



Parish-wide Sustainable Transport Survey July 2022



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1. BACKGROUND

The East Harptree Sustainable Transport Group (EAST) is part of the Parish Council Climate & Nature Emergency Working Group which was formed to consider possible ways for the Parish to address the Climate & Nature Emergency. EAST initially engaged villagers in a walking to school survey, in order to identify any 'pinch points' that seemed to be less safe for pedestrians and to generate suggestions for improvements. A report of the outcomes entitled 'Safe Routes to School' was presented to the Parish Council who then asked the group to test the temperature of the school and the Parish in response to the suggestions made.

EAST contacted East Harptree Primary School and, as a result of this, Ian Harvey, the Headteacher is now part of EAST and has joined B&NES Modeshift STARS Scheme¹. EAST also approached East Harptree Pre-School and awaits a response.

EAST updated the Parish Council in February 2022 and presented five costed proposals. The Parish Council asked EAST to gauge the level of support within the Parish for these ideas. ²

In response to this request, the group carried out a village wide sustainable transport survey (electronically via email groups and Facebook, and in paper copies through every door in the Parish) in June/July 2022. The range of options originally presented to the council was expanded within the survey to accommodate suggestions the group received.

90 questionnaires were received within a predetermined 3 week period, (equivalent to broadly 33% of households in the Parish.)

2. OUTCOMES SUMMARY

The survey indicates that there is a strong desire for routes to school to be made safer for pedestrians: 93% indicating concern about current levels of safety, and a desire for this to be improved. The comments sections indicate that some people feel significantly unsafe due to the speed and volume of traffic, the perceived lack of care in relation to pedestrians and inadequate quality and number of pavements, especially when with a pushchair/pram/wheelchair, with more than one child or when dog walking.

1

<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/streets-and-highway-maintenance/road-safety/school-crossing-patrols/safer-routes-school>

² Available on request

Comments indicate that if routes to school are made more safe for pedestrians, then safety generally will be improved, enabling more people to feel confident to move around on foot.

74% of those responding to the question about traffic volumes wanted to see fewer cars at the school and pre-school drop offs. Mention was also made of the 7am commuting traffic and of delivery vans into the village as occasions where the needs of pedestrians were not adequately considered by drivers. There is complexity in this issue however, which is discussed in more detail within Section 3 of this report.

The survey indicates that there is likely to be broad support for the following initiatives:

- (87%) Adding traffic sensors and signage to allow safe crossing over West Harptree/Coley Road Several people noted that the 'slow down' sign does not function and needs to be reinstated. Others argued that the existing sign is not in the ideal position, and a sign on the outer side of the traffic calming might be more effective in increasing safety at the junction. Throughout the questionnaire there were at least 5 respondents who suggested adding a zebra crossing
- (85%) A 'Park and Stride' campaign from the pavilion for the school/pre-school run
- (79%) Adding safety signs designed by children
- (74%) Adding road markings to indicate pedestrian priority areas
- (72%) A 'walking bus' (community walking) to school
- (71%) Extending 20mph or 30mph to the top of Smitham Hill

There is some support for the following initiative

- (67%) A lollipop person on West Harptree/Coley Road however comments questioned the cost and extent to which it was necessary given the fact that most children walked to school with an accompanying adult.

There is more of an even split of support and lack of support for the following initiatives

- (50% for : 50% against) Widening of existing pavements
- (49% for: 51% against) Converting narrow, raised pavements (such as Middle Street) to designated wider walking lines. Comments on this question show a complex range of issues and also suggest a lack of awareness of the present difficulties that some experience, and of the impossibility of widening some raised pavements because of the narrowness of the roads. Some people were unaware of the function of a virtual walking line (to be a pavement with the same rights as a pavement for pedestrians but the shared option for cars to drive on the line if

no pedestrians are present). Some people were unaware of the recent changes in the Highway code (January 2022) which give greater rights to pedestrians³.

