

A Proposal by  
**GAMLINGAY PARISH COUNCIL**

In respect of  
**Improvements to Church Street,  
GAMLINGAY**

**Traffic Study**

May 2014

**DOCUMENT SIGNATURE AND REVIEW SHEET****Project Details**

<b>Project Title:</b>	Improvements to Church Street, GAMLINGAY		
<b>Project No.:</b>	1212-50	<b>Report No.:</b>	1212-50/TS/01
<b>Client:</b>	GAMLINGAY PARISH COUNCIL		

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**Document Review**

Revision	Date	Description	Checked By
A	11.04.14	Amendments to the proposals following a meeting with Cambridgeshire County Council	Julian Clarke

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Transport Planning Associates has been retained by Gamlingay Parish Council to examine options to improve the traffic and parking conditions in Church Street in Gamlingay and prepare proposals for consultation with key local stakeholders, including residents, businesses and the emergency services.
- 1.2 This report presents the findings of a community consultation event held on the evening of 3 July 2013 at the Eco Hub in Stocks Lane. Residents of Church Street, Church Lane and the section of Stocks Lane between Church Street and Station Road were invited to participate in the consultation event along with those representing local businesses.
- 1.3 The proposals arising from this study will be presented to key stakeholders for further consultation and there will be discussion with Cambridgeshire County Council, which as highway authority will have to approve the proposed changes.
- 1.4 The background to this study will be discussed in the following section of the report to present the historic context against which this project was first conceived. The views of the key stakeholders who attended the consultation will be discussed in Chapter 3 and the options for change are presented in Chapter 4. The next steps are presented in Chapter 5.

## 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Traffic and parking congestion in Church Street has long been a concern to local residents. The effect of vehicles servicing the Co-op convenience store and on-street parking, sometimes without regard for the existing parking controls often result in conditions where on single file traffic movements are possible. At the worst times this results in drivers having to wait to the west of the pedestrian crossing, with single file movements eastwards as far as the former China Garden Take-Away.

2.2 The effect of new residential populations moving to Gamlingay as a consequence of the proposed development of land at Station Road for around 87 dwellings and the potential for further development at Green End Industrial Estate were felt to place greater burden on the current levels of congestion.

2.3 The Parish Council entered into a private agreement with the developer of land at Station Road to secure a financial contribution towards the examination of options for traffic and parking management in Church Street. This would allow the existing conditions to be evaluated, preliminary assessments of traffic and parking matters to be made and community consultation/participation to take place to aid in the development of suitable options.

### *Consultation workshop*

2.4 Transport Planning Associates was engaged by the parish Council to facilitate a 'brainstorming' style consultation workshop, evaluate the findings and then prepare a report for presentation to the Parish Council. Options for change would be identified following the workshop sessions and taken forward for wider consultation.

2.5 The consultation workshop took place during the evening of 3 July 2013 between the hours of 7pm and 8pm. Attendees were arranged into small working groups and were asked to work together to discuss their views of the principle causes, of the problems as they saw them. The working groups were facilitated by staff from TPA and at the end of the period, a nominated spokesperson was asked to summarise the findings of their review and present their suggested works to address the identified issues as they saw them.

2.6 The following chapter of this report presents a summary of the issues identified.

### 3 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

3.1 The venue for the event was arranged into a series of tables with between five and eight people on each table. An introduction to the project was provided by TPA and a short presentation was made, similar to an earlier presentation given to the Parish Council and its Annual General Meeting.

3.2 The consultation session resulted in the following comments:

**Table 1:**

People need to park at the car to the rear of the Mill Street/Green End junction

Problems caused by driving short distances, not walking

The road is two way, but due to parking, Church Street acts like a one-way street

Delivery lorries cause problems at the co-operative and public house

Promote parking at the BT exchange

A new relief road should be proposed due to new housing

**Table 2:**

Too many road signs cause visual intrusion

A 20mph speed limit should be considered

A one-way system should not be considered due to potential increases in vehicle speed.

