



whiteshillandruscombe.org.uk

# The WaRbler

Notes from Whiteshill and Ruscombe

**Inside this issue**

*Ideas from the Traffic Coffee Morning*

2

*What is the Parish Council doing about it?*

2

*What are the Police doing about it?*

3

*Considerate Driver Neighbourhoods*

3

*Statements from our local representatives*

4

*Publicity*

4

*Post offices under threat again*

5

*Street Lights*

5

*Whiteshill School*

6

*Playground Area*

6

*Energy Neighbourhoods*

6

*Update on Ruscombe Brook*

7

*Village Hall*

7

*Old Photos*

7

*Village Shop*

8

## Closure of the A46

As you would expect most of this issue relates to the traffic issues caused by the closure of the A46.



## Traffic Coffee Morning

On 22 September we held a coffee morning where people could discuss the traffic situation with the Parish Council and the Police. Although speeding traffic has long been a concern of the Parish Council, the situation has been made more urgent with the closing of the A46. I would like to thank the 30 people who attended; most people liked the informal approach and I think we came up with some good ideas between us. The event received good press coverage which does help to remind Highways that we have a problem.

## A Little Background

The Parish Council believes we have a problem with traffic going too fast through the village. Highways were persuaded to carry out a speed

survey. They found that 15% of the uphill traffic was going more than 34mph and 15% of the downhill traffic was going more than 31 mph. To qualify for speed management schemes 15% of the traffic would have to be travelling at more than 35 mph, so 'officially' we do not have a speeding problem.

But when the school children asked about having a pedestrian crossing in 2003 we were told that Highways could not find a site near the school with sufficient visibility to ensure that drivers travelling at 30mph could safely stop for anyone on a crossing.

That's why they have just painted in a courtesy crossing by the school. It has no legal status, but if drivers choose to stop you can choose to cross. In many situations these appear to work but please make sure that the traffic is stopped in both directions before crossing, as drivers have no obligation to stop for you.

However, doesn't this really mean that 30mph is too fast to drive through the village and we should have a 20mph speed limit instead? The Police say that just changing the ...

.... speed limit will not slow drivers down and they are against the use of 20mph limits in areas where the average speed is not already below 20mph, on the grounds that they give pedestrians a false sense of security. In short we will only get a 20mph zone if we install more traffic calming.

Unfortunately, the County Council has a limited highways budget for traffic calming and priority has to be given to areas where there are accident black spots or that officially have speeding problem i.e. a problem with drivers breaking the legal speed limit, not areas where the speed limit is too high! So we have to find some other way to slow down traffic.

### ***Ideas from the traffic coffee morning***

#### **General observations**

The A46 must be fixed urgently (3 comments).

- Something needs to be done about speeding (3 comments + many ideas)
- Concern that traffic will not go back to using A46 once it is open.
- Traffic lights at Edge are a nuisance

#### **Suggestions**

- Advertise rail and car share
- Get the bin collectors to collect bins outside of rush hour
- Install Vehicle Actuated Speed sign by school both ways either end of the curve at the school crossing point
- Introduce a 20 mph zone by school

- More traffic calming throughout the village (4 comments)
- The school crossing lady is our traffic expert. Let's have her "mandate" changes. She is putting her life on the line at the moment!
- Discourage people parking on the pavement, it is a real hazard to pedestrians (5 comments)
- Make parents drop children off in the playing field car park (2 comments)
- Use of life-size cut out figures to press drivers to be aware / considerate (2 comments)
- Make the road side look more like a village (3 comments)

### ***Issues where conflicting views were expressed***

- Parking clampdown but 4 differing comments.
- Additional traffic lights but 4 differing comments
- Speed traps / cameras.

### ***What is the Parish Council doing about it?***

- Contacted **the school** about the dropping off of children; most parents do appear to be acting responsibly on this now.
- Contacted **Stroud DC** about rubbish collections - agreed to carry out after 9:30am
- Pressing **Highways** for implementation of improved road markings to highlight the school crossing patrol route across the road (completed).
- Asked **Highways** to reconsider the case for an **advisory 20mph** zone round the school and their refusal to let us install vehicle actuated speed signs.