Road closures at pre-school/school pick-up times would be likely to be unpopular in the parish with 83% of respondents against this proposal. However an alternative initiative, creating a one way system, was suggested by 4 respondents, with 3 identifying Middle Street and Church Lane as suitable for this, or a scheme whereby villagers were encouraged to walk on Church Lane and drive in Middle Street during school/pre-school drop offs.

Across the survey there were more comments supporting measures or suggesting solutions than there were questioning the value of ideas or directly criticising them. One respondent gave feedback about the way questions were phrased.

Some respondents did not all answer all questions in the survey so the number responding is noted beneath each question. The highest ratio of comments to respondents is in those questions which have the closest balance between yes and no answers (widening pavements and swapping pavements for walking lines).

A themed analysis of all comments made, identifying areas of interest and some further suggestions for action is detailed in the next section of the report.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/introduction#ruleh1>

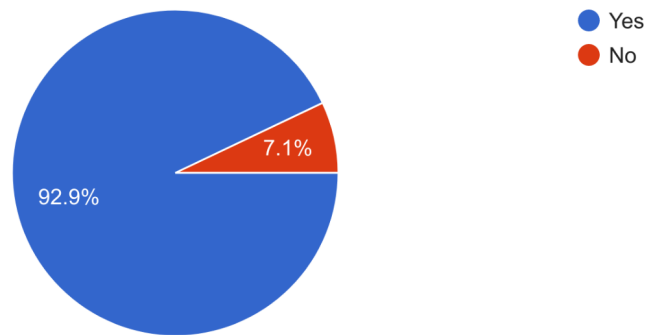
3. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF COMMENTS: What does the Parish think?

General questions

1. Making routes to school safer for pedestrians

Making routes to school safer for pedestrians?

85 responses



33 comments (39% of respondents to this question commented)

Most of the comments made were unique, or gave views only expressed by one or two other people. 2 comments suggested that the way this question was worded was unhelpful.

The most commonly expressed concerns were about routes being dangerous in various ways (overhanging vegetation & hedges causing people to step into the road, speed and volume of traffic, non compliance to walking line, lack of breadth of pavements, dominance of cars) and about specific unsafe places (Cemetery to High Street/High Street/Middle Street/Crossing from Townsend to High Street/Townsend).

Speeding vehicles were mentioned as a key issue in 6 comments, with 'dangerously fast' and 'race-track' mentioned. One of these described speeding issues with 7-8am commuters, school and preschool drop off and delivery drivers, especially as they drive fast towards the top of the High Street. One respondent was aware of a police traffic survey being carried out in the past. However this was during half term (when traffic flow is much quieter), another mentioned Smitham Hill as having problems with speeding.

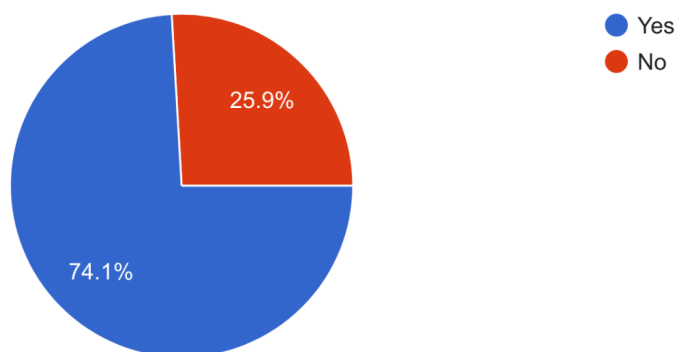
In this question views were quite polarised between those who felt that walking was safe now (3) and those who felt walking was dangerous now (14).

Other comments were suggestions (educating drivers about pedestrian safety issues -1, improving footpaths between East and West Harptree-1, the value of virtual paths on middle street -1 and Church Lane-1 and the value of cutting back vegetation -1.) as well as many ideas which we had already presented as options in later questions in the survey.