It is important to retain access for deliveries

The location of the crossing is problematic, with poor visibility for pedestrians

Provide car parking where the BT exchange is

Parking controls are too restrictive

Footway condition is poor

Large vehicles have to use Church Street because of the industrial estates

Speed humps are not a good idea due to noise

**Table 3:**

Suggested a none interventionist approach of removing yellow line near the chemist

Removing the maximum 30 minutes stay bays

Provide double yellow lines opposite the co-op

Remove the bus stop markings, the services are not often enough

Remove the yellow line outside the co-op

Similar comments to before in respect of one-way system approach

Suggested restrictions on vehicle sizes

**Table 4:**

Concern was expressed that the crossing was poorly positioned

A wider footway should be provided on the northern side of Church Street to facilitate cyclists

It was suggested that a one-way system be examined

Acknowledged that speed humps are not suitable due to access requirements of fire engines

**Table 5:**

Introduce a priority arrangement similar to Mill Street

Introduce a residents parking scheme

Problems are different in different parts of Church Street. Parking is the problem between Stocks Lane and Mill Street and speeding is the problem between Stocks Lane and Church Lane.

Delivery vehicles approach from different directions.

- 3.3 It was clear that a number of common themes ran through the event, but alongside these was a desire not to overly constrain parking further than it is currently perceived to be. It was further expressed that the greatest problems arose from multiple deliveries occurring at similar times, for example deliveries to the public house occurring at the time the co-op delivery was taking place, with a bus or similarly large vehicle passing through Church Street. Improved management and coordination of deliveries would improve the day-to-day conditions.
- 3.4 Further, the co-op deliveries are managed in a manner to avoid the times when school children might be travelling to either the Village College or the First School. In the afternoon this potentially has the consequence of extending deliveries into the later part of the afternoon, and the evening peak hours when people use the co-op on their journeys home from work or make short trips during the preparation of dinner.
- 3.5 A number of suggested options for improving conditions in Church Street had to be discounted relatively early due to costs and practicality. It had been suggested that parking should be made available at the BT exchange, however, it is understood that this remains

- an active exchange, with no plans for its sale or closure. Further, people using the facilities in Church Street have a desire to park as close as possible to their destination, hence the wide spread abuse of the single yellow line outside the store and along that section of the street frontage.
- 3.6 It was further suggested that people should park at the existing car park behind Mill Street; however, the same circumstances apply as referred to above. Improved signage will help to inform people of the available spaces, but most users of the co-op or Londis are local and know it's there already.
- 3.7 Suggestions were made that the north side footway should be widened throughout its length; however, this would be expensive and reduce parking significantly.
- 3.8 Road safety and the frequency of 'near-misses' at the existing pedestrian 'zebra' crossing have been raised as has the appropriateness of its location. Speeds on the approach to the crossing have been suggested as a problem, although there is no empirical analysis to support the view. The crossing is heavily used, particularly during morning and afternoon school times and for the majority of children, the crossing is correctly located. Many users of the crossing combine their route with a visit to the co-op. Relocating the crossing to the east of the co-op would not, it is felt, prevent children crossing in this location. The reasons for the occurrences at the crossing are felt to be a feature of the difficulties that are experienced, travelling along the section of Church Street, between the crossing and Stocks Lane.
- 3.9 The attention of drivers approaching the crossing from the west, is perhaps focused upon the approaching traffic and whether or not they might be able to pass through the crossing before giving way to another vehicle. The distance over which a driver might have to make this judgement is significant, during the worst periods, extending towards the co-op or the butchers shop. To try to address this condition, improved passing place availability should be created and the visual presence of the crossing should be enhanced. Improved surface treatment may also be possible to increase skid resistance.
- 3.10 The crossing could be 'raised' onto a speed table, which if correctly designed should not cause too much noise impact for neighbouring residents and can be made 'bus-friendly'.
- 3.11 Elsewhere, through the use of contrasting carriageway surfacing materials, additional informal crossing points could be introduced at such locations as near Avennels Way.
- 3.12 A further dialogue with the co-op should be commenced to review serving hours and reduce the size and possible frequency of deliveries. Given that the presence of large lorries outside the co-op, combined with parked cars adjacent often narrows the carriageway to the extent that buses or other larger vehicles cannot pass, modest widening of the carriageway could be considered to help. This might also allow the co-op vehicles to cease overrunning the footway. The footway condition, which includes significant cross-fall, could be addressed through new kerbing and resurfacing.