### **What else is the Parish Council doing about it?**

We are running a workshop on **Saturday 24 November at 3.00pm in the Village Hall and on Main Road** to get some practical proposals for reclaiming the streets for the village.

### **What are the Police doing about it?**

The Police have asked for people not to park their cars on the main road and they are looking out for illegal and obstructively parked cars - this includes cars parked on the pavement. Community Police Officers have been out taking speed measurements and have issued 60 notices to drivers exceeding the 30mph limit.



### **Considerate Driver Neighbourhoods**

In a village one driver travelling at a sensible speed acts as a pace car and holds up following cars who may want to go faster. If we can get one in three drivers to slow down we can more or less eliminate speeding traffic at peak travel times. It is unlikely that we can get enough drivers from the parish to make this work, but we may get a network of considerate driver neighbourhoods.

A **Considerate Driver Neighbourhood** would be a parish or council ward in which at least 10% of the drivers sign a statement that they will drive considerately in their neighbourhood and any others in the network. Once a neighbourhood has the required number of signatures they put up signs declaring themselves as a considerate driver neighbourhood, this will act as a prompt for drivers from other considerate driver neighbourhoods to slow down.

For the idea to become credible it must be able to show that it has public support. If we get **over 80 signatures** from this mailing I will float the scheme across the county. As speeding is a problem for a number of communities I am sure we will get others to follow our lead but someone has to go first.

**If you would like to support this scheme by agreeing to observe the Highway Code in all Considerate Driver Neighbourhoods, please sign the statement included with the enclosed Parish Survey and return it to me.** It may sound naïve but what have you got to lose by trying it?

**John Rogers**

### **Car Sharing**



We all know the traffic is bad these days and the cost of travelling keeps on rising. One alternative is to share

your car with another person. There is a co-ordination service to help you find car share partners or lifts.

They can be contacted on **08700 111199** or through their website **[www.carsharegloucestershire.com](http://www.carsharegloucestershire.com)**

### **Statements from our local representatives about the traffic issues**

**David Drew, our MP**— "I spent some time in Whiteshill the morning of 15/10/07 as the children arrived for school and then had a word with the Head Teacher. I have now written to the County Council saying that in my opinion they need to proceed as a matter of urgency both with the anti-slip surface on the road near the school (this has now been done) and with the 20mph zone during school times at the very least. I'd be happy for you to say this in your newsletter and shall continue to chase up the County Council until the work is done."

### **Cllr Stan Waddington, County Council Cabinet Member for Highways**

The position on the A46 repairs is that following the completion of the geo-technical survey, an outline design for the remedial works has been produced. The nature of the slippage is as bad or worse than had been suspected. Barring unforeseen obstacles however, current negotiations with the selected contractor should be completed in time for the work to commence at the beginning of November. I do not yet have an estimated completion date. Some suggestions have been made to reduce speeds on the Whiteshill Road but none of these could be implemented immediately. There is a significantly enhanced Police presence and traffic speed



surveillance in Whiteshill particularly at school opening and finishing times and I shall look to this being continued throughout the closure period. This is by far the most effective way of regulating driver behaviour at this time. The other suggestions are more appropriate to longer term measures and will be considered on that basis

### **Philip Booth, our local District councillor**

Philip has met with County Highways on 5 occasions and made many phone calls/emails to encourage action. He said: "Whiteshill has increasingly become a traffic corridor rather than a village - even before the A46 closure cars travelled too fast. We want our village back so that children can safely cross the road to the playground. The Parish Council's efforts to find solutions are to be applauded: it is also great that support is now coming from other places. We have been told we are not considered a priority for spending - basically not enough accidents - and Government rules about 20mph zones also do not make it easy. However I am still optimistic we can much improve on the current situation."

