



# Fairfield Village Community Association

c/o Fairfield Village Hall, Stourbridge Road, Fairfield,  
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B61 9LZ

To: County Councillor Shirley Webb, Woodvale Division

CC: Belbroughton and Fairfield Parish Council  
FVCA Committee  
Residents

15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Shirley,

Thank you for your recent Fairfield Report, which has been made available to members of our community.

The Community Association Committee has considered your report, the comments on Facebook regarding Swan Lane and the email exchanges between our Treasurer, Robert Garvin, and yourself. Please find below our collective response, approved by and with contributions from the FVCA committee.

## **Yew Tree Lane**

So that the elderly, people with a disability or children in pushchairs are not disadvantaged to access local services, such as the Post Office, Church & Village Hall, it is a responsibility of the public authority to adopt reasonable adjustments to enable safe accessibility. Not having a dropped kerb to enable people in protected groups to cross the Yew Tree Lane at the junction adjacent to 25 Stourbridge Road puts people that are elderly, with a disability or in pushchairs at a disadvantage and at risk of injury.

In your report you mention issues regarding the siting of a dropped kerb and that an alternate solution, at a cost "*in the region of £10,000*", has been drawn up that crosses Stourbridge Road by "*the specialist team*".

Considering that traffic surveys in 2016, 2017 & 2018, taken adjacent to 24 Stourbridge Road, record vehicles driving in excess of 40mph, between the hours of 7am and 7pm, with some vehicles driving at speeds in excess of 50 & 60mph, such a proposal does raise eyebrows. We would not want to put someone at unnecessary risk crossing such a fast road.

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Site No: 18022282		Site Reference: 18022282										
#22 Stourbridge Road, Fairfield												
Speed Summary (All Days)-Limit 30 Mph			From 06/07/2018 To 18/07/2018			Channel: Northbound						
<b>Time</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>85th</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.</b>	<b>Bin 6</b>	<b>Bin 7</b>	<b>Bin 8</b>	<b>Bin 9</b>	<b>Bin 10</b>	<b>Bin 11</b>	<b>Bin 12</b>	<b>Bin 13</b>
<b>Begin</b>	<b>Vol.</b>	<b>%ile</b>	<b>Ave.</b>	<b>Dev</b>	<b>36- &lt;41</b>	<b>41- &lt;46</b>	<b>46- &lt;51</b>	<b>51- &lt;56</b>	<b>56- &lt;61</b>	<b>61- &lt;66</b>	<b>66- &lt;71</b>	<b>=&gt;71</b>
07:00	230	40.6	34.1	6.6	48	21	6	2	0	0	0	0
08:00	276	38.8	32.8	7.1	48	13	4	1	0	0	0	2
09:00	178	38.4	32.2	6.9	30	8	2	0	0	0	0	1
10:00	181	37.9	31.9	6	28	6	2	1	0	0	0	0
11:00	202	38.5	32.5	6.8	35	8	2	1	0	0	0	1
12:00	206	39.1	33	6.9	38	11	4	1	0	0	0	1
13:00	209	39.1	32.9	6.2	38	13	3	1	0	0	0	0
14:00	237	39.2	33.2	6.6	46	13	4	1	0	0	0	1
15:00	272	38.9	33	6.9	54	12	3	1	0	0	0	2
16:00	370	39	33.1	6.4	78	18	4	1	0	0	0	2
17:00	449	38.8	33	6.5	85	23	4	1	0	1	0	2
18:00	257	40.4	34.4	6.5	62	22	6	2	1	0	0	0
19:00	135	41.4	35.1	7	32	14	4	2	1	0	0	0

Site No: 18022282		Site Reference: 18022282										
<b>#22 Stourbridge Road, Fairfield</b>												
Speed Summary (All Days)-Limit 30 Mph			From 06/07/2018 To 18/07/2018			<b>Channel: Southbound</b>						
<b>Time</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>85th</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.</b>	<b>Bin 6</b>	<b>Bin 7</b>	<b>Bin 8</b>	<b>Bin 9</b>	<b>Bin 10</b>	<b>Bin 11</b>	<b>Bin 12</b>	<b>Bin 13</b>
<b>Begin</b>	<b>Vol.</b>	<b>%ile</b>	<b>Ave.</b>	<b>Dev</b>	<b>36- &lt;41</b>	<b>41- &lt;46</b>	<b>46- &lt;51</b>	<b>51- &lt;56</b>	<b>56- &lt;61</b>	<b>61- &lt;66</b>	<b>66- &lt;71</b>	<b>=&gt;71</b>
07:00	329	38.8	33.4	5.8	66	16	3	1	0	0	0	1
08:00	330	37.6	32.6	6.2	52	10	2	1	0	0	0	2
09:00	242	37.3	32	5.4	36	8	2	0	0	0	0	0
10:00	177	37.3	32.1	6.2	27	5	1	0	0	0	0	1
11:00	172	37.7	32.2	6.6	26	6	2	0	0	0	0	1
12:00	187	38.2	32.9	6.3	33	6	1	1	0	0	0	1
13:00	181	38.5	32.9	5.4	35	8	1	0	0	0	0	0
14:00	193	38.5	32.9	5.6	39	7	1	1	0	0	0	0
15:00	230	38	32.5	6.5	37	9	1	1	0	0	0	1
16:00	241	38.9	33.3	6.8	48	11	2	1	0	0	0	2
17:00	252	39	33.1	7.2	51	13	2	0	0	0	0	2
18:00	185	40.2	34.6	6.7	50	16	2	1	1	0	0	1
19:00	118	40.6	34.8	6.5	31	12	3	1	0	0	0	0

