

Chearsley Village Plan (RESCU Group) Chearsley Village Plan Traffic Survey

**Traffic passing through Chearsley and local traffic flows around the Village Green.
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Focus.

The focus of the survey was to ascertain:

1. The number of vehicles simply passing through the village in comparison with those using the village lanes.
2. The pattern for vehicular traffic around the Village Green with particular reference to the traffic around the shop and pub access routes to and from the village lanes.
3. The case for the introduction of traffic measures around the Village Green, including the possibility of a one way system, widening of the access roads or controls on parking.

Methodology.

The surveys were conducted on weekdays in May 2013 at various times, incorporating the morning and evening rush hours of 8.00am to 9.00am and 5.20pm to 6.20pm. We also included the times between 3.15 and 4.15, thus including the school run. Total survey time was six hours of which four hours focussed purely on local traffic and a further two hours which focussed additionally on through traffic patterns.

The location for the survey was at the Bus Stop/Village Green area. The target vehicles for through traffic were those entering the village from Long Crendon and the Aylesbury directions, irrespective of if they came from Aylesbury, Winchendon or Chilton as all those would be counted as “coming through the village”.

Survey Results

- The first two tabular results were from the “through traffic” surveys, taken in separate weekdays and timed as 3.15pm to 4.15pm and 8.00am to 9.00am. Tables 1a and 1b show the spread of through traffic by ten minute intervals to illustrate the highly significant variations in traffic volumes and consequent safety issues associated with the “school run”.
- The third and fourth tables offer data spread across five separate hours of different weekdays, but focussed on traffic volumes and patterns around the village green, shop and pub areas. This important work surveyed numbers of vehicles entering or leaving the village lanes via the Shupps Lane/Church Lane junctions and entering or leaving the village via the shop or pub carriageways.

Total number and pattern of vehicle road usage.

In the 3.15 to 4.15pm survey exactly 300 vehicles were logged as in Table 1a. From 8.00am to 9.00am the total vehicles observed in that hour was 520 (Table 1b). In each case, results were calibrated by 10 minute intervals to ascertain the density of traffic as this would be a material factor in assessing the potential danger for and from vehicles manoeuvring around the pub and shop junctions with the main road.

TABLE 1a: TRAFFIC VOLUME PATTERNS BY 10 MINUTE INTERVALS. (1 hour survey)

Time	3.15 - 3.25	3.25 - 3.35	3.35 - 3.45	3.45 - 3.55	3.55 - 4.05	4.05 - 4.15
Cumulative Total	30	76	98	192	226	300
Vehicles in 10 minutes	30	46	22	94	34	74

TABLE 1b: TRAFFIC VOLUME PATTERNS BY 10 MINUTE INTERVALS. (1 hour survey)

Time	8.00 - 8.10	8.10 - 8.20	8.20 - 8.30	8.30 - 8.40	8.40 - 8.50	8.50 - 9.00
Cumulative Total	74	139	277	371	459	520
Vehicles in 10 minutes	74	65	138	94	88	61

From these Tables, we should note the significant increase in intensity of traffic flow associated with the school run times, both morning and evening, notably 8.20 to 8.30am and 3.45 to 3.55pm. These times, of course, also coincide with the pressure on parking near the bus stop, the areas around The Bell and the numbers of pedestrians and small children crossing the roads at these times. The additional issues of parking of the buses themselves in what is only a partial layby from the main road and affecting driver visibility around the junctions of the village also needs to be considered.

Chearsley is very unusual in having no less than seven road junctions within a distance of a few hundred metres, including three village access roads. We also suffer from some “ambiguity” in identifying the through traffic main road, as the Crendon/Winchendon route is seen by some to be the principal route, whilst for others it is the Crendon/Aylesbury route. This causes many issues of vehicle displaying incorrect or even misleading signalling at the junctions.

TABLE 2: Routes and volume of vehicles passing through the village. (derived from the 2 separate one hour surveys as in Tables 1a and 1B)

Route	From Crendon, passing through	From Aylesbury, passing through	Total vehicles passing through the village
No of Vehicles 3.15pm - 4.15pm	132	104	236/hour
No of vehicles 8.00am - 9.00am	153	360	513/hour
Totals in 2 hours	285	464	749 in two hours

From this Table we note the sheer volume of traffic passing through the village on the main roads, across complex junctions and sites of limited visibility for local drivers accessing or leaving the main roads and for pedestrians attempting to cross the roads.

