

## **Preliminary Traffic Sub-Committee Submission**

### **to the Blockley Parish Plan 2009**

The Traffic Sub-Committee were tasked with assessing traffic implications in the Parish - current and likely future - to make recommendations for policies that should be included in the Parish Plan.

Prime Authorities for most aspects of traffic are Gloucestershire County Council (Highways) and Gloucestershire Police, with responsibility for road cleaning vested with Cotswold District Council.

The Sub-Committee identified 9 headings for consideration:

- 1) Speed Limits
- 2) Other Traffic Restrictions
- 3) Commercial Vehicle Implications
- 4) For Pedestrians
- 5) Signage
- 6) Parking
- 7) Street Lighting
- 8) Carriageway Maintenance
- 9) Road Cleaning & Drainage

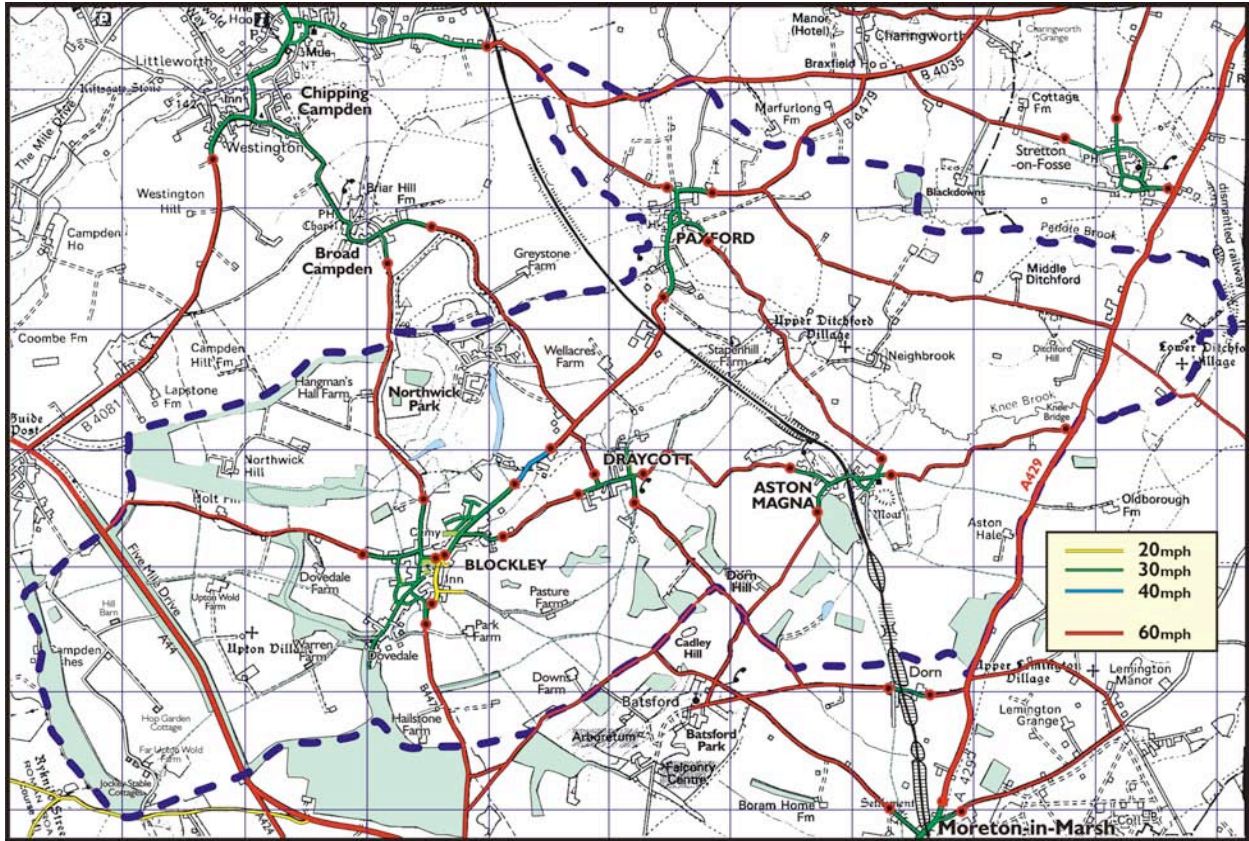
Although important and of periodic concern to many residents, we did not consider that the Parish Plan was the appropriate place to include objectives re routine maintenance of roads and associated cleaning & drainage.