We, therefore, request sight of the proposals and that a consultation takes place with the community and local equality access groups. We are very concerned that any proposal to make individuals cross the Stourbridge Road will mean that they will have to cross Stourbridge Road twice to get back to the side of the road for the Post Office etc instead of just crossing Yew Tree Lane once. We are quite certain that it would be very much safer for a mobility scooter to cross Yew Tree Lane once than cross Stourbridge Road twice. We are happy to discuss local proposals, which would need local consultation.

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## **Raised Tables**

Over the past few years there have been meetings that have included yourself and Mr. Clewer, emails to you and others, including Mr. Hobbs (Director of Infrastructure), as well as working groups meetings with the Parish Council, with emails and minutes being copied to you. We have raised various engineering options, which have included suggesting Speed Tables to be sited at locations that have minimal impact on nearby properties and that actively reduces the speed of vehicles entering the village, where residents regularly experience vehicles driving in excess of 50 & 60mph (WCC Traffic Surveys). The sites we have identified are before the village planters, where there are no properties. We have also suggested, if funding permits, other strategic locations that also have minimal impact on neighbouring properties.

In your email to Mr. Garvin, you state that *“If we placed the tables in the positions you are suggesting it does not mean the traffic would slow down in the middle of the village.”* Speed Tables at the village entrance will actively slow down motorists, which we hope will be maintained throughout the community, but will, at least, reduce risk in those area of the village that experience high traffic speeds. Even though current speeds are high in the centre of the village, they are not as high as at either end of the village along Stourbridge Road. Should suitable engineering be adopted throughout the community, we would have a safer village.

You also mention that you *“don’t think any formal request has been made for this, but I have simply progressed this with officers from seeing a facebook post”*.

At a public meeting of the Community Association on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018, the approved minutes state:

*“With regard engineering works to slow down traffic, Mr. Clewer informed the meeting that ‘engineering works is most unlikely to happen’, adding that the Stourbridge Road was a main arterial commuter B-road. Mr. Clewer was challenged and was asked to qualify why works cannot be done? Is there a legal reason? Is there an engineering reason? Or is it cost? If cost, Mr. Clewer & Cllr Webb were asked for figures as it could be a cost that the community could fund through a joint fundraising initiative with groups in the community. Emails previously sent from FVCA have asked for justifications and have suggested works that are low cost, are effective and have minimal impact on residents; e.g. a road table between the Post Office & School Drive and works at a point before the village entrance where there are no properties. The works suggested by FVCA are accepted by the Department of Transport and, according to the Parliamentary Select Committee, have been found to be effective.”*

*“It was stressed that works proposed to Highways, subject to there being no legal or engineering reasons why that cannot go ahead, would need further consultation with the community.”*

In my email to you of 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018 thanking you and Mr. Clewer for attending the meeting I wrote:

*“As suggested previously and at the meeting, engineering works are needed. As a starting point for consideration (measures that are effective, affordable and have minimal negative impact on the community):*

*\* Traffic calming before vehicles enter the village, i.e. before the 30 mph signs. There are no residential properties at these points.*

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*\* Traffic Table between School Drive and the Post Office. The table can be marked (similar to a zebra crossing) and can be a safer place for children to cross the road. The impact on the community will be minimal, only two cottages adjacent to the proposed works."*

On the 14th August 2018, the Community Association received the following, via email, from Mr. Richard Clewer:

*"You have asked for costs of speed tables and crossings. There are a number of issues to consider when installing such traffic calming; these include drainage, street lighting upgrading, high friction road surface, signage and sight lines. A budget figure for the installation of a speed table would be in the region of £30K, and substantially more if anti-skid surfacing was required. A zebra crossing, subject to finding a suitable place for this, would cost in the region of £50K."*

We most recently mentioned that we were seeking Speed Tables in an email to Mr. J. Hobbs, Director of Economy and Infrastructure (9<sup>th</sup> February 2020):

