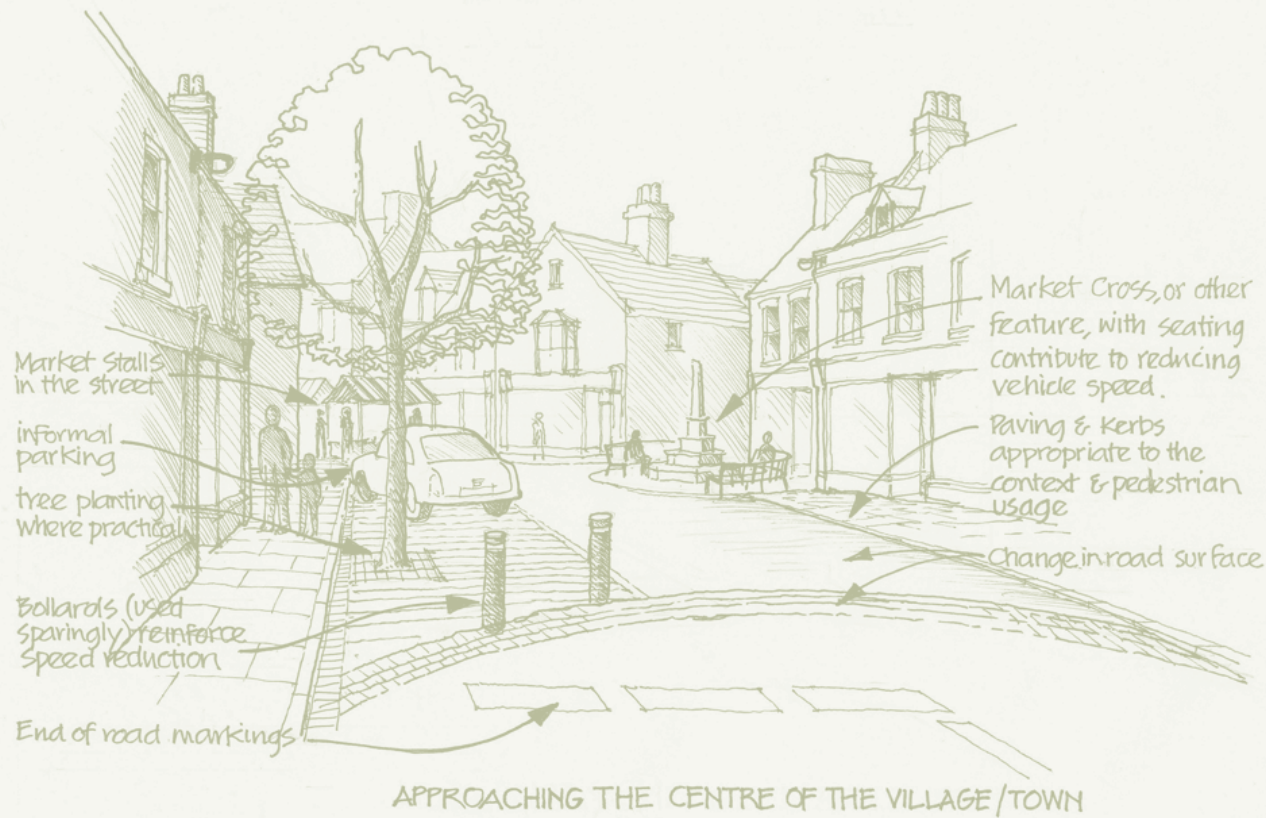


Traffic in Villages

Safety and Civility for Rural Roads

A toolkit for communities



hamilton-baillie
a s s o c i a t e s

Produced by the Dorset AONB Partnership in conjunction with Hamilton-Baillie Associates
Written by Sue Mitchell and Ben Hamilton-Baillie

Foreword



The publication of Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 signalled a significant change in our approach to the relationship between highways and transportation and the quality of the public realm. Its intention was to bring about a transformation in the quality of new and existing streets. This required a fundamental culture change and a collaborative approach. People needed to think differently about their various roles in the process of delivering streets

- breaking away from standardised, prescriptive, risk-averse approaches - and instead follow a rational and creative process in order to create high quality places. Until now, most guidance has focused on urban areas, although the issues are equally relevant to smaller settlements and the rural environment.

Streets are places in their own right and make up most of the public realm. The development of further guidance to support the philosophy developed in MfS is essential to enable the principles to be rolled out and show how better designed streets contribute to the quality of the built environment and help to create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities. Traffic in Villages is an excellent example of a document that has taken those principles and demonstrated through cases studies how they can be applied to enhance the individual character of some of our most important local communities, our rural villages.

Traffic in Villages - Safety and Civility for Rural Roads is an important addition to the growing guidance that assists built environment professionals. On behalf of the Institution, I am pleased to commend the toolkit to all those who are involved in the planning, construction and improvement of our streets and highways. I am sure it will make a worthwhile contribution to professional practice and, over time, to our rural communities.

David Gillham BSc (Hons) CEng MICE FCIHT
CIHT President 2011-12



Andy Foot
Dorset AONB



Developing a partnership approach to road management has been an significant and continuing strand of work in the sensitive landscape of the Dorset AONB. This Toolkit represents an important step forward in helping communities and highway authorities work together to value and conserve our local distinctiveness. By providing a step by step approach to making our rural roads so much better, the Toolkit will empower communities to embrace their rural roads with confidence and enthusiasm. I'm proud that the Dorset AONB Partnership have produced this Toolkit and hope it will inspire community action in other landscapes.

As we work even more closely with our communities following the Localism Act 2011, it is essential that we provide them with the tools and ability to care for and improve their local environments. A Toolkit for Communities does exactly that, it enables parish and town councils, community groups and individuals to make a difference, to take charge of their neighbourhood and to reinforce local identity and distinctiveness. The Toolkit supports the work of the Dorset Design and Heritage Forum and as Chairman I fully support and endorse its contents and look forward to seeing enhanced environments in our towns and villages as a result of this excellent document.

Kevin Morris
Chairman Dorset Design and Heritage Forum

This is a timely document for local use and is a practical update in understanding the ever changing traffic management needs of villages. Written to complement the Dorset Rural Roads Protocol, it promotes and encourages local communities to work with their local authorities to encourage improvements relevant to their village setting. There are lessons here for others around the country - with an emphasis on understanding context and generating locally relevant solutions.

Stephen Gleave
Chair RTPI Urban Design Network

Recent guidance on cutting clutter and improving streetscape has tended to focus on towns and cities, providing little detail for those in rural areas. This much needed toolkit fills the gap, providing principles and case studies that will help villages to free themselves from standardised traffic measures and reclaim their local distinctiveness."

Ralph Smyth
Campaign to Protect Rural England



“

If you want drivers to behave as in a village, make sure it feels like a village. ”

Hans Monderman 1945-2008



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Streets and village spaces have always served a multitude of purposes. Ever increasing traffic during the past century has created an imbalance at the cost of social and economic life. It is only recently that new models for shared space have begun to emerge, principally in cities and larger market towns. The principles illustrated by more complex urban schemes are still relevant for more modest rural application despite the very different context.

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Purpose of the toolkit

Cars and lorries are part of our lives, for better or worse. Maintaining and protecting the quality of life against a background of growing traffic volumes is perhaps the greatest challenge facing most rural communities. Rural life depends on the highway network for connections and communication. Many villages lie along the route of busy country roads. Modern travel patterns and transport place huge pressures on the historic form and qualities of the rural landscape, threatening the economic sustainability and social cohesion upon which communities depend. It is a problem that is universal to village life in the modern world, and especially in the UK.

Dorset County Council is pioneering new approaches to rural traffic management. With support and initiatives generated by the Dorset AONB Partnership, fresh ideas are emerging to help address rural traffic issues. Many of these ideas have evolved from cities and from larger market towns. The preparation and adoption of a *Rural Roads Protocol* has prompted new application of these emerging principles for the towns and villages that punctuate our exceptional landscape. The approach places community engagement at the heart of the process, building on local energies, creativity and commitment to contribute to the work of the highway authority.

This toolkit is intended to contribute to such engagement. It aims to provide advice and information on a range of measures and initiatives available to parish councils and community groups. It builds on ideas generated by a number of pilot projects, and is informed by best practice from the UK and elsewhere in mainland Europe. It will be updated as knowledge and experience increases.

