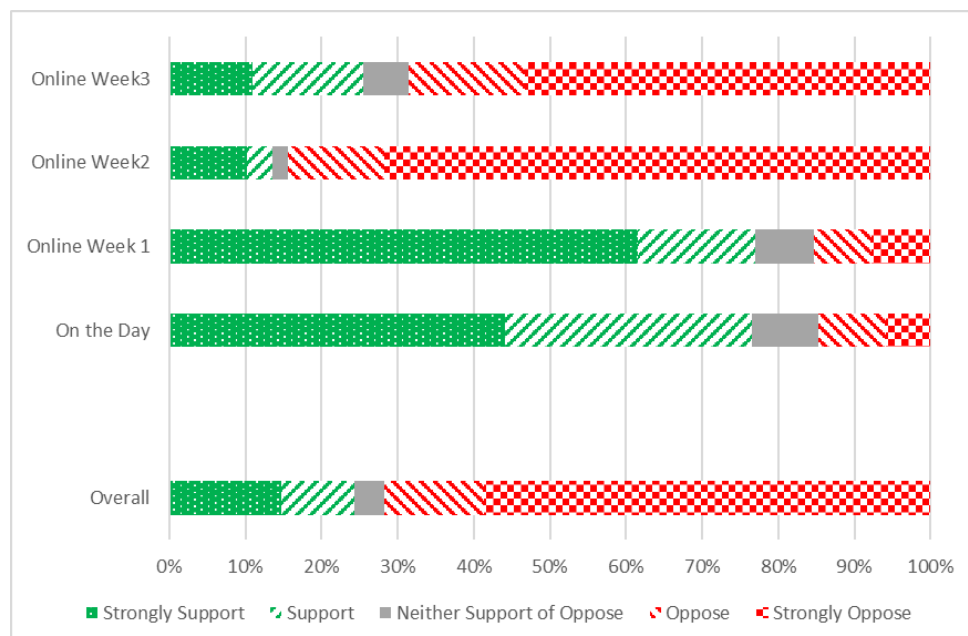
- Assess the impact of speed reductions and traffic volumes and, if it is felt necessary, come forward with revised traffic calming proposals
 - Using the best solution for each specific location
 - WBC will have had time to fully evaluate the Arborfield traffic calming scheme
 - This will be done in conjunction with an independent traffic consultant and WBC
- Continue to work with Swallowfield Parish Council about options to encourage traffic on to the A33 Swallowfield bypass
- Assess further options for improving road crossings in key locations in the parish
- Further consultation with residents of Hyde End Lane regarding a possible one-way scheme

GENERAL OVERVIEW

We had a total of 434 completed feedback forms (34 who completed on the day and 400 who submitted their views online) on our proposals and the overall results were as follows:



As can be seen the vast majority who submitted their views were more often than not strongly opposed to the traffic proposals. However it is interesting to note that those who actually attended the Consultation Day, albeit in much lower numbers than online, were able engage in the detail of the proposals and were actually much more in favour of the proposals.



Of those 434 respondents 382 made additional comments beyond just ticking boxes on the overall and individual responses.

Why did we put forward these proposals?

Contrary to some of the comments received, the councillors on the working party and the council officers all live and drive, walk, cycle and use the bus in the parish and see for themselves first-hand what the traffic is like in the parish. We know that traffic is a fact of modern life and accept a lot of that traffic necessarily starts and ends within the parish boundaries.

To reiterate, we sincerely believe that there are practical measures that could be taken:

- To divert traffic that doesn't need to use roads in the parish which make life better for all remaining road users
- To reduce speeds within the parish
- To encourage more people to walk, cycle or use the bus

If we can influence these journeys then, even with any speed restrictions or traffic calming measures the net result is a benefit for all our residents and addresses concerns expressed in the feedback on issues such as air pollution.

Why didn't we ask residents before producing proposals?

We were reacting to an increasing number of concerns received from residents over the last few years.

The definition of the word "proposal" is "a plan or suggestion, especially a formal or written one, put forward for consideration by others". We could have gone back a step and asked more open questions but we wanted to present a joined up set of proposals for your consideration.

What is it about Chicanes?

