

Porlock Parish Council

Traffic Calming and Road Safety Working Group

Questionnaire Results

Summary

Overall, the traffic and road safety survey was well received, with 222 responses in total. 85% of respondents were aged 56 or over. In general, it is felt that road safety is an issue in Porlock, and there are clear themes emerging from the survey, for example:

- Speed of traffic and parking
- Pedestrian safety
- Large vehicles and congestion

That said, there is also a strong sense that a balance needs to be struck between traffic speed versus congestion, and traffic calming and road safety measures versus maintaining the character of the village. It is also clear that perceived speed of traffic and feelings about pedestrian safety are interrelated. Any recommendations taken forward to improve traffic and road safety should be sympathetic to the character of the village wherever possible.

Survey Results

98% of respondents get around on foot, and 87% by car. By comparison, 27% use the bus and 20% cycle. These are by far the most common means of getting around. How people feel about using these means of transport is as follows:

	Unsafe or Very Unsafe	Neutral	Safe or Very Safe
Foot	33%	20%	47%
Car	12%	18%	70%
Bus	0%	18%	82%
Cycle	34%	29%	37%

69% of respondents think road safety is an issue in Porlock.

When asked about the main road safety issues needing to be addressed, the most common answers were:

- Speed of traffic (speeding, driving within the speed limit but driving too fast for the conditions, need for speed cameras/speed checks): 88 mentions
- Pedestrian safety (narrow paths, lack of paths, inconsiderate drivers): 46 mentions with Dunster Steep being mentioned specifically, many times
- Parking (illegal parking, bad parking, on street parking causing congestion, lack of use of car parks): 28 mentions
- Congestion and large vehicles (farm vehicles, lorries, buses, Exmoor Coaster bus): 32 mentions, with the Exmoor Coaster bus being mentioned numerous times
- More road signs, clearer signage or speed limit/give way painted on road: 16 mentions, especially related to speed, narrow road, pedestrians, elderly people, horses.

81% of respondents also agree or strongly agree that the whole of Porlock village should be a 20 mph zone.

A useful snapshot of responses to specific traffic calming and road safety measures covered in the questionnaire is as follows (%). **It should be noted** that other information captured in the survey is not completely consistent with the results in this table – the conclusions and suggestions for improvement which can be found at the end of this document take into account a balance of information gathered from the survey.

	Disagree or Strongly Disagree	Neutral	Agree or Strongly Agree
Pedestrian crossing on the High Street	41	28	31
Extension of 20 mph areas in Porlock, West Porlock and Porlock Weir	29	20	51
Rumble strips on road in and out of Porlock, West Porlock and Porlock Weir	47	22	31
Speed limits painted on road	19	27	54
Use of mobile Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)	21	27	52
More 30 mins free parking spaces in Doverhay and Central car parks	5	9	86
One way system on Meadowhayes Road/ Sparkhayes Lane	45	35	20
Enforcement for illegally or badly parked vehicles to ensure traffic flow and access	7	16	77
Random police speed checks	16	33	51
Local police presence walking the High Street	17	34	49
Improving evenness and camber of pavements	13	35	52
Extension/creation of pedestrian lanes where there is no pavement	23	24	53
Prevention of vehicles mounting the pavement where roads are narrow	23	23	54
Use of visibility mirrors at blind junctions	15	29	56
Upgrading Dunster Steep footpath	10	24	66
Addition of double yellow lines in specific locations to ensure traffic flow and access	24	32	45

A slight majority of respondents are not in favour of a pedestrian crossing. For those in favour, two locations were mentioned the most times: between Abbeyfield and the Post Office (45) and near the Pharmacy (27).

There is a lot of support for additional 20 mph areas in Porlock, with the following mentions:

- West Porlock 99
- Porlock Weir 87
- Redway 77
- Parsons Street 91
- Bossington Lane 91
- Doverhay/Hawkcombe/Horseshoe 11
- Bay Road/Villes Lane/The Meadows 5
- Sparkhayes Lane 4
- Old Lane 2
- Everywhere 6

Opinion is divided on whether there should be solid white lines on the side of the road for pedestrian use, where there is currently no footpath or pavement. There is also no clear consensus as to where any such lines should be located. It is clear however from responses elsewhere in the survey, that pedestrian safety should be improved. The question appears more to be how this could be achieved, rather than whether there should be more white lines painted.