- 3.13 Considering the matter of one-way traffic operation in Church Street, there were differing views offered at the consultation event. It is widely acknowledged that without suitable speed constraint, one-way streets experience higher traffic speeds than two way streets especially when opposing traffic has to negotiate parked vehicles in the way that exists in Church Street.
- 3.14 One-way traffic has not been considered further.
- 3.15 Much of the difficulty passing along Church Street, during the busier periods is felt to arise from the long distance over which one-way travel is possible. Shoppers naturally gravitate to the same side of the road as the co-op and hence ignore the single yellow line. It is probable that many fail to appreciate too, that as signed, the 8am -6pm restriction applies seven days a week.
- 3.16 The approach therefore that has been taken in designing changes going forward is to introduce more passing opportunity, through the provision of shorter sections of parking on both sides of the road. The proposals are explored in more detail in the following section of the report.

## 4 PROPOSED CHANGES

### Parking changes

- 4.1 Whilst there is abuse and ignorance of the restrictions that define the bus stops, the local bus services now operate at such a reduced level of frequency that defined bus stop 'cages' are not felt to be necessary. The bus stop on the northern side will be removed and the bus stop 'flag' relocated to the east such that the buses will stop on the existing double yellow lines. Once the bus stop has been removed, a parking bay marking will be introduced creating two additional formal parking spaces on a day-to-day basis.
- 4.2 On the southern side of Church Street, the double yellow lines extend for a distance of approximately 30m and this is felt to be excessive. Approximately 20m of the double yellow line is proposed for removal, creating an additional parking for 3 vehicles.
- 4.3 Between number 19 -21 white 'H' bar marking is used to discourage parking across private drives. It is suggested that this should be extended to allow more space for vehicles to manoeuvre into to wait for opposing traffic to pass.
- 4.4 The single yellow line restriction on the southern side of Church Street is to be reduced in length to allow parking outside the butchers and LJ's sandwich bar. A white 'H' 'Access Protection Marking' will be provided between 38a and 42 Church Street.
- 4.5 The parking spaces on the northern side of Church Street, outside property 29 -31c are proposed to be removed to allow for easier movement of vehicles delivering to the Cooperative convenience store. This is illustrated in our drawing (number 1212-50/SP01) that forms **Appendix A** to this report. The restrictions on the northern side of Church Street outside number 33 and the chemist are proposed to be removed to allow for on-street parking.

### Pedestrian crossing

- 4.6 Concern has been expressed regarding the visibility of users of the pedestrian crossing. The suggested reasons for this have been discussed above, however, this study provides an opportunity to review the operation of the crossing and introduce measures to enhance the safety of its use.
- 4.7 The footway build out at the pedestrian 'pelican' crossing will be extended to provide improved visibility to users. There are reports of 'near-misses' at this location and it is expected that by widening the area where pedestrians may wait, they will enjoy greater visibility to approaching vehicles and vice-versa. The build out on the north side will be widened by 3m and on the southern side, the build out will be widened by 2m.

- 4.8 The existing carriageway drainage will need to be reviewed as a result of this proposal, as the natural flow of surface water will be impeded by the changes to the kerb lines. New drainage gullies will be introduced along with new drainage connections.
- 4.9 It was originally intended to provide an anti-skid surface treatment at the crossing as materials are available in a range of different colours and this could have been applied either side of the crossing. Cambridgeshire County Council has however, advised that the carriageway surface quality in Church Street is poor and anti-skid surfacing cannot be applied to the road surface. It is proposed to resurface the carriageway using a coloured tarmac material that has recently been approved for use by the County Council. This would provide a clear message to road users that the environment in which they are driving has changed.
- 4.10 In the vicinity of Avenells Way, the carriageway surface should be replaced with the use of the same coloured asphalt material used at the pedestrian crossing to create an informal crossing. During periods of low traffic speeds when Church Street is busiest, this approach would add an additional traffic calming effect. This has been the effect when used elsewhere.
- 4.11 The examination of general pedestrian movement infrastructure reveals that this is generally poor locally and the traffic island at the junction of Church Street and Mill Street could be replaced with a pedestrian refuge to improve crossing movements at this location. Unfortunately due to the need to accommodate the swept path of both delivery vehicles and buses in Church Street, it is not possible to widen the refuge to a standard acceptable for pedestrian use. The carriageway surface at the western end of Church Street should be resurfaced with the coloured asphalt material used at the crossing to provide a clear message to drivers entering Church Street that the environment differs from that they have left. This type of approach has been successfully employed elsewhere.

