

Traffic and Parking Update

Introduction

This document provides a summary and update on the current position regarding Traffic and Parking within Olveston Parish. It is not intended to be a highly detailed account, but an outline of key events and outcomes on Traffic and Parking in recent years and since the Traffic and Parking Group was formed. More information can be gained from the Full Parish Council meeting minutes, other related documents on the Olveston Parish Council (OPC) website and via South Gloucestershire Council (SGC).

Background

For some years concern has been rising about the speed and type of vehicles passing through the parish. There has also been concern regarding the volume of parking in and around certain areas and junctions in both Tockington and Olveston. In response to this and other areas of concern identified in the Local Village Plan initiative, Olveston Parish Council (OPC) set up a number of sub-groups to explore how these concerns might be addressed. The sub-groups report into the Parish Council but are independent of it.

In 2015 OPC asked for volunteers to form a Traffic and Parking Group. Its aim was to ascertain the opinion and strength of feeling of villagers on aspects of traffic flow around the parish and to seek suggestions on how any issues could be addressed. Since its original establishment the group has undergone a number of changes both in structure and membership. For example, in 2018 the group briefly disbanded, but reformed in 2019.

In Autumn 2019 the Traffic and Parking group asked residents to complete a survey to identify the specific issues, gauge strength of feeling to initiate changes, and make suggestions for possible solutions. Since then, due to the COVID restrictions there has been a delay in implementation. The Traffic and Parking sub-group however have been working hard to collate and submit the views of residents to the Parish Council and ultimately given local approval, to South Gloucestershire Council (SGC).

Survey Outcomes

The overwhelming response to the survey is for the introduction of speed reduction and traffic calming measures in all the villages. Speed reduction would aim to limit routes through the Parish deemed to be the 'fastest route' on SatNavs, especially when avoiding the Friday night build-up of traffic on the A38.

An increase in the volume of traffic through the Parish has been noted since the lifting of the tolls on the Severn Bridge. Alongside this, more recently an increase in industrial and commercial goods vehicles using village routes as 'cut-throughs' has been observed, again often because of SatNav re-routing* between the A38 and the motorways at certain times. This is of specific concern where some roads narrow to a single lane. Furthermore, speeding along Haw Lane, Hardy Lane and Upper and Lower Tockington Roads are considered to be a particular issue.

* SatNavs calculate travel times based on known speed limits and traffic flow updates.

The concerns regarding parking issues focuses on several areas such as Old Down Hill, Manor Park and Pool Corner and the junction of The Street, New Road and Denys Court. In both cases it is felt that parking often restricts visibility putting safety at risk. Traffic and parking around the schools in Tockington and Olveston has also been raised as being of continuing concern.

Potential Solutions

A number of the proposals on potential solutions and how to address the issues raised in the survey have proved to be contentious, dividing opinion amongst residents, lacking support and/or being impractical or impossible to implement. The proposals submitted by residents include the introduction of rumble strips, mini- roundabouts, chicanes, a one-way traffic system and speed bumps. Apart from the increased noise factor associated with some of these measures as being unacceptable and therefore unworkable, following consultation with SGC, county policy dictates that speed bumps for example would not be permitted in our Parish due to limited street lighting.

There is a clear consensus of agreement among respondents though that some form of traffic calming measures are essential with most respondents in favour of 20mph restrictions across most of the Parish. In addition, it is thought that the suggested introduction of weight restrictions and better signage at the entrances to our villages would help reduce the volume of large industrial and commercial vehicles using the roads. A ban on HGV's has also been suggested by some.

Progress to Date

The COVID pandemic has to a large extent stalled progress on the traffic and parking initiative since early 2020, and understandably there has been a delay in action from SGC, without whom most of the proposed measures cannot be implemented. Following a meeting in January 2020 however, attended by OPC Councillors and representatives from the Traffic and Parking group and SGC, a great deal of progress has been made.

Some of the most notable changes in recent years are the introduction of a 20mph limit around Tockington Manor School and Olveston Primary School, and the introduction of a seven and a half tonne weight limit and a speed reduction to 30 mph from the top of Washingpool Hill Road. The 20mph limit around Olveston Primary School is likely to be further amended following a public consultation.



A speed reduction to 40 mph (from national speed limit) has been introduced along Alveston Road approaching Old Down.

