



PIRBRIGHT VILLAGE SAFETY SCHEME

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)

30th MARCH 2006

KEY ISSUE

This report recommends abandonment of two proposed lorry bans. It also seeks a decision on the way forward following concern expressed regarding noise and vibration to properties in Cemetery Pales, allegedly as a result of two speed tables installed as part of the Pirbright Village Safety Scheme.

SUMMARY

The report sets out further developments since the previous report considered by the Committee on this matter. These include counts of the numbers of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) using Cemetery Pales, consultations carried out on the proposed HGV bans, further evidence provided by the complainants and details of a meeting with the complainants. It puts forward options to improve the situation, including removal of speed tables, their replacement with speed cushions or chicanes, provision of a one-way system or installation of a speed camera.

Report by

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR

Surrey Atlas Ref.

Pages 87 F4-F5, 88 A4-A5

GUILDFORD B.C. WARD(S)

PIRBRIGHT

COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION(S)

WORPLESDON

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to agree

- (i) that the proposed implementation of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction in Cemetery Pales be abandoned.
- (ii) that the proposed investigation of a 7.5 tonne weight restriction covering a wider area be abandoned.
- (iii) which of the options in paragraphs 23 to 29 should be pursued as the way forward on this issue.
- (iv) that any financial consequences of the decision reached under (iii) above be funded as a priority item from the 2006/07 LTP devolved funding, and that funding of Phase 2 of the Pirbright Village Safety Study be considered alongside other schemes in the forward programme (see a separate report on this agenda).

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1 At the meeting of this Committee on 20 October 2005 Members considered a report on the Pirbright Village Safety Scheme and allegations of damage to one property and of nuisance to its occupants and their neighbours as a result of the impact of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on speed tables in Cemetery Pales.
- 2 The Committee resolved inter alia as follows:
 - (a) that the suggested 7.5 tonne heavy goods vehicle ban in Cemetery Pales should be progressed immediately.
 - (b) that an area-wide environmental HGV ban should be investigated with a further report being brought to the Committee.
 - (c) that the cost of the above be borne by the £50,000 already allocated to Phase 2 of the Pirbright Village Safety Scheme. The effect of this decision will be to defer other elements of the scheme until 2006/07.
- 3 The officer report to the 20 October 2005 meeting is taken 'as read' and its contents are not repeated here, although much of the report is highly relevant to consideration of this matter. Members will recall that the objective of the Pirbright Village Safety Scheme was to enhance road safety in the village by addressing vehicle speeds and improving conditions for pedestrians.
- 4 Over the three years from April 2000 to March 2003 there were 21 Personal Injury Accidents. In the five months since the scheme was completed for which accident records are available, there have been no injury accidents.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE PREVIOUS REPORT

5 Actions taken since the previous report include:

- HGV counts in Cemetery Pales have been undertaken.
- Consultations on the proposed HGV ban have been undertaken.
- The complainants have commissioned a report from the Transport Research Laboratory and have submitted this together with other evidence of the extent of the problems they are experiencing.
- Officers have met with several of the complainants, the Parish Council and Cllr. Mike Nevins.
- The principal complainant has made a number of further suggestions as to remedial measures which might be considered.

Details of each of these are provided below.

TRAFFIC COUNTS

6 On Thursday 2 February a count was carried out of the HGVs exceeding 7.5 tonnes using Cemetery Pales between 7.00 am and 7.00 pm. The results were as follows:

NE-bound, towards Brookwood Crossroads:

Hour Beginning	Rigid 2 axle	Rigid 3 axle	Rigid 4 axle	Artic. 4 axle	Artic. 5 + axles	Total
7.00	1	0	1	0	0	2
8.00	0	1	1	0	0	2
9.00	3	0	2	0	0	5
10.00	2	1	1	0	0	4
11.00	5	0	0	0	0	5
12.00	1	0	0	0	0	1
13.00	1	1	0	2	0	4
14.00	0	0	0	1	1	2
15.00	2	1	1	0	0	4
16.00	1	0	0	0	0	1
17.00	1	0	0	0	0	1
18.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	17	4	6	3	1	31

SW-bound, towards Pirbright:

7.00	0	1	0	0	0	1
8.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
9.00	3	2	0	0	0	5
10.00	2	0	1	0	1	4
11.00	2	1	0	0	0	3
12.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
13.00	2	0	1	0	0	3
14.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
15.00	1	0	1	0	0	2
16.00	1	0	0	0	0	1
17.00	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.00	0	0	1	0	1	2
Total	11	4	4	0	2	21

- 7 As the results show, a total of 52 of HGVs exceeding 7.5 tonnes used the road. Compared to many roads, this is a relatively modest number. No counts were taken before 7.00 am or after 7.00 pm. Experience elsewhere shows relatively few HGV movements during late afternoons and evenings. It is likely that there are additional movements in the early morning (and this is confirmed by the complainants – see paragraph 17 below). While these may not be numerically significant, their environmental impact at quiet times of day is likely to be greater.
- 8 It was not possible to determine the heights of these vehicles, and therefore to predict whether, if prohibited from Cemetery Pales, they would divert via Connaught Road (through the 11 foot 6 inch height limit at Pirbright Arch) or whether they would need to use the A322 and A323 route. Officers' opinion, based solely on casual observation, is that perhaps two thirds (around 30 - 35) would be capable of passing through Pirbright Arch with the balance (around 15 - 20) needing to use the longer route. Neither of these figures could be considered significant when compared with the daily traffic levels using either of these routes.