2. Fewer cars in the village for pre-school and school drop offs

Fewer cars in the village for pre-school and school drop-offs?

81 responses



35 comments (43% of respondents to this question commented)

6 respondents felt that measures to restrict parking at drop off times would be impractical or unwise for a range of reasons (hard for working parents dropping off on the way to work/hard for people with disabilities needing to drive/hard for people with a baby and a school or preschooler/could effect business to hairdresser/shop.) 7 respondents questioned whether reduction in traffic at these times was possible to achieve.

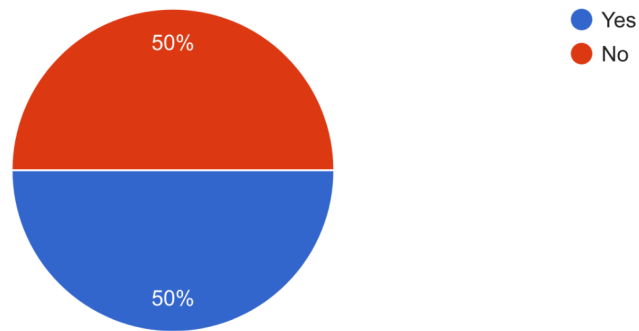
However, the majority of comments indicated some level of support for finding ways to reduce car traffic at these times and many suggestions were given for solutions which ranged from using some of the measures given in the survey to staggered school and pre-school starts, car sharing or banning cars from stopping near the theatre at this time. 1 person was particularly keen for a reduction in SUVs.

Pavement adjustments

1. Widening existing pavements

Widening of existing pavements?

80 responses



42 comments (52% of respondents to this question commented)

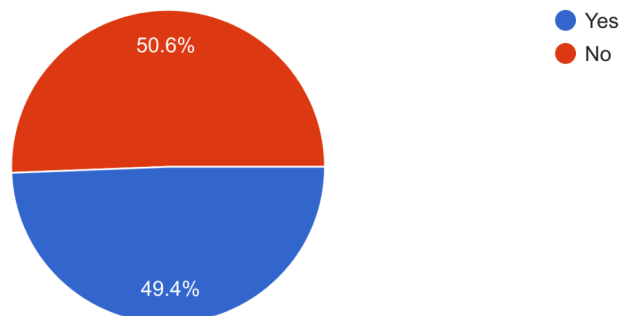
The majority of comments questioned whether widening pavements would be possible given the narrowness of roads (23), with some suggesting that walking lines would be more practical.

There were 7 comments in favour of wider pavements and 6 against for a variety of reasons (the needs of pushchairs, wheelchairs and adults with multiple children vs the needs of vehicles & the look of the village.)

2. Swapping pavements for walking lines

Swapping narrow pavements (such as Middle Street) to walking lines?

81 responses



45 comments (55% of respondents to this question commented)

This question generated the most comments and seemed to show the greatest difference in understanding about the function of walking lines.

16 of the comments were against walking lines with most being because of concerns that motorists did not respect them (though there was some belief that motorists can't drive on the walking line when in fact they can when pedestrians are not using them) and pedestrians felt less safe on them than they did on a raised pavement (however this was stated in a generic way rather than comparing specific village pavements with the existing walking line).

12 of the comments were strongly in favour of walking lines for a variety of reasons (seeing them as the pragmatic choice given the narrowness of roads/impossibility of pavements, feeling they were better suited to buggies, prams and wheelchairs, feeling more flexible for dogs, groups of children and families, feeling the High Street worked).

Other comments drew attention to suitable places where they could be cited (Church Lane, Townsend and Middle Street) and some had questions as to whether they would resolve safety issues.