The Sub-Committee were able to reach consensus on objectives for the first 4 headings above; our suggestions are presented herewith, illustrated by appropriate maps.

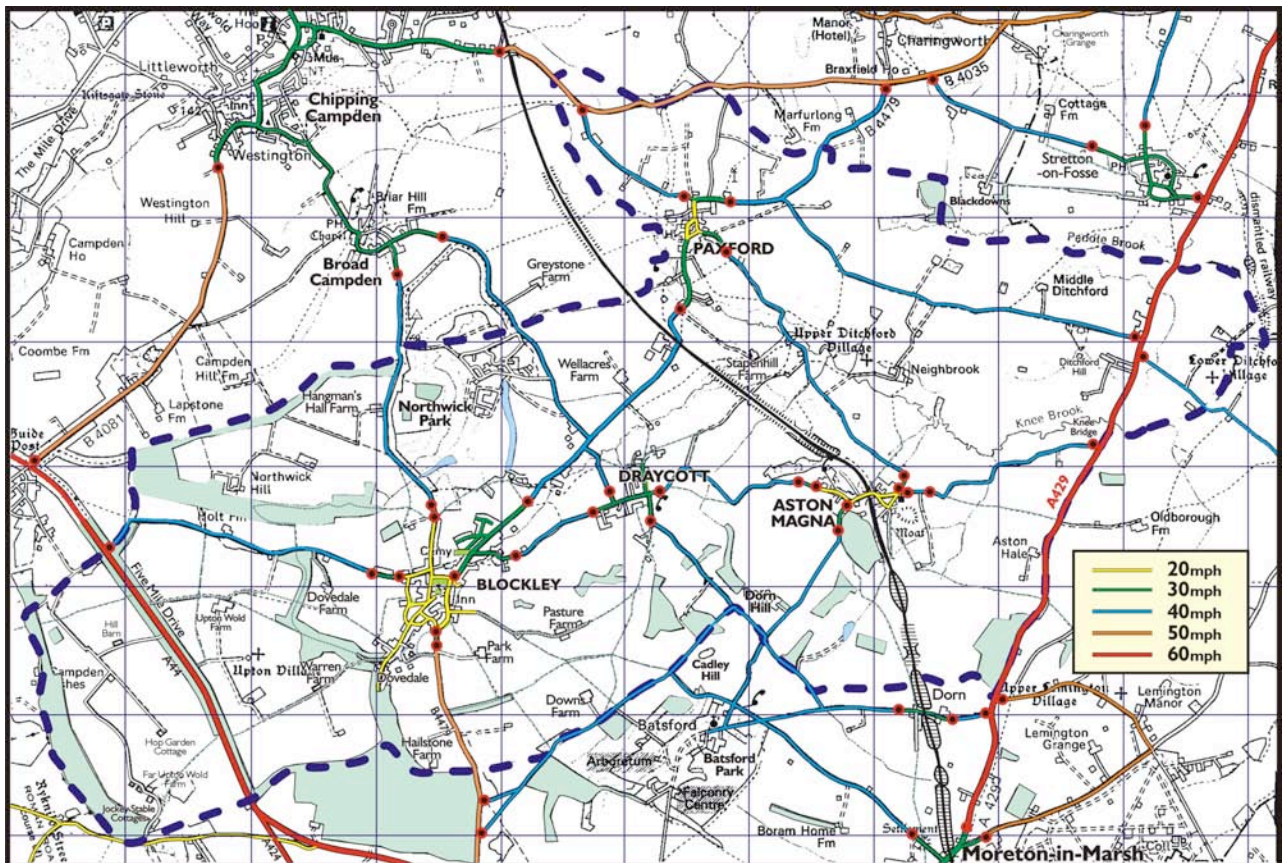
But for Signage, Parking & Street Lighting we felt the need to have wider input and suggestions so - with this preliminary submission - have posed a number of questions (which will be included in the general Parish Plan Questionnaire to be circulated shortly by the Parish Council). From the responses to these questions we would hope to then be able to make specific recommendations in our final submission.