CONSULTATIONS ON THE CEMETERY PALES HGV BAN

- 9 Following discussions with colleagues in the Woking Local Transportation Service, officers wrote to all County and Borough Councillors, Parish Councils and Residents Associations in the area affected, together with 'professional' consultees such as the emergency services and Freight Transport Association. The results were as follows:
- 10 The following respondents were in favour of the ban:
- Inspector Dave Kelley Surrey Police (Borough Inspector)
 - Leslie Clarke Normandy Parish Council
 - Bill Barker Horsleys County Cllr

In supporting the proposal they cited the support of the Local Committee for the proposal at its October meeting and the need for consistency with public opinion. The response from Normandy was made without discussion of the issue or a resolution being passed at a meeting of the Parish Council.

- 11 The following respondents were opposed to the ban
- Neil Thomas Brookwood Village Association
 - Elizabeth Compton St Johns & Brookwood County Cllr
 - Jill Chan Worplesdon Borough Cllr
 - Diana Lockyer-Nibbs Normandy Borough Cllr
 - Phillip Goldenburg Brookwood Borough Cllr
 - Mrs V Wild Worplesdon Parish Councillor
 - Ralph Pomphrey Worplesdon Parish Councillor
 - D. L. Slaymaker Worplesdon Parish Councillor
 - Norman Sherwin Worplesdon Parish Councillor
 - Michael Dillon Worplesdon Parish Councillor
 - Hilary Barker Worplesdon Parish Councillor
 - Gaynor White Worplesdon Parish Council
 - Sandra Morgan Fairlands, Liddington Hall & Gravetts Lane C.A.
 - John Crook Sheets Heath Residents' Assoc.
 - Mr & Mrs Weekes Residents of Holly Lane
 - PC Trevor Bashford Surrey Police (Traffic Division)

In opposing the proposal they cited the unsuitability of Connaught Road for HGVs (residential, already traffic calmed, presence of schools), the length of the diversion route(s), the risk of displacing HGVs to other unsuitable routes, and the need to share the problem posed by HGVs equitably across the various communities.

12 Four respondents expressed no clear opinion either way:

- Burnham Clinton Pirbright PC
- Catherine Fisher Knaphill Borough Cllr
- Diana Smith Knaphill County Councillor
- Louise Perry Freight Transport Association (FTA)

The FTA, while expressing no preference, suggested that traffic counts be carried out, that alternative traffic calming measures be installed, that any HGV restrictions imposed be “except for access” and installed for a temporary period to determine their effectiveness. They state that they encourage operators to use the most appropriate routes. Pirbright Parish Council stated that without a wider ban, there would be a serious effect on other parts of the parish as a result of diverted vehicles. They propose instead a ban affecting a much wider area, and conclude that they support the proposals providing the wider ban follows on soon afterwards.

13 No replies were received from the following consultees:

- Mike Nevins Worplesdon County Cllr & Pirbright Borough Cllr
- Fiona White W. Guildford County Cllr. & Stoughton GBC Cllr
- Terry King Worplesdon Borough Cllrs
- Victor Searle
- Jayne Marks Stoughton Borough Cllr
- Pauline Searle Stoughton GBC Cllr & N. Guildford County Cllr
- Valerie Hazelwood Westborough Borough Cllrs
- Olaf Kolassa
- Marilyn Merryweather
- Mr C Wright Road Haulage Association
- John Reed Ambulance
- Bob Weldon-Gamble Surrey Fire & Rescue
- Tony Hayes-Allen Knaphill Borough Cllrs
- Neville Hinks
- Ken Howard Hermitage and Knaphill Borough Cllrs
- Tina Liddington
- Graham Cundy
- John Kingsbury
- Ric Sharp Knaphill Residents Assoc.

