

APPEAL

by the Badgers Mount Residents Association

**To Reduce the Speed Limit on the
A224 through Badgers Mount
from 60 mph to 40mph**

**Together with Additional Safety Measures
on both the A224 and Old London Road**

Reason for Appeal

Following the fatal accident which occurred on the Orpington By Pass (A224) by Badgers Road, on Tuesday 24th July 2012, causing the tragic and unnecessary death of one of our long standing residents, the Badgers Mount Residents Association (BMRA) wish to put forward their representation for the lowering of the speed limit on the A224 to 40 mph, together with associated traffic calming and road safety measures on both the A224 and the Badgers Mount section of Old London Road.

A224 - Road Safety Concerns

- The A224 cuts through the centre of a residential area / village
- Pedestrians crossing the A224 to access public transport and social links
- Public Footpaths link both sides of the A224
- Amount of traffic accessing the A224 from side roads
- Use of A224 by HGVs and similar
- Speed limits on surrounding and / or comparable roads
- Accident history of the A224

A224 - Road Safety Measures Suggested

- Reduction in speed limit to 40 mph
- Traffic lights & pedestrian crossing at Badgers Road Junction (Option 1)
- Mini roundabout & pedestrian crossing at Badgers Road Junction (Option 2)
- New traffic island
- Cleaning / maintenance / upgrading of existing road signs / islands
- New road signs
- Maintenance of trees / undergrowth to allow safe sight lines
- Footpath to the east side of the A224
- Road markings
- Additional traffic calming measures

Old London Road, Badgers Mount - Road Safety Concerns

- Pedestrians crossing Old London Road to access public transport
- Public Footpaths link both sides of the Old London Road
- Current 40 mph limit not encouraged or enforced
- Used as a 'rat run' by many vehicles including HGVs
- Recent accidents on Old London Road

Old London Road, Badgers Mount - Road Safety Measures Suggested

- Traffic islands at three locations, linking footpaths and bus stops
- Cleaning / maintenance / upgrading of existing road signs / markings
- New road signs / road markings
- Additional traffic calming measures

A224 - Road Safety Concerns

1. The A224 Cuts Through the Centre of a Residential Area

The A224, despite being named the Orpington By Pass, runs through the centre of the village of Badgers Mount, with residential properties fronting both sides of the road. It cannot be treated as a traditional 'By Pass' for speed limit reasons, it must be regarded as a residential road utilised, on a pedestrian and vehicular basis, by a considerable number of Badgers Mount residents, both young and old. It bears no resemblance to the A21 south of the A25, the Sevenoaks and Tonbridge By Passes, and it certainly does not bypass Orpington. To rectify this anomaly perhaps Kent County Council could consider re-naming this road.

Please see Appendices 1 & 2 showing the layout of Badgers Mount and how the A224 cuts through the centre of the village. Appendix 3 shows an aerial photograph of Badgers Mount, again showing the layout of both the A224 and Old London Road in relation to the residential properties.

It should also be borne in mind that this area is also a haven for wildlife. Deer charge across the roads, indeed there are deer warning road signs in place on the A224. Should a vehicle hit a deer at 60 mph it could cause serious injury or possibly even death to the driver, especially a motorcyclist, and of course the animal involved.

2. Pedestrian Crossing of the A224

The A224 is used by many pedestrians, i.e.

- a) The only bus stops serving Badgers Mount are situated in Old London Road. These bus stops are used by the following residents:
 - i) Schoolchildren from the east side of the A224 need to cross the road, often in hours of darkness during the winter months, and in traditional dark school clothing / uniforms.
 - ii) Commuters from the east side of the A224 also need to cross the road to access Knockholt Station, again often in hours of darkness during the winter months.

- b) Residents accessing the Badgers Mount Memorial Hall at the corner of the A224 and Highland Road from Old London Road and the west side of the A224 also need to cross this road. It should be noted that there are steps leading from the Memorial Hall directly onto the A224, encouraging hall users to cross the road at this point. This access is hidden by overgrown trees and therefore drivers may be unaware of people exiting at this point.
- c) Dog walkers and residents wishing to avail themselves of the facilities offered at Andrews Wood and other woodland areas on the east side of the A224 will need to cross this road
- d) Residents wishing to access Polhill Garden Centre (Badgers Mount nearest shopping facility) or the Toby Carvery (Badgers Mount nearest public house) on the other side of Polhill Roundabout may also need to cross the A224.

