

## **ITEM 10: WATLINGTON - PYRTON LANE: PROPOSED 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT ZONE AND TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES**

### **IAN HILL**

I am Ian Hill, a Watlington Parish Councillor and have been involved in trying to make Pyrton Lane a safer road for residents since 2017.

The lane provides the only vehicle access for 20 homes on Pyrton Lane and 21 homes on St Leonards Close. It is also used as a rat-run by cars, and increasingly by HGVs, to avoid the town centre with its congestion problems.

But it is the need for pedestrians to walk along the road that is of most concern to me as a parish councillor. About half of the houses in Pyrton Lane have no pedestrian access other than along Pyrton Lane. This includes children walking to school some of whom have to walk 70 or more metres along the lane to get to a safer route, and of course they are doing this during the rush hour. The result of which is that parents tend to drive their children 1.5km to school when they could walk less than half that distance along footpaths and little used streets.

Only about a third of Pyrton Lane has a usable pedestrian path, with the rest being blocked by hedges that make it unusable or inaccessible. The path that is available is between 0.6m and 1.2m wide with most of it being less than 1m. This narrowness and discontinuity makes it inconvenient for parents with younger children in buggies to use footpath. When combined with the lack of dropped kerbs, it also forces users of motorised wheelchairs to use the road.

Although my main concern is the dangers to walkers, the narrowness of the lane leads to passing vehicles having to go into the access routes to the housing or onto the verges, especially the verges on the north-west side. There are two pinch points where the carriageway is down to 3.5m width, which adds to the congestion on the road during rush hour. The southern part of the lane is narrow and has no verges or footpaths. **Despite these problems, although there have been collisions and scrapes between vehicles, there have been no serious accidents. Traffic calming measures are proposed in order to reduce the chance that a serious accident will occur in future.**

**WPC records show a 7am to 7pm average speed over the week of 24mph, with 15% of vehicles (about 250 a day) at or exceeding 30mph.**

OCC is currently working on a plan for an Edge Road around Watlington, which once constructed, will cut-off Pyrton Lane as a through road. But this Edge Road is still at the planning stage and its construction is dependent on four housing developments, only one which has full planning approval. Best estimates seem to be that it will be at least 5 years until the road is complete.

**(the text in red will be skipped if I am running short of time)**

**END**

**COUNCILLOR FREDDIE VANMIERLO**

Residents have long been asking for traffic calming measures on this section of Pyrton Lane, which is used as a 'rat run' to access the M40.

During the May 2021 elections I spoke extensively with residents of Pyrton Lane and St Leonards close, and again following the publication of the proposals for this project in Autumn 2021. There is a desperate need to reduce speed on this section in the interests of residents' safety and wellbeing.

I made this a priority and am delighted we have been able to bring forward proposals so quickly. It has been testament to the hard work of officers and to the parish council.

The proposals have been brought forward in careful consultation with the parish and residents and represent the best possible compromise to reduce speed whilst maintaining accessibility for wheelchair users and pushchairs.

It is acknowledged that the Watlington Relief Road project may ultimately result in the closing off Pyrton Lane and creating a cul-de-sac with pedestrian and cycle through access. However, although the relief road is progressing through the planning stages, the road won't be completed for several years and the need to alleviate traffic conditions for residents is now. It would be intolerable to resign residents to their fate, saying you must wait for the relief road and put up with it until then.

For these reasons I am supporting the project and hope that the cabinet member will approve the scheme today.

**END**