



Gravesham Joint Transportation Board

Wednesday, 29 May 2024

Dear Councillor

You are advised that the attached documents form part of the main agenda papers for this meeting.

Please ensure you bring them with you to the meeting.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Walsh', written in a cursive style.

S Walsh
Assistant Director
(Organisational Development & Democratic Support)

List of documents attached

- b) Petition - Safety Improvements to Reduce Driver speeds and enhance crossing facilities at the Shorne Crossroads (Pages 3 - 8)

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Cllr Bob Lane
Chairman
Shorne Parish Council

Tel: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

By email to:

Cllr Bryan Sweetland
Gravesham Rural Division Councillor
[REDACTED]

18th March 2024

Dear Bryan

Re: Shorne Crossroads Petition

I have been requested to present Kent County Council with a petition requesting significant safety improvements to Shorne Crossroads. This follows a number of collisions and near misses, culminating in the tragic death of an elderly resident of Shorne, who was hit by a vehicle and killed at this location on Saturday 24th February 2024.

The Petition

The petition states:

“Shorne Crossroads is where Forge Lane and Green Farm Lane cross the A226 in Shorne. There have been numerous road accidents recorded here, including fatal ones, plus many other collisions and near-misses that go unrecorded. Pedestrians, drivers, and other road users are at risk when crossing the fast-moving traffic flow. We, the undersigned, call on Kent County Council to make significant safety improvements at this crossroads, including consideration of lowering the 50mph speed limit, better warning signs, and introducing traffic lights with pedestrian crossings.”

There are two formats of the same petition:

An online version was produced via Change.org and publicised on local social media. As at 16th March, **684** people have supported the petition online, the vast majority of whom are residents of Shorne, Gravesham, or other parts of Kent & Medway, or who have family connections to the area. It is noted that the locations/postcodes recorded are not always accurate – there are verified Shorne residents with incorrect locations or postcodes recorded against their names.

An identically-worded hard-copy version was collected door-to-door by concerned residents in Shorne, primarily for the benefit of residents and family members who do not have access to social media or are unable or unwilling to complete the online version. As at 16th March, this has been signed by **642** residents and visitors to the area.

A copy of the petition is attached, together with comments at the foot of this note. Even allowing for possible duplications, a total of **over 1,300 names** in just 3 weeks is indicative of the strength of concern from local residents and users of this crossroads.

Shorne Crossroads

Shorne Crossroads is where Forge Lane and Green Farm Lane cross the A226 in Shorne. There have been numerous road accidents recorded here, including a fatality in 2013 and the recent fatality in 2024. There are numerous other collisions, some serious, which for some reason fail to get recorded on Crashmap.

Shorne Parish Council has been requesting fundamental changes to reduce the frequency and severity of accidents at this location for a number of years, including reducing the 50mph speed limit and consideration of traffic light controls with pedestrian crossing facilities.

In December 2021, Kent County Council consulted on a proposed TRO to reduce the speed limit to 40mph. However, in November 2022 it was discovered that Kent County Council had withdrawn their proposal without explanation.

There are bus stops either side of the A226, so bus passengers must cross the road in one direction or the other. Residents from Lower Shorne must cross the road to access the shops, school, and doctor's surgery in Shorne village. The road is very wide at this point, some 76 feet or 23 metres where pedestrians cross the road on the western side of the crossroads, 82 feet or 25 metres where pedestrians cross on the eastern side, with centre islands. Visibility ranges from less than 150 metres to over 200 metres, depending on your starting point.

Recent automatic traffic counts (ATCs) carried out by Kent County Council show that the "average" speeds on the A226 at this location are up to 49.1mph. Even assuming that these are the 85th percentile speeds (rather than average), this means that at least 15% of vehicles are exceeding this speed. In fact, the ATCs identified that up to 9.7% of vehicles travel in excess of the "enforcement" threshold of 57mph. At this speed, it will take just 6 seconds to travel 150 metres. In 6 seconds, a pedestrian will have only walked between 5 and 8 metres and will be in the middle of the carriageway.

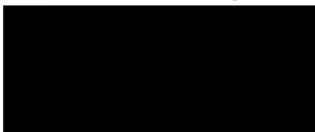
Crossing this road on foot is considered so dangerous that many residents simply avoid it, choosing instead to drive their children to the local school, or to drive them to the bus stop on the opposite side of the road. This extreme avoidance behaviour would render valueless any PV2 calculations to determine the need for a controlled crossing, *since the real number of people who wish to cross the road on foot is considerably higher than those who are currently prepared to risk it.*

I and Shorne Parish Council support this petition, and urge Kent County Council to make effective safety improvements at this location before we see another fatality or serious accident.

We would therefore be grateful if you would have this included on the agenda for the Council Meeting on 28th March. I am prepared to address the Council if required.