The toolkit is intended to:

- Stimulate fresh ideas and initiatives to inspire and encourage villages to enhance and conserve their unique and special character
- Improve communities' understanding of driver behaviour and the key influences on traffic speeds
- Build confidence with new, locally sympathetic, design principles that can contribute to Parish Plans and Village Design Statements
- Increase opportunities for local input, resources and influence in the management and definition of rural streets
- Contribute to the management of Dorset's highways through the Dorset Rural Roads Protocol
- Reduce long-term financial pressure and responsibilities on local authorities

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The highway authority has to find ways to respond to the demands for rural transport and the growing volume of regional and local traffic. At the same time there is an urgent need to protect and promote the attractiveness and viability of rural communities...

”

The background - how we got here

The development of a toolkit for rural communities forms one part of efforts in Dorset aimed at reconciling two seemingly incompatible objectives. Firstly, the County Council as the highway authority has to find ways to respond to the demands for rural transport and the growing volume of regional and local traffic. At the same time there is an urgent need to protect and promote the attractiveness and viability of the rural communities which form such a significant part of Dorset's economic and social structure. The toolkit is intended to help find new ways to balance these conflicting pressures, and to explore ways in which local residents can become more closely engaged with ideas and initiatives to improve the relationship between people, places and traffic.

National policy in past decades tended to separate these aspects of economic and social life. The principle of segregation of traffic from civic life was a key recommendation of the influential *Traffic in Towns* report published in 1963. The division of responsibilities for traffic and transport from the responsibilities for broader environmental objectives has contributed to the tensions between the competing purposes of rural roads and streetscapes. The organisational structure and policy frameworks of government and local authorities has, until recent years, defined the highway network as infrastructure to be planned, managed and maintained without direct reference to the social and economic context of local communities. This has often resulted in standardised road layouts, signage and lighting which has eroded local distinctiveness.



Village centre as road



Village centre as village



Policy development

Our understanding of successful streets and traffic is changing rapidly. The principle of segregation of traffic enshrined in *Traffic in Towns* is being increasingly abandoned as we learn more about speed, safety and driver behaviour. The publication of *Manual for Streets* and particularly *Manual for Streets 2*, the new national policy statements, are the culmination of a continuing move towards integration of streets and public spaces back into the civic context of towns and villages. Department of Transport guidance, such as *Traffic Management and Streetscape* and *Shared Space* reflect increasing understanding of the links between transport, urban quality, social cohesion and economic vitality. Guidance by English Heritage and Design Council CABE, as well as European Union research studies has reinforced such connections. At the local level, *Dorset's Rural Roads Protocol* embodies principles developed in the Dorset *Local Transport Plan*. The *Traffic in Villages* toolkit forms a further step in this change of approach.

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National publication timeline

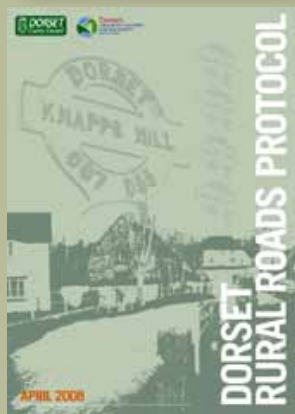


Local publication timeline



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The Protocol confirms Dorset's position at the forefront of fresh thinking on rural highway design, whilst reflecting the latest national and regional thinking. ”



Dorset Rural Roads Protocol

The adoption by Dorset County Council in April 2008 of the Rural Roads Protocol provides formal support to a set of principles for the management and maintenance of rural highways. The principles are summarised in the leaflet *Managing Dorset's Rural Roads*. The Protocol confirms Dorset's position at the forefront of fresh thinking on rural highway design, whilst reflecting the latest national and regional thinking. This toolkit outlines some simple and practical ways for local communities to extend the Protocol to address problems commonly associated with traffic within the context of rural villages.

All of the measures in the toolkit are based on the key principles underpinning the Rural Roads Protocol.

The most important of these principles include:

- Understanding and exploiting the quality and character of the built and natural environment to increase driver awareness and to influence driver behaviour.
- Avoiding the imposition of standardised highway measures that can erode the distinctiveness and quality of villages, and serve to isolate drivers from their surroundings. Signs, road markings, barriers and traffic signals are kept to a minimum to reduce roadside clutter, and to engage drivers with the environment outside their car.
- Employing the principles of “psychological traffic calming” to influence driver speeds and responses. “Self-reading” roads that inform drivers appear to reduce speeds and improve drivers’ awareness of their surroundings by increasing interest and changing perceptions of time. Research suggests that the more our brains engage with interpreting the immediate environment, the less we sense time passing. This seems in turn to promote lower speeds and a reduced sense of urgency.
- Expanding the menu of measures available to local communities and local highway authorities beyond standardised highway measures. Such measures are intended to build on the principles of “place-making”, to make villages more distinctive and recognisable, introducing elements of intrigue, uncertainty and interest to alert drivers to the specific context of their surroundings.
- Redefining the boundaries for responsibility and management of village streets and spaces.

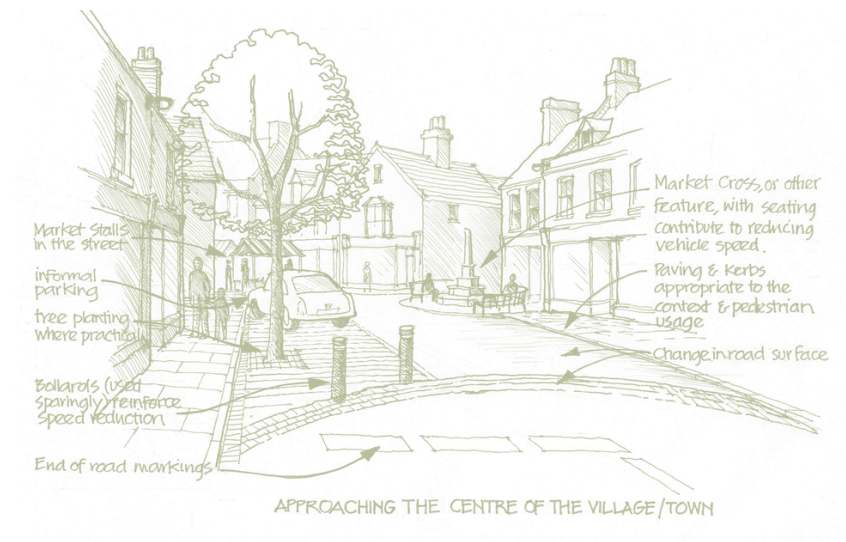


Using the Toolkit

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Successful plans are built on a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the special qualities and circumstances that combine to create an individual place. ”

9



Understanding place and gathering information

A good plan requires good analysis and information. The first step involves building a clear picture about your town or village - how it developed in the past, how people respond to it today, and what the future could offer. It is vital to consider the broad picture as well as the detail. Understanding the history and context, the distinctive features and characteristics of place provides a foundation for developing partnerships with your highway authority and addressing rural traffic issues. This section provides some practical guidance.

Every town and village is unique. Successful plans are built on a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the special qualities and circumstances that combine to create an individual place. The *Dorset Rural Roads Protocol* sets out to exploit the unique character of the landscape and built environment. It is therefore essential to look at ways to prepare an analysis of place from as many angles as possible.

Places evolve and are shaped by movement. Travel to and from and around places, and the reason for such journeys, shapes our past and our future land uses. Movement patterns mould and define places and help explain their form. Such patterns change over time. Understanding such changes and their effects helps explain the increasing dominance of movement in many villages, and offers clues to re-establishing the principles of “place”.



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Historical maps, local history societies and historical records can help explain the origins and development of a place. ”

10



The village yesterday

The past helps explain the present. Start by considering all the geographical and historical factors that have shaped your settlement. Why is your village the way it is? The character of the surrounding landscape is shaped by the soils, the geology and the land use activities that originally supported the inhabitants of the settlement. Historical maps, local history societies and historical records can help explain the origins and development of a place. Economic and social forces and events will have influenced the patterns of land use and the location of buildings and spaces. Understanding such influences will help build a picture of a village today.

