

Gretton Traffic and Parking – Options to improve

Preliminary report, to seek feedback and comments

Introduction

It is generally recognised that the volume and speed of traffic in Gretton and Gretton Fields is increasing and is a concern, impacting road safety and discomfort for residents. This is confirmed by data from the 'active' traffic sign (see App 2), individual feedback, the Village Survey (conducted in 2014) and from the stakeholder meeting held in Sept 2015.

Recent developments are likely to exacerbate this, by adding traffic volume and reducing available off-road parking. In particular; (i) additional housing in Winchcombe (ii) the development of the Bugatti site, and (iii) the 'Spitfire' housing development behind Church Row.

This report is the initial feedback from a group set-up to review options to *improve safety for all road users in the Village*. This is the first step in a process; to initiate discussion and seek feedback from the Village and other bodies, with a view to making a set of recommendations to GPC. This will then inform a plan of action that GPC can pursue, as funds become available.

Scope

There is a problem of speeding traffic, particularly traffic approaching Gretton village and through Gretton Fields, and at other locations identified in Appendix 1

Whilst traffic volume is an additional concern, there is little that can be done directly to reduce it. Although measures to slow traffic through Gretton could make it a less-preferred through-route.

Parking is also a problem at a few locations, in particular:-

- Occasionally blocking access to Gopshill Lane
- Reducing visibility at Working Lane junction
- Occasionally outside the Church
- Village Hall – on the road
- Parking outside school is currently a problem at pick-up & drop-off, but with the likely development of the Bugatti site (& the consequential loss of parking there), parking is likely to become a safety issue as it impacts visibility, restricts traffic flow and makes pedestrian access to and from the school more difficult.

Funding is going to be a challenge. Some of the feedback received from Highways, Police etc. whilst sympathetic, is that traffic is inevitably increasing, and is effectively 'a sign of the times' and that Gretton's problems are far less significant than many other villages, which would therefore have to be given priority.

We are unlikely to have enough funding to do all that we'd like, so we'll need to adopt a prioritised and phased approach to suit funding availability.

Approach and General Assumptions (what's good, what's not)

Opinions on the effectiveness of different traffic calming measures vary widely.

The assumptions below were established by a small working group, which has widely researched and met several times. While there are no certain answers it is hopefully a good set of guiding principles.

Recent good practice is to take a 'psychological' approach, encouraging drivers to want to slow down, and behave courteously and with respect for what is clearly a village environment and a shared community space, because it feels like the right thing to do. Signage is used to support this. This approach is discussed in the report: *Traffic in Villages Safety and Civility for Rural Roads, a Toolkit for Communities*:

<http://www.hamilton-baillie.co.uk/files/publications/50-1.pdf>.

The alternative approach of multiple warning signs and measures such as speed bumps is now usually considered to have limited long-term effect and can look unsightly. Police / camera enforcement does work, but it needs

DRAFT issued by GPC, to be placed on the GPC website, inviting feedback as part of a consultation process.

multiple locations and is costly to establish and maintain – and based on numerous previous requests, it is clear we are unlikely to get this.

Measures, such as changing speed limits (up or down) are unlikely to get highways approval or funding.

It is considered that we should avoid excessive 'urbanisation', Gretton should look and feel like a country village and different from the larger communities of Cleeve and Winchcombe for example.

We should limit measures that cause traffic to start & stop or queue. Introducing such carriageway obstacles can cause a 'stop-start-accelerate' noise nuisance; in addition they can encourage vehicles to speed-up to get past an obstacle / restriction before oncoming traffic, thus actually increasing speeds. It is understood that such a 'build-out' or obstruction was considered in Gretton some time ago, but following review, was rejected by the Highways Authority

Proposals for consultation:-

Speeding

We will try to avoid:

Obstacles to slow traffic;

Speed bumps, pillows, rumble–strips

Enforced single-lane traffic (as per approach to Bishops Cleeve from Gotherington)

Road narrowing (queuing, stop / start)

Excessive road signage, warnings etc (too urban, often ineffective)

Note, 30mph repeater signs are unlikely to be permitted, as we have street lamps in Gretton.

Excessive road markings, coloured tarmac, parking lines etc (inappropriate for this village, too urban)

Possible options:-

- Make the approach to Gretton look like a village community and very different from the roads between villages.
- Suggest a 'village centre' at Gopshill Lane junction through to the Village Green and Working Lane
- Village signs - emphasising village features to make it clear that this is a community space, shared by pedestrians e.g. School, Bus stop, Village hall, Footpath signs etc.
- Introduce some inconvenience, to slow people down, make Gretton less attractive as a through-route
- Additional kerbing, to reduce road width, often to replace verges eroded by traffic – in particular from construction vehicles.
- Improve footpaths – e.g. opposite Myrtle Cottage to Royal Oak.
- Add footpaths e.g. opposite school, Royal Oak to Littleworth turn
- Widening of grass strips at road-side, additional tree and shrub planting.
- Speed-activated signs (smiley faces, speed read-out, 'slow-down' etc) solar-powered?
- Extend and better delineate the 'triangle'- eroded by heavy traffic
- 'Village gateways' at three locations, with planting.