It should be noted that a high percentage of Badgers Mount residents are older and therefore need additional time to cross a fast 60 mph road. Residents with young children also need sufficient time to cross the A224 – something that is not possible with traffic travelling at 60 mph. The Department for Transport Circular 01/2006 'Setting Local Speed Limits', which has been adopted by Kent County Council (KCC), advises that there should be an assessment of the conditions and facilities for vulnerable road users when setting local speed limits.

Residents are literally too scared to use the pedestrian islands as they feel too vulnerable when large vehicles such as HGVs, rush past at 60 mph. The level of 'public anxiety' should therefore be taken into account when assessing local speed limits (DFT Circular 01/2006 Setting Local Speed Limits).

3. Public Footpaths Link Both Sides of the A224

As can be seen from the attached maps (Appendices 1 & 2) there are numerous footpaths traversing Badgers Mount which encourage residents to cross at various points along this road, thus acknowledging the need for safe crossing facilities.

- SR7 / SR7A / SR596
Crosses the A224 and links with the bus stops on both sides of Old London Road as well as access to Knockholt station
- SR669
Crosses the A224 and links with the bus stops on both sides of Old London Road
- SR8
Crosses both the A224 and Old London Road to link with Halstead

4. Traffic Accessing the A224 From Side Roads

There is a considerable amount of residential traffic accessing the A224 between Polhill roundabout and its junction with Woodlands View:

a) Residential properties

- i) All the residential properties fronting directly onto the A224 (32 properties)
- ii) All the residential properties in :

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Badgers Road | (29 properties) |
| Johnsons Avenue | (19) |
| Milton Avenue | (22) |
| Highland Road | (47) |
| Charles Road | (3) |

access the A224 via two points - Badgers Road and Highland Road.

Total number of properties accessing the A224 from these two points is therefore 120.

- iii) All the residential properties from Sandersons Avenue, Christies Avenue and Woodlands View also access the A224 (27 no.)

Thus, 179 residential properties access the A224 within the section of road where the BMRA would like to see the speed limit reduced.

- b) The position of Elite Motors and D & G Car Wash which are situated opposite Badgers Road, also means that many cars enter and exit the A224 at this point. It should be pointed out that drivers often find it difficult to get out into the fast stream of traffic when exiting the premises and turning right across the direction of traffic. These waiting vehicles also make it difficult for pedestrians exiting the footpath to the north of the car showroom to cross east on the A224 to see traffic approaching at high speed. (Appendix 9)
- c) The Memorial Hall, the very hub of Badgers Mount life hosts very many events on a daily basis. Many events are accessed by residents on foot, however many are accessed via cars. Turning into Highland Road from the A224 from a northerly direction can be dangerous, due to the very sharp turn and the need to slow down almost to a stop in order to take the turn. Vehicles travelling at 60 mph, particularly HGVs, do not always travel at the safe distance from the vehicle in front – this is likely to cause further safety issues.

5. Use of A224 by HGVs & Similar

Since the old MOD site in Shacklands Road was sold to FM Conway Ltd and unlimited 24hr vehicle movements have been allowed, there has been a sharp increase in the amount of HGVs using the A224, some of which are articulated lorries with 40 foot trailers, which if fully loaded could be 44 tonnes. All vehicles are capable of being 'lethal weapons' if they are involved with a pedestrian or another vehicle, and HGVs (20 / 30 ton) require a braking distance of 300 – 360 feet on dry roads when travelling at 60 mph.

This does not take into account reaction time of the driver, other road conditions, sun blind spots or reduced visibility due to weather conditions or the hours of darkness. There could therefore be insufficient time to allow a vulnerable pedestrian such as a schoolchild, elderly resident or a parent with young children to cross safely. The BMRA do not believe this to be realistic in such a residential area where the A224 is used as almost a 'footpath' between the different parts of the village.

Motor bikes are also a particular danger, often reaching speeds in excess of 100 mph within metres of accessing the A224 northwards from Polhill roundabout. It is worth noting that residential properties with driveways onto the A224 start at approximately 100 metres northwards from this roundabout.

6. Speed Limits on Comparable and Surrounding Roads:

a) Old London Road - 40 mph limit

There are just 43 houses mainly along one side of Old London Road in Badgers Mount, with two side roads – Crest Close and Badgers Rise, contributing a further 19 houses, whose residents need to enter and exit into / from Old London Road. This makes a total of 62 houses fronting or accessing the Badgers Mount section of the Old London Road with a 40 mph limit.