If you are able to nominate the appropriate "decision maker", I will arrange for the Change.org petition to be directed to them and the original paper forms to be forwarded to them. In the meantime, I trust that electronic PDF copies will suffice.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Bob Lane

Comments

Some of the comments made by people participating in the online petition include:

- "My son will be using the bus stops at that junction come September. Currently it isn't safe for him to do independently."
- "There is a bus stop either side with residents currently having to cross the road. It is so dangerous! My son will need to do this to get a school bus soon and it isn't safe. Traffic lights and a crossing is needed."
- "Safety is so important for ALL road users . KCC need to prioritise making our roads safe!"
- "My daughter and family live in Shorne."
- "The crossing is very dangerous. Secondary school children cross the road in the morning and it's unsafe."
- "I live in Shorne and use the road often. This road needs to be safer for pedestrians and drivers alike. Lights I think are essential. Let's hope there are changes!"
- "I live in Lower Shorne and although only 43 yrs young I have hip issues that affect my mobility. I can't walk fast or run but when crossing that main crossroads I often fear the speeding traffic and wish I could move faster. It's a really unsafe junction yet its left without ANY safe method to cross. Yet a smaller crossroads up opposite the Higham garage has traffic light control.. yet this is a smaller junction with slower speed restrictions... why on earth is the Shorne crossroads not controlled by traffic light signals or pedestrian crossings. 2 children have lost their lives in years past on this same junction. Thoughts with all the families of those who lost loved ones. How many more lives need to be lost before Highways & the Gravesham Borough Council (*sic*) & Shorne Parish Council listen and actually act to prevent any more deaths or serious injuries."
- "Although visibility is good at this junction, it's a wide road and vehicles travel at a pace without slowing to be aware of pedestrians. A pelican crossing here would prevent further fatalities."
- "I am a local resident who uses this road every day. I have seen how dangerous the crossing is, and how fast the traffic can flow, above the 50mph speed limit."
- "Because this junction is not safe, too many cars come by driving way too fast."
- "Improvements in road safety should be a priority in this area"
- "This is a hazardous road with the school, just up the road which my granddaughter goes to, and I worry every day that she comes home safely as people drive so fast down the road"
- "Cannot put a price on safety."
- "All the traffic situation in the village should be reviewed. Crossroad, pedestrian crossing and traffic lights, same as pear tree lane."
- "I think it's a dangerous crossroads"
- "This is such a dangerous crossroads."
- "If it improves people's safety, then it's worth signing!"
- "It's a busy junction, with school run traffic twice a day, connecting 2 residential areas and bus stops used by school children opposite each other - it should have better

safety measures - a proper crossing. It is really dangerous for pedestrians and vehicles alike."

- "I have family who live near the crossroads and they feel this is a real hazard! A proper risk assessment needs to be reviewed for this crossroad immediately!"
- "Traffic speeds way too fast along this road"
- "I know how dangerous this crossing can be."
- "This is a very dangerous junction on a high speed road close to a primary school. Something needs to be done to make it safer."
- "I have a family member who lives close by to this crossroads junction and has to use it daily to get in and out of her road"
- "Known accident blackspot"
- "Too many people killed there"
- "it's a dangerous crossroads as my son was involved in accident there"



A STATEMENT FOR GRAVESHAM JOINT TRANSPORT BOARD TO BE HELD ON 29th MAY 2024

Shorne Parish Council has seen KCC's report, and whilst we welcome the immediate actions KCC proposes to take, and the further review they intend to commission, we do not consider that the proposed changes to signage go far enough.

We do not accept that lowering the speed limit will have little effect. Whilst there will always be some irresponsible drivers who disregard speed limits whatever they are, the majority of drivers try to adhere to speed limits displayed. In fact, in 2021/22 KCC itself proposed and consulted on lowering the speed limit to 40mph, effectively extending the existing 40mph limit through Higham westwards from Hollytree Drive through Shorne Crossroads to Crown Lane, but they subsequently abandoned their plan.

What is clear from KCC's report is that Shorne Crossroads is ranked joint 6th out of 148 give-way crossroad junctions on "A" roads across the county in terms of collision numbers. If it is 6th in the whole county, it is likely to be one of the worst, if not the worst, in Gravesham.

It is also clear that the majority of accidents are T-bone type collisions, where one of the vehicles is attempting to cross the A226 or turn right at the crossroads. There are many, many more similar collisions and near-misses at this location that go unrecorded; we see them with depressing frequency. It is a wide road, and people frequently underestimate the speed of approaching vehicles.

What the report fails to identify adequately is the risk to pedestrians and the genuine fear felt by pedestrians who have to cross this wide, 50mph road at this point. There are bus stops at either side of the A226 at Shorne Crossroads, and anyone who needs to use the bus services between Gravesend and the Medway Towns must cross the A226 on at least one leg of their journey. This includes children going to and from secondary schools in Gravesend. Children in Lower Shorne who attend Shorne Primary School must cross the A226 in both directions, as do any residents who want to visit the shops, doctors' surgery, or other facilities in Shorne village. It is small wonder that many residents choose to drive their children to the school or bus stops rather than allow them to cross the A226 on foot.

Almost all accidents are a result of driver error (or pedestrian error), but where these errors occur frequently it is our responsibility to reduce the opportunity for these errors and accidents. If drivers and pedestrians are finding it difficult to judge the speed of approaching vehicles and are consequently making unsafe manoeuvres, we need to make it safer for everyone by slowing and stopping the traffic.

Board members may recall that we used to have a similar situation at the crossroads at Pear Tree Lane and Villa Road. This was addressed by lowering the A226 speed limit to 40mph and installing traffic light controls at the crossroads.

We strongly request the JTB's support to implement similar measures at Shorne Crossroads.

(500 words)

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