

SHERE TRAFFIC WORKING GROUP

The problems of traffic in Shere have been thorny and have caused much debate which, on occasions, has proved very contentious. To illustrate this point the subject of building a by-pass for the village is first mentioned in Parish Council Minutes in 1937. The by-pass, which carries the A25, was finally opened in 1960. A survey of local opinion was carried out before the final decision was made. The residents decided in favour by a very tiny majority. The considerable body of opinion against the by-pass was based on fears that the lack of passing traffic would kill the village. Not to have built the by-pass would have led to the village becoming strangled!

Since that time with increasing car ownership and mobility Shere has suffered from two traffic related problems.

The first is congestion which at times is severe. Shere is known as a tourist “honeypot” and on occasions, especially weekends and during the summer months, it is very difficult to drive through the village and access by emergency vehicles is seriously restricted and even impossible. Furthermore the trade of local businesses is adversely affected by such events. There is also a problem at times with extremely large lorries (mainly foreign ones) following Sat Nav instructions through the village.

The second is speeding traffic particularly in Upper Street and also when the centre of the village is not congested. The village was laid out long before motorised vehicles were imagined and residents get very concerned over the dangers caused by fast traffic. (Upper Street is part of the commuter route between Cranleigh/Ewhurst and the railway stations to London). For example there have been many accidents in Upper Street the majority of which have involved only one vehicle which has been driven far too fast, lost control and then damaged property. Several residents have also been hit by a wing mirror. There is great concern over this problem as large groups of school children visit Shere on a regular basis. Upper Street is always part of their “exploration route”, the pavements are very narrow and it is felt that it is only a matter of time before a fatality occurs. In addition many older residents and families with young children live in Upper Street and have to use the narrow pavements to access the village shops and to reach the school.

It will be appreciated that these two problems are contradictory and measures to ease one could hinder the other. In the mid 1980’s a major project was carried out by Surrey County Council working in conjunction with Shere Parish Council. This was known as the STAR Project. This made a number of proposals to improve conditions. One of the key elements was the introduction of double yellow line parking restrictions at certain key congestion points in the village. Coupled with these a limited time for parking by non-residents would possibly be introduced to tackle the problem of all day parking on the main streets. A lot of discussions took place and public meetings were held. In the end, however, the whole project was dropped because of the extent of local opposition. Shere Parish Council was keen to proceed but Surrey County Council felt that they could not proceed in the face of such opposition. The main source of objection was the parking restrictions. The local traders were strongly against the scheme because they felt that trade would suffer and local shops would become less viable. Other residents felt that the painted lines and associated signage would disfigure the village, ignoring the disfiguring impact of densely parked vehicles. Surrey County Council finally expressed the view that the approach to the STAR project had

been too “top-down” and that any future consideration should be more “bottom-up” and that ideas should be fed upwards through the Parish Council. It was this which led to the formation of the Shere Traffic Working Group, the membership of which included representative residents as well as parish councillors.

Since the STAR project was abandoned the problems in Shere have steadily become worse. At least there is now a public car park after fighting for one for many, many years. This has brought about some improvement but there are many drivers who will not use it unless they simply cannot find a space to park on the road. Further attempts to resolve the parking and speeding problems are desperately required.

The Shere Traffic Working Group’s achievements to date

2003 – Public consultation carried out.

2004 Suggested proposals for traffic improvements – drawn up by Mike Richardson whilst working for Surrey County Council following detailed consultations with the Traffic Working Group.

2004 A Public Display of the suggested proposals was held in Shere following the completion of the public survey. The display was very well attended and generated a great deal of interest. All proposals, with the exception of the zebra crossing outside Shere School, received widespread support i.e. if the entire package of measures were to be implemented the Working Group felt that there would be little public dissent.

However, implementation of the plan in its entirety was not possible due to lack of funding and the Parish Council decided to implement measures according to the following stages:

Proposals Agreed by both the Parish Council and the Working Group

Stage 1a – to improve pedestrian safety on the bridge – successfully implemented by Shere Parish Council with the assistance of Surrey County Council. This involved narrowing the road by the introduction of a pedestrian walkway on either side. This was greatly welcomed by local residents.

Problems subsequently occurred at the junction of Lower Street/Middle Street, Shere. A drawing of proposed hatching had been considered and approved by both the Working Group and the Parish Council with a view to eliminating the snarl-ups which occur in this area. However, the Conservation Officer at Guildford Borough Council did not wish to see hatching and recommended a mini roundabout although the Parish Council was firmly of the opinion that hatching would be preferable. Eventually a “keep clear box” was painted on the road by Surrey County Council which has helped, but not completely cured the problem.

Also Shere Parish Council obtained “no parking” notices and placed these on the wooden posts in this area. These, however, are ignored by motorists during busy periods.

Lighting of the wooden posts in this area – solar lights installed. Higher powered units are, unfortunately, not available. The effectiveness of the solar lights is patchy with the lights themselves not working if the weather during the daytime has been dull. In addition, the lights themselves seem to fail very quickly and the only source found is in the U.S.A.!