This is in stark contrast to the figures quoted above for a similar length of the A224, i.e. 179 houses fronting the A224 and accessing the road from Badgers Road, Highland Road, etc.

The 40 mph limit currently in force was reduced from 50 mph several years ago.

b) A21 from the Hewitts roundabout towards Bromley - initially dual carriageway with no residential properties fronting has a 50 mph limit, however when the road reduces to single carriageway (a similar width to the A224 between Polhill and Hewitts roundabouts, complete with grass verges) and there are residential properties fronting the road (mainly on one side), and with side road accesses, the speed limit reduces to 40 mph.

- c) A224 from Hewitts roundabout towards Orpington – initially 60 mph, however the limit reduces to 40 mph when approaching side road accesses and at least one kilometre before any residential properties front the road. This road is of a similar width with grass verges to the section of the A224 between the Polhill and Hewitts roundabouts.
- d) A26 from its junction with the A21 at Tonbridge towards Tunbridge Wells - initially dual carriageway with no residential properties fronting has a 40 mph limit. This limit is maintained when the road becomes single carriageway with residential properties fronting, along with side road accesses.
- e) B2173 London Road, west of Swanley – whilst a B road it has a 40 mph speed limit and is of a similar width, with grass verges, crossing islands, side access and light controlled pedestrian crossings, albeit with fewer residential properties fronting.

7. Accident History of A224

Accident data obtained from Kent Police under Freedom of Information shows there have been 28 accidents on this section of the A224 during the last 10 years, not including the fatality on 24.07.12. Of these 28 accidents, 5 were classed as 'serious', which the BMRA believe to be an unacceptable level, showing the need for speed reduction and enforcement by traffic calming measures. (Appendix 10)

A224 - Road Safety Measures Suggested

1. Reduction in Speed Limit to 40mph

The BMRA request a reduction in the speed limit from 60 mph to 40 mph on the A224, between its junction with Polhill Roundabout and 150 metres to the north of the junction with Woodlands View. It may also be appropriate for the remaining part of the A224 up to Hewitts to be restricted to 50 mph.

2. Badgers Road Junction - Option 1

Traffic Lights with Light Controlled Pedestrian Crossing

Traffic lights to be positioned on the A224 at the junction with Badgers Road and exit from Elite Motors, together with a pedestrian crossing, as shown in Appendix 5.

This would have a double impact by making traffic slow / stop at this danger point, encouraging adherence to the reduced speed limit in the approach to the traffic lights, as well as allowing safe egress for drivers from both Badgers Road and Elite Motors / Car Wash.

The introduction of a light controlled pedestrian crossing at the traffic lights would provide a safe crossing point for pedestrians at the exact location that is most often used, i.e. crossing from Badgers Road (footpath SR7A) to footpath SR596 to access the bus stops and Knockholt station in Old London Road. This would also allow more vulnerable pedestrians, such as the elderly, visually impaired, residents with children and pushchairs sufficient time to cross this road in a safer and more controlled manner.

3. Badgers Road Junction - Option 2

Light Controlled Pedestrian Crossing

A light controlled pedestrian crossing to be positioned at the existing central island to the south of the junction of Elite Motors / Badgers Road to make a safe route from Badgers Road to the footpath leading to Old London Road. (Appendices 6 & 7)

This would have a double impact by making traffic / drivers slow down and adhere to the speed limit, as a reduction to 40mph by itself would not slow down all drivers, as well as providing a safer crossing point for pedestrians.

There is an example of pedestrian crossings and traffic calming along the A25 at the entrance and exit to the villages of Brasted and Sundridge. (See Appendix 14)

Mini Roundabout

This would allow safer egress for vehicles from both Badgers Road and Elite Motors / Car Wash, as well as helping to slow vehicles down at one of the most dangerous points of the A224. Please see Appendices 5 & 8 showing suggested positioning and layout of the proposed mini roundabout.