For example, did your village emerge as a result of:

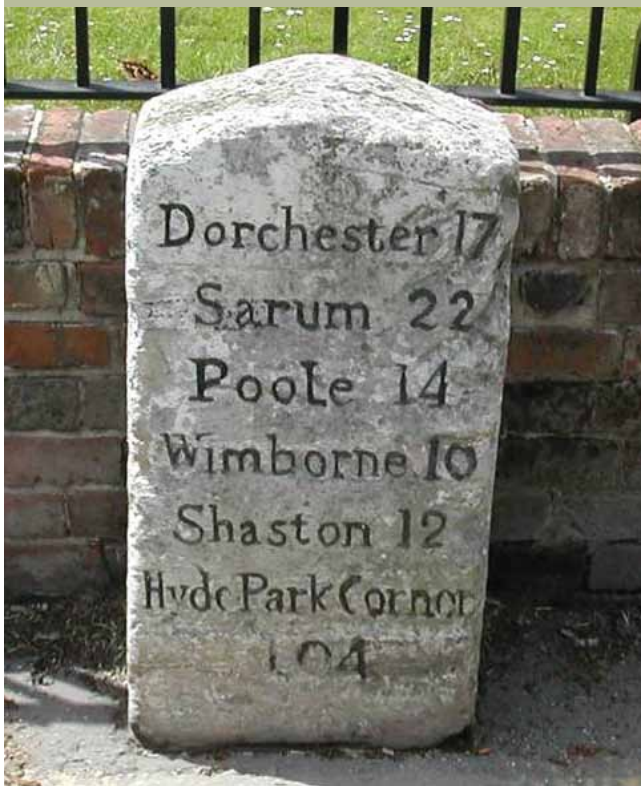
- A bridge over a river or stream?
- A cross-roads or the confluence of different routes?
- The availability of resources such as water, minerals, forestry or special land qualities?
- An accessible position as a local market for surrounding farms and settlements?
- A defensive position on a hilltop or river?
- Access to the sea or navigable river?
- The coming of the railways?
- The existence of a large estate or particular land holding?
- The location of a church or notable institution or landmark?
- A stopping place on a drove road, coaching journey or other significant route?

Most villages will have been shaped by combinations of these and many other factors. Sketching out the evolution of a town or village can help explain and illustrate its character and form. An understanding of the history helps when it comes to finding ways to emphasise character and context and to communicate to drivers.

“

Historic roadside features are particularly important as links to local history and components of a sense of place. ”

11



The village today

It may be that you have already prepared a Parish Plan or Village Design Statement as a means to plan future changes and improvements. This can act as a useful starting point on which to build further ideas for the key streets and spaces, and for ways to cope with traffic.

Drawing plans of your village helps explain its character. Such plans can be based on actual maps, but free-hand representations, sketches, photographs all help to highlight the key reference points. If possible, encourage children to draw a plan of the village based on their day-to-day experience. This can be a good exercise for primary schools, helping to highlight the key routes, the small details that often go unremarked or unnoticed, as well as the main landmarks that define a place. Such “mental maps” are a useful companion to topographical maps, helping to define the way a village is perceived and understood.

More systematic recording is also helpful. Recording typical widths between buildings and between kerbs, by carefully pacing out (one long stride for a tallish person = c. 1 metre). Small studies of the key spaces, buildings and features are helpful in building a complete picture. Note the location and surroundings of the church, school, pub, shop, village hall, car park, village green, etc.



“
Conventional
highway design seeks
standardisation. Good
village street design
is all about context.”

12



It is useful to prepare a detailed audit of every aspect of your main street, and noting them on a basic plan of the village. Include details such as:

- Highway signs and signals
- Directional signs and finger posts
- Road markings such as centre lines, stop lines and parking restraints
- Pavements and kerb details
- Railings, guardrails and bollards
- Paving materials and surfacing and where these change
- Street lighting and other light sources
- Advertising signs and hoardings
- Bus stops and taxi ranks
- Service covers, gullies and drains

Note items that are damaged or especially worn. Consider whether each item is essential and appropriate, or essential but poorly designed or sited, or whether obsolete and unnecessary.

Historic roadside features such as distinctive fingerposts, milestones, unusual materials, post and telephone boxes, nameplates, war memorials, horse troughs etc. are particularly important. Record as much detail as possible on a plan to build up as rich a description of your village as possible. There is a downloadable checklist on page 38 to take out with you when gathering information.



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Sketching out plans of the village and noting the places people feel to be important. ”

13

Movement

Recording typical pedestrian routes can help build a vital picture of how people chose to move around. This can be done by sitting and watching a street during busier hours, and marking each person's route with thin lines on a plan, noting where people walk and cross streets. Note with a circle where people pause and spend time, or stop to chat. After a couple of hours, the bundles of lines and circles will illustrate the dominant pedestrian activities. The plan will probably highlight key destinations such as a shop, bus stop or school. Many of the lines across the road will show the typical diagonal pedestrian routes or "desire lines".

Recording traffic patterns is also essential. Local highway authorities regularly gather information on traffic flows and volumes, speeds, accidents and, in some cases, air quality. It is possible that a reasonable amount of data already exists for your town or village and is available on request. However it is often easier and more accurate to manually count numbers of passing vehicles for a sample hour. It is helpful to break down the count into lorries, cars, motorcycles and bicycles. A count during morning rush hour, and one during the middle of a weekday, or on a Saturday, is ideal. Multiplying the vehicles flows during a peak hour by ten gives an approximate daily estimate of vehicles per day (vpd).

Vehicle count and movement



Pedestrian count and movement



“ Resist the temptation to assume that the slowest possible speed is the target. ”

14



Speed

Recording speeds can be tricky, but any information is useful, whether based on actual recordings or on observations. Again, the highway authority may have information. Hand-held laser speed recorders are increasingly available to rent or to buy, but it is often simpler to drive through the village in light traffic, and record typical speeds and build up an accurate picture from speedometer readings.

Traffic speeds will vary by location and time of day. Observe the approaches, as well as through various parts of the village. Marking up a plan with different colours can help describe the existing “speed profile” of the village, and highlight areas where speeds tend to be higher or lower.

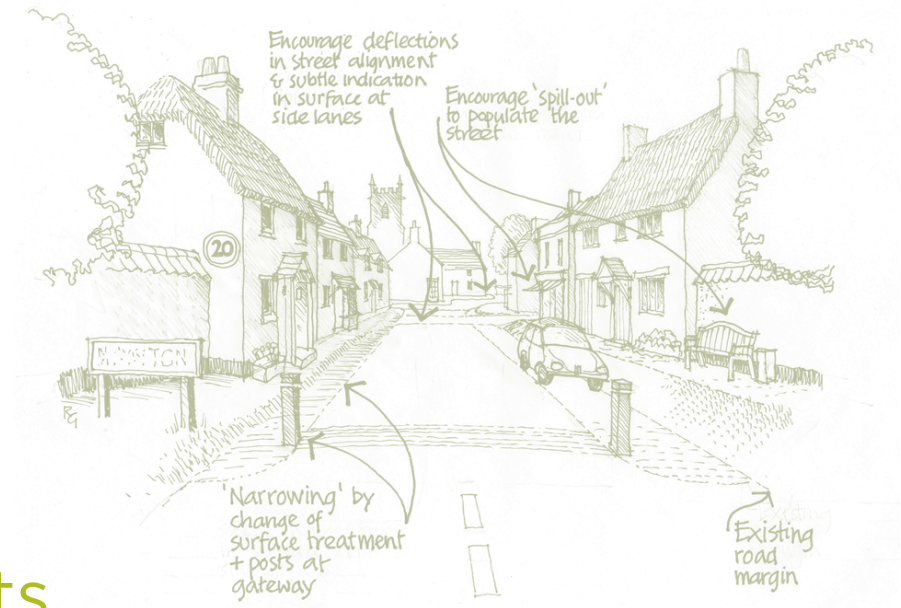
The next step is to give careful thought to the ideal speed profile. What speeds feel reasonably comfortable and safe? Resist the temptation to assume that the slowest possible speed is the target – the best speed allows vehicles to flow smoothly and steadily through the village without excessive braking or acceleration. Speeds around 15 – 20 mph usually allow drivers to respond easily to their surroundings – above 25 mph pedestrians and cyclists are much less comfortable, and informal communications become harder. There may be junctions or key places where lower speeds suit the circumstances and allow hand gestures, eye contact and negotiations.

Comparing the existing speed profile to the ideal helps to identify those places where changes in the road’s characteristics are needed, and where more detailed studies will be necessary. A study of speeds will highlight where to prioritise your efforts. Usually such places are at the entry points into the village, at significant junctions and transition points, and around the centre of the village. The following sections look at such places in more detail.