Parking

Some options that might be considered, particularly to address school parking for pick-up / drop-off. are as follows. Note all these options will require considerable consultation.

- a. Barn Close ?
- b. Use of Royal Oak car park (limited times) ?
- c. Use of any additional parking (if established) behind Village Hall ?
- d. Allocation of limited parking at Bugatti development ?
- e. Parking at Spitfire development, with pedestrian access through the Churchyard ?

The village is effectively free parking. If we start to identify 'preferred' parking areas, we may have to start adding yellow lines elsewhere(although this might be necessary outside the school).

Notes

- 1 School. The GPC has had an initial consultation with the School, who are generally supportive of the GPC's approach. Initial thoughts included:-
 - a. Create additional parking, see options discussed above

- b. School to remind parents re courteous parking and driving in the Village
 - c. Manned crossing on S/East approach to School?
 - d. Change bus times to better suit school start times
- 2 Gateways. There are significant constraints about gateway design, structure, distance from the road etc. Those at Alderton represent the latest standard – though not necessarily at the best location. There is scope for variation and we can make Gretton’s look different and more attractive, by creating features supported by planting that will be noticed and respected by those entering the Village.
 - 3 Other bodies. We will maintain ‘external relationships’ and establish new ones to get advice, support and possibly funding:-
 - a. Gloucestershire Road Safety Partnership (& Road Safety Hub)
 - b. Gloucester Constabulary
 - c. CARS – Community Approaches to Road Safety
 - d. GRCC - Gloucestershire Rural Community Council
 - e. Other national advisory bodies
 - f. GCC Highways (both GCC & Amey - the contractors) to solicit support and funding.

Next steps

The Group will undertake the following actions:

1. Continue to consult:-
 - a. Use this initial report as a catalyst to collect ideas and comments from the village Collect ideas (& photos) of good and bad village road-safety / traffic calming ideas
 - b. Review what plans have been considered and adopted or ruled-out in the past, in other nearby villages.
 - c. Continue discussions with the School, to develop options to improve parking and traffic, co-ordinating with plans they may have (and any sources of funding?)
2. Consider a campaign aimed at school-run drivers
3. Seek opportunities to improve the overall appearance of the Village, adopting a village-wide strategy for maintenance, liaising with owners as appropriate.
4. Check ownership of grass verges; scope / permission to change their use or look, e.g. adding shrubs, posts etc.
5. Develop list at Appendix 1, from Village feedback, then rank ideas, by considering cost, timing and impact, in order to establish an action plan

We ask you to comment on this topic by email to grettonpc@gmail.com:

- Please say whether you support or not the general approach of managing driver behaviour by improving the village environment rather than using coercive measures such as speed bumps.
- Please comment on the proposed options for managing traffic passing into or through the village – are there any you particularly wish to see put in place or are opposed to.
- Please comment on the proposed options for managing parking in the village – are there any you particularly wish to see put in place or are opposed to.
- Please make your comments by March 24th.

The council and the traffic sub group will analyse carefully all the returns submitted by the closing date and report them to the full council AGM at the May meeting where Council priorities can be discussed.

Appendix 1 – a list of problem areas and possible remedial actions

Appendix 2 – speed-activated road sign data

Appendix 1

The Ideas List – For Discussion - by village location

Location	Possible ideas
Through Gretton Fields	<i>40mph, straight wide road (most development is set back from road). Problem with speeding traffic, both directions, see App II</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 mph limit and the 'unlimited' section is a concern locally. But a request for continuous 30mph, and speed bumps etc, is likely to be seen as unreasonably restrictive for through traffic. • Note: speed limits in areas with no housing – devalues their use in areas where they are needed. • Action in hand to improve poor existing speed-limit signage. • Consider speed limit count-down signs (III, II, I)
Approach to Church Row (from Gretton Fields)	<i>30 mph, past entrance to new Spitfire development. Approaching traffic slows only as it approaches bend.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh red tarmac + markings on road. • Establish village gateway, with shrub planting and 30 mph sign, near Wellingtonia trees (slightly closer to Gretton Fields to accommodate new Spitfire entrance) • Recovery of some eroded verge <p>(Note; the above are currently included in GPC request to Spitfire)</p>
Gotherington Junction, Grass Triangle	<i>Grass triangle disappearing, damaged by heavy / large vehicles. Opportunity to improve look of village entrance.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore grass triangle, make it as large as sensibly possible, with low profile kerbing (note; this is one of the requests to Spitfire) • Include low maintenance planting. • Establish village gateway, with shrub planting on Gotherington approach
Church	<i>Road parking (but does slow traffic), Church parking occasionally a problem</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific action. Church may consider occasional use of cones for weddings etc to encourage local off-road parking. • Consider pedestrian access to parking (if available) in the new Spitfire development
Railway bridge to Church	<i>Wide road, traffic often too fast as it approaches <u>and</u> leaves village</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore second pavement and path under bridge, on approach • Alternatively add white lines on road edge to 'narrow' the road. • New pedestrian crossing point – Note; this was offered by Spitfire as part of their planning. GPC is inclined to accept the offer, but there remain concerns about type of crossing – eg too urban?