4. New Traffic Island

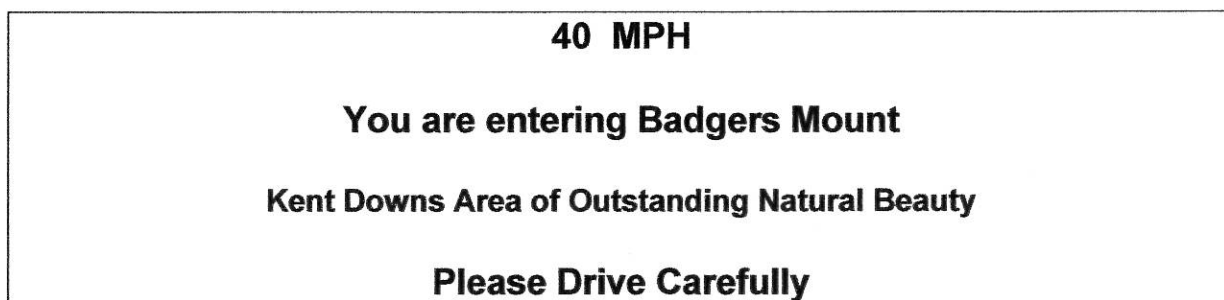
To be positioned to link Public Footpath SR8 which connects both sides of the A224. It has been noted by the BMRA that many pedestrians use this point to cross the road and follow SR8, and there are no other traffic islands within a reasonable distance. (Appendix 2)

5. Existing Road Signs / Islands

- a) Existing illuminated islands are not cleaned / maintained on a regular basis, thus reducing their effectiveness. It has been noted that some have even been out of order for several months at a time.
- b) The newer type central islands are not illuminated, only reflective, and again if not cleaned / maintained on a regular basis also reduces their effectiveness.
- c) Road / parking signs are not cleaned / maintained on a regular basis.

6. New Road Signs

- a) We would suggest that new speed limit signs are placed on the A224 at both ends of Badgers Mount, possibly replacing the existing signs, as per the example of the A25 in Brasted (Appendix 13) – to read:



- b) 'Entrance only' and 'exit only' signs at Elite motors to encourage correct use of entrance and exit as per revised road signage

7. Maintenance of Sight Lines Restricted by Trees / Undergrowth

At certain points along the A224 trees and undergrowth are restricting sight lines, particularly on the eastern side of the road. (Appendices 11 & 12) Trees and undergrowth should be regularly monitored and maintained in order to provide a safe environment for both drivers and pedestrians alike, and not left until a fatality occurs before being cut back. The BMRA noted that the overhanging trees at the junction of Badgers Road and the A224 were actually cut back within 24 hours of the fatal accident on 24.07.12. The BMRA believe cost cutting measures resulting in a reduction in maintaining sight lines should not even be considered when people's lives are at risk.

There is also the problem of overhanging / overgrown vegetation along the footpath on the western side of the A224 causing vulnerable / elderly residents, particularly those who are visually impaired, to have to walk on the uneven grass verge, and more crucially, along the verge of the eastern side which could cause pedestrians to have to walk on the very edge of the road, if not actually on the road, thus putting themselves at risk from traffic collision.

8. Footpath to the East Side of the A224

The BMRA have previously requested a footpath / pavement to the eastern side of the A224 between Polhill roundabout to join up with the section of footpath which runs in a southerly direction from Woodlands View to just beyond Badgers Road. This extended footpath, which combined with the regular monitoring and maintenance of sight lines, would allow pedestrians, particularly the elderly and those with pushchairs, to walk safely on the eastern side of the A224 and not have to un-necessarily cross the road twice in order to walk on a level / safe surface.

9. Road Markings

The positioning of road markings should be revisited, particularly in the area of Elite Motors / Car Wash, as these markings do not correspond with the way the premises is being used. (It was noted that the current markings were painted on Thursday 26th July, two days after the fatal accident)

Appendix 4 shows the existing layout of road markings between Sandersons / Christies Avenues and Badgers Road. Appendix 5 shows Option 1 being the suggested layout of traffic lights, pedestrian crossing and road markings, and Appendix 6 (Option 2) shows the suggested mini roundabout, pedestrian crossing and road markings in order to provide a safer environment for both pedestrians and vehicles alike.

10. Traffic Calming Measures

In order to support the reduced 40mph speed limit it may be necessary to introduce additional traffic calming measures.

