

BAPCHILD VILLAGE HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

UPDATE NOVEMBER 2021

Since October 2020, Bapchild Parish Council Members have been working with the KCC Schemes Project Manager for Swale, together with County Councillor Rich Lehmann, on a Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) for Bapchild Village.

Following our residents' survey, we put forward the three most important issues affecting our village. These were:

- (1) Speeding through the village along the A2
- (2) Parking and congestion along School Lane near the school
- (3) HGV's using Panteny Lane and School Lane

SPEEDING VEHICLES A2

We looked at other areas to see what measures had been introduced to control speeding traffic and we asked the KCC Officer whether it would be possible to introduce a reduction in the 60mph limit to 40 mph (when approaching the village from Teynham) creating a buffer zone.

We were advised by KCC Highways that a speed survey would be carried out along the A2 in conjunction with Tonge Parish, as both Bapchild and Tonge had reported speeding vehicles when travelling from the direction of Teynham. There had also been accidents on the A2 near to the junctions with Dully Lane and Hempstead Lane. A speed survey was carried out during April 2021 (delayed by Covid-19 restrictions). KCC Highways set up the survey equipment near Bapchild Cricket Ground; a 24-hour seven-day speed survey was carried out week commencing 19th April 2021. We were informed afterwards the posted speed limit at that point is 60mph and since the mean speed results confirmed the traffic was compliant with the speed limit it would remain at 60 mph.

We enquired about speed cameras and were informed Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership has specific criteria which need to be met before speed cameras are installed and we do not qualify for a speed camera in the village.

We enquired about the possibility of replacing our existing flashing 30mph signs (known as Vehicle Activated Signs), but they have a limited shelf life and the rules around installation have changed. KCC also informed us these signs often do not act as a deterrent once drivers become used to seeing them.

As part of the Stones Farm development scheme, the 40mph on the A2 at Fox Hill Bapchild was reduced to 30mph and when the old 40 mph signs were removed, we raised concerns about speeding vehicles with KCC Highways. We enquired about replacement signs being installed at Fox Hill to advise drivers of the change to 30mph, but KCC informed us they were not required or permitted, other than the terminal signs already present, as there is a system of streetlights in place.

Despite this, speed of vehicles remains an issue, particularly through the narrow part of The Street. We made enquiries about Speed Watch, but we received advice from KCC Highways that the results of Speed Watch data cannot be used as a substitute for a full seven-day analysis. Therefore, we have enquired whether a speed survey can be carried out along The Street by KCC Highways. We await a decision on this.

PARKING AND CONGESTION ALONG SCHOOL LANE

We enquired about the possibility of additional zig zag lines being painted opposite the ones outside the Bapchild & Tonge Primary School in School Lane. KCC advised it is not usual to add a second set of zig zag lines. It might be possible to add a single yellow line opposite the school. There is a KCC School Travel Plan Officer who is available to help advise the school with updating the school travel plan, including the possibility of staggered start times, or a walking to school bus for example.

HGV's USING PANTENY LANE AND SCHOOL LANE

To help vehicles when exiting or entering School Lane, new and improved signage has been introduced including "Keep Clear" markings on the A2 near the School Lane junction. Other signs which have been installed include "unsuitable for HGV's" on the approach to Panteny Lane, and staggered junction signs either side of Hempstead Lane. We have also requested further signage for School Lane as it too is unsuitable for HGV's.

ONGOING UPDATES

November 2021 - we have made enquiries with KCC Highways about whether there are any other measures including "reminder signs" to remind drivers of the 30mph speed limit along The Street and, will provide further updates as soon as they become available.

We are working hard to address these issues, particularly the speeding and how this can be addressed. Our HIP which is a "live document" requiring further consultation remains an Agenda item for our future meetings.

Parish Clerk

29th November 2021