14 In addition to the above, at the meeting of the Woking Local Committee on 1 February 2006 the following written question was asked by Cllr Phillip Goldenberg: *“In the light of the proposed HGV ban along Cemetery Pales Pirbright, which will inevitably result in additional lorry traffic through Pirbright Rail Arch (already a known danger for pedestrians) and along Connaught Road (recently traffic-calmed), will the Officers please convey to the Guildford Local Committee this Committee's firm opposition to this proposal?”*

- 15 The Senior Local Transportation Manager responded as follows: *“Officers share Councillor Goldenberg's concerns about the consequences of a 7.5 tonne HGV ban on Cemetery Pales. Such a ban is likely to result in an increase in HGV movements under Pirbright Arch and along Connaught Road, which is predominantly residential. As part of the legal process, this proposal would need to be formally advertised. Should the scheme progress to that stage, the Committee would have the opportunity of lodging a formal objection at that time. Meanwhile, Officers will, if the Committee so wishes, make their views known informally, as this may have the effect of discouraging the commencement of formal processes.”*
- 16 In response to a supplementary question from Cllr Goldenberg, the Committee agreed that officers should make their views known.

EVIDENCE SUBMITTED BY THE COMPLAINANTS

- 17 On 17 February 2006 a letter was received signed by seven residents of four properties affected by the speed tables. The letter alleges significant damage to quality of life of the residents and ongoing and serious nuisance. Appended were records of times, dates and (in some cases) registration numbers or operators of HGVs causing this nuisance. These records show vehicle movements less numerous than those recorded in the traffic counts above, mainly (but not exclusively) during the early morning or evening periods, i.e. outside the periods when the traffic counts took place. The records are a sample and are not intended to reflect the actual number of events which the residents find disturbing.
- 18 In addition the principal complainant has commissioned vibration measurements from the Transport Research Laboratory, whose report has been provided in confidence to officers. Based on extensive measurements of vibration, the report makes reference to five other reference documents, four of which were written (or co-written) by the report's author. The report makes the following points:
- Buses and trucks produced the highest levels of vibration.
 - The vibration exposure at the property is likely to be above perception level on the upper floors when some heavy vehicles pass.
 - Out of a total of 32 vibration events reported, two exceeded this threshold; the vehicles involved, a large box van and a heavy articulated vehicle, were travelling quickly.
 - People vary in their tolerance of low level vibration, but events such as those referred to above can be a cause of serious concern especially if residents feel that their property is being damaged.
 - Annoyance is also related to the time of day that the events occur.
 - Annoying 'parasitic' sounds can also be produced by vibrations (e.g. loose radiators rattling, creaking ceilings)
 - Vibration levels in the building are far below the threshold for even very minor damage.
 - Normal use of the house can result in vibration levels well in excess of those produced by passing traffic.
 - The report suggests that former marshy conditions may have produced low soil strength in the vicinity, which would aid the transmission of vibration. It does not explain, however, why, if this is the case, that the measured vibration levels are so low.

- 19 The report's main conclusions are:
- Levels of vibration due to passing heavy traffic have been shown to exceed the perception threshold on upper floors. This has the potential to cause disturbance to occupants.
 - There should be little concern that the vibration is causing, or could in the future cause even minor damage.
 - Remedial measures might include:
 - ❖ Removing the tables
 - ❖ Installing other speed control devices such as cameras and horizontal deflections. Obviously the safety implications of changing the method of speed control need careful consideration.
 - ❖ A weight limit of 7.5 tonnes should also prove beneficial.

MEETING WITH THOSE AFFECTED

- 20 On 24 February 2006 officers met with five complainants representing three of the four affected households. The chairman of Pirbright Parish Council and Cllr. Mike Nevins also attended. The following points were made during the meeting:
- The overall effect of the speed tables is beneficial. Speeds have reduced in Cemetery Pales. (One resident disagreed with this).
 - The design of the speed tables had not taken account of local ground conditions, and this was the reason why the vibration is affecting these properties.
 - Speed tables 3 and 4 should be removed and replaced with temporary signs until a permanent solution could be devised (all but one of those present disagreed with this).
 - Some of the speed tables should be replaced with either one long chicane or several short chicanes.
 - A one-way system around the triangle (Pirbright Green) should be considered.
 - A speed camera should be provided.
- 21 The overall conclusion of the meeting, supported by the majority of those present, was that the speed reductions achieved were worthwhile, and that no action should be taken until a satisfactory solution to the problem had been devised. Despite this the urgency of the matter was emphasised.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS MADE BY THE COMPLAINANTS