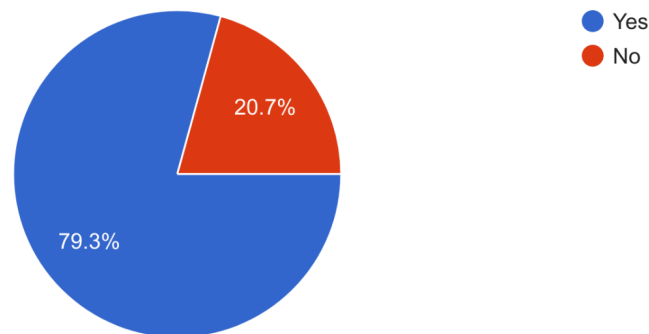
It was proposed that road safety for car drivers and pedestrians could usefully be taught in the village.

Signage

1. Adding safety signs made by children

Adding safety signs made by children?

82 responses



24 comments (29% of respondents to this question commented)

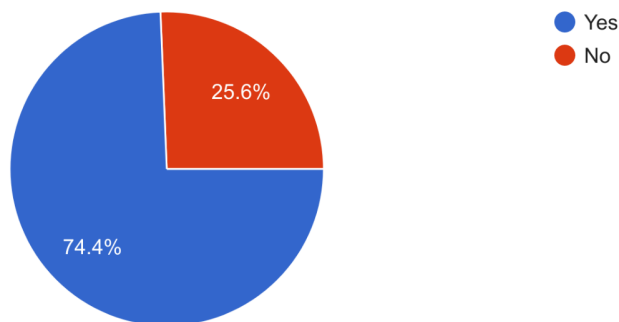
8 comments rejected this idea, with 5 doing so on the basis that it would not enhance the village/would create unwanted clutter and 3 who felt it would not have any real impact.

13 comments were in favour of this proposal, with many clarifying the ways it would be likely to impact positively and with suggestions that they be eye catching, positive ('East Harptree: pedestrians welcome here') using existing signage furniture and perhaps rotated over time.

2. Adding road markings to indicate pedestrian priority areas.

Adding road markings to indicate pedestrian priority areas?

78 responses



25 comments (32% of respondents to this question commented)

9 respondents were in favour of road markings, stressing the need for pedestrian priority with the key areas of around shop and school and crossing the Coley Road with 3 of these suggesting the use of zebra crossings..

3 respondents felt road markings were not needed and 5 respondents spoke strongly against the idea, feeling the aesthetic of a rural village would be spoiled by this.

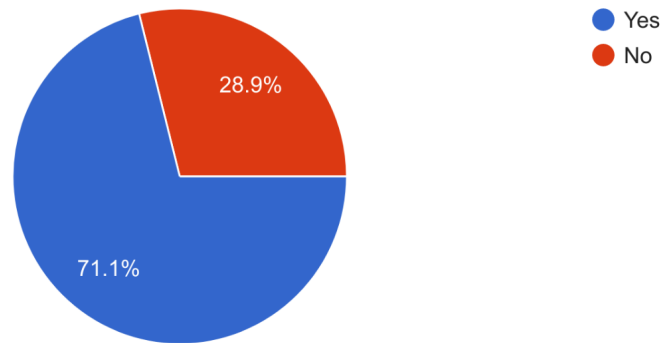
2 respondents said that they were unclear about what was being proposed and 1 respondent was unsure what they felt.

Speed limits

Extending 20mph or 30mph to the top of Smitham Hill

Extending 20mph or 30mph to the top of Smitham Hill.

83 responses



34 comments (41% of respondents to this question commented)

9 comments were in favour of the existing national speed limit up Smitham Hill being reduced to a 20 miles per hour limit and 9 commented in favour of a 30 miles per hour limit, one comment argued for 40 miles per hour.

5 comments stated that changing the speed limit would not be likely to change the behaviour of speeding drivers, pointing to delivery drivers and traffic (including agricultural traffic) passing through at speed with 2 saying that local people were the ones speeding. 1 comment suggested a lower speed limit might induce a false sense of safety and some comments also expressed concern that it would not be effective at increasing safety.

There was some commentary on exactly where the limit should be positioned (up to Proud cross- 1, up to the forest gate-2, and 1 pointed to the complication of Smithams Hill moving into another Parish and District Council.