## 1. Speed Limits and Safe Speeds

The two maps below show, respectively, speed limits current in the Parish as at October 2009, followed by the sub-committee recommendations for safe speeds. The dark blue dashed line shows the Parish boundary.



**Map 1:** Speed Limits in Blockley Parish, October 2009



**Map 2:** Suggestion for Safe Speed Limits within the Parish

There are a number of reasons for these proposed speed reductions. Needs for some reduced speeds were identified in areas where children congregate, near doctor's surgeries and also where there are known danger spots on certain roads, either due to bends, blind spots or popular crossings. In addition, a major contributor to the need to reduce speeds is the extensive on-street parking which effectively narrows these Parish roads to one lane of traffic at all times and results in dangerous 'blind-spots' for pedestrians, animals or vehicles emerging from accesses between parked cars. The issue of on-street parking will continue to be a fact of life, and no doubt grow as more and more families have 2 or more cars per household. The majority of homes in our Parish villages were built prior to cars and garages being introduced. They give us unique character but we must also address the problems they pose.

Proposals for reduced speed limits outside the built-up areas arise from the narrowness of the rural roads, use by seemingly ever larger vehicles and to make them safer for walkers, cyclists and riders.

## **2. Other Traffic Restrictions**

As a Committee, we would like to see that the Safe Speeds as proposed in Map 2 can be more effective and enforceable in slowing traffic, with the additional benefit of deterring 'casual' traffic using our villages as bypasses.

Three specific Speed Restriction locations were identified as most desirable. They are:

- 1) Station Road located approx at cemetery gates;
- 2) on Greenway Road, located approx at the Back Ends junction, and
- 3) in Aston Magna.

Various known Speed Enforcement methods were discussed and the Committee's favoured method is Priority Wiggles (the Highway Code refers to these as "Traffic Calming Chicanes"). These are used in Oxfordshire and Warwickshire in many places and reduce the passage on a road to one lane and give priority to one vehicle over another. The benefit is that this method definitely slows traffic but without additional flashing lights or extensive signage, or ongoing upkeep of cameras etc. and without the noise associated with speed bumps. An additional bonus is that it provides a natural crossing place for pedestrians, affording good visibility up the road.

Additionally such Priority wiggles are ultimately likely to deter 'casual' Commercial Vehicle traffic which often uses Blockley Parish as a 'rat-run' bypass.

Such Priority wiggles are large enough for Commercial Vehicles to pass through but do require them to carefully and slowly manoeuvre their way through.

We as a Committee actively seek to promote the speed reductions noted in Map 2 as a part of Blockley's new Parish Plan.