The total of 749 vehicles in two hours represents a vehicle within every ten seconds. Observational evidence was that this was frequently in the form of tailgating groups of vehicles rather than regular ten second intervals. This is potentially dangerous when cars are travelling at excessive speed and the driver is required to respond quickly.

TABLE 3: Number of vehicles surveyed entering the village lanes via Shupps Lane/Church Lane junction over a staggered five hour period.

Route	Entering village via Shop route	Entering village via Pub route
Number of vehicles	62	90

From this Table we should note that 152 vehicles entered the village using the Church Lane/Shupps Lane junction in the five hour period of the surveys, one every 2 minutes on average. Although predominantly these vehicles access the junction by passing The Bell Public House, 40% use the Shop frontage route and therefore leave the Main Road by this narrow route.

TABLE4: Number of vehicles surveyed leaving the village from Shupps Lane/Church Lane junction over a staggered five hour period.

Route	Leaving village via Shop route	Leaving village via Pub route
Number of vehicles	60	60

From this Table we should note that 120 vehicles left Chearsley in the five hours of the survey via accessing the Church Lane/Shupps Lane junction, with equal numbers using either the Shop frontage route to the main road, or go past the Bell Public House.

Overall, these latter two Tables show that 272 vehicles used the Church lane/Shupps Lane junction in the period of survey, an average of almost one vehicle per minute. Anecdotal evidence however, is that this is not in a uniform pattern of time, with many instances where vehicles coincided at that junction from different directions, both entering and leaving the village.

Summary and conclusions from the overall statistics.

Main Road.

Of the 300 vehicles logged in the hour of intensive scrutiny, (Table 1), 236 vehicles, or 79% of them, went “through the village” as defined. However, well over twice this number (513 vehicles) went “through the village” in the other one hour survey between 8.00am and 9 am, illustrating the importance of effective speed management given this intensity of road usage across our complex junctions.

Visually, and without any equipment to quantify actual speed the fact that the majority of vehicles were simply passing through the village had an understandable impact on their relatively high speed with “many” assessed as being in excess of 30mph. In some cases there was sharp braking required from vehicles passing through Chearsley as a vehicle came from or to the Main Road via the village lanes. Observations noted several “near miss” situations between cars entering or leaving the village and those passing through at greater speed and not anticipating encountering other slower moving vehicles

Village traffic

In the focussed five hour survey period of local village traffic patterns around the Green, 152 vehicles came into the village via the Shupps Lane/Church lane junction to the south of the shop and pub. This is a difficult and partially blind junction, currently extremely badly marked in terms of “Stop or “Give Way” priorities. There were many instances of “stop-start” manoeuvres around this junction due to poor visibility and a lack of clear signage.

Similarly, 120 vehicles came out of the village via these routes, giving a total traffic use of that junction of 272 vehicles in five hours.

Options for traffic management around the Village Green.

This was a difficult issue for the surveyors within the Group as there are many and varied opinions about the degree of safety issue, but also about possible solutions. As such, this issue was looked at closely with pros and cons offered in the Table 5.

Although only 21% of the traffic observed in the 3.15 to 4.15 focussed one hour survey was travelling within Chearsley in the area of the Village Green, the most markedly dangerous safety issues were around the relatively “blind” vehicle manoeuvring around the Shupps Lane/Church Lane junction below the shop. Observing the speed and lack of attention to junctions of some home delivery vans when coming up the slopes of Watts Green, Shupps Lane and Church Lane illustrated the need for attention to that point very clearly.

It was also observed that difficulties in traffic flow across the front of the pub and alongside the shop due to parked cars, even when the pub was closed, actually serve to slow traffic speed.

After careful consideration, we have concluded that it is impractical to prevent parking on or near the shop entrance area without materially affecting the viability of the shop. It is also unreasonable to require those house owners between the shop and main road to park elsewhere.

The safety of villagers, vehicle drivers and pedestrians must have the ultimate priority in considering traffic management. However, the team have found and observed nothing, either statistically or observationally, to suggest that a one-way system (either up or down the Green) would necessarily benefit road safety or access to facilities.