- a) Flashing speed restriction sign at both entrances to Badgers Mount
- b) Speed limit marked on road surface (as per those recently installed on Polhill)
- c) Speed camera signs (which alert in car satellite navigation systems)

Old London Road, Badgers Mount - Road Safety Concerns

1. Pedestrians Crossing Old London Road to access Public Transport

Bus stops are situated on both eastern and western sides of Old London Road. These bus stops are utilised by school children, pedestrians with pushchairs and the elderly. As an example there are 9 children in Woodlands View, out of a total of just 12 residential properties, who have to cross both the A224 and Old London Road to get to the bus stops utilising footpath SR596. There are no traffic islands or pedestrian crossings whatsoever along the Badgers Mount section of Old London Road

2. Public Footpaths Linking Both Sides of Old London Road

Footpath SR8 crosses Old London Road and leads into Halstead, providing access to the church, nursery and primary schools, village pubs, tea rooms, shop and the nearest post office. Please see Appendix 1 showing the footpaths within Badgers Mount. Note that SR8 also crosses the A224 eastwards and continues into the woods beyond, making this a popular route for dog walkers.

3. Current 40mph Limit Not Enforced

Whilst the speed limit is 40 mph there are no measures to encourage or enforce this and vehicles often travel at considerably higher speeds.

4. Use as a 'Rat Run'

Old London Road is used as a 'rat run' particularly by HGVs, cars, motorbikes and the skip lorries from BSP, the local waste depot at Knockholt Station, who wish to avoid the traffic congestion that occurs at the Hewitts roundabout on the A224.

5. Recent Accidents

During the preparation of this report, in August 2012, there have been two accidents on the Old London Road within 12 hours of each other, both of which occurred in daylight with good visibility.

| | | |
|----------|-----------|---|
| 16.08.12 | 20.00 hrs | Fatal collision between car and cyclist |
| 17.08.12 | 07.30 hrs | Collision between car and BSP skip lorry Driver transported to hospital on a spinal board with the vehicle damaged beyond repair |

Please see Appendix 15 showing photographs of the accident and positioning of vehicles driving along the Old London Road due to displacement Knockholt station parking.

Old London Road - Road Safety Measures Suggested

1. Traffic Islands

Traffic islands, with associated road markings, at three locations where footpaths cross Old London Road to assist pedestrians accessing the bus stops and footpath to Halstead:

- a) Two islands either side of the entrance to Crest Close, to allow safer crossing for those pedestrians accessing the bus stop and SR669
- b) One island located near to 52/54 Old London Road, to allow safer crossing for those pedestrians using SR8
- c) Two islands either side of the entrance to Badgers Rise, to allow safer crossing for those pedestrians accessing the bus stop and SR596, and extension of footpath / pavement to the west side of Old London Road to join up with the existing.

Please see Appendix 2 showing proposed locations.

2. Maintenance / Upgrading of Existing Road Signs / Markings

- a) Speed signs on road – to be re-painted where faded.
- b) Overhanging trees / undergrowth to be cut back to allow clear visibility of speed / road signs (Appendix 16 shows speed signs obliterated by foliage)

3. New Road Signs / Road Markings

- a) Additional speed signs to be painted on road in appropriate locations

4. Additional Traffic Calming Measures

- a) Speed camera signs – as per requested for the A224
- b) Flashing speed restriction sign – as per requested for the A224

Summary

The key objectives of the DFT Circular 01/2006, which has been adopted by KCC, include:

- the setting of more appropriate local speed limits, including reduced or increased limits where conditions dictate
- local speed limits that better reflect the needs of all road users, not just motorised vehicles
- improved quality of life for local communities and a better balance between road safety, accessibility and environmental objectives, especially in rural communities
- Appendix D 'Speed Limits for Single Carriageway Roads in Rural Areas' states that 60mph is recommended for only the best quality strategic A and B roads with few bends, junctions or accesses, whereas 40mph is recommended where there are a high number of accesses, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users

Badgers Mount is not just the A224 Orpington By Pass and Old London Road with a few houses, we are a community of over 240 houses and at least 600 residents, including children, who are all entitled to live in a safe environment.

The BMRA believe that by implementing the simple measures as outlined above it would go a long way to help ensure the safety of residents and road users alike and could assist in saving lives. We would urge Kent Highways to take our appeal seriously otherwise the lives of every Badgers Mount resident, including children, the vulnerable and the elderly, will continue to be at risk every time they attempt to cross, or drive along, the A224.

The BMRA would welcome the opportunity of meeting with a Kent Highways representative to discuss our reasons for concern, and suggestions for increased road safety and traffic calming measures, in more detail. The BMRA would also like to show Kent Highways first hand how the A224 and Old London Road differ from many other similar roads in that they are both used as a footpath between different areas of the village by schoolchildren, families with children and pushchairs, dog owners, pedestrians, cyclists, and particularly the vulnerable sections of our community such as the elderly, visually impaired, disabled or children who are unable to access different points by vehicle.