- 22 Subsequently the principal complainant has submitted photographs of chicanes in another location (Tilford, in Waverley borough) which she believes may be suitable in Cemetery Pales. These suggestions were received on 15 March 2006 after this report had been largely completed. In the time available, therefore, it has not been possible to give these full and detailed consideration. Officers' preliminary view is that while chicanes may have merit (see paragraph 26 below) that the particular design illustrated in Dr. Ansell's photographs is not likely to be effective in speed management terms.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 23 **A 7.5 tonne Heavy Goods Vehicle ban.** As set out above, this has been fully investigated and consulted upon, and does not command the necessary support.
- 24 **Complete removal of one or both of speed tables 3 and 4.** This would increase the distance between tables 2 and 5 to over double the recommended distance between adjacent tables. This could be resolved by also removing table 5 and relocating the Vehicle Activated Sign which is the speed-reducing feature on the approach to the village. This would weaken the speed-reducing effect of the village safety scheme as a whole, would require advertisement, and would cost some £25,000.
- 25 **Replacement of one or two of the speed tables with speed cushions.** Larger vehicles would be able to straddle the cushions and would not need to slow down, so the speed-reducing effect of the safety scheme would be reduced. If one of these faster-moving HGVs were to impact a speed cushion, it is possible that the vibration transmitted could be greater than those currently being experienced. This proposal would require advertisement, and would cost some £30,000.
- 26 **One or more chicanes.** This may be a possibility but would require careful design and local consultation. The chicanes could not be located close to junctions, would need to take account of the presence of parked vehicles, and would be urbanising in their effect on the village streetscape, requiring additional signage and perhaps also lighting. Their cost would be significant. Chicanes are no less controversial than road humps, as recent experience in Trodds Lane demonstrates. If the Committee favours this option, a feasibility study, surveys and detailed design would be required at an estimated cost of £10,000. Depending on its outcome, its recommendations could be funded as a priority item from the 2006/07 LTP devolved funding.
- 27 **A one-way system around the triangular Pirbright Green.** This cannot be recommended. One-way streets tend to experience increased vehicle speeds as there is no risk of collision with an opposing vehicle. It is likely that larger vehicles would have difficulty in negotiating the sharp corners, resulting in their crossing the centre line of the road with consequent risk of collisions.
- 28 **A speed camera.** This could not be provided as it would not meet government criteria for cameras to which the Safety Camera Partnership is required to adhere.
- 29 **Do nothing.** Members may believe that none of the other options is feasible, desirable, affordable or would not command public support, or may simply feel that enough effort has been devoted to this issue, that all schemes have disadvantages as well as advantages, and that it is time to move on.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 30 At its meeting on 20 October 2005 the Committee resolved to defer Phase 2 of the Pirbright Village Safety Scheme (VSS) in order to release funds to resolve these problems. Since the 2005/06 financial year is now over, it is recommended that any resolutions of the Committee related to Cemetery Pales as a result of this report be funded as a priority item from the 2006/07 LTP devolved funding, and that Phase 2 of the VSS be considered alongside other schemes in the forward programme (see a separate report on this agenda).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 31 This report provides a clear illustration of the difficulty of achieving sustainable transport solutions. On the one hand are the difficulties being experienced by a small group of residents, whose ability to lead a fulfilled, healthy life is allegedly being compromised by actions taken by the County Council. On the other is the possible reduction in the effectiveness of measures designed to improve road safety and improve the village environment for the majority of residents.

CONSULTATIONS

- 32 The recommendations regarding abandonment of the proposed lorry bans have been reached as a result of extensive consultation as set out above. The measures implemented as part of the Pirbright Village Safety Scheme were the subject of extensive consultation, and the measures have generally been welcomed. Care should therefore be taken in deciding what further action should be taken to ensure that the positive aspects of the scheme are not lost. Formal consultation is likely to be required whichever option (other than doing nothing) is chosen.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 33 The traffic count evidence shows that the numbers of HGVs using Cemetery Pales is modest, and therefore the effects of any diversion of HGVs to other routes would also be modest. Despite this, the number of responses opposed to the proposed Cemetery Pales HGV ban proposal far outweighs those in favour. It is therefore recommended that this proposal be abandoned.
- 34 Although consultation has not been carried on the suggested wider HGV ban, it is clear that this, too would be opposed, and reasonable to assume that, since a wider ban would cause wider dispersion, that the weight of opposition would be even greater than that already expressed. It is therefore recommended that this proposal, too, be abandoned.

- 35 The problems described by residents of four Cemetery Pales properties remain. Of the suggested remedies:
- HGV bans cannot be recommended.
 - Removal of two or more speed tables would be detrimental to the safety objectives of the Village Study, which still command support.
 - Replacement of the tables with cushions would be expensive and there can be no guarantee that this would be effective.
 - Chicane(s) may provide a satisfactory alternative, but have their disadvantages, including cost and urbanisation and they may not command public support. A feasibility study would be required.
 - A one-way system may increase speeds and turning vehicles would increase the risk of accidents.
 - A speed camera would not be permitted by government criteria.
 - Doing nothing would retain all the agreed benefits of the village Safety Scheme to the benefit of the village as a whole, but would greatly disadvantage a small group of residents.
- 36 The Committee is therefore invited to choose an appropriate course of action from those described.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Guildford Local Committee Report and Minutes
(20 October 2005, Item 12)
Mouchel Parkman report
Emails from SCC's Noise Engineer
Letters and e-mails from residents
Consultation responses