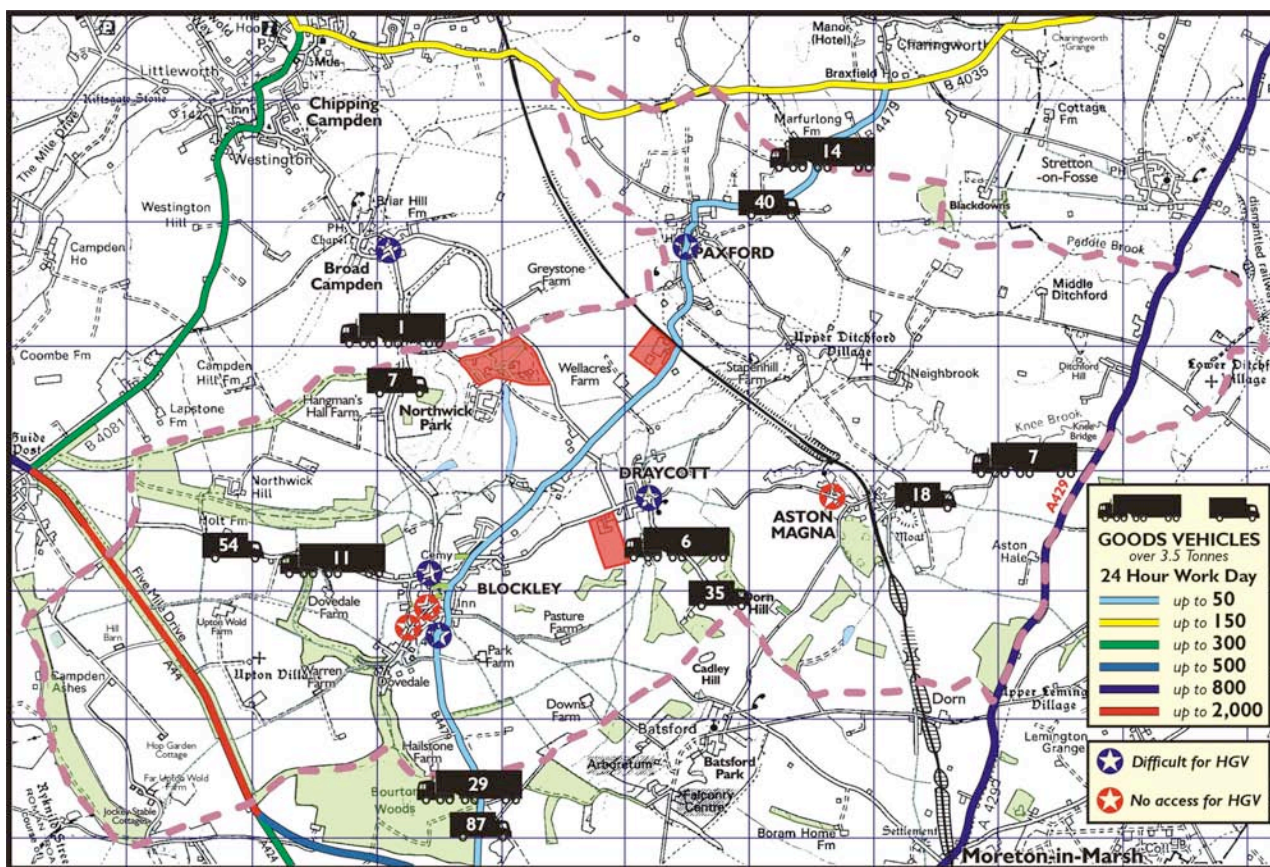
We would ask that the Parish review the issue of Priority Wiggles with the community as well, as we feel they are an essential part of keeping Safe Speeds in the Parish and eliminating unwanted additional traffic.

### 3. Commercial Vehicle Implications

Shown below as Map 3 is data from a Blockley Parish Council vehicle count (\* a dawn to dusk count in 2000) and Gloucestershire Highway's own 2007 data they shared with us.

This Map identifies and enumerates the number and types of vehicles routinely passing through the Parish. In addition, as the map key indicates, blue stars and red stars identify 'Traffic Hot Spots' (eg: population density, children/school crossings, ever present on-street parking on narrow roads & roads impossible for lorries to pass one another, etc). The 3 Business Parks in the Parish are shown as red-shaded areas.

There is increasing concern that Commercial Vehicle traffic is growing and that while access to the Blockley Parish Business Centres is completely understandable, many 'casual' Lorries are travelling through without stopping, routed by Sat Nav. As the 'Hot Spots' on map 3 indicate, many of our Parish Roads are completely unsuitable for such traffic.



**Map 3:** GCC estimates of Goods Traffic 2007 in and around the Parish, with actual observed volumes 2000

The Traffic Sub-Committee would propose that this map be used in the new Parish Plan to better identify for Gloucestershire Highways the need to minimise Commercial Vehicle Traffic through the Parish. Gloucestershire Highways are currently conducting a "Cotswolds Lorry Management Survey". Their existing data only tracks main roads (A44, A429, B4035 & B4479) through the Parish. However as can be seen in the attached Map 3, there are a number of other smaller roads that are being actively used by Commercial Vehicles, many of which also have 'Hot Spots' identified on them.