There were eighty-eight respondents (20.3%) who voiced concerns specifically about chicanes with many pointing to the situation in Arborfield. We have been at pains to say that we think there are too many in Arborfield and in many cases they are in the wrong place. We specifically stated on our proposals that if there was to be a chicane then the final positioning would be done with care to avoid replicating the issues in Arborfield. We do NOT want to have the same problems here. However we know of other locations locally where chicanes are having a positive impact.

We have also said that if we could achieve the traffic reduction and speed reductions we hoped to see in any other practical way then we would be open to considering any and all such options.

We will now look and see if there are any better ways of achieving traffic calming. This may mean different proposals for specific locations. We welcome any positive suggestions to help achieve our stated goals.

Chicanes and cyclists

Many people pointed out that the style of chicane we used to illustrate our proposals is "good in theory, but bad in practice" for cyclists. While in theory cyclists can cut through the gap left for them, in practice these tend to become blocked with detritus forcing cyclists to use the main section of the road.

As stated above we will look and see if there are any better options for traffic calming but we will ensure that if a chicane is the appropriate method it will be bike friendly.

Speed Bumps vs Chicanes

We did of course consider speed bumps and cushions as part of the traffic calming options but we felt that they also had their own set of problems such as noise and vibration issues to neighbouring properties also air quality issues.

Speed Reductions

Without any prompting, sixty-eight respondents (15.7%) made specific comments supporting the concept of speed restrictions. Our proposals have stated that we would like to see those roads currently with 40 mph limits reduced to 30mph and to 20mph outside schools

We will be asking WBC to implement the speed limit reductions they have already made public as soon as possible

We will also work with WBC to see what can be done to speed up the process of achieving the remaining speed reductions. This may take the form of looking at each section of road e.g. prioritising Hollow Lane which is a built up area with street lights in place.

Speed Cameras

Despite some respondents suggesting that we were doing this as a money making exercise, all our proposals were put forward on the basis of encouraging improved driving through passive measures. However a recurring suggestion from respondents was that speed cameras would be preferable to chicanes.

We know that WBC/Thames Valley Police have not followed up the speed cameras on Hyde End Road but we will revisit the enforcement of speed limits in conjunction with WBC and TVP as part of a process of pushing for lower speed limits.

We will discuss with WBC and TVP about how there can be effective enforcement of speed limits in the parish.

Improving Walking and Cycling Routes in the Parish

Again without prompting, twenty-three respondents (5.3%) made comments that there could be a reduction in vehicle journeys if there were improvements to main walking and cycling routes. For example improving road crossings in key locations; this might reduce the number of vehicles doing the school run by providing safe routes to school which is a Shinfield Parish policy.

This was one of the reasons that we wished to push for reinstatement of the Bus Gate originally planned for Beke Avenue. Having a bus gate would reduce the total number of vehicles on this road and make crossing from Footpath 11 (and the new Lidl's) much easier.

We will now expand our thinking to include key road crossing points within the parish starting with looking at our proposals for Beech Hill and the southern end of Hollow Lane

There were a number of comments along the lines of pavements are blocked by cars parking on them and other requests for improvements to cycle routes to make this an easier option for some people. These were not included in our initial proposals but we have always intended to listen to, and act on, feedback

We will also look to see what we can do in these areas

Shinfield Parish Council and Wokingham Borough Council

Some respondents seemed unclear that the proposals were coming from Shinfield Parish Council (SPC) rather than Wokingham Borough Council (WBC). SPC can put forward proposals but they are only suggestions and need to be supported and approved by WBC as they have responsibility for highways in the borough.

There were many comments such as fix the potholes and we strongly suggest that those concerns are addressed directly to WBC via their website reporting tool.

We intend to work with WBC in a proactive manner to seek the best outcome for our residents

You don't know what you're doing!

As mentioned earlier all those involved in this exercise from SPC live in the parish and we know what traffic is like. We also have regular meetings with WBC to discuss traffic issues in the parish. We met with WBC's road engineer to discuss our proposals and while we were developing our proposals we worked with an independent traffic management consultant with considerable knowledge of the area.

This is all a waste of money!

There were fifteen comments that this was “a waste of money”: either the consultation itself and/or proceeding with the proposals.

We have not incurred any expenditure (other than on some stationery costs in preparing the consultation presentation). The plans have been developed internally and the independent traffic management consultant gave their time free of charge.

We held the consultation to get feedback on what might work or not work. We know that money is tight for councils as it is for individuals and it is important to get things right.