Stage 1b. Car Park on the Recreation Ground, Shere

17th March 2007 – public consultation on the plans for the car park – very well received.

Following this a public car park was finally constructed by Guildford Borough Council on land owned by the Shere Recreation Ground Association. This was financed by the Borough Council with the Parish Council contributing £5,000 plus a further £5,000 from the Shere Film Account. The car park was opened in 2010 after approximately 25 years in the planning stage! A management agreement has been drawn up between the Parish Council and the Recreation Ground Association and the Parish Council also pays £1,000 per annum compensation to the Recreation Ground Association for the use of this area as a car park.

Build out – Upper Street

Planning permission for the car park was only granted subject to a condition imposed by the County Council that a build out be installed in Upper Street near the entrance to the car park. This is now in place.

In addition to the installation of a build out it was agreed that the centre white line be removed and new markings installed at the edge of the road to give the impression that the road narrows – this has now been carried out.

Stage 2 – Speed restrictions in Upper Street: The Working Group and the Parish Council have agreed that top priority now be accorded to the measures in Upper Street.

A further temporary pinch point was installed further up Upper Street but was unsuccessful due to traffic congestion between the two builds out and was subsequently removed.

The installation of humps or cushions has recently been considered but rejected at the last meeting with Surrey County Council due to the number required, the noise factor and the necessary lighting.

Stage 3 – Measures in Shere Lane

The main problem here is the parking of cars, especially at weekends on the south approach to the village. This necessitates all traffic using one side of the road as it travels around a very sharp bend and it is felt that it is only a matter of time before an accident occurs.

Buff coloured “Ripple prints” with SLOW markings on Shere Lane have been supported as are primrose double lines along the edge of the pavement near the entrance to the bend. However Guildford Borough Council is not willing to consider primrose lines until the next Rural Villages’ Review – possibly in 3/4 years.

Entry gates in this area are to be examined in due course although there may be physical difficulties in locating them. The principle of a pinch point in the area is supported although care will have to be exercised in the precise positioning.

Widening the footway between Pathfields and Pilgrims Way – Kerb should be sufficiently high to prevent vehicles parking on the pavement. However, funding for this could be difficult.

Narrowing outside the Malthouse – Not necessary as sight lines are inadequate. Roadway here already narrow enough to slow traffic especially if the centre white line is removed.

Stage 4 – Implementation of coloured surfacing around the village square.

Build out outside Vaughans and in the Square not supported. Marked parking bays would be desirable – and implementation of coloured surfacing.

Other Projects

Parking – It has been agreed that consideration will be given, in due course, to actively persuading local businesses to use the car park during the day rather than parking on the streets in the centre of the village.

Middle Street – Possibility of time limited parking

Junction of Middle Street and Upper Street – new build out on the actual junction not thought to be a good idea.

Bus Stops – improvements supported.

Gomshall Lane - pinch point outside the “Studio” desirable.

Note: No further formal public consultation on the measures outlined on the original plan was required by Surrey County Council.

Implementation of lower speed limits

Speed Assessment 22nd January 2004 – Speed survey results:

Location	Direction	85% percentile (mph)
Gomshall Lane	Westbound	30
	Eastbound	33
Upper Street	Westbound	32
	Eastbound	32
Shere Lane	Southbound	37
	Northbound	37

Before recommending a new speed limit the current 85% percentile results are required to be within 8 m.p.h. of the requested limit. All the above fall within the parameters for a 30 m.p.h. limit. Therefore, given the above, Surrey County Council was not prepared to recommend Shere village for a 20 m.p.h. speed limit as it does not meet the criteria.

It is possible that the criteria will change in the future.

Village Gates – Approximately £2,000 each plus signing and lining at a cost of £1,500 – total £7,500 for entire project (January 2004)

Street lighting – Recommendation by the Working Group and the view of the public – no street lighting to be installed unless required by law to support other measures installed.

Signage – Signs stating “unsuitable for HGV’s” have been erected at all entrances to the village but seem to have had little effect. In addition there is still height restriction signage erected in Upper Street although the bridge over the road is no longer in place.

Bollards – Suggestion made that these could be installed on the pavement in Upper Street and possibly in Shere Lane.

Removal of directional signs to Ewhurst and Cranleigh on the A25 – request made to Surrey County Council for removal of these.

One way system – The suggestion of making Gomshall Lane and Upper Street “one way” only has been considered (without discussion on installing further measures at the same time to slow the traffic) but rejected on the grounds that this could increase traffic speed and volume in the area of the school in Gomshall Lane.

PRIMROSE YELLOW LINES

Surrey County Council have just completed a public consultation on the installation of primrose yellow double lines at the following locations – at the junction of Middle Street with Upper Street, outside the entrance to the Surgery in Gomshall Lane and in front of the Village Hall, in Lower Street just east of the Orchard Road junction (this area is of particular concern to the Fire Brigade) – **installed September 2012.**

Update December 2012 – Parish Council agree to pay £2,000 towards Surrey County Council’s costs of employing a traffic consultant to study Shere and report back with his ideas. **Report due January/February 2013.**

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