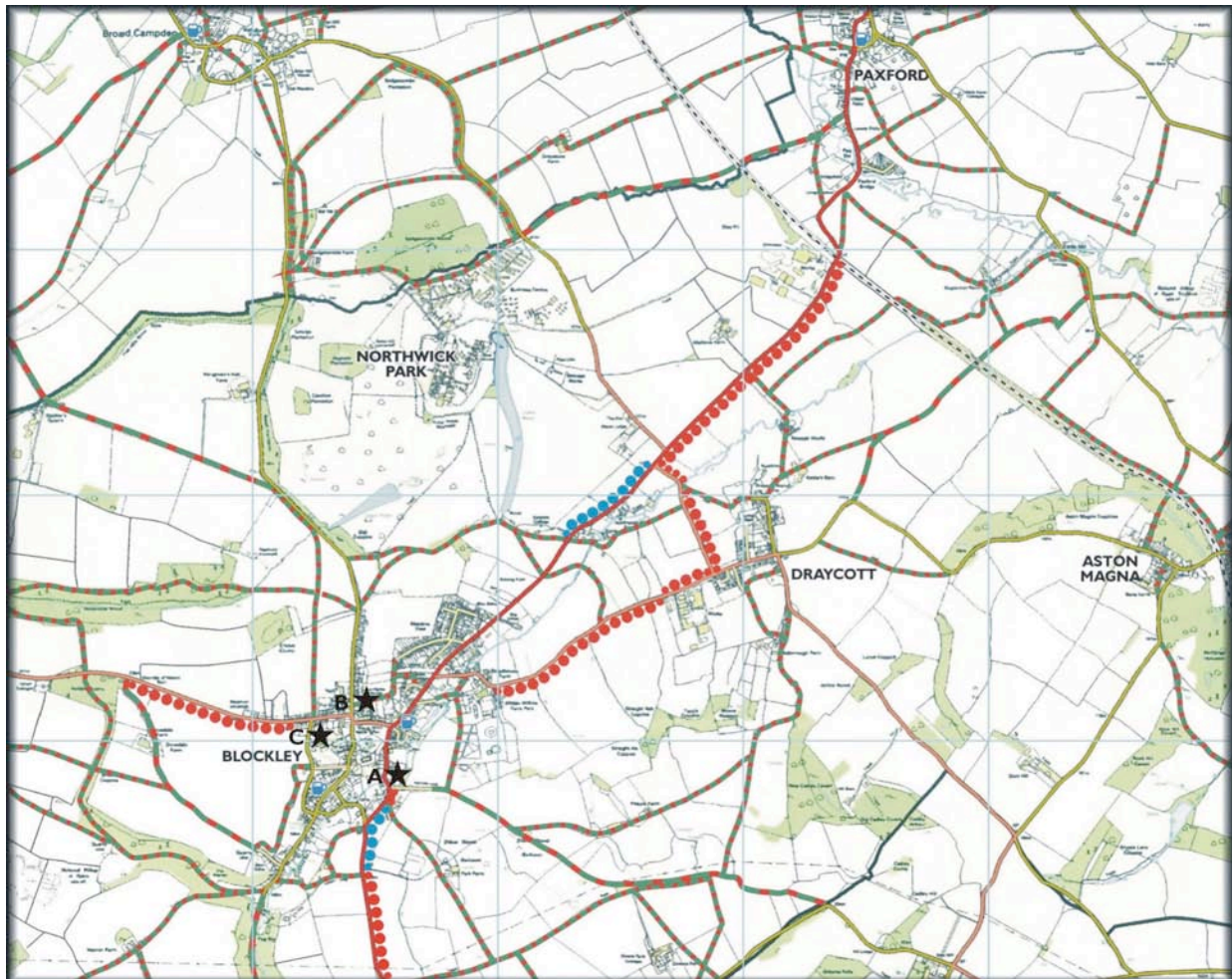
The Traffic Sub-Committee believes Map 3 has two uses. The first is in the new Parish Plan in order to back-up our proposed new Safe Speed Limits and Priority Wiggles BUT also to help reduce additional 'casual' Commercial Vehicle traffic passing through the Parish.