*"Reducing the speed of vehicles who are exceeding the speed limit can only be addressed through a combination of road engineering, enforcement and psychological signage. The village had, for a few months, visits from the Safer Road Partnership. The repainting of lines and the SRP visits have reduced the 38th% by a negligible amount. The Department of Transport studies and guidelines encourage engineering. Fairfield Village Community Association seek Traffic Speed Tables at the following locations along Stourbridge Road:*

- Entrance to the village, before the planters and dwellings;*
- Junction with Bournheath Road, a mini-island that does little to slow traffic;*
- Between School Drive and retail units opposite. There is a school in the village and with there being no School Crossing Warden for the past 5 years, the costs saved from not paying someone could have paid for or greatly paid for this Speed Table."*

As you will have read in Mr. Clewer's email of 14<sup>th</sup> August 2018, a Speed Table is cheaper than a Zebra Crossing. Wilshire County Council's guide price: *"Speed control table with crossing point and associated works such as coloured surfacing, street lighting, signing and lighting costs from £14,600 dependant on length and carriageway width."* and Bristol City Council say that a large table would cost in the region of £15,000 to £20,000. It may be possible that two Speed Tables at either end of the village will cost less and be more effective than a Zebra crossing in the centre of the village.

Even though it is possible that Speed Tables could create noise and vibration which is heard and felt in residences nearby, by siting Speed Tables in the locations we have identified and ensuring that Speed Tables are kept apart (we are not proposing siting them next to each other) the noise impact on nearby properties will be minimal.

According to the UK Noise Association, there is a measurable link between traffic noise and speed, the slower the vehicle speed, the less noise the vehicle produces. The noise benefits for nearby properties of having slower traffic will outweigh any minimal noise disruption from the Speed Table.

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You mention in your email to Mr. Garvin that you know of some Speed Tables that have had to be removed. Could you please tell us in which communities with similar site environment where Speed Tables have been removed?

Speed Tables are only one option to reduce the speed of vehicles entering our village. We are open to other realistic & meaningful solutions and we ask that residents are properly consulted on any proposed engineering works.

### **Mini-Island**

We are surprised that you write in your report, which you say is *“a few items we have discussed over the last year”* that you mention *“FVCA reported this island as having a missing bollard. Upon checking with highways, one was never put in as this would stop the residents at The Old Post Office turning right out of their property.”*

Firstly, the answer that the bollard was never there was clarified in August 2018 in your response to a question from Parish Cllr. Mabbett (30<sup>th</sup> August 2018), *“With respect to the mini island, am I correct in saying that Richard Clewer felt that improvements could be made to that island having seen how traffic use or abuse it? Just wondering whether there are any planned improvements in the pipe-line?”* to which you replied *“As for the island the only thing we didn't do was to a bollard on the village arm of the Stourbridge Rd, it was decided to leave this as it would mean that the resident of 96 would only be able to turn left when exiting their drive, which is probably why it was left out.”*(email 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018).

We made a follow-up enquiry on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 asking about the legality of crossing an unbroken white line marking out striped lines and pointing out that *“as the marked area is used as crossing point, for the safety of pedestrians there should be the two bollards.”* We did not state in this email that a bollard should be replaced, it could be that the crossing point is redesigned that enables vehicles to turn right out of The Old Post Office and also provides a safe point to cross the busy Stourbridge Road.

Secondly, the matter of the “missing bollard” stemmed from a site a meeting on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016 that included me, on behalf of Fairfield Village Community Association, Cllr. Alan Mabbett, on behalf of Belbroughton & Fairfield Parish Council, and Mr. Richard Clewer, Senior Highways Liaison Engineer, Worcestershire County Council – it was noticed that a bollard was missing, and, at the time, we did not know why. In an email later the same day, Mr. Clewer wrote *“2. Replacing the bollard at the mini-island. I will make enquires as to why this is missing and if it is still required I will raise a service request for its replacement.”* On the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2017, the Community Association chased this outstanding item, to which an update from Mr. Clewer was received on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2017 saying *“2. It would appear that the missing bollard was never put in this was probably down to objections from the residents of the house next to the island as this would have prevented them from turning right out of their driveway.”*

We would appreciate that your report reflects the accuracy of the reporting of the missing bollard.

In your report, you mention that the mini island is *“due to be relined again soon (it was done last year)”*. The most recent markings were Edge Lines – it is considered that white Edge Line are not legally enforceable in itself, but indicates that a motorist might cause an obstruction if they park there, which could result in a ticket for obstruction rather than because a motorist has parked on the white line.