To address speeding on other roads, OPC has introduced the use of two Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) sensors, with a significant reduction in speeding taking place where they are positioned. It's worth mentioning that even if the display on these devices is inactive, they are still recording data that can be used to monitor traffic conditions and the effectiveness of the devices once the display is switched back on.

Aligned with this has been the Speed Watch initiative, a collaboration between OPC, Avon and Somerset Police and other local authorities. This got underway with a number of residents volunteering to manually monitor traffic through the Parish but had to be abandoned due to COVID restrictions in March 2020. It has recently regained momentum with eight volunteers having received up-dated training from the police.

In terms of parking, OPC had already created an extra 22 parking spaces on land at Aust Road to help alleviate parking problems at Olveston Primary School and is investigating the possibility of creating an additional 20 spaces.

In March 2021 SGC decided on the 2021/2022 programme of highway works for Olveston Parish, it includes:

- A review of waiting restrictions (i.e. double yellow lines) in Washingpool Hill Road, Upper Tockington Road and Lower Tockington Road
- Installation of a new pavement in the lower part of Old Down Hill – linking the existing the pavements.
- Reconstruction of Ingst Lane - Motorway bridge to Highfield House
- Resurfacing of Fernhill – completed in August 2021
- Resurfacing of the pavement in front of Manor Park, Washingpool Hill Road – completed late 2021

In the spring of each year all highway schemes are scored against criteria by SGC, the top schemes then go forward for design and two periods of public consultation.

The proposals for reducing speed limits to 20 or 30 mph and a 3.5 tonne weight limit through the parish were reviewed and agreed by OPC and forwarded to SGC Officers and Cabinet Councillor for consideration and inclusion in the 2022/2023 programme. In October 2021 however the proposal was rejected by SGC, mainly on the grounds of cost. It covered 15 different roads and over 12km of public highway, and a requirement for street lighting to be installed in some locations, with a total estimated cost of over £500,000.

SGC have suggested that the area be broken down into smaller targeted zones for future consideration. In no particular order the first three zones proposed are:

- Extend the 20mph from Tockington Manor School to the Parish Hall (on Upper Tockington Road).
- A 20mph limit on Haw Lane from the entry to Orchard Rise, including Orchard Rise and the closes and extending on to The Street and associated roads, to link with the current 20mph limit around Olveston School.
- A 20mph limit on Hardy Lane from the current 30mph signage adjacent to Port Farm or Mill Lane, crossing the limit already established in zone 1, extending along Lower Tockington Road past the Green and continuing up the length of Old Down Hill.

These are proposals only and are currently awaiting approval by OPC and then formal submission to SGC. Nothing has been formally agreed at this time. Alongside this, following an extensive and

detailed review, OPC has committed to work towards improving signage throughout the Parish, including the installation of “village gates” with clearly marked speed limits and the words “Please drive carefully”. It is hoped that these will be approved and installed in Q4 2022/Q1 2023.

Moving Forward

While progress has not been as fast as everybody may have wished, the Parish has moved forward in addressing the issues and concerns raised in the 2019 survey. It has also been a useful experience in understanding how to move matters forward in future. It’s clear from the work to date for example that we need to present a clear vision on what is required and speak with one voice. Support for plans is needed from all parishioners to help OPC lobby SGC. Any plans we do put forward must also be reasonable, cost effective and implementable.

The Parish Council would like to thank all the members of the Traffic and Parking Group, especially Pat Hinton (its original Chairperson) and the current Chairperson, Cath Purchase for their work in coordinating the group. Those directly involved since it was set up include Barrie Cragg, Jeanette Treby, Tina Fear, Tony Turnbull, Ed Elderton, Dan Lewis-Leaver, Faneau van Niekerk, Chris Arkey, Councillor Martin Gibson and Councillor Miles Grocott, who has lead the VAS installations and monitoring. The Speed Watch initiative will now be overseen by Councillor Lyndsay Gethin. OPC would also like to thank all those who responded to the survey and the Speed Watch volunteers (both past and current). There is still much that can be done but without the help of all those involved we would not have made such progress towards making our Parish a safer place.

Request for further information and to ask questions please visit the OPC website. For information regarding Speed Watch and/or the VAS sensors please contact Lyndsey Gethin and/or Miles Grocott at Olveston Parish Council.

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