

Position Statement

Junction of Grinstead Lane, Sharpthorne Road and Plaw Hatch Lane at Tyes Cross

Highways Responsibility

The junction of Grinstead Lane with Sharpthorne Road and Plaw Hatch Lane is on the border between East Sussex and West Sussex. The border runs along the western verge of Grinstead Lane and the northern verge of Plaw Hatch Lane. Grinstead Lane and the junction is the responsibility of East Sussex Highways whilst the approach from the west is the responsibility of West Sussex Highways.

Local residents have serious concerns about the dangers of turning out of Grinstead Lane and the difficulty of seeing traffic approach, from the West, or from the East if a car is parked in what has become an informal layby on the north side of the junction.

Following a fatal accident in 2015 East and West Sussex Highways assessed the junction and decided that the only solution they could offer was to provide some better signage on the approach to the junction.

Throughout 2016 the Parish Council requested a meeting on site with East & West Sussex Highways to highlight the concerns of local residents and consider possible options for the junction. To date this has been unsuccessful. At the end of 2016 the Parish Council therefore prepared some questions so the Council and residents could better understand the background and reasons to other options not being considered.

Responses to these questions were supplied by Richard Speller, the Mid Sussex Highways Area manager within West Sussex County Council.

Questions asked of West Sussex County Council Highways and answers received

- **Considering the traffic coming from Sharpthorne (eastbound) what is the safe stopping distance required for drivers to react to cars pulling out of the Grinstead Lane junction?**

As defined in the "Transport in Urban Environment" document if building a **new** junction where the speed limit is derestricted the desirable stopping sight distance would be 215m.

However existing junctions may well not provide this. Due to the layout of the roads which includes a blind summit on a bend, the junction is not clearly visible to drivers approaching the junction from Sharpthorne until they are almost upon it.

- **What are the criteria for establishing a 40mph traffic regulation order?**

Based on the WSCC Speed Limit Policy an average (mean) speed of below 42mph is required.

- **Please let us know the reasons why these are not met by conditions on Sharpthorne Road, Plaw Hatch Lane and Grinstead Lane?**

Based on the traffic survey carried out in September 2016 the average speed was recorded as 30.5mph (eastbound) and 36.2mph (westbound).

It would therefore appear that the majority of road users are coping with the situation and adjusting their speed accordingly. Sharpthorne Road is National Speed limit or derestricted. Whilst drivers state this as meaning 60mph it actually means there has been no safe speed limit applied. If the Highways Authority posted 40mph as a safe speed there is a risk that average speeds could increase.

To change the speed limit requires a Traffic Regulation Order to be made which needs to be prioritised and processed by the relevant County Council.

- **Please let us know the reasons why traffic lights are not a solution at the staggered junction of Grinstead Lane/Chilling Street with Sharpthorne Road and Plaw Hatch Lane?**

A cost benefit analysis is unlikely to produce a significant argument to justify prioritising public funding to this solution. Generally interventions such as traffic lights are data led. The details of all injury accidents that occur on the roads in West Sussex and are reported to the Police are recorded and shared with WSCC.

The WSCC road safety intervention level is based on studies of all reported **injury** collisions over a given period. Remedial measures may be installed if a pattern or trend can be demonstrated. The current level for intervention is 8 collisions in 5 years or 5 collisions in 3 years. These levels help WSCC prioritise areas with greatest risk.

- **Please let us know the reasons why a round-about is not a solution at the staggered junction of Grinstead Lane/Chilling Street with Sharpthorne Road and Plaw Hatch Lane?**

For a round-about the same reasons as traffic lights apply. Also to establish a round-about land would need to be purchased from at least 3 different landowners to achieve a reasonable, safe design.

- **Can the informal lay-by that has been created east of the Grinstead Lane junction be removed? When cars are parked here visibility to the east is reduced causing cars turning out of Grinstead Lane to edge forward.**

This land lies in East Sussex and WSCC will raise the issue with them.

Parish Assembly 2017

At the Parish Assembly in April 2017 it was noted that whilst the average speed may be less than 40mph this was distorted by cars that slow down because they are about to turn left into Grinstead Lane. It was felt that the County Council should also take note of the 85th percentile speed not just the average speed. It is the cars driven at higher speeds that cause the accidents when drivers can't react to cars turning out of the junction in front of them.

At the Assembly there was unanimous support for WSCC to consider a Traffic Regulation Order to reduce the speed between Horsted Lane and Tyes Cross to 40mph.

Councillor Christine Field agreed to put forward such a proposal to the North Mid Sussex County Local Committee before she stood down as West Sussex County Councillor for the area.

A request was submitted in May 2017.