

Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

9th December 2014

The Working Group met at 2pm at The Meeting Place, Westbourne supported by David Bell from LGPS Resources.

David has been engaged in road safety, traffic management, highway engineering and development engineering for over 35 years. Prior to entering the private sector he was a local authority Chief Engineer and, along with other responsibilities, advised Planning and Highway Committees on the suitability of planning applications. Other responsibilities included matters such as in-depth accident investigation and prevention, highway inspection & maintenance, highway design & construction, street lighting and winter maintenance. David project managed and provided technical advice for the Government Office "Safe Routes to School Pilot Project".

It was proposed that the first session that afternoon would be a general discussion and then the Group would go out to look at any sites identified followed by a debrief back at The Meeting Place.

David had been provided with background information, including local surveys and responses, and he explained that whilst the Group was meeting a Technician was undertaking covert, radar speed surveys at various sites in the village and that this information would be available in the debrief session.

The Group had an in-depth discussion about matters raised by local people via the survey data and it was agreed that it was unlikely, in the current financial climate, that all matters raised would be funded by the Local Authorities or the Government. It was, therefore, necessary to try to prioritise a list so that the local community could ask for appropriate measures at appropriate times. For example, proposed development may have an impact on traffic and parking in the central area and it would be good to have an action plan to input into mitigation of any impact of approved sites. Similarly, there are existing problems that need thought and a longer term plan is likely to be useful where funding may not be available now.

Some quite specific problems were highlighted along with general matters of a wider, more strategic nature.

Several areas came into discussions on multiple occasions but it became clear that some were critical to resolve:

- The Square was emerging (strategically) as an important area to provide specific solutions to identified problems.
- General access for deliveries.

- Overall traffic flows with through traffic at The Square, particularly at commuter times, being seen as causing difficulties and hold ups.
- Lack of available public transport to get to areas such as the main employment sites. It was also felt that lack of public transport made it inevitable that the rural location was impacted by private car use and added to by future development.
- On-street and off-street parking. This includes examples of inconsiderate or inappropriate parking and longer term parking on-street taking up spaces that could be used for quicker turnover shoppers parking.
- A proposed 20 mph zone implementation was discussed and it was felt that this would be very useful but could be complemented with some physical traffic management features.
- The possibility of a one-way system near the Post Office

It was felt that the above matters, whilst not representing all the topics discussed, formed a good basis for more detailed discussions on-site. The Group went on-site to look at matters from a practical viewpoint.

During the site visit some of the speed survey data became available. Some extracts from observations follow.

Whitechimney Row:

It was noted that traffic had increased in recent years and that there were some natural pinch points/restrictions. The speed data check revealed 85th percentile speeds of 25 mph and 26 mph in the narrower area north of Fir Tree Cottage. A crude definition of the 85th percentile speed is the speed that most drivers think appropriate for the conditions. This is, perhaps, a little high for this length of road given the possibility of pedestrians and more chance of meeting opposing vehicles as traffic flows increase.

East Street:

It was considered that the majority of the length of East Street functioned reasonably well and parking acted as a “calming effect”. However, nearer the Stag’s Head/garage area the conflict between parking and deliveries can cause significant congestion. Some erratic driving was seen (and had been on other occasions by DB as part of some other work in the area) and this is likely to be caused at least in part by frustration.

The Square (Harold Road Junction to Stag’s Head and Post Office):

The proposal to implement a one-way system was discussed at length. On the face of it, this looks like a reasonable and effective proposal but the need for quicker turnover short term parking hampers the movement of delivery vehicles and there is not likely to be a short term solution so that the manoeuvring of the delivery vehicles around the tighter corners can be accommodated. This prompts the need to look at parking facilities for longer term parking and free up (perhaps less and controlled) on street parking for short term only.

The Square (Junction Marked With Blue Star On Attached Plan):

Two main points were noted here. DB asked about the regular presence of a vehicle parked partially into the junction between the wider part of The Square and King Street and it appeared to make the situation more complex for pedestrians and motorists combined with an informal layout of parking in the adjacent area of The Square. Some vehicles were parallel parked, some perpendicular and some herringbone. A redesign/reorganisation of this area is likely to provide more orderly, safer and a more effective parking arrangement. A small kerblines build-out could delineate the end of the parking bay and assist at the junction where vehicles sweep around towards the Post Office.

The Square, Pedestrian Desire Lines:

Points A, B, C and D along the green lines annotated on the attached map have been observed to be pedestrian desire lines. At times, particularly in peak hours, it is difficult to judge gaps in traffic in both directions to make the short trips.

The 85th percentile speed survey check results show that it would be appropriate to consider some form of low cost, physical measures to support the new 20 mph restriction - especially if they provide additional benefit for pedestrians.

A pedestrian refuge at Point A with appropriate kerb works on each side (even if it resulted in the loss of a parking space or two) may also act as a speed restrictor as well as a pedestrian aid. Narrowing the carriageway slightly at B and C may assist pedestrians by providing improved visibility and act as a "marker" that motorists are entering an area of slightly different character.

Parish Hall/Church Area:

Vehicular speed in this area is reasonable and we looked at the possibility of a "long term" car park siting behind the hall.

