

Report

Road Safety Childsbridge Lane

Situation:

Childsbridge Lane railway bridge crossing is construed by many in the local community to be a dangerous part of the highway due to the road layout and approaching speed of motorists.

The bridge and its lack of safe pedestrian access across it is a physical and psychological barrier which is preventing the local communities from engaging, causing social and economic detriment to those communities.

Seal and Kemsing have shown great commitment and passion by working together on this campaign for a common goal.

Parents in Kemsing refuse to walk their children to school in Seal through fear of crossing this bridge.

Two pedestrians have been hit by motorists both suffering injury to the extent that a year on one is continuing to receive treatment and undergoing further tests to diagnose skeletal damage.

Mrs Tracey Smith Head Teacher Seal School expressed concern as many children now attend the school from Kemsing and safety over the railway bridge is a recurrent topic of conversation among parents and teachers at the school.

Parents refuse to run the risk of walking their children to school from Kemsing because they do not want to cross this bridge. Today one of the government's key objectives is to encourage young people to engage in daily activity, the hazards associated with this bridge are hindering this and therefore addressing these concerns is a very important for parents, children and the local community.

Objective:

Safety improvements across the railway bridge in order that pedestrians may cross without fear or threat of harm.

A traffic calming scheme is proposed which would hinge around a protected area in which pedestrians may walk across the bridge. As traffic approaches a priority layout across the bridge the scheme would act to reduction the speed of traffic flow into the 30 zone and make the crossing for pedestrians safer.

Actions:

The local communities of Seal & Kemsing have been very keen to get involved and support this local issue.

A petition has been set up electronically and on paper and is massing a number of signature in support of road layout changes over the bridge.

A Speed Watch Scheme has been set up by members of the community in order to further monitor excessive speed and highlight speed concern to motorists.

Many people have emailed with accounts of near misses and their concerns in relation to venturing over the railway bridge, two of the most concerning case studies are listed below.

The police are in support of this proposal and have conducted speed checks, locals have also monitored traffic flow in order to provide a snap shot of the high number of vehicles using this stretch of road, making it very dangerous for pedestrians to cross.

Results & figures:

Traffic survey carried out by members of the public

| Date | Time | Total |
|----------|-----------|--------------------|
| 06.11.12 | 0730-0830 | Total vehicles 524 |
| 06.11.12 | 1830-1930 | Total vehicles 323 |
| 10.11.12 | 1000-1100 | Total vehicles 356 |
| 12.11.12 | 1430-1530 | Total vehicles 387 |

Speed checks carried out by local police

22.11.12 Duration speed monitored: half an hour and in that period 5 cars were stopped due to travelling excessive speeds.

Recommendation from Chief Inspector STEENHUIS of Kent Police Sevenoaks District:

Speeding is one of the communities top priorities across the district and we are often asked to conduct enforcement in certain areas. The difficulty is that the enforcement works for a very short period of time in relation to the reduction of speed on the highway. When enforcement officers move on, the speeding vehicles return.

I am sure you will understand that we are unable to provide a constant presence to undertake speeding enforcement, therefore, I would recommend your campaign ensures Highways looks to design out the speeding issue, with the use of traffic calming measures, rather than just reduce the speed limits.

Case studies

Mrs Chevin

On 09/10/1, a Sunday afternoon at around 1645 hours in day light, she was walking with friend & her dog over the bridge southbound. A vehicle hit her causing her a broken arm which remained in plaster for 6 weeks, ongoing physiotherapy treatment, she has seen a specialist who has recommended an injection into her shoulder for

pain. Furthermore she has had an MRI scan, seen her GP on numerous occasions due to the ongoing issue of her hand feeling like a dead weight, she has recently been diagnosed with severe damage to the cartilage in her wrist and she is now too afraid to walk across the bridge. Incident reported to police however vehicle failed to stop.

Mr Duke

Walking his dog across the bridge at around 1100 hours on a week day morning April 2012, hit by a vehicle's wing mirror, reported the incident to police however vehicle failed to stop. Unable to work for two weeks due to bruising sustained to shoulder.

Maresfield Parish Council traffic calming scheme

The traffic calming scheme in place in Maresfield was introduced specifically to improve safety for non-motorised road users and target excessive speed.

After the scheme was implemented results obtained over a 24/7 radar speed check showed the average speed was recorded at 2 MPH lower than the 30 mph limit.

Any increment in speed above 30mph greatly increases the chances of death to pedestrians hit by speeding vehicles – such a reduction in speed has made the road safer for those “non-motorised” road users.

Result:

Ongoing support continues for the safety changes proposed, the communities of Seal & Kemisng are committed in calling for a change in road layout in order that the railway bridge on Childsbridge Lane is a safe place to walk across.