



## **Traffic Calming – the final update!**

Shortly after we moved to Fownhope back in 2011, I went to a Parish Council meeting to inquire whether anything might be done to slow traffic through the village. I was politely informed that councillors had been working with Herefordshire Council Highways department and West Mercia Safer Roads Partnership for many years, but that the bureaucracy surrounding traffic regulations made change slow and difficult to implement. A few months later I was invited to join the council and recognising that change doesn't make itself happen, I agreed to help out.

Fownhope Parish Council Highways Working Group made steady progress to address the problem over the years, obtaining approval to update signage, install village gateways and implement a regular Community Speed Watch programme while continuing to lobby for further support. We finally gained some real momentum a couple of years ago when Herefordshire Council agreed to fund a village wide traffic calming programme. One of our councillors, Stuart Eames, grabbed the baton and spent dozens of hours of his own time working with road safety specialists to design a tailored programme based upon their assessment of traffic patterns on the B4224, Fownhope specific traffic issues and an understanding of driver behaviour. The team considered physical traffic calming measures such as speed bumps, traffic lights, pinch points and priority one way systems, but these proved unsuitable for Fownhope. Research conducted by road safety specialists has shown that modified road markings which give the impression of a narrower road with no clear priority for vehicles travelling in opposing directions, has the effect of reducing speed while allowing safe and easy access for emergency vehicles and agricultural equipment.

The draft Traffic Calming Scheme was put to public consultation on a number of occasions including an exhibit at the Jubilee Celebration. The programme was extensively discussed at public meetings of the Parish Council and progress reports published in our meeting minutes, in the Fownhope Flag and via our weekly newsletter. Feedback and comment from parishioners was solicited on all occasions and proved overwhelmingly positive.

Implementing the programme was always going to involve road closures, diversions and disruption to our daily routine. Work was scheduled to take place over the February half term holiday to minimise inconvenience to school users. Having a week or twos inconvenience was going to be frustrating, but we hoped that after the 14 month road closure we lived through a couple of years ago, we would all have the resilience to deal with it, given the long term benefits the programme would bring.

BBLP and their communications team did not cover themselves in glory during the programme, but the Parish Council worked with Tarmac to provide daily updates on progress, road closures and arrangements to access the village. Updates were distributed using multiple channels including social media.

At the time of writing, the white edge lines had still not been installed, but we have addressed three of the concerns most frequently raised during my time on the council – namely; potholes in the road between Scotch Firs and Woolhope Road, the narrow footpath between Lower House Gardens and West End stores and speeding traffic. A Traffic Regulation Order is in process to extend the 30mph speed limit to the Hereford side of the new development at Cherry Hill which will help reduce speeds further in due course. Our thanks go to West Mercia Police Safer Roads Partnership for their technical insight in designing the programme, to Herefordshire Council for their financial support and to the Tarmac team for working with us to ensure that implementation of the scheme caused as little inconvenience to residents as possible. On a personal note, I also want to thank Stuart Eames for his perseverance over the past few years to get the scheme funded, designed and finally, in place.

Kevin Braybrook

Chair, Fownhope Parish Council