And secondarily, to immediately provide Gloucestershire Highways with better data for their current "Cotswold Lorry Management Survey".

#### **4. For Pedestrians**

Quiet Lanes/Pathways policies seek to provide additional pedestrian paths alongside roads and often they link up to footpaths. They make it possible to walk safely alongside a road rather than on it and in the way of traffic.

Blockley Parish is blessed with over 70 miles of public footpaths and bridleways, the additional Quiet Lanes/Pathways suggested in Map 4 overleaf would allow safe passage and links to many paths on to the footpath network. This fourth Map identifies with large red dots places considered as high priority for the continuation of the Quiet Lanes program initiated around the Parish in 2000 (blue dots show existing Quiet Lanes). Most of these areas noted are almost certainly within Gloucestershire Highways ownership, as the Highways Authority would normally own a minimum of 1 meter of land each side of the carriageways.



**Map 4:** 'Quiet Lanes' footpaths alongside carriageways: Blue dots show those existing in October 2009, Red dots show those considered desirable.

The Traffic Sub-Committee suggests that Map 4 be considered by the whole community in order to get their consensus that the request for additional Quiet Lanes/Pathways as defined on the map should be incorporated into the new Parish Plan.

In addition to the above improvements for pedestrian comfort and safety, the sub-Committee identified 3 other locations (shown on the map as black stars A, B & C) where enhancements would be most desirable:

- A) Some form of pathway, or a painted 'cycle' lane, around the sharp bend at Lower Brook House. Knowing land there is at a premium we thought perhaps a painted pedestrian/cycle lane on the road surface that could also be used for pedestrians would serve two purposes: 1) to slow traffic there and 2) provide a much needed safety pathway for walkers.

- B) A defined pathway/ school crossing at Park Road where it meets Landgate, linked with the widening of the Path on the school side of Park Road up to the school and beyond to the entrance of St George's Hall car park. Current access for mothers with prams or pushchairs and also anyone with a disability is extremely problematic. Currently there is no lollipop lady outside the school.
- C) A defined pathway particularly along Back Ends and ideally down Chapel Lane. (*\*along Chapel Lane may be physically difficult to achieve.*)

For headings 5, 6 & 7, the Sub-Committee felt that they needed wider input from the community, specifically against the following questions:

### **5. Signage Questions**

- a) Do you agree that the speed change & flashing sign be moved further up Greenway Rd beyond Backends junction?
- b) Would you like to see new signs at the 6 Parish entry points advising "Traffic Restrictions Ahead"?
- c) Would you like to see a reduction in the number of signs off A429 & A44 directing traffic through Parish villages?
- d) Are there any other signage issues you perceive?

### **6. Parking Questions**

- a) Where are known parking problem areas in the Parish?
- b) Are you able to find a place to park?
- c) Would you welcome a scheme that allocates parking places?
- d) Would you be prepared to pay for Permit Parking?
- e) Would you reduce the number of cars in your household if there were more public transport to local towns?
- f) Do you agree the Parish Plan should RIGOROUSLY INSIST new development (business or residential) cannot be approved without adequate new off street parking spaces?
- g) Are there any areas of land in the Parish which you think could/should be designated for additional Parking?

## **7. Street Lighting Questions**

- a) Is Street Lighting appropriate & sufficient in your vicinity?
- b) Do you perceive any problem areas in the Parish?

The Sub-Committee did not see the Parish Plan as an appropriate place to specify policies for headings **8. Carriageway Maintenance** or **9. Road Cleaning & Drainage**; the Questionnaire asks whether you feel that objectives should be included for these topics.