It would appear that an in/out at the northern access point would work from where there is good visibility in both directions. Such an access could well incorporate a narrowing for speed control set away from the junction with The Grove by an adequate distance.

There is much to support the provision of such a car park as it could be used by the shop and office staff, etc. and free up valuable on-street space for short term shoppers and the like. This may have a beneficial effect on the local economy and retain valuable local shops in this rural community. It is difficult to value such a facility for the local community but when local, rural facilities disappear it is not easy to get them back.

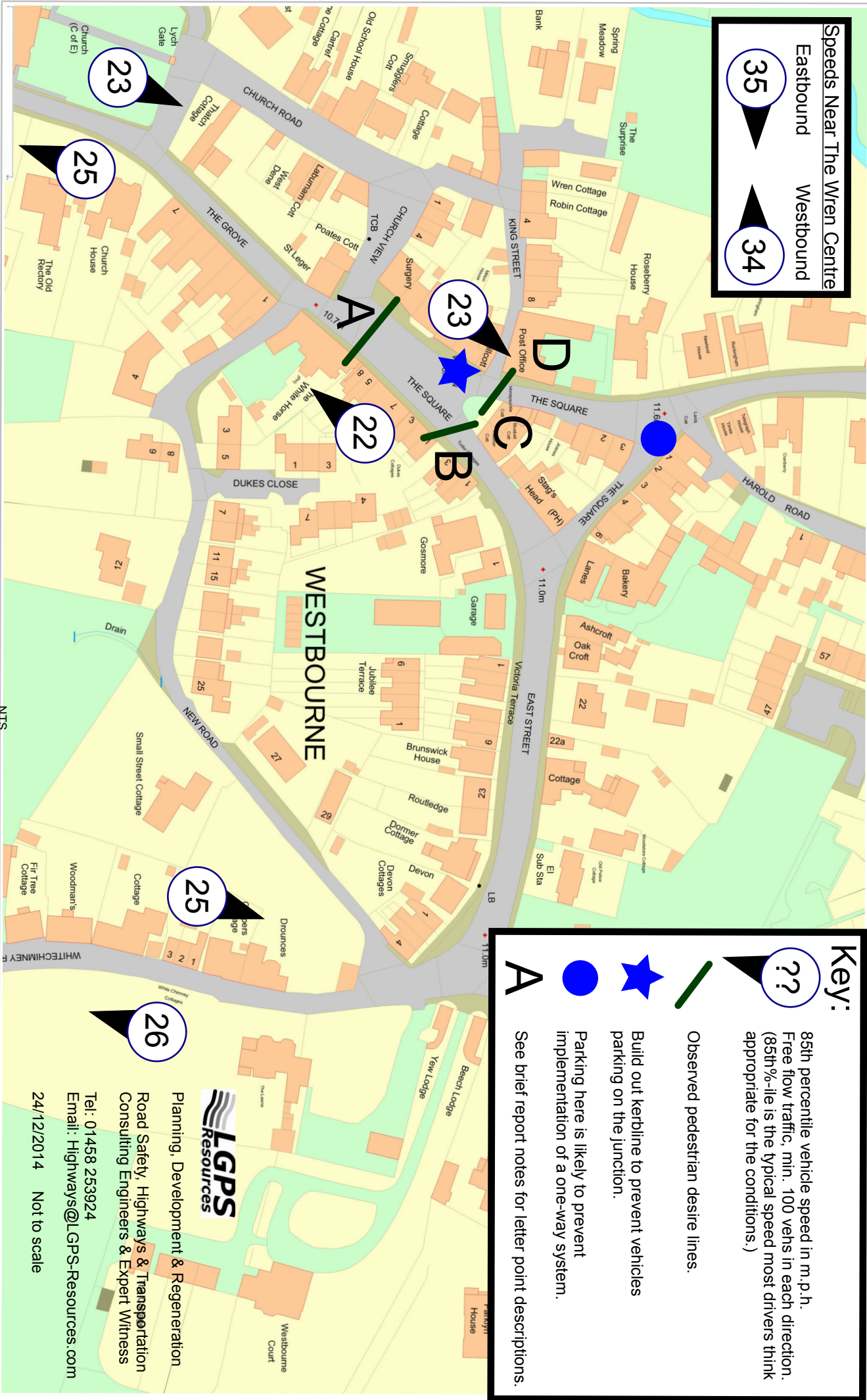
It will be appreciated that these brief notes only reflect the main points but the afternoon spent by the Working Group did much to focus thoughts and concentrate on promoting short and longer term measures. Benefit/cost ratio is a significant driver for local funding in the current economic climate and it is felt that the measures proposed in outline should be worked up in detail as resources permit. This could be in preparation for local authority/central government funding or as part of a package via a legal agreement for agreed housing allocations.

Speeds Near The Wren Centre

Eastbound	Westbound
35	34

Key:

- 85th percentile vehicle speed in m.p.h. Free flow traffic, min. 100 vehs in each direction. (85th%-ile is the typical speed most drivers think appropriate for the conditions.)
- Observed pedestrian desire lines.
- Build out kerbline to prevent vehicles parking on the junction.
- Parking here is likely to prevent implementation of a one-way system.
- See brief report notes for letter point descriptions.



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