“ Identifying the key entry point helps to define the treatment of the road to achieve lower speeds and improve driver awareness. ”

15



Entry points

Where does the village begin? Outlying buildings and farms are often strung out along the road, and village boundaries become blurred over time. Often the nameplate and speed-limit signs are positioned well outside a village, without any particular reference to buildings or changes in the highway.

Look carefully at the approaches to your village, and note the points where the presence of buildings or activities begin to become apparent. Usually a change in scale or character marks where the older core of the settlement begins. The transition may be signalled by an important building such as a school or pub, or the road may take a sudden sharp turn or reach a crossroads or junction. Sometimes trees, hedges or the landscape mark the transition, or a bridge over a river. It is usually a combination of many elements. Identifying the key entry point helps to direct measures to achieve lower speeds and improve driver awareness. Ideally the character of the highway will change from “road” to “street”. Centre lines should end to emphasize the change in character. The signs associated with arrival in the village should accord with the driver’s visual perceptions of the village boundaries. Subtle changes in surface materials and colour help mark the contrast between the higher-speed design of the road, and the low-speed context of the village.

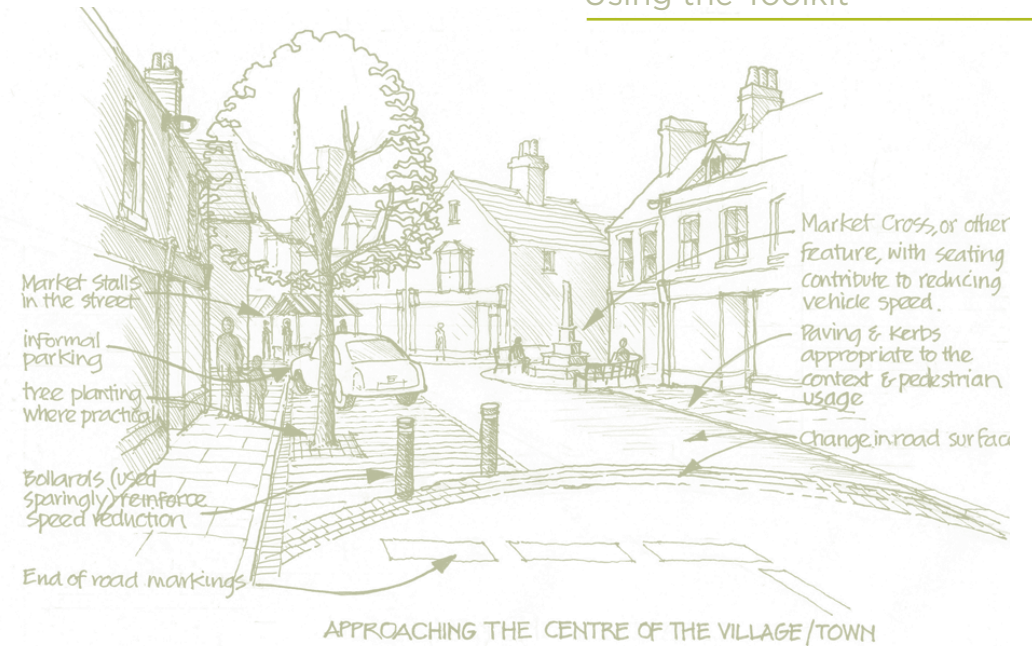
Highlighting the agreed entry points on your plan will help in discussions with your highway authority to steer any maintenance or improvement measures. It helps define a consistent use of surface materials, signs and markings (or their absence), as well as the best places for initiatives to plant or prune trees, locate a village map or noticeboard, or to find creative ways to celebrate the “front door” of a village.

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Traffic speeds
tend to be lower
in villages where
drivers can easily
identify the centre.”

16



Using the Toolkit



The heart of the village

Traffic speeds tend to be lower in villages where drivers can easily identify the centre. The heart of a village may be obvious to those who live there. But conventional highway engineering can easily ignore or erode the subtle clues that help to define the core, making it harder to communicate a sense of place to passing drivers. An essential element in the toolkit is to think carefully about the nature of a village centre, and to consider ways to emphasise its essential characteristics.

What is it that defines a centre? Usually village life is focused around key buildings or landmarks. The key might be the church, a shop or group of shops, a pub, or a village hall, or perhaps a particularly imposing building. There may be a recognisable formal or informal square, a former market place or village green, a war memorial or statue, or maybe just a crossroads or place where several routes converge. There may be a bridge over a river or stream, or merely a subtle widening in the alignment of a street or the surrounding building lines. A centre may be a significant High Street, or merely a space outside a shop. The main routes through the village may pass through the centre, or the focus maybe off to one side of the main road. Old photos, postcards and OS maps often highlight the village focus, helping to define the centre where former open spaces and grass verges may have disappeared beneath the tarmac of the carriageway.

“

What is it that defines the centre of the village? ”

17



It is worth listing all the potential measures that could add emphasis to the definition of the village centre.

Careful observations and analysis of a centre can raise issues such as:

- Do the existing kerb lines and markings add to a sense of place? Does the highway layout emphasise or ignore the particular characteristics of the centre?
- Where are the important buildings and entrances? Does the layout of the streetscape emphasise these reference points? Do signs and road markings get in the way of the surroundings and distract the eye from “reading” the space?
- Is any parking arranged to suit the space? Do vehicles screen or block easy access to key buildings?
- Does the centre feel like a place to pause, to look around, or chat to a neighbour, or do elements like road markings encourage drivers and passers-by to move on?
- Could the lighting of buildings accentuate the particular character of the place?

Finally, it is worth considering whether the centre has a specific place name. If so, could distinctive street nameplates increase awareness of the centre?

“
The more features,
landmarks and
identifiable places in
a village, the easier it
becomes to achieve
lower speeds and
smoother traffic flows.”

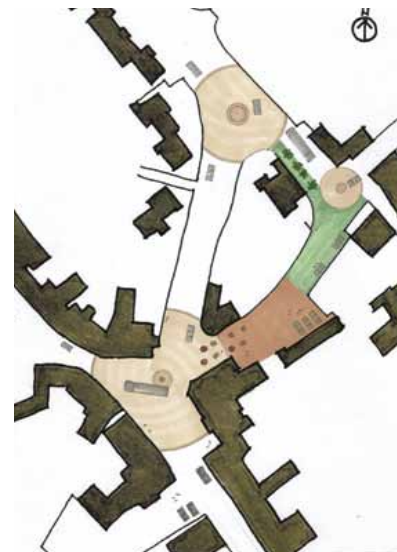
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Defining meeting places

The more features, landmarks and identifiable places in a village, the easier it becomes to achieve lower speeds and smoother traffic flows. Long, featureless stretches of road need visual interruptions and incident if drivers are to respond and adapt to their surroundings.

One useful way to create an additional series of spaces is to emphasise the points where a main road intersects with minor streets, lanes, alleys and paths. Small changes at such junctions can enhance the way drivers become aware of characteristics of a village, and adapt their speed accordingly.



It helps to map out all the relevant places where minor roads and junctions exist. Observe how visible or obvious such places are to passing traffic. Have a careful look at the surrounding buildings, walls, trees and other features to explore whether these could be made more visible to create a distinctive space. Could something appropriate to the context be added - a tree, a flower-bed, a finger-post, a notice board or a seat to add presence to a simple intersection and reinforce context?

With the support of the highway authority, it is often possible to introduce a secondary paving material to help define a sequence of minor spaces throughout the village. Major changes in surface materials may be beyond local budgets, but small areas of setts, cobbles, paviours, bound gravel or surface dressing can be used with conventional asphalt in carefully selected locations. Introducing an appropriate material to highlight a pedestrian desire line can help create a simple “courtesy crossing”. The principle can be tried out relatively cheaply through using different coloured road surfaces.

Identifying a sequence of places through a village can help inform the highway authority where future maintenance or improvements can be focused to provide a series of “punctuation marks”. Having recognisable places every 50-150 metres helps maintain slow speed and the interest of drivers. Small scale subtle changes in kerb detailing, the creative use of tactile materials or other minor variations in paving are often all that is needed to emphasise the structure of a place. Changes of material need to be used sparingly, and not result in too busy or fussy a layout. Simplicity is easier and less expensive to maintain or reinstate.