### **Servicing**

- 4.12 The servicing of the local Cooperative convenience store is raised regularly as a reason for many of the problems experienced in Church Street. The parking restrictions outside the Cooperative allow for flexible servicing at any time between 8am and 6pm. This however, conflicts with demand for parking and the desire to park outside the store. The servicing regime of the Cooperative has therefore been discussed with them and the store now receives its primary delivery of the day from 7am. The parking controls remain as other deliveries occur up to approximately 1pm. It is proposed to amend the single yellow line waiting restrictions and introduce a 'Loading Only' order between the hours of 7am and 1pm, allowing the Cooperative to manage its logistics in a way that allows for maximum flexibility in the availability of parking.
- 4.13 Specific to these discussions, the Cooperative management has confirmed that every attempt will be made to prevent deliveries in the hours where people tend to use the store as part of their journey home from work. This can often be a time when parking and customer demand is greatest and to receive deliveries at this time is problematic. There are many cases, in locations such as Church Street where deliveries to these types of stores is

managed tightly to respect local amenity. If needed, traffic cones, similar to those used by the Cock Inn public house could be used in advance of a known delivery to ensure the approach to the loading bay is free from obstruction. This would be an informal arrangement and during discussions with the manager of the Cooperative this was understood.

- 4.14 The footway outside the Cooperative slopes to a dropped kerb along the carriageway edge which reflects the need for access of historic uses of the site before it was developed as a convenience store. In times of inclement weather, particularly snow and ice, the movement of pedestrians along the shop frontage can be hazardous. The dropped kerb is to be raised and the footway resurfaced to reduce this hazard. The re-profiling of the footway will also assist deliveries too.

### **Environment enhancement**

- 4.15 The Stocks Lane/Church Street junction is widely used for u-turn movements and this can lead to uncontrolled movements. Two options for the treatment of this junction are for consideration. Firstly the footways will be extended in Stocks Lane to narrow the crossing distance for pedestrians travelling in an east to west direction and *vice versa*. The t-junction form of control will remain as current exists, bus u-turn movements will be less easy, encouraging compliance with the existing junction control.
- 4.16 A further option for consideration is a change in the form of junction control, to create a mini-roundabout. The proposals would include the use of low 'upstand' footway extensions to form the roundabout layout, thus allowing larger vehicles to over-run these areas. This would have the benefit of formalising the u-turn movements that currently occur whilst also providing a form of control that recognises the change in character between the eastern end of Church Street and the busier 'village-centre' feel of the western section.
- 4.17 The overall package of changes is illustrated in the drawing (number 1212-50/PL01 Rev A) that comprises **Appendix B** to this report.

## 5 PROPOSED COSTS

- 5.1 There are a number of measures and options to consider further and hence detailed costs have not as yet been fully worked through.
- 5.2 As alluded to already, the location of the pedestrian crossing is a matter raised by many during the consultation workshop. The costs of relocating the crossing are likely however, to be prohibitively expensive, and could account for more than half of the budget. For this reason, it has not been worked through as a formal proposal.
- 5.3 Changes to waiting restrictions and the imposition of loading orders require consultation and advertisement.
- 5.4 Improvements to the existing crossing, in its current location would represent the largest budget sum, along with possible environmental measures and features to enhance the quality of pedestrian footways in Church Street.

## 6 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Discussions should be opened with the co-op and their logistical managers to discuss changes to loading and unloading arrangements.
- 6.2 Liaison should also commence with the local highway authority, Cambridgeshire County Council as well as the local emergency services regarding changes to parking controls and the opportunity to enhance the safety at the existing pedestrian 'zebra' crossing.

# FIGURES

# APPENDIX A



# APPENDIX B