Development in Shinfield

Shinfield Parish Council recognises that the historic infrastructure on local roads within the parish has not developed to keep pace with the new developments.

Black Boy Roundabout

There is no doubt that WBC need to take additional steps to improve this particular junction with thirteen respondents (3.0%) specifically stating the need for enforced box junctions to be added to the mix. We support those improvements.

However this is a multi-lane roundabout which, with the exception of southbound to the Eastern Relief Road, quickly reverts to single lane in all directions and any hold up along any of those routes will spill back on to the roundabout itself. This emphasises the need to co-ordinate other aspects such as any future plans for the A327 Shinfield Road.

We will push WBC to add yellow box markings to this roundabout

Communication with Residents

We promoted the consultation at our venues, on our website, and through our newsletter and social media. Some people felt that we should have done more to communicate that we were having the consultation. For example they felt that we should have conducted a mail out to residents or gone door to door to promote the consultation. We wanted to minimise expenditure and make sure that your precept is spent wisely. This will be a long and careful process.

We would also take a view that the number of people who attended both consultation exercises and the 400+ who have completed a questionnaire indicates that people are aware of what we are doing.

We will however look at how we have approached the process to ensure that future consultations are as inclusive as possible.

We do recommend that residents sign up for our electronic newsletter as this will guarantee that you will be kept informed about SPC activities.

<https://shinfieldparish.gov.uk/newsletters/>

It has all been already decided!

Some responses suggested that we have already made up our mind about what we were going to do.

We have run this consultation in order to hear the views of residents and we feel we have given them appropriate consideration as set out in the detailed replies set out below.

Courtesy and Respect is important

We as a council intend to be as open and honest with our residents as we can be throughout this entire process. We will also communicate politely at all times, and we do ask that you do the same.

It is entirely understandable that you may wish to disagree with a proposal (or indeed even all of them) and we have and will continue to listen to what you have to say. However references such as "morons" and suggestions that we take "brown envelopes" etc do not help the process at all.

Bus Services

Many people felt we were wasting our time on a bus lane for services that were effectively doomed. We genuinely believe that it is worth fighting for our bus services and WBC have committed to them for the next three years so we do have time to build numbers.

Many people may not be aware that Reading Buses (as they are owned by Reading Borough Council) can only operate services outside of Reading if they are financially viable in the long term to maintain the services they need customers.

GET INVOLVED

We would like to take this opportunity to remind all those

- who responded to the proposals
- voiced their opinions about the parish council or
- generally want to be more involved about what happens where they live

that there will be **elections for the parish council this May**.

If you are interested in becoming a parish councillor (and have an influence on this process) then please contact the Clerk (clerk@shinfieldparish.gov.uk) in the first instance to find out more about what this entails.

DETAILED PROPOSALS

On the next page is a graph showing the actual number of comments received for each of the specific proposals. Our detailed response to each follows that graph.



A - Measures to move traffic on to Eastern Relief Road

We believe that to achieve part of the traffic reduction within our parish we need to ensure that through drivers make use of the Eastern Relief Road built for that very purpose. We would like to see traffic coming up from Hyde End Road to turn right and use the Eastern Relief Road (as it is already signposted).

We feel this proposal is still integral to our overall objectives.

B - Measure on Hollow Lane to move traffic to ERR

Many people objected to the proposal for a bus lane for one of two main reasons:

- It would cause congestion in an already busy area.
 - If we are able to divert traffic to the ERR then the actual numbers using the Hollow Lane route to the Black Boy roundabout would actually be reduced
- We were fighting a lost cause and there would be no buses to justify the bus lane anyway.
 - As a parish we have been very vocal in our efforts to protect and even enhance the bus services for the parish. WBC have this month recommitted to these services for another three years
 - If we want to retain these services beyond that time, there needs to be a growth in passenger numbers and reduced travel time will help with that.

We do think that in the short term there is scope for WBC to move relatively quickly to implement a 30 mph speed limit on Hollow Lane and we would wait to see what impact that may have before bringing forward any further proposals in this area.

We will push for a speed reduction on Hollow Lane and will look again at the bus lane option at a later stage

C - Church Lane to be One Way (Six Bells and L'Ortolan)

This section of road prohibits vehicles "except for access" however we know this is regularly ignored and the road is used as a cut through. Our concern is that the restriction is almost unenforceable and therefore something stronger is required.