“

The narrower a road and its surroundings appear to the driver, the slower the likely traffic speeds. The absence of road markings also helps to reduce speed. ”

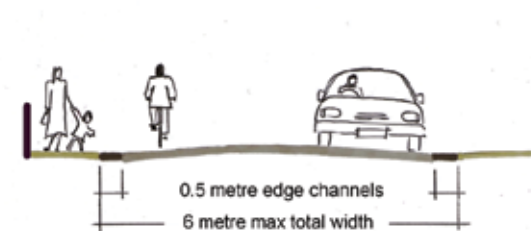
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Slowing the pace

Speed limits are not the only way to slow traffic. In many rural villages the limitations of policing and enforcement mean that formal legislation has limited effect. Research suggests that drivers choose speeds that appear to suit the characteristics of the road ahead. Reducing speeds therefore requires careful attention to the clues and information presented to drivers by the rural road and its surroundings.

The apparent width of the road is an important clue. It is worth paying careful attention to the distances between kerbs, and to measure distances between buildings. The narrower a road and its surroundings appear to the driver, the slower the likely traffic speeds. The absence of road markings also helps to reduce speeds. Centre lines and side markings encourage faster speeds by drawing the drivers eye to the horizon, limiting awareness of the peripheral vision and surroundings, and adding to driver confidence.



Look carefully at places where widths vary, or whether there are significant pinch points. Narrow segments can be helpful if drivers have to negotiate passage with other street users.

It helps to review where cars are typically parked, to see whether some repositioning of spaces might create a useful narrower point on a straight stretch of street. In looking at car parking, it helps

to ask where you would plan for parking if starting afresh, so that parking places reinforce the sequence of spaces through the village.

When verges, drains and the gullies at the edges of streets are renewed or maintained, it is sometimes possible to use a secondary material such as setts, cobbles, road paint or even reinforced grass paving to reduce the apparent width of the carriageway. Such “visual narrowing” is a good way to maintain slow speeds whilst coping with the dimensions of buses, heavy lorries and other large vehicles.

As a general rule, a clear width of 6 metres on straight streets allows two large vehicles to pass at slow speeds. By paving the edges of a street with a different material to the carriageway, a visual width of 5 – 5.4 metres can be created which further reduces speeds, without the need for artificial bumps, signs and chicanes. Using a different surface tone or texture can achieve this effect.

“

The more each feature of a place can be emphasised, the easier it is for drivers to recognise and respond to the village context.”

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20



Clarity, legibility and visibility

The most effective way for a community to influence the behaviour of drivers is to enhance signs of village life and a sense of place. Research has suggested that traffic speed is determined by the degree of “psychological retreat” of the community from the public realm. As traffic speeds increase, the less time people spend in public places, and so the more speeds increase. To break this vicious circle calls for creative measures to allow the life of a village to be visible and apparent to drivers.

Local communities are best placed to come up with ways to improve the visibility of village life. The more each feature of a place can be emphasised, the easier it is for drivers to recognise and respond to the village context. Likewise the more that the life of a village is evident, the easier it becomes to reverse the psychological retreat and encourage street life.

A plan of a village should highlight as many important features as possible. Ideas to accentuate the presence of such features can then be generated. For example, a bridge can be made more visible by painting handrails or features. Clean, well-maintained finger-posts, red telephone boxes, letter boxes and milestones all help to add distinctiveness. Some communities are able to appoint volunteers who can take on responsibility for looking after such features.

If your village includes a primary school, look at whether its presence is apparent, visible and welcoming from the street. Does the area in front of the school look like a place for children, for parents to meet, and for village life to congregate? Often schools are marked only by high walls and aggressive road markings, barriers and signs. Residents and schools can help improve the visibility of schools by resisting the use of excessive highway clutter and allowing the life of a school to spill out into the street. A few chalk marks on the asphalt and goalposts on walls can alert drivers to the presence of a school as effectively as road signs.

Active communities can encourage measures, wherever possible to make the life of a village visible from the street. Owners of pubs, cafés and shops should be encouraged to make maximum use of spaces outside premises with tables, chairs, awnings and displays and by making the most of the powers of highway authorities to licence such activities. Bicycle parking, floral displays and the thresholds of front doors can all help build an impression of life and activity that can slow speeds as effectively as physical traffic calming.

“
...make the most of events, festivals and anniversaries to draw life back into public space and generate pride in local distinctiveness.”

21



Celebrating public space

Slowing speeds and reducing the impact of traffic is not merely about physical measures. Ephemeral events can likewise influence the way drivers perceive and memorise a village. A final tool in the toolbox involves making the most of events, festivals and anniversaries to draw life back into public space and generate pride in local distinctiveness.

Every village will have its own traditions, and much local energy tends to be successfully channelled into planning local events. Such efforts can also play an important role in altering the perceptions of drivers and their awareness of a particular place.

It is helpful to plan events that do not require streets to be closed to through traffic, or that will appear to significantly delay drivers. Festivals and activities that are welcoming to passing traffic, and that engage with motorists are more effective than those that cause resentment or inconvenience. Anything which adds intrigue, humour, or a degree of surprise and uncertainty can contribute to the long-term expectations of drivers and influence speeds and behaviour.

Christmas lights or summer bunting strung between buildings can be used to enliven streetscapes, create gateways and animate public space. If there is a tradition for decorating a village Christmas tree, it is worth giving careful thought to where this is positioned so that its presence is evident to passing traffic. Similarly other seasonal festivities such as May Day and Harvest celebrations, street fairs, open gardens, local food stalls and fund-raising events all provide opportunities throughout the year.

Organising village walks, bicycle rides and similar events can help raise interest in the key issues, and can be an excellent way to increase community interest and engagement in the many small scale measures that make up the village toolkit. Not only do such activities help reverse the retreat from public space that is so essential to calming traffic; they also help build the social networks and local capacity that can contribute to a creative partnership with local authorities.

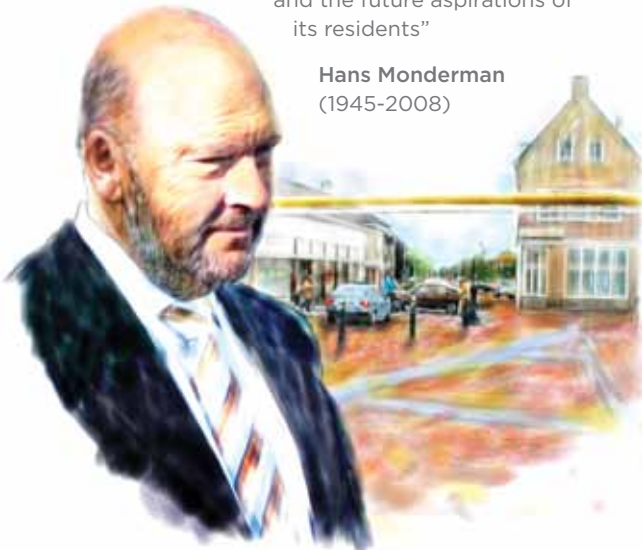
“

It is vital that local residents and traders are sufficiently informed to engage creatively with their councils and other partners. ”

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“A safe street is one that tells a rich story about its past, its context, and the future aspirations of its residents”

Hans Monderman
(1945-2008)



Summary

This toolkit outlines a number of basic ways with which communities can understand more about traffic and the ways in which its impact can be reduced. Most of the physical measures and interventions can only be carried out by the highway authority. But it is vital that local residents and traders are sufficiently informed to engage creatively with their councils and other partners. In addition the local knowledge and creativity available to communities are resources that may not be available to local government and large organisations. With an understanding and consensus built on the principles of this Toolkit, your community can engage more productively with your local highway authority.

Our understanding of traffic management is changing. Reducing speeds and minimising the adverse effects of traffic involves integrating the design and management of streets and village spaces with the special qualities of place. This has organisational implications for local authorities. It also calls for new skills in partnership working and a combination of professional skills in engineering, urban design, planning and landscape architecture to reconsider conventional highway measures. The *Dorset Rural Roads Protocol* provides an important starting point for this process.