<p>School / Barn Close</p>	<p><i>Parking and safe school access is a problem, particularly at pick-up / drop-off times. Will be become much worse when the Bugatti site is developed, and parking is lost. Road is wide with no footpath / crossing at Barn Close entrance.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-paint school zig-zags on road. • Re-establish verge and kerbs opposite school and at Barn Close entrance. • Identify specific 'parking' and 'no-parking' areas, to establish (i) safe crossing point to cars in Barn Close, (ii) use parked cars to help slow traffic, but (iii) still provide gaps for cars to safely pass. (Note additional parking ideas - main text) • Brighter, smarter, more obvious school safety railings (aligned with nominated parking, passing slots) • Extend planting of shrubs road-side verge (from bridge up to Barn Close) to make road feel narrower.
<p>Bugatti / Duglynych Lane</p>	<p><i>Carriageway widens at Duglynych Lane. Development of Bugatti site is very likely, adding new housing and re-defining the Duglynych junction. Planning approval conditions should ensure no worsening of this road junction.</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bugatti development should help to re-define wall, paths and road verges, and improve junction • Relocate Duglynych footpath sign to more obviously visible position, possibly on other side of road. • Continue footpath kerbing opposite Bugatti (this could be a planning condition for Bugatti developers)
<p>Village Green double bend</p>	<p><i>Generally traffic slows here. Parking concerns on Working lane corner (junction visibility) & down Working Lane (congestion). Parking on Gopshill Lane occasionally blocks bin-lorry access Posts and chain around the green are now old and difficult to maintain. Notice board although repaired, will need replacing in 2018. Existing 'rumble strip on Working Lane / Close Field junction, ineffective and noisy.</i></p>
	<p>Generally agreed we should make the Green more significant and a pleasant focal point. Much debate, but ideas considered include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove chains. Replace posts with short wood posts, around Green <u>and</u> on two opposite grass areas, to better suggest a connected village centre, whilst effectively (visually) narrowing the road in this area. • De-clutter existing Green and spread-out:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional bench on opposite side of road (behind short posts). ○ Re-locate new notice board, and letter-box on other side of road. ○ Verge ownership / permission needs to be addressed. • Extend effective Green boundary around the entrance to W/Lane, and add road marking to keep W/Lane entrance clear of parking obscuring the junction. • Relocate Gopshill footpath sign

<p>Phone Box & Greenway Lane</p>	<p><i>Phone box is attractive 'village' feature, no significant traffic issues</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve culvert and Greenway Lane junction, to become a more attractive village feature • Relocate Greenway Lane footpath sign to more obviously visible position
<p>Village Hall & layby</p>	<p><i>Occasional parking problem, but slows traffic. Roadside parking encourages village / rural feel, and helps to manage speed?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider limited additional parking for Hall events on hard-standing by rear access to playing field.
<p>Manor Farm House to Myrtle Cottage</p>	<p><i>Wide bend at Myrtle Cottage - <u>leaving</u> traffic, speeds up here; <u>approaching</u> traffic does not brake until this point. Restricted pavement width due to tree (by salt bin).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to make both bends (Myrtle Cottage & Manor Farm House) feel 'slower'. • Add shrubs to grass verge (at Manor Farm House) to effectively narrow road (and reduce visibility?) Ownership / permission to be addressed. • Widen pavement opposite Myrtle cottage (safer pavement, and effectively reduce road width). Note; expensive and could push traffic onto other-side of road, over lowered kerb (and drain). • Alternatively cut back or cut-down (ash?) tree and / or add heavy white lines (on road next to kerb) to provide visual effect of road narrowing.
<p>Myrtle / Hillside cottages to Royal Oak</p>	<p><i>Wide straight approach, no apparent housing or indication of village environ. Poor gravel footpath (not necessarily a problem), but verges eroded by traffic approaching too fast and taking avoiding action.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-instate path and eroded verge locally, opposite Hillside Cottage (by field entrance) and add kerbing (this 'narrowing' would be seen from both directions) • Restore grass verges to original width (and reduce carriageway width to original) • Consider adding kerbing, to protect against continued erosion and emphasise rural road, different from approach roads. • Restore or replace gravel path with tarmac – not urgent or significant? • Village gateway with shrub planting in existing location