### **Publicity**

It is important that we keep trying to get the message across to drivers that it is not safe to speed through Whiteshill; please can you give the Parish Clerk details of any incidents that occur. We will try and get them in the press and pass them on to Highways. As you will have seen Highways think the situation needs monitoring so it is essential that we tell them about the

problems as they probably won't be actively looking for them.

## Announcements

**Saturday 24th November 2007**

**2pm – 5pm**

### More Hall Convent Curry Day

Here is a chance to try some genuine Indian cooking by the nuns at More Hall Convent. So treat yourselves and help the Convent raise some funds.

**Curry and rice to takeaway £5.50.**

**Thursday 15th November 8pm**

### Village Hall AGM

If you or your children use the hall please come along to the AGM. We desperately need some more volunteers to help keep the hall open.

**Saturday 24th November**

### Shared Space Workshop for the Main Road

**at 3.00 pm to 4:30 pm in the Village Hall and on Main Road**

The idea is that we will go and look at some available areas and try to come up with some ideas as to how they may be improved in a way that we are a community not a highway. This is about your involvement as nothing will be done without the support of the residents in the immediate area.

**Saturday 15th December  
PLAYING FIELD WORKING  
PARTY to clear shrubs and  
bushes starting at 10.30 am**

## Post Offices under threat again

Yet again the Post Office is looking to close sub post offices. This means that the new branch in the Maypole Hall is under threat. The best way to defend our local post office is to **USE IT!**

For anyone who does not know where it is, Maypole Hall is just behind The Church of the Holy Spirit, Paganhill and can be reached by driving into Mathews Way then turn 1st left down a row of garages.

## Street Lights

The County Council propose to switch off around **1 in 3 of the street lights** between **midnight to 5.30 am** to save money and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This scheme will pay for itself in 3 years and reduce the county council's energy bill (and emissions) by 10%.



The Parish Council think that we should go further and switch off **half** the lights on the main road and **all** the other street lights between midnight and 5.30am unless local residents specifically ask for their local light to be left on. Each light has to be individually modified so there should be no problem accommodating particular requirements. If you feel there is a safety or security reason for keeping your local street light on after midnight please fill in the reply slip and forward it to me.

**John Rogers**

## **Whiteshill School**

The summer has been a busy time for Whiteshill School. Many of you, no doubt saw the craning in of two new temporary classrooms at the end of July. These replaced the two single units which after 22 years had reached the end of their life. There is still some outstanding work to finish the project and this half term we are having some work done to smarten the inside of the original building. The school would like to thank all the local residents for their patience and understanding through the summer. The increase of traffic through the village has raised our awareness of pupil safety. Some mornings it can be so busy and drivers are still reluctant to stop, even when our School Crossing Patrol Officer is standing in the middle of the road. However, lots of our children are now walking to school and good use is being made of the village car park.

This year one of our big projects is to look at how we can make ourselves more environmentally friendly, developing projects such as improving recycling and planting and growing. We hope to be able to harvest and eat some of what we grow by next summer - let's hope for better weather than this year!

**Robert Kempner, Head Teacher**

## **Play Ground Area**

Good news! The children's play area is now fully back in use, paid for by insurance. New swings and rubber surfaces are installed and the roundabout has been restored to its former glory. There is also a second fence now to offer better protection from

vehicles. Please note that new signs have been posted on the gates of the area reminding visitors that NO DOGS are allowed in the area for safety as well as health reasons. Thanks in particular to Julie and Wendy of the Parish Council for their hard work. One comment from a child who has used the area is "its cool"!



**Energy Neighbourhoods** - The Parish Council have begun to consider a new initiative called Energy Neighbourhoods which needs some volunteer households. If we get enough volunteer households they will be given free help from appointed experts to monitor their household energy usage over a 6 month period. Households will be requested to commit to saving some energy during the monitoring period. There will be a variety of ways they can achieve this and it is up to them what they wish to do to help achieve their goal. The organising local body, **South West Energy Agency** will be offering to do a presentation on the Energy Neighbourhoods initiative soon to the Parish Council; interested persons are invited to attend the date and venue to be announced.