Local communities can draw on the toolkit to look more closely at a number of critical elements that help define a village and inform drivers. These include:

- Building a thorough understanding of the past and current context of a town or village
- Identifying and strengthening the entry points to a village to achieve a clear transition between higher speed roads and the town or village itself
- Identifying and emphasising the location of the village centre and seeking ways to highlight its significance
- Looking at ways to create a series of features and smaller places throughout the village, exploiting opportunities such as junctions and special places
- Encouraging slower speeds by careful attention to the apparent width of carriageways and the detailing of kerbs, verges and street furniture
- Measures to bring to life and celebrate the activities and presence of the community
- The opportunity to celebrate a places' history and of marking the seasons of the year
- Harnessing local knowledge, events and creativity to encourage a clear connection between village life and the perception and awareness of drivers travelling through it

Abbotsbury, Dorset

Issue One

Over 1000 years old, Abbotsbury is a small village in Dorset, England. It is a village of traditional stone buildings, many of which are listed buildings. The village is situated on the banks of the River Piddle, which flows through the village. The village is a beautiful example of a traditional English village.

The village is a small, peaceful village in the heart of Dorset. It is a village of traditional stone buildings, many of which are listed buildings. The village is situated on the banks of the River Piddle, which flows through the village. The village is a beautiful example of a traditional English village.

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Slindon, West Sussex

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Case Studies

Abbotsbury, Dorset

Glebe Close

New developments and village extensions, and the lanes that serve them, can enhance or erode the relationship of a village to its road network and the surrounding landscape. The village of Abbotsbury lies within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and stands on the coastal route of the B3157 between Weymouth and Bridport, a route that serves visitors to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site as well as the day-to-day movements associated with a working agricultural settlement. The coast road enjoys spectacular views over the Fleet Lagoon and Chesil Beach.

Glebe Close, a small, carefully designed development on the edge of Abbotsbury illustrates the benefits of simple street detailing to exploit the local characteristics associated with a distinctive place. Standard kerb and road markings have been avoided in the new streets, and the locally familiar high footways have been used without the protection or railings. The simple streetscape helps accentuate a sense of place and creates a calm low-speed environment. Glebe Close reads to visitor and residents as part of the historic village.

The application of the toolkit could have helped improve traffic issues in the rest of the village. Projecting the presence of Glebe Close into the B3157 coastal route would help emphasize the eastern entrance to the village, as would the removal of centre lines from this point. Future highway measures could take their cues from the detailing of this quality development.

Contact: Conservation Team, West Dorset Development Services,
West Dorset District Council. 01305 251010



1| Glebe Close presents a clear entrance to the village approach from the coast road 2| Glebe Close in its village context 3| A simple effective approach to place-making 4| Distinctive high kerbs remain 5| An opportunity for clearer place-making at junction with coast road.

Bamburgh, Northumberland

Villages which are also tourist attractions face particular problems in coping with traffic and parking. It is very easy for the measures to cope with the cars and buses bringing seasonal visitors to damage the precious qualities of place and to erode residents' sense of ownership and community. Bamburgh, the village at the foot of the magnificent castle dominating the beautiful Northumbrian coastline, is the jewel in the crown of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The castle, the village green, and the sweeping sandy beaches attract many visitors who help sustain the local economy. But the municipal clutter of road markings, signs and bollards are often seen as the inevitable price for such popularity.

Bamburgh Parish Council has set out its own vision for a future village environment that could welcome crowds of visitors without succumbing to highway standardisation. With help from the Northumberland Coast AONB, a study of the existing public realm was prepared, together with simple sketches to illustrate what might be achieved through a careful emphasis on place-making, pedestrian flows, and management of driver expectations. A series of public discussions involving the County Council helped build understanding of the principles of shared space, reinforced by study tours to other similar communities in the region.

A change of approach to parking lies at the heart of the vision. In place of restrictive, ugly (and largely ignored) yellow lines, the Parish is seeking a Restricted Parking Zone throughout the village centre, reinforced by clearer transition points at the entry gateways. Improvements to better integrate the public car parks with the village and provide enjoyable, direct access routes for visitors to increase the attractiveness of off-street parking. The village green is restored to its role as the focal point, down playing its former role as just another road junction.

Contact: Iain Robson, Northumberland Coast AONB Partnership.
01665 511206 Email: iain.robson@northumberland.gov.uk



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1| Highway clutter accumulating 2| Approach to Bamburgh along coast road 3| Municipal signing screens the castle 4| Highway elements eroding the village centre 5| Restoring a sense of place to The Grove.

Bibury, Gloucestershire

The adjacent villages of Arlington and Bibury lie on the B4632 in the Cotswolds. The River Coln runs alongside and under the road, creating attractive waterside spaces and gardens throughout the village. The 14th century group of cottages of Arlington Row, acclaimed by the artist and designer William Morris, are among the many attractions drawing visitors from afar every summer.

The principles of the Toolkit can be applied to improve safety. Concerns about speeds and road safety had been growing, but there was understandable reluctance to introduce further signs and conventional highway measures and traffic calming. Instead the County Council exploited the special context of Bibury to influence driver speeds and behaviour, de-cluttering the highway and using natural local materials.

Over 50 signs and posts were removed. Simple locally-made, square-section solid oak posts were used where appropriate, allowing the intrusive steel chevron bend signs to be replaced. The posts were also used to simply define parking spaces. Grass verges were introduced to visually narrow the road, and to emphasize the entry points to the village.

The collision records for the period after the scheme's implementation suggest that the simple, sensitively designed measures were successful in reducing speeds and improving safety. The busy B road now feels more an integral part of this memorable Cotswold settlement.

Contact: Alex Luck, (formerly Gloucestershire County Council, now A Luck Associates).

Email: Alex@aluckassociates.co.uk



1| The B4632 alongside the River Coln 2| Less markings and signs could enhance place-making at the bridge 3| Soft highway detailing by Arlington Row 4| The main road is an integral part of the watery landscape.

Buriton, Hampshire

Parish councils can take steps to prevent the erosion of village quality by highway measures before crisis point is reached. The small village of Buriton near Petersfield in Hampshire decided to plan a set of co-ordinated measures to reduce speeds and maintain the special qualities of place of this community which sits within the new South Downs National Park.

Having prepared an overall plan and held a series of events to gain wide community consensus for the approach, the Parish Council initiated a series of small schemes to remove highway clutter and to build on the natural qualities of the village – its church, school, pubs and duck pond. Simplicity and sensitive design principles were applied first to a key crossroads outside one of the pubs, followed by improvements to the main entry points and finally the space outside the church. Road markings, signs and barriers were removed, and a robust palette of paving materials used to reduce the speed context and to highlight key spaces.

The success of the scheme and its popularity has inspired several historic villages in the area to develop a similar approach based on the principles outlined in this toolkit.

Contact: Doug Jones, Buriton Parish Council.

Email: doug.pam@btinternet.com



1| Highway clutter accumulating around the village pub 2| Simplification, visual narrowing and kerb realignment 3| The former southern approach to church and pond 4| A simple threshold marker and removed markings 5| The village cross-roads before 6| The crossroads after as a place outside the pub.

Dunster, Exmoor, Somerset

Almost everyone knows Dunster, the remarkable estate village under the lee of Dunster Castle on the edge of Exmoor. Its remarkable collection of medieval buildings and winding streets attract thousands of visitors from around the world. Its High Street served as a market place for hundreds of years, where the octagonal Yarn Market shelter survives as the centrepiece. Dunster serves as the gateway for Exmoor National Park, and as the setting for countless romantic films and images.

But like all villages, Dunster exists because of transport patterns. It stands at the junction where the Tiverton to Minehead road (the A396) meets the east-west coast road (the A39). It has to cope with modern traffic. Growing traffic has brought standardized highway measures in its wake, and signs, road markings and traffic signals have eroded the quality of space upon which Dunster's thriving tourist economy depends. Car parking, the links between car parks and village centre, and the interaction of pedestrians with through-traffic, present constant challenges.

Project Dunster, the local community partnership, has worked closely with Exmoor National Park Authority to develop a fresh approach to street design for the historic village. Careful attention to entry points, to place-making, and to celebrating the unique qualities that characterize Dunster have helped develop an action plan that has informed future highway investment and maintenance by Somerset County Council as highway authority.

Contact: Graham Lamacraft (Dunster Action Plan Project Manager)
Email: lamacraft@higherorchard.fsnet.co.uk



1| Dunster's attractive and busy High Street 2| Highway measures eroding Dunster's special qualities 3| Traffic pressure on Dunster's narrow streets 4| The historic Yarn Market isolated from the street 5| The Yarn Market as part of the High Street 6| Existing street markings ignore buildings 7| Proposed entrance space at start of village.

