

Killing Speed on Shortgate Lane, Laughton

Laughton Parish Council meeting 21 July 2021

Author

Sarah Whiting , Laughton House, Shortgate Lane

1. Introduction

At the Parish Council meeting on 28 April the issue of dangerous traffic on Shortgate Lane was discussed, The Council agreed to fund 50% of the cost of a road use survey with the remaining 50% to be met by the community. Since this time we have been in correspondence with Cllr Nick Bennet, Ina Johnson The Traffic and Safety Manager of ESCC, to ascertain the type of survey that needs to be undertaken and the process of taking things forward once the survey is complete.

The Council have stated that whilst they will undertake the survey, Shortgate Lane has not been identified as a priority for the Road Safety Team and they would be unable to take forward any proposals. They have advised that once we have the data and evidence to support our position on the dangerous nature of the Lane that we may wish to consider a Community Match Application for road improvements.

Since the last Parish Council meeting there has been a further accident on the lane which Police attended, a number of incidents reported to 'Operation Crackdown' and a complaint made to the Police themselves for using the lane at dangerous speed as part of a training operation.

We have also received overwhelming support from the residents on Shortgate Lane and the majority of residents on Brickhurst Lane to address the speed and dangerous nature of the lane.

2. Next Steps

Given the community support for action and further incidents on the lane we believe we should proceed with undertaking a survey and collecting the evidence of the dangerous nature of the Lane.

3. Types of Surveys

There are several different types of surveys that the Council can undertake. These are summarised below.

Speed

Speed surveys would address the issue of collecting existing vehicle speeds and, if set up differently, they could also collect the classification by length of vehicle, which would show whether there were large numbers of commercial vehicles. The cost of a 7 day temporary speed survey which could collect flow, speed and class (by length) of vehicle would be £410. Taking in to account the length of

the lane, if you wanted to obtain data at two locations in the same area, the cost would be £720 and for three it would be £1,030.

Use of the lane by commercial vehicles

In order to ascertain whether the lane was being used as a through route, rather than for access purposes, equipment could be installed at either end of the lane which would pick up anonymised sat nav and mobile phone codes and inform of the journey times from point to point. The cost of a 12 hour survey, with two timing points, would be £441. This is technically a journey time survey, rather than an origin/destination survey, but it would indicate how many of the vehicles tracked took longer than the approximate journey time and were therefore using the lane for access.

A similar survey (and the traditional way of establishing usage as a through route) could be done manually with enumerators located at either end of the lane, noting part number plates, exact times of entry and exit and the class of vehicle. These are then matched up to see how long vehicles are taking to pass from The Broyle to Lewes Road and vice versa. If they take under the established time needed to pass from point to point at a careful speed, then it is clear they are using it as a through route. A 12 hour manual survey of this nature would cost £2,079

Conflict in usage of the lane

Identifying conflicts between traffic and other road users would not be very easy. It could be possible to install cameras if there are particular stretches where this is thought to occur and if there is something substantial against which to anchor them. Without street light columns, this would prove difficult. Also, the view needs to be unobstructed by foliage. The useful view from a camera is approximately 60 yards so the whole stretch of the road could not be covered and, in any case, would be prohibitively expensive. The footage would have to be watched back (it is not sufficiently high resolution to identify faces or number plates) and any incidents noted. This is a very time consuming and, therefore, expensive method for only a possibly small amount of evidence, if any at all. The cost of one camera for 12 hours, with observations of the footage noted, would be £350.

4. Recommendation

We recommend that we approach the Council to undertake a Speed Survey at two points in the Lane at a cost of £710. Advice will be sought from the Road Safety Team as to the ideal location for these. The ideal time for the survey will be after the school holidays.

As for demonstrating the nature of the use of the lane by traffic and vulnerable road users, we believe we can undertake this ourselves with a one day survey manned by volunteers and by taking photographs of the different types of users of the lane. We aim to form a small working party to organise and undertake this.

Depending on the strength of the evidence we collect with can then either reapproach the Council to consider Shortage Lane as a priority for road improvements or we can consider making an application for Community Match Funding.