Road widening, cutting into the Green, would benefit parking around the shop and Pub, but would detract from village amenity and almost certainly increase traffic speed around these areas, which are frequented by pedestrians, notably families around the Bus Stop, pub and shop customers and walkers. Advice from the County Council also offers the view that one-way systems lead to increased traffic speed.

TABLE 5: Pros and Cons for altering the present position around the Village Green.

	OPTIONS FOR ACTION	POSITIVE FACTORS	NEGATIVE FACTORS
1	Keep things as they are	No finance required. Villagers generally know the difficulties and respect the problems, adapting speed and showing consideration.	Traffic issues not solved for passing traffic negotiating routes around the shop and pub areas.
2	Create a one-way system allowing traffic up past the shop to the Main Road only.	No traffic forced to back out onto main road. Drivers can get out of their cars easily when parking for accessing the shop or their home.	Intrusive and unwelcome road signs required. More traffic would be forced past the bus stop and pub with potential for danger to children and pub customers.

		No danger of vehicles “stuck” sideways on the Main Road trying to access the shop route and meeting parked cars and cars coming up past the shop on the wrong side	County Council Advice and experience elsewhere is that traffic will speed up. Shop could lose custom as access may be seen as more difficult.
3	Create a one-way system allowing traffic down past the shop from the Main Road only.	No one forced to back out onto main road. Safer for pedestrians crossing to/from shop	Parked cars will have driver’s door against wall. Intrusive and unwelcome road signs required. More traffic would be forced past the bus stop and pub with potential for danger to children and pub customers. County Council Advice and experience elsewhere is that traffic will speed up. Shop could lose custom as access may be seen as more difficult.
4	Restrict parking on stretch of road to immediately in front of the shop only.	Traffic can go both ways.	House owners cannot park near their houses. Intrusive and unwelcome road signs and road side lines will be required. Shop could lose custom due to restrictive parking
5	Widen the road by the shop by cutting out extra road space from the Village Green area.	Traffic can go both ways. Opportunity to create Off-road parking by widening carriageway there from Village Green area.	Expensive to implement, and no realistic prospect of financial support. Loss of village amenity. Traffic will speed up if manoeuvring difficulties are removed.

Final RESCU Group Recommendations **relating to the three focal issues of the road traffic survey.**

Focus One: Through Traffic:

Recommendation:

- Establish appropriate **traffic management measures** to encourage adherence to the 30mph limit on all the main roads approaching Chearsley.

Specifically, the RESCU Group as a whole had mixed feelings about the relative value of solar powered speed indicator signs with many whole heartedly in favour but a few others more concerned about the intrusive nature of the proposed signage. However, almost all members keenly support a road marking scheme to emphasise the importance of reduced speed on approaching entry to our village, especially, if funds are limited, from the Winchendon Road, Aylesbury and the Long Crendon directions. Overall, we are keen to support the initiative of the Parish Council in taking long awaited action on this important issue.

Focus Two: Traffic accessing the village lanes around the shop and The Bell.

Recommendation:

- The junction between Shupps Lane, Church Lane should have clear “Stop” road markings to increase clarity of priority and road safety.
- Establish 20mph speed limit on the lanes of the village including the areas off the Main Road around the Village Green.

There is a very strong feeling of support for the immediate implementation of a 20mph limit throughout the village lanes, partially in response to perceived and observed safety issues affecting children and pedestrians, but also as a contributing factor to the protection of the verges and hedgerows of the sunken lanes. We do not consider it satisfactory to dismiss such an important improvement in the everyday safety of residents in Chearsley as “too difficult”.

Focus Three: Assess the case for changes in permitted traffic flows around the Village Green areas around the shop and The Bell.

Recommendation:

- No further action should be taken in regard to altering the flow of traffic around the Village Green.

Having given the issue due consideration and research, the Group felt that no remedy is appropriate to resolve the present difficulties without incurring unacceptable consequences or creating new and potentially dangerous issues elsewhere. Although the installation of a mirror on the north side of the Main Road at the top of the lane leading from the shop may assist drivers accessing the Main Road from that direction, it is our view that the issue of safety for pedestrians, children and drivers will be best served by formally and legally implementing a 20mph speed limit around the Green and all Chearsley lanes south of the Main Road.

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