Lockeridge, Wiltshire

Animating public space in a village can sometimes be enough to reduce speeds and change driver behaviour. Wit and ingenuity can sometimes serve as effectively as speed bumps to intrigue and amuse, and to introduce human presence even where there is not much day-to-day activity.

The small village of Lockeridge found that traffic speeds were increasing, reducing the confidence of older people and children in walking, bicycling and spending time in the public realm. The Parish Council began to realise that they were unlikely ever to be considered a priority by Wiltshire County Council, and any additional traffic engineering or speed enforcement was remote.

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Instead the village made use of its annual summer fair. A scarecrow competition was launched, and local groups and school children came up with a remarkable array of characters to animate the village and amuse drivers. A zebra could be found thinking of crossing, and a beady-eyed bird-watcher scans approaching traffic. A polish plumber stands on the village entrance, hoping forlornly for a lift home. Children in bright uniforms scamper out of the school gates, and the scariest crow ever seen dangles from an overhanging tree.

At Christmas time, residents make sure that any Christmas lights extend across the village roads to make sure that any drivers feel welcomed into the heart of the village. No-one confuses the village for just a piece of highway!

Contact: Judith Woodget, Lockeridge Parish Council.

Email: judithwoodget@btinternet.com



1| Village entry surveilled by a mysterious bird-watcher... 2| Scarecrow children highlight the primary school 3| Scarecrow figures animate the village green 4| Elderly scarecrows gossip on the village bench 5| Christmas lights form a canopy over the road.

Seven Sisters, East Sussex

Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP) Visitor Centre, Exceat

A change in approach to coping with rural traffic and maintaining safety is not just confined to towns and villages. Important landmarks and attractions are often located alongside busy rural roads. The principles outlined in the Toolkit can help solve problems of speed and safety where conventional highway measures are inappropriate.

The SSCP Visitor Centre near Eastbourne occupies a former set of farm buildings on a meander bend of the Cuckmere River. Over the years, the rural road running through the site has become the A259, carrying over 10,000 vehicles a day. White lines, signs, barriers and screens have all served to increase speeds, and to reduce the visibility of the historic site. The visitor centre forms an important facility in the new South Downs National Park. The County Council needs to find ways to improve safety for visitors, particularly when crossing the busy road.

Instead of traffic signals and barriers, the National Park's Authority predecessor proposed a range of simple measures to increase driver awareness of the peculiarities of the site. Places where pedestrians wish to cross are highlighted, and careful attention is given to the features that mark the entry-points into Seven Seats Country Park. All road markings, signs and barriers are to be removed, and the relationship between buildings and water made clearer. Old maps and an analysis of natural focal points were used to highlight a sense of place and provide a contrast to the higher speed highway.

Contact: Andy Beattie, South Downs National Park.

Email: andy.beattie@southdowns.gov.uk



1| The former farm of Exceat was closely linked to the water 2| Highway elements have gradually created a barrier and increased speeds 3| Large numbers of visitors cross the busy road 4| Outline plan for creating a sequence of places and crossings 5| The existing barriers and chevrons speed traffic and isolate drivers 6| Proposed place-making to reconnect with water.

Slindon, West Sussex

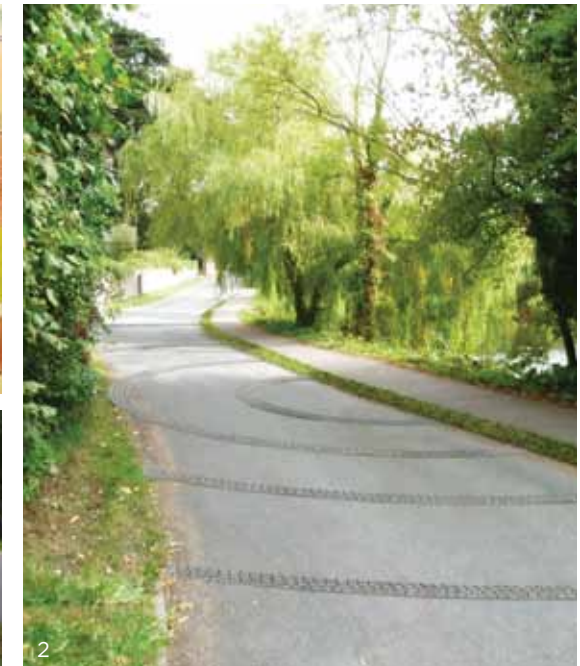
No two villages are alike. The village of Slindon, on the edge of the new South Downs National Park, has an unusual dispersed pattern of buildings set in a ring around farmland. In the last century additional village accommodation was built on Slindon Common, now divided from the village core by the busy A29. It is a difficult village to “read”, with no obvious centre or focal point, but with many distinctive and interesting places.

The barrier effect of the A29 has undermined the cohesion of Slindon, and the only local shop has now closed. However the local action group, Slindon Life, has set about building consensus for a strategy to retain and improve the special qualities of the village. In addition to exploring ways to reduce speeds and improve the safety of crossing the A29, their plan adopts the principles of place-making at each of the key junctions of the extended lane system that characterizes Slindon. Plans to build a new community café and to integrate the popular primary school into the visible life of the village form the basis for a new “centre”.

The National Trust, who own much of the former Slindon Estate, and the new National Park Authority, see Slindon as a test-bed for new approaches to rural regeneration, and the plans provide an unusual example of the principles behind the Toolkit.

Contact: Mike Imms, Slindon Life.

Email: mike@mikeimms.co.uk



1| Slindon's unusual dispersed plan alongside the A29 2| Simple paving detail to link road with village pond 3| Place-making around the village school and café 4| Existing A29 bisects the village as a busy highway 5| Proposals for slowing traffic and allowing safe crossings.

Stonehouse, Gloucestershire

Rural communities rely on the vitality and attractiveness of their High Street and core shopping areas. As traffic volumes increase, there is a creeping tendency for highway measures to erode the essential qualities of place that attracts business and activity. Stonehouse, the small town close to Stroud, has managed to retain the shops, pubs and businesses to serve its population of around 8,000. But its High Street is under threat, largely due to the volume and speed of traffic that uses the High Street (part of the B4008), despite the bypass provided by the nearby M5.

The Parish Council and the Stonehouse Partnership took the initiative in 2008 to prepare its own vision for what Stonehouse High Street might become. A large-scale model was constructed by local enthusiasts, and sketch plans were explored for the town's entry points, the town centre and significant locations. A High Street Working Group works closely with Gloucestershire Highways, and, with a very limited budget, has started a series of measures that will reduce speeds, improve pedestrian crossings and create a more distinctive centre.

Work started on site in 2011 after many months of local discussions, design revisions, painful budget cuts and difficult decisions. But the Parish has stuck to its original vision for Stonehouse, which will guide all future investment in the High Street.

Contact: Jim Dickson, Stonehouse Partnership.
Email: j11dickson@btinternet.com

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1| The community prepared a masterplan for its long High Street 2| Plans and priorities were much discussed at town events 3| The former High Street - fast, bleak and featureless 4| One of many sketch proposals for the centre 5| Lower speeds, reduced clutter. Trees still to come...

West Meon, Hampshire

Villages often find themselves bisected by main roads. Speed limits are rarely enough to prevent traffic from dividing the community both physically and psychologically. The toolkit describes a range of measures that can help reduce speeds and reconnect a village across its main street.

West Meon is one of a number of villages along the A32 Meon Valley in Hampshire. A small primary school, village centre pub and community hall stand one side of the main road, the village shop, a second pub and most of the houses on the other. High traffic speeds and aggressive driving, especially by motorcycle gangs, dominated the concerns of the energetic Parish Council.

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Following a series of local meetings to explore shared space principles, the Parish Council resolved to serve as a pilot project for Hampshire County Council. A careful analysis of traffic behaviour and local movement patterns informed a series of sketch designs for small-scale measures intended to adapt the character of the A32 in West Meon. Simple, low-cost interventions focused on the entry points to the village, together with two key places at the centre. Centre lines and chevron warning signs were removed.

Recorded speeds have shown an immediate reduction of between 3-4 mph, sufficient to reduce the severity and number of accidents and to improve confidence and mobility for pedestrians in the village.