2 comments suggested that the current national speed limit was a disincentive to those wishing to cycle to school from these areas outside the main housing of the village, where walking was less possible due to distance.

A request was made for 20 mile an hour to be put in place for Whitecross, Highfield Lane, Morgans Lane & Western Lane. Townsend from the Coley Road beyond the last

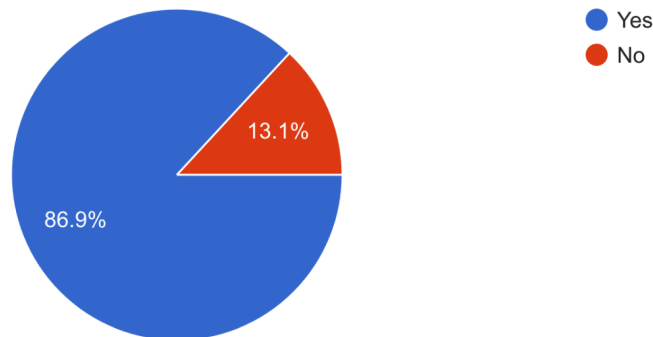
houses in Townsend before Shrowle, was also identified (in a comment on another question) as suitable for a 20mph limit.

Improving safety at the Coley Road/High Street/Townsend crossing

1. Adding traffic sensors and signage to allow safe crossing

Adding traffic sensors and signage to allow safe crossing over West Harptree/Coley Road?

84 responses



25 comments (30% of respondents to this question commented)

Only 1 comment was against this idea of adding sensors and traffic signage at the crossing from High Street to Townsend. 9 comments were strongly in favour and pointed to this as the most dangerous part of the village. 2 comments drew attention to poor visibility on the left when approaching the junction from the High Street. 2 referred to this crossing as an accident waiting to happen and 3 felt adding sensors and signage would encourage the use of a Park & Stride scheme.

4 comments suggested a zebra crossing in tandem with this, 1 suggested traffic lights and 1 flashing lights during the school run (as per Bishop Sutton).

A number of respondents pointed out that the existing sensors did not work/were sited incorrectly (should be beyond the chicanes to slow traffic as it comes towards them) and said calls had already been made for repair without success (with 1 comment pointing to the cost of this).

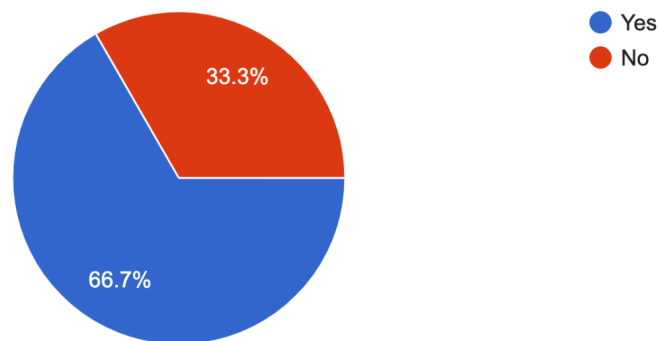
6 comments stressed that sensors and signage needed to be accompanied with a 20mph speed reduction between the chicanes.

The road between the High Street/Townsend junction and the cemetery was also seen as very dangerous and suggestions were made for adding a footpath and/or creating all weather off-road footpaths between East and West Harptree, linking to the cemetery walkway and public footpath, for the benefit of families, dog walkers and all pedestrians.

2. A lollipop person at the crossing

A lollipop person on West Harptree/Coley Road?

72 responses



31 comments (43% of respondents to this question commented)

8 comments were in favour of a lollipop person at the Coley Road crossing.

5 comments suggested zebra or traffic light signals would be more useful/cost effective as not limited to school runs.

5 comments felt the cost/benefit did not justify this and 1 comment said it felt any costing should not be from the school budget.

There was also concern that there might not be suitable people to staff it (2) and that it might actually be dangerous for the Lollipop person with the current setup (1).