A majority of respondents are not in favour of visibility mirrors at blind junctions for a variety of reasons. The most mentioned locations where a minority thought they would be useful are: corner at Doverhay Museum (31), Mc Coy's corner (26) and the junction between Sparkhayes Lane and the High Street (13). This perhaps indicates areas where people feel less safe.

A majority of respondents are not in favour of additional yellow lines. However, parking is considered to be a contributor to congestion in the village, and a large majority of respondents would like to see better enforcement of illegally parked vehicles where yellow lines are already in place. The most commonly mentioned locations for new yellow lines are Parsons Street near the entrance to the allotment and at the junction between Doverhay and Hawkcombe View.

There is a very mixed response with regard to pavements. Many people feel the pavements are ok as they are or should not be changed, in order to maintain the character of the village. There are also strong views that the pavements need to be improved, though no clear pattern as to which pavements in particular. The main issues appear to be the narrowness of the pavements and lack of dropped kerbs for people with mobility restriction, wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The following ideas are not supported by a majority of people responding to the survey: rumble strips on the road at entrances/exits to the village, West Porlock or Porlock Weir; one-way system on Sparkhayes Lane; changes to the pavements or use of solid white lines to mark pedestrian footways; use of visibility mirrors at blind junctions; additional yellow lines.
- There is a clear interrelation between perceived speed of traffic and pedestrian safety. Modest measures to deal with speed of traffic may help feelings about pedestrian safety without the need for any significant changes which could impact on the character of the village. This of course is a balancing act, but the intention should be to make improvements while avoiding substantial impact to the character of the village, wherever possible.
- Clearer signage or specific signs indicating narrow roads, pedestrians crossing etc. were common suggestions, including painting speed limits or 'give way' information etc. on the road. This could be explored holistically, in conjunction with the signs audit carried out by members of the Working Group, with a view to creating a signage plan which is fit for purpose for the village.
- Use the information in the survey to request greater Community Police Officer presence, and conducting more regular speed checks.
- Explore applying for funding for our own SID from Somerset Council/Avon & Somerset Police, renting one from Williton Council, or borrowing one from the Somerset Traffic management Team, to collect more traffic information and deter speeding. Particularly in West Porlock (this has also been requested by a resident of West Porlock at the December Council meeting).
- Explore establishment of a full 20 mph zone in Porlock Village.

- Consider extension of the existing 20 mph speed limits at: Bossington Lane/Old Lane, Parsons Street, Redway, Doverhay/Hawkcombe, Bay Road/Villes Lane/The Meadows. The Somerset Traffic Management team has already indicated that a simple extension could be achieved in a number of these areas since they are linked to the existing 20 mph areas and the average traffic speed on these roads would be appropriate.
- Use the information in the survey to support the request for more, free 15 mins parking spaces in the Doverhay and Central car parks. Also, PPC to do greater promotion of the car parks.
- Explore ways of influencing traffic speed on the Porlock Weir road, and in West Porlock. Explore establishing safer pedestrian routes between Porlock and the Weir.
- Explore whether one or two 'informal' pedestrian crossings could be located on the High Street. It's probably not possible to establish a formal crossing because of restricted visibility due to the narrowness and the bends in the High Street, but something along the lines of what is done in Minehead on the stretch of high street between WH Smith and Costa might be possible. Another possibility is to establish protected parking on the High St outside Spar to give some pedestrian refuge.
- Explore ways of improving accessibility of the High Street for people with restricted mobility and users of wheelchairs, push chairs and mobility scooters, such as dropped kerbs.
- Find out what is happening with the private plans to upgrade the Dunster Steep footpath. Consider the Council revisiting this project, or having the hedge and verge reduced, to widen the existing path.
- Explore changes in bus timetabling to minimise impact of Exmoor Coaster bus on traffic congestion.