While we proposed making this road one way an alternative suggestion from some respondents was to completely close the road to through traffic making it much safer to use for pedestrians.

We will conduct a formal consultation with residents of Church Lane between Brookers Hill to St Mary's Church about possible measures for this section of road

D - Traffic calming on Church Lane (Six Bells End)

We will review all options for traffic calming in this area.

We will look at all options for traffic calming in this area

E - Traffic calming on Church Lane (Three Mile Cross End)

There were questions as to why we were proposing a pedestrian crossing in this area, but we are aware that planning permission has been given for a Montessori school and we felt it appropriate to incorporate a crossing into our plans.

F - Alternative to proposed works at Church Lane Three Mile Cross junction

This proposal was put forward to show that there are alternative ways of achieving the required end goal. However we recognise that WBC and the developers are already heavily committed to the planned redevelopment of this junction. We along with all our residents and the many others who use this junction hope that WBC and the developer can finally start and complete this work. We know that WBC will not support any further traffic measures in Three Mile Cross area until the work has been completed and its impact assessed.

We will support WBC in progressing this work in any way we can. We have already agreed to give up land in the area for the construction of a filter lane.

G - A33 southbound to Basingstoke and left to Three Mile Cross

We will NOT be pursuing this one any further.

H - Traffic calming on Basingstoke Rd

WBC will not support any additional measures on the Basingstoke Road until the work in Three Mile Cross has been completed. We do however think that they should press on with making this 30mph as they have said they would.

We will push WBC to make this road 30mph

I - Traffic calming in Grazeley (approaching from North)

We feel that, as there have been two fatalities in recent years directly because of speeding into the village, there is a need for traffic calming at least at the entrances to the village.

We will pursue the option of traffic calming on the approaches to the village.

J - Traffic calming in Grazeley (approaching from South)

As for Proposal I above

K - Measures to encourage traffic on to A33 Swallowfield Bypass at Riseley

This is one of the key points where we know traffic could be diverted on to a more appropriate road. The volume of traffic on the roundabout at the bottom of the Swallowfield bypass is such that traffic coming from the Wellington Country Park roundabout struggles to turn right onto the bypass towards Reading; as a result rather than queue this traffic drives through Riseley towards Spencers Wood.

This may be difficult to achieve given that the junction actually lies in Hampshire. We have however been working with Swallowfield Parish Council to see how we can collectively achieve traffic calming which benefits both parishes especially where the volume is generated by traffic travelling to and from Hampshire.

We will continue to work with Swallowfield Parish Council to identify how we can encourage through traffic to use the bypass

L - Traffic calming on Basingstoke Rd (Backs Lane)

Even though the image we used was clearly labelled as "Indicative only – Final design to take into account bends on road for safety of road users" we should not have used an image that suggested chicanes forcing traffic to cross double white lines. We used this particular image to help those looking at the consultation to place where we were talking about.

We will work with Swallowfield Parish Council to identify where there may be scope for appropriate traffic calming measures

M - Traffic calming on Beech Hill Rd

Given the proximity of the school and the relative straightness of this road this is an area where we stand by our initial proposals to have something more substantial than an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing (i.e. more than dropped kerbs) in conjunction with village gates.

We will continue to push for one or more controlled crossings in this area

We will also look to see if we can improve walking routes to Lambs Lane School

N - Traffic calming on Hyde End Rd (Spencers Wood)

There is support for seeing this road reduced to 30 mph along its length (20 mph at the school). This will need to be enforced by bringing back into effective use the existing speed cameras.

We will work with WBC to introduce a 30mph speed limit

We will push WBC and TVP to bring the speed cameras back into use

O - Traffic calming on Hyde End Rd (Shinfield)

As for Proposal N above.

The bends are an obvious concern for larger vehicles (especially when they meet each other). Some respondents argued for a widening of the road which we feel would encourage even more traffic. We would support some straightening of the road provided this is done in conjunction with a reduced speed limit.

P - Re-instate Bus Gate proposed for Beke Avenue

As originally planned for the redevelopment of this area, there was a bus gate (which would stop through traffic along Beke Avenue) intended to promote walking in the heart of Shinfield village. This was removed by WBC on traffic modelling grounds, but we believe this bus gate should be reinstated as part of encouraging more walking.

We will continue to push for the reinstatement of the bus gate