1 comment suggested that staggering the school day and enabling earlier drop off and later pick up might relieve congestion problems.

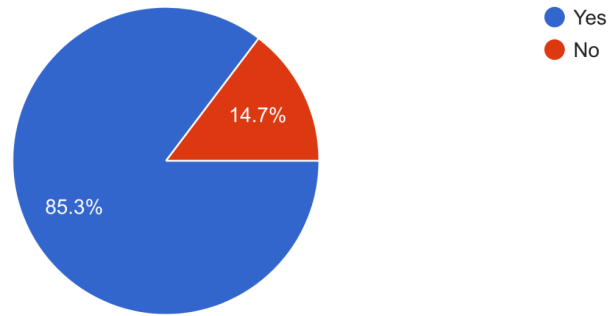
5 comments expressed uncertainty about the value of this and 4 comments suggested it would not be used/was not needed.

Introducing schemes to encourage walking to school

1. Park and Stride scheme from the Pavillion

A 'Park and Stride' campaign from the pavilion for the school/pre-school run?

75 responses



31 comments (41% of respondents to this question commented)

All but 3 of the comments were broadly in favour of a Park and Stride Campaign from the Pavillion. 1 comment was against the scheme and 2 felt unable to comment having no children at the school or pre-school. 2 comments suggested that the same scheme could usefully be set up from the top end of the village as well.

17 comments specifically supported the scheme and other comments supported with qualifications (exceptions needed for people with mobility issues, although ample parking at the pavilion people needed to only stay for brief visits so that pavilion users had access, potential legal issues to consider, limitations in poor weather.)

1 comment asked whether the school could comment on whether children who walk to school are more or less energised by the walk.

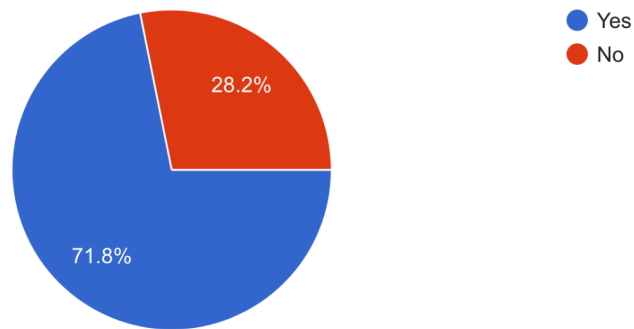
1 comment suggested that people park at the pavilion and then get a minibus to school.

1 comment suggested that education be given to parents about safe & unsafe parking .

2. Walking bus

A 'walking bus' (community walking) to school?

71 responses



27 comments (38% of respondents to this question commented)

7 comments were in favour of setting up a walking bus scheme, a further 11 saw its potential but only offered qualified support (concerns raised included wet weather viability -3 the need for parental support and involvement -6 and the need for a mechanism for parents to know their child had arrived safely -1).

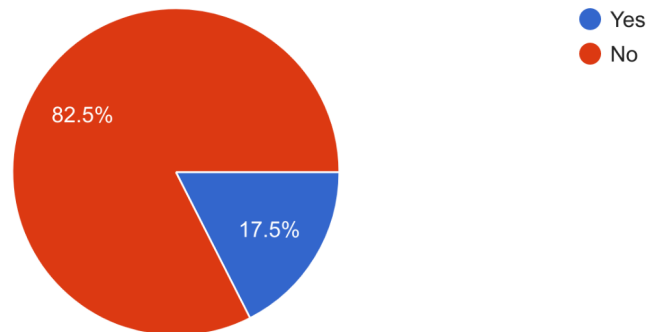
1 comment suggested that this would be useful from West Harptree across the fields as this would give safety in numbers but that education would need to be given in managing livestock/dangerous plants/behaviour around strangers etc..