### **THE VILLAGE AGENT**

Pam Thorne has been the Village Agent for about a year since the scheme started but is leaving at the end of October. The Parish Council would like to thank her for all her work and wishes her well for the future. We look forward to working with Pam's

## **Update on Ruscombe Brook**

We have only had one serious incident in recent months where sewage got into the Randwick tributary. Severn Trent Water cutting roots in sewer pipes that run near the brook, and other works, do seem to have significantly improved matters: there is also now a plan to reline some sections of sewers where roots have re-grown. Severn Trent funded the enclosed leaflet about the brook and we now have all relevant bodies signed up to a memorandum of cooperation to look at sustainable ways of reducing flooding at sites like Puckshole and improving water quality and biodiversity. A Masters student from Glos University has been researching this and we are close to having a draft plan available for consultation. **Do join us at our next meeting 7.30 Tues 4th Dec - contact for venue and further information.**

**Philip Booth, Secretary of the  
Ruscombe Brook Action Group,**



**Tel: 01453 755451 E-mail:  
[safe.water@virgin.net](mailto:safe.water@virgin.net)**



**The Village Hall**

## **Village Hall Activities**

### **MONDAY**

**Yoga** 18:00 to 19:00

**New Keep Fit** 19:30 to 21:00

### **TUESDAY**

**Tai Chi** 14:30 - 15:30

**Lindy Hop dancing** 19:00 to 21:00

### **WEDNESDAY**

**Playgroup** 10:00 to 12:00

**Pilates** (please ring number below)

### **THURSDAY**

**Playgroup** 10:00 to 12:00

**Wives Group** First Thursday in month 19:00 to 21:00

**Parish Council** Second Thursday in month 19:30 to 22:00

### **FRIDAY**

**Ballet** 16:00 to 18:00

Please check the village hall notice board for confirmation of times.

For more details and booking enquiries please ring

**Mrs Bremerkamp on  
759023**



## Parish Council Contacts

**John Rogers (Chairman)**

John.rogers@whiteshillandruscombe.org.uk

**Mrs Julie Shirley (Parish Clerk)**

60 Hawk Close, Abbeydale, Gloucester,  
GL4 4WE Telephone 01452 424245, email  
clerk@whiteshillandruscombe.org.uk

**PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE to view  
Agendas and Minutes at  
whiteshillandruscombe.org.uk**

## SOME USEFUL NUMBERS

**Council Direct**

**01452 505345**

**Adult Helpdesk (formerly  
Social Services)**

**01452 426868**

**Children and Families  
Helpdesk (formerly Social  
Services)**

**01452 426565**

**Gloucestershire  
Highways**

**08000 514514**

**GUIDE—health, social care  
and disability information**

**0800 444000**



## Whiteshill and Ruscombe Village Shop



Please don't forget  
we stock:

- A range of organic products
- Sainsbury's own brand non-perishable goods, and
- Our own-brand premium biscuits

There will be a Christmas Fayre at the Village Shop on **Saturday 24th November 9 am to 1 pm.**

**Our normal Opening Times** are from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm on Saturdays and 9am to 11am on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

### Volunteering Opportunities

If you can spare one or two hours to volunteer in the community shop or bring skills to the Management Committee. For these and any other enquiries please telephone the shop on **01453 766277.**

---

**For letters and all newsletter contributions please send to The Editor, 'Ashbourne', Star Green, Whiteshill, Stroud, GL6 6AE or on email to:**

**warbler@whiteshillandruscombe.org.uk**

---

**COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT  
EDITION OF THE WARBLER  
IS 8TH DECEMBER 2007**

### ADVERTISING

If you would like to advertise your business here, please forward items to The Editor at the above contact. Ads start at £10 per 1/8 page and £20 per 1/4 page.

**Make cheques payable to:  
'Whiteshill and Ruscombe Parish  
Council'**