<p>Winchcombe approach, past Royal Oak & 30mph sign</p>	<p><i>Fast approach, most traffic disrespects the 30mph sign, despite pub entrance.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguably the 30 mph sign is too early and could coincide with the gateway and the 'start of the village'. But then traffic would slow down even later as it approaches. • An alternative, is to have a 40mph limit, earlier, well before the pub entrance (to start traffic slowing sooner) and then move the 30mph sign, nearer the village centre, at the gateway location. • Refresh road tarmac markings on approach (coloured tarmac, white markings and 'slow') • Replace (now missing) road-side / verge marker posts, on approach to village (on pub side). • Consider speed limit count-down signs (<i>III, II, I</i>)
<p>Royal Oak to Littleworth turn</p>	<p><i>No footpath, pedestrians feel very exposed, footpath desirable</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We're informed that introduction of a footpath (for pedestrian safety and to help encourage traffic to slow), is not possible, as there is insufficient width to meet regulations, and funding would be an issue. • Whilst arguably not possible now, this should remain as a long-term goal, should regulations / circumstances change.
<p>General</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single village grass-cutting maintenance contract – to ensure signs never covered, verges maintained etc. • Encourage hedges to be maintained to a managed height (ie village environment, not open road). • Additional signage eg 30 / 40 mph repeater signs or occasional 'courteous driving' reminder signs. Some debate over whether this is excessive (and ineffective) urbanisation? Note: speed limit repeater signs probably not permissible in Gretton (street lights) but may work in Gretton Fields. • Continue use of speed activated road-sign, at several locations (note this is battery powered and requires maintenance every 2 wks).

Appendix 2

Gretton's Speed Activated Road-sign. Feedback from the first 18 months of operation

The vehicle speed activated sign has now been in operation at three locations.

The camera counts every time there is speed infringement, and a log is recorded, at every battery change.

In general it has worked well, but requires a battery change-over every 2 weeks.

Summary - Jan '15 to Oct '16

	Location	Direction	Period	Average no. of Speed infringements per day
1	Gretton East - 30mph (near Royal Oak)	Approaching Gretton	8/1/15 - 3/3/15	463
			27/6/15 - 7/11/15	607
			3/4/16 - 6/7/16	668
2	Gretton North - 30 mph # (near new Spitfire development)	Approaching Gretton	3/3/15 - 2/5/15	422
			10/1/16 - 3/4/16	352
			21/7/16 - 31/8/16	484 ##
3	Gretton Fields - 40 mph (near Gilders Transport)	Approaching Gretton Fields	4/5/15 - 27/6/15	245
			20/11/15 - 10/1/16	210
			31/8/16 - 20/10/16	270

Notes; # - at location 2, the sign can be triggered by cars before they enter the speed restriction zone, so unreasonably high infringements are likely to be recorded.

- sign obscured by tree foliage late summer (it still registers cars, but cars do not see the sign!)

Comments

- It is clear to observe that traffic does slow down substantially after it has triggered the sign. So the sign does provide a road-safety benefit.
- Location 1 – Royal Oak. High count - 463 /day increasing to 600 over the Summer / Autumn period
- Location 2 – Gretton North. High count is probably misleading, because of the location. See note # above.
- There is no provision for (i) traffic approaching from Gotherington or (ii) any traffic leaving Gretton.
- Estimate of number of speeding vehicles in Gretton per day:-
 - Location 2 – assume 50% of measured are real infringements..(#) 200 / day
 - Vehicles approaching from Gotherington – conservative estimate.. 100 / day
 - Location 1 (Royal Oak) average measurement 500 / day
 - (Vehicles leaving village – at 3 locations – conservative estimate.. 200 / day
 - **Total** **1000 / day**

Conclusions / recommendations

It can be concluded that Gretton sees over 1000 vehicles breaking the speed limit each day, demonstrating that Gretton does have a serious traffic speed problem.

Actions to consider:-

1. Continue sign usage at the current locations 1 and 3.
2. Consider moving location 2, closer to Gretton (further from 30mph sign)
3. Consider additional location on entrance to village from Gotherington
4. Report findings to Police and discuss possible actions
5. Develop plan for introduction of permanent traffic calming measure, see main report.