5 comments expressed concern that a walking bus might not work given that children come from different parts of the village (1) that it wouldn't stop cars speeding, (1) that it would concentrate footfall at busy times rather than staggering it (1) and that it might have organisational issues if children were ill or late. (2)

3. Road closures during the Pre-school/School run

Road closures at pre-school/school pick-up times?

80 responses



38 responses (48% of respondents to this question commented)

This suggestion provoked the strongest comments of all those made in the questionnaire. 31 comments were against the idea with words such as 'ridiculous', 'extreme' 'madness' being used and the word 'impractical' occurring in 9 comments.

4 comments were in favour but with qualifications: 1 suggested a trial, 1 suggested a special one off event where all children were asked to scoot, walk or cycle to school to get more pedestrians onto the roads to raise awareness of the value of active travel, 2 supported the idea but could see practical issues. 1 person suggested a possible one way re-routing of middle or church lane during a school run, and this was also suggested by 3 others at other points in the survey.

Reasons against the idea ranged from problems with geography, through routes and parents in multiple roles driving on the way to something else or having mobility issues. Others pointed to the likely congestion it would cause. However, most pointed to the need to balance the needs of children with the needs of others in the village to get to work or appointments, to have deliveries, to make choices according to weather and variations in health.

Anything else?

37 comments (41% of total respondents to the survey)

Within this free text area there were a range of individual comments made which can be broadly grouped into the following categories:

Concerns about present dangers:

- Walking dogs from Churchyard to High Street on Coley Road
- Speeding cars down Smithams Hill and through the new houses at Proud Cross
- Walking up Smithams with sunlight impacting on visibility
- Drivers not understanding how dangerous it feels to be a pedestrian

Positive comments about increasing walking:

- Encouraged by 20 mph speed limits throughout the village
- Measures will help all pedestrians (not just children)
- Useful initiative to work on
- A belief that reminding people through this campaign will impact beneficially on behaviour

Negative comments about suggestions made:

- Asked for more facts around the issue in terms of numbers who drive to school/ pre-school, where they travelled from & accident stats in the village (2)
- The need for some cars on the school run to enable some people from beyond the village to use the facilities and for cars in the village 'so people can lead their lives'
- That walking and cycling with children and teaching them road safety was more helpful than suggested interventions (2)
- That people who want to walk already do walk and those who don't won't be persuaded by improved safety
- Concern at lack of action about danger and unwillingness of transport section of B&NES to do speed checks until there is a fatality
- A belief that nothing can be done about the worst offenders in terms of speeding
- The problem of enforcement for any signage.
- Wanting no infrastructure changes to preserve the look of the village

- Feeling we need to enable more villagers to stay in the village & that it is mainly newcomers 'complaining'
- Feeling that suggestions are unnecessary if people learn road safety

Possible alternative solutions:

- 20mph throughout the whole village/on Townsend
- Traffic calming on the entrances to the village (Smithams & High Street)
- Speed bumps at the bottom of the High Street
- Flashing 20mph lights on the Coley Road at drop off times
- Encouraging children within 10 mins walking to walk and beyond this to use the minibus rather than cars.
- Introducing a 'bike bus' as per the Netherlands/European countries/Evesham in the Midlands https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bike_bus
- Awareness raising about the rights of pedestrians, a public information campaign reminding drivers of their responsibilities to pedestrians, making people aware of the consequences of their actions/of how little time is saved by speeding (perhaps via posters/leaflet drops/Parish News/Chew Valley Gazette)
- Move the school to be sited in Townsend
- Stop parking on High Street & Whitecross
- Designated drop off zones for school and pre-school
- Introducing fines for 'stupid' parking offenders
- Consider cycling lane
- Shared road usage signs
- One way system for traffic up Middle street and down Church Lane (2)
- Encourage cars to use Middle Street and pedestrians to use Church Lane
- A pedestrian crossing at the junction by the Community Shop with lollipop person

Thanks to the group

- For carrying out this research
- For the ongoing work of the group
- For inviting people to join the group
- For inviting different points of view

