

Stedham with Iping Parish Council

Highways and Traffic Update – June 2021



At the council we receive a lot of enquiries and complaints about the state of, and people's conduct on, the roads.

As a parish council we have no jurisdiction here, but we are in regular contact with those who have, and we are quite well placed to escalate these concerns as a general theme. What we can't do is take responsibility for the reporting of specific issues. As part time councillors we simply don't have the resource to do this expediently and by passing on second hand information there is the risk we'd introduce inaccuracies.

Fortunately, the organisations that need this detail recognise this and have put systems in place to allow individuals to report their concerns directly, either by phone or on an online portal.

So, taking the themes of issues reported to us, in no particular order...

Parking

If vehicles are causing an obstruction, causing a hazard at a junction, preventing access for emergency vehicles, parking on the pavement or blocking driveways, report it to Sussex Police. Please use the non-emergency number 101 or email your local policing team at:

<https://www.sussex.police.uk/>

If you need to identify a specific location, the police have a number of tools for that but the What 3 Words app is simple and very effective.

<https://what3words.com/>



Be mindful that obstruction is a very broad issue and Sussex Police will review each report on a case-by-case basis. They can only issue a fixed penalty or take other action in certain circumstances, for example when an obstruction is likely to endanger life.

You can report vehicles parking in a hazardous position on an unrestricted section of highway to the County Council via Love West Sussex at love.westsussex.gov.uk or via their mobile phone app

We know we have a selection of our own parking issues here in Stedham also, and the Parish Council has produced a **Parking Code of Conduct** to explain what we are doing as a council and also what we can all do to help with this issue. A copy of this is available on our website.

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Highway maintenance

This is another item for the [love.westsussex.gov.uk](https://www.love.westsussex.gov.uk) as a general portal for reporting road condition problems, obstructions, fly tipping, flooding, blocked drains, problems with rights of way and cycle paths, abandoned vehicles and damaged road signs. It's very quick and simple to use.

There is also an emergency number when the issue to report poses a risk to the public, **01243 642105**. This is office hours only, but out of hours is diverted to the Police. This is a very effective tool and has been seen to get a Highways Team on the scene within a couple of hours.



Anti-social motoring

This can take many forms but speeding through our villages, and speeding along the A-roads that divide them, with the risk to life and the noise disturbance that go with that, is the issue we face most regularly.

This problem is not unique to Stedham with Iping so the Parish Council has joined forces with a number of other councils and organisations to form a Road Safety Forum covering Sussex and the South Downs. This forum also includes Sussex Police and a number of our MPs and is being taken very seriously.

This forum has seen a number of successful initiatives such as speed cameras and automated speed signs being deployed and the formation of Community Speed Watch Groups.

Chief Inspector Jon Carter who is the lead of Operation Downsway frequently attends. This is a Sussex Police initiative to tackle anti-social motoring and speeding on our roads and has seen hundreds of offences being dealt with. The only limit to the success of this approach is the limited number of Police Officers available at any given time.



CI Carter has recognised that, in villages like Stedham, it is often noise rather than speed that is the problem. Noise cameras (similar to the familiar speed cameras) have been discussed, but are still some way off from being approved by the Home Office, so not an option for the foreseeable future. He also noted that the Police can test vehicles for noise emissions compliance but this involves stopping the vehicle and testing it at the roadside with the same sort of equipment used in a MoT test. Very time consuming, and not suitable for

addressing problems such as a dozen motorcycles at a time on the A272. He also noted that most vehicles tested in this manner are found to be legal, so clearly a solution to this problem lies elsewhere.

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The root cause of the issue, as the Police see this, is the manner of driving and riding at excessive speed, with the noise being a by-product of this. If we reduce the speed, we reduce the noise, and improve road safety.

The installation of speed cameras has been discussed but currently we do not meet the criteria for a permanently installed camera. We also have issues installing items such as interactive speed signs as fixed infrastructure like this would represent a hazard at the road side.



“Village Gates” and road colour changes are used to indicate Rural communities and an area with a known hazard, and these work well in some areas. We already have the coloured road however, and our Village Gates cannot be located on the A272 as they would again represent a safety hazard. We will be looking at a fresh coat of paint on the road markings we do have.

We have contacted the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, run by Sussex Police, who Operate Community Speed Watch groups. Whilst we could have a group within our villages, they have told us that due to the speed limit on the A272, this particular location is not suitable for a Speed Watch group as it would represent a high risk to the volunteers. He has also confirmed that the mobile phone noise meter apps some people have discussed are not of evidential quality, and their use should be discouraged as this would also put the users in danger.

This looks like the only practical option at present is to rely on the Police to enforce the speed limits. We have discussed this with Officer Steve O’Connell who leads the Safer Roads Partnership and is also the Sussex Police Parishes liaison officer for our patch. His advice is to report the problems and to keep reporting them.

Operation Crackdown is the tool to use to do that. You can see the details on posters on our notice boards, download the details from the SIPC website or go to <http://www.operationcrackdown.org/>

When the Police are looking at locations for Operation Downsway to target, their first source of intelligence is the detail provided by Operation Crackdown. The greater the number of reported incidents, the more likely we are to see patrols and speed traps in Stedham.

In addition to this, Councillor Tom Richardson of Lodsworth has produced a local log that people can submit to the Parish Clerk that will be collated and used to justify Police resource. A copy of this is on the SIPC website also.

One final point made by Officer O’Connell was not to just report it on social media, not even the Police use twitter accounts. They are not used to collect this type of information. Only a report to **Operation Crackdown** will do that!

S. Barnard
SIPCChair
10th June 2021