

Shared Space

Principle

If your streets look like roads, drivers will treat them as ‘through-roads’, if they look like places where other activities happen, then they drive with more caution.

Does it work?

Some evidence in the UK (a press report from a Norfolk village claimed a 7mph drop in average road speed, that’s about the same as speed humps), it has been adopted in parts of Holland, many French villages appear to be implementing it, included in draft planning guidelines for new developments.

What’s involved?

The “classic” solution is to:

- put a uniform non-tarmac surface across both the road and the footpath
- remove all driver warning signs and road markings
- remove traffic lights and most pedestrian crossings
- remove formal barriers between pedestrians and drivers
- install bollards, planters, benches and street sculpture to break up straight runs of road
- use changes in surfaces to imply crossing points.

Is it for us?

Making the place look more like a village and less like a road will have aesthetic appeal but I wonder if the impact on traffic speed will last if there are no people around. The question is do we have sufficient day time residents to use the created shared space even if the traffic speeds were lower?

What could be done?

There is no central money for this. We are not considered a traffic black spot and do not have a run down retail area so would not be considered as an urgent case. Things we could do include:

- Village green refurbishment – should start in October
- Change the style on non-statutory road signs
- Improve the look of areas where the pavement is more the 1m wide. These include:
 - Barrowfield Road entrance
 - Whiteshill sign at Stroud end of The Plain
 - Grit bin locations
 - The turning into the playing field
 - The turning into Ruscombe Road
- Plant the verges around Ruscombe Road to create “green gateways”
- Discourage further inappropriate signs & road markings.

Some of this could be done by the Parish Council directly but it is likely to be more effective if we could get people to adopt their own little piece of shared space and the Parish Council give assistance with bureaucracy and funding through environmental grants etc. Public involvement is essential as it helps build the community that will use the shared space and means that local development can be to the taste of those living nearest to them.