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The mini island is, at times, dangerous, with some traffic not giving way as they are supposed to. There have been several “shunts” and HGVs that are being sign posted to and from Dodford have difficulty turning into or out from Bournheath Road. It has been suggested that the island needs to be redesigned. At the public meeting of the Community Association on Monday 4th June 2018, Mr. Clewer “*acknowledged that there was an issue with the mini-roundabout and that Highways will review the junction to see what can be done*” [FVCA Minutes 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018].

What purposeful action is being done to improve the junction that is the mini island?

### **Brook Road**

Brook Road, according to *Department for Transport guidance - Setting local speed limits* section 7.3 (adopted in full by Worcestershire County Council), should have a speed limit of 30 mph (paragraph 133 as there are 20 dwellings along a length of road measuring 600 metres of road or a maximum 40 mph (paragraph 136) if it is considered that dwellings between the Dordale Road junction and the National Speed Limit sign on Brook Road are considered “*outlying houses beyond the village boundary*”. We welcome the speed monitoring exercise and, unlike the previous traffic survey on Brook Road in 2017, the survey lines are placed in a more suitable locations along the road.

### **TRO**

You state that a consultation has started. As yet the community have not received official notification of what is being proposed. We look forward to receiving and circulating the consultation document. From briefings received to date, we have strong reservations regarding increasing the speed limit from 30mph to 40mph on that stretch of Stourbridge Road between the north planter and Orchard Farm, a point on Stourbridge Road that is a blind spot with brow in the road and nearby access points from residential properties, a farm and a pub.

### **Swan Lane**

We welcome your comments on Facebook that you will be reporting the blocked drainage grids, caused by workmen that resurfaced Swan Lane, and those grids that were not cleared by the “Gully Cleaner”. It has been noticed (Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May) that operatives have revisited Swan Lane and all but three drainage grids were found to be unblocked. After your posting on Twitter (13<sup>th</sup> May) saying “Pleased to advise Swan Lane, Fairfield, drains have been cleared again this week”, we checked Swan Lane on 14<sup>th</sup> May, to find that that the three drains identified on the 12<sup>th</sup> May (below) were still blocked with mud & vegetation.



We note your comments that “*Resurfacing is also due to take place once lockdown is over*”. It would be beneficial before this work take place if the banks around the drainage grids were supported to reduce soil spillage into the drainage grids and gullies.

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## Hedges

The hedge along Madeley Road, opposite residential properties, needs cutting back and then managing. We understand that this was mentioned to you at a meeting at Catshill Village Hall earlier this year on the 15<sup>th</sup> January, by representatives of Fairfield & Belbroughton Parish Council, on behalf of the Community Association. The Parish Council were told no, as there is no interference with traffic sight lines currently. There may not be an issue with sight lines, the issue is tractors and other large vehicles, that are driving towards Stoneybridge Island, being forced to drive in the middle of the road, thereby forcing oncoming traffic to drive on the footpath opposite the hedge. We note in your report that *“There have been a few reports of hedges that need cutting back within the village, we have agreed the lengthman to maintain these on a regular basis”*, we hope that this hedge is one of the hedges to be maintained, outside the bird nesting season.

## Other Issues

In your email to Mr. Garvin, you enquired about other outstanding issues:

- Mr. Keith Gorman, on Facebook, has kindly reminded us of the need to clear the gullies along Top Road and you asked if we could *“confirm all relevant reference numbers”*. Unfortunately, I am unable to find report reference numbers. We most recently reported that across the Fairfield Ward area drains and gullies needed clearing to Mr. J. Hobbs, Director of Economy and Infrastructure, Worcestershire County Council (email 9th December 2020).
- Strategically placed parking restriction are requested that have minimal unintended consequences on local retail establishments. Congestion at peak commuter times is having a negative impact on retail operations. Parking and congestion are projected to get worse, with the Fairfield First School enlargement (approved by County Council) and an increasing Bromsgrove population. We would like to develop in partnership with Highways & the Parish Council draft proposals for public consultation.
- Wood Lane, between Glovers Meadow Farm and Wood Lane Farm, is damaged – potholes, sides of the road are eroded and vegetation blocking drainage grids. Over the past few years, the road has been assessed on several occasions and marked for repairs, with no action.
- Swan Lane is being used by large vehicles accessing the Wildmoor Industrial Estate. These vehicles are having a negative impact on the road surface. A weight restriction should be imposed on this road unless access is required to a property or land that is off Swan Lane. Vehicles accessing the industrial estate to use Mill Lane and Wildmoor Lane (something that should be happening, since the Mill Lane road improvements).

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As always, Fairfield Village Community Associations wishes to work with all stakeholders to find and deliver meaning solutions, that benefit the whole community. We ask that we are invited to site & other meetings, to help make informed decisions.

Yours sincerely,

*C. Palmer*

**Conrad Palmer**  
**Chairman**

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