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey indicates that there is a strong desire for routes to school to be made safer for pedestrians

The following areas lend themselves to early adoption having high levels of support:

- Adding/repairing/adjusting traffic sensors and signage to allow safe crossing over West Harptree/Coley Road (87%)
- A 'Park and Stride' campaign from the pavilion to school/pre-school (85%)
- Adding safety signs designed by children (79%)
- Adding road markings to indicate pedestrian priority areas (74%)
- A 'walking bus' (community walking) to school (72%)
- Extending 20mph or 30mph to the top of Smitham Hill (71%)

It also reveals that alterations to walking infrastructure (whether by widening pavements or adding walking lines) is a complex area that is not well understood by many and where teasing out the issues further would be valuable in order that more informed choices can be made.

EAST would therefore make the following recommendations to the Parish Council:

1. **That the Parish Council engages with B&NES to negotiate funding for improved safety on the Coley Road/Townsend/High Street crossing** including:
 - a) Repair/enhancement/repositioning of sensors on Coley Road
 - b) Improved sight lines for pedestrians crossing at this High Street/Townsend/Coley Road junction and cars turning left from High Street on to the Coley Road (mirrors for blindspots?)
 - c) Improved footpath for pedestrians travelling from the graveyard to the High Street
 - d) 20mph speed limit between the two Coley Road chicanes
 - e) An improved more visible crossing place (considering a zebra crossing)
 - f) Improvement of the existing off-road footpaths between East and West Harptree
2. **That the council increase the scope of the proposed 20mph zone to include Townsend, between chicanes on Coley Road, up Smitham Hill (within B&NES) and all the roads within the village (including**

Whitecross/Highfield Lane/ Morgans Lane, Western lane, not just High Street, Church Lane, Middle Street and Water Street)

3. **That the council move to consider specific on-road pedestrian priority markings** in the areas
 - a) At the bottom of Middle Street/outside the theatre
 - b) Between the pub and the church

4. **That the Council approve the inclusion of signs made by children at the school that are placed**
 - a) at all entries to the village (bottom of High Street/top of Smithams Hill/ near Eastwood Manor)
 - b) within the village where possible on existing signage/speed limit signage

5. **That the Parish Council requests funding from B&NES Cllr David Wood** for
 - a) Safety signs created by children
 - b) High visibility jackets for the school to use in a Park & Stride scheme
 - b) Road safety training for pedestrians and drivers

6. **That a village meeting be set up (co-hosted by the Parish Council and EAST) in Autumn 2022** to clarify the work and focus of EAST, to present the results of this survey, raise awareness about pedestrian priority and clarify the actions that will now be taken by the Parish Council and the School. This meeting could also
 - a) present further information about the specific issues with pavement widening/walking lines to increase awareness about the complexity of the issues
 - b) garner interest in road safety training.
 - c) Make the link to the need to decarbonise transport and reduce pollution.

7. **That this report be made available via the PC email list, Facebook and on the PC website after the Village meeting**

East Harptree School in collaboration with EAST will endeavour to:

1. Continue to work on the Modeshift Stars Scheme in collaboration with the B&NES home-school Transport officer (once this post is filled)
2. Seek to encourage a culture of active travel and school bus use (rather than cars)
3. Seek to set up a joint parents evening for school & pre-school parents in Autumn 2022 to share the results of this survey and raise awareness on road safety/decarbonisation and to scope out walking bus/Park & Stride campaign & launch the creation of safety signs designed by children
4. Encourage a parent-led Park & Stride Scheme

EAST will endeavour to

1. Forge links with the Pre-school in order to
 - a) Consider ways to encourage active travel to school & pre-school
 - b) Forge links between school and pre-school to encourage joint working on active travel/road safety training

9/4/2022



Martha Carter, John Darvill, Janine Hargreaves, Ian Harvey, Jackie Head, Bethany Hunt, Chrissie Wellington, Sarah Wheirs.