Contact: Tracy Predeth, Clerk to West Meon Parish Council
Email: westmeonpc@googlemail.com



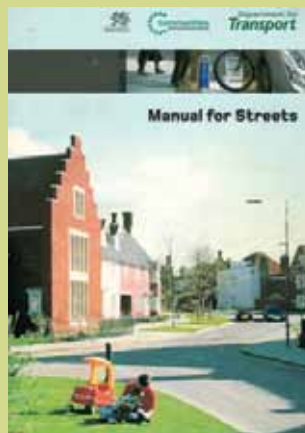
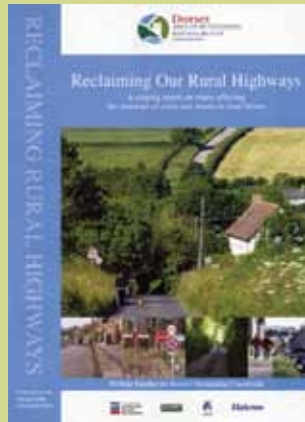
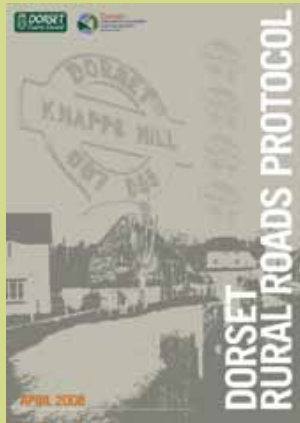
1| Formerly A32 continued unchanged through the village 2| Gateway transitions reduce the scale and change character 3| The road used to double as forecourt for the pub 4| Former highway details promoted speed and severance 5| Simple paving and simplification creates low-speed place.

Locally distinctiveness

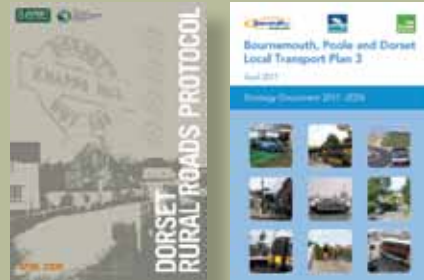
No two places are alike. Location, landscape and the combination of natural and man-made features build distinctiveness, and create the unique identity upon which a village depends. Streets and spaces can highlight and reinforce the unique character of each settlement, making safer and calmer roads. Field patterns, hedges, trees, water courses and boundaries all help tell the story of a place, along with subtle details of colour and texture of materials, doors and windows, and all the minor roadside artifacts that build a patina of history. Understanding and promoting distinctiveness lies at the heart of this toolkit, helping local communities and highway authorities successfully manage traffic in villages.

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Useful References



Useful publications, websites and references

Reclaiming Our Rural Highways

Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (2005)

www.dorsetaonb.org.uk

Streets for All

English Heritage (2006)

Helps identify key failings in urban and rural streetscapes, and ways to minimise street clutter. Improve and enhance street design and local character.

www.english-heritage.org.uk

Dorset Rural Roads Protocol

Dorset County Council (2008)

Paragraph 4.02 states:

The fundamental principle of this Protocol is that the recognition and understanding of Local Distinctiveness or Context must guide the decisions made in the rural road environment.

www.dorsetforyou.com

Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation

www.ciht.org.uk

Landscape of Highway Corridors

Cranborne Chase & West Wilts Downs AONB

www.cwwdaonb.org.uk

Bournemouth and Dorset Local Transport Plan (LTP3) 2011-2026)

Strong policies from this document (LTP D-6, LTP G-2, LTP G-2) underpin the county council's commitment to their new approach to managing roads.

www.dorsetforyou.com

Shared Space

Department for Transport (2011)

Local Transport Note 1/11

Although mainly focused on high streets and research from urban examples, the guidance and advice is relevant and useful for rural contexts

www.dft.gov.uk/publications/ltn-01-11

Manual for Streets 2

Department for Transport (2010)

Updated guidance for Highway authorities on good street design.

www2.dft.gov.uk

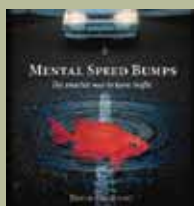
Natural England

www.naturalengland.org.uk

Dorset Design and Heritage Forum

Promotes quality and design that respects the county's landscape heritage.

www.dorsetforyou.com



Managing Dorset's Rural Roads

Dorset County Council (2009)

Outlines the new approach to road management in a high quality environment

www.dorsetaonb.org.uk

Conserving Character - Landscape Character Assessment & Management Guidelines for the Dorset AONB

Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (2008)

Many Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have a landscape character assessment that defines the visual context of villages and gives guidelines on condition and improvement.

www.dorsetaonb.org.uk

Dorset AONB Management Plan A Framework for the Future 2009

Sets the context for rural roads in a protected landscape

Hamilton-Baillie Associates

Projects & Gallery

Includes examples of rural schemes in UK and elsewhere, and additional articles on rural streetscapes. eg. Dunster, Somerset; Porlock, Somerset; Clifton, Cumbria; West Meon, Hampshire; Buriton, Hampshire, Freshford, Bath; Wellow, Bath; Exceat, East Sussex, Alnwick, Northumberland; Slindon, West Sussex.

www.hamilton-baillie.co.uk

Mental Speed Bumps

Engwicht, David (2007)

Explores creative ways for communities to influence traffic speeds.

www.amazon.com

Traffic and Rural Settlements

Dorset AONB and Hamilton-Baillie Associates (2009)

Illustrates the principles of the toolkit in action.

www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/publications.html

English Historic Towns Forum

www.ehtf.org.uk

Landscape Design Trust

www.landscape.co.uk

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Campaigning for a beautiful and living countryside, working to influence the planning of towns and cities and to protect rural England for now and future generations.

www.cpre.org.uk

Common Ground

www.commonground.org.uk

England in Particular

Clifford, Sue and King, Angela (2006)

Common Ground

A celebration of the commonplace. Helps identify and enhance the rich and diverse distinctiveness surrounding us.

RTPI

www.rtpi.org.uk

Promotes good planning that values our historic environment.



Credits and authorship

This toolkit has been developed by Sue Mitchell of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership and Ben Hamilton-Baillie of Hamilton-Baillie Associates.

With particular assistance from:

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Dorset AONB, James Purkiss, John Pennington

Traffic in Villages Checklist

Photographs are a useful addition to record style, materials, location in relation to surrounding buildings and highway as well as condition. There may be a Landscape Character Assessment for the area, as in the Dorset AONB. Here are some examples of local distinctiveness features to help you identify what is in your area. Don't forget to include the approach to and exit from your village.



Traffic in Villages Checklist

Take this checklist out with you when you are gathering information about your village. It will help you identify roadside features which can contribute to the local distinctiveness of your village as often they are so commonplace that we take them for granted. A printer version of this checklist is available.

Surfaces

- Unusual materials or features** - Cobbles, old paving, local stone or brick, metal manhole covers from local foundries with maker's name, raised footways, steps within footways, cattle grids.

Roadside Boundaries

- Hedges** - ancient, new, uncertain date, hedge banks, field or garden hedge? Are they laid, flayed or coppiced? Does the hedge correspond with the parish boundary? Is it single species or mixed? What is its condition (good, reasonable, poor)?

- Walls** - local stone, brick, flint, other, mortar or dry stone? Is there a particular local design? What is its condition (good, reasonable, poor)? Are there buildings that front directly onto the road?

- Fences and railings** - metal, decorative wrought iron, timber post and rail, other. Is there a particular local design e.g. from enclosed historic parkland or local estate?

- Gates** - galvanised, metal (decorative as above), wooden, church lych gate, kissing gate, stile.

Trees

- Free standing at junctions or village green, avenues of trees within or approach to village, trees within pavements or flanking footpaths. Note species, are any subject to Tree Preservation Order (ask Local Planning Authority) or are veteran trees. Are they coppiced, pollarded, maiden trees, other? Mini sketches of tree shape are useful. See http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/fepveterantree_tcm6-6492.pdf

Verges

- Note width, composition e.g. grass, grass and wild flowers, grass and cultivated flowers etc. Are verges part of SSSI's/SSSI's/Nature Reserves (www.magic.defra.gov.uk has national but not local designations mapped)? Are any noted as "conservation verges" (is there a blue post or green metal sign?) or contain special species at certain times of the year? Many local authorities work with their local Wildlife Trust to identify and manage special wildlife -rich verges ("conservation verges") see http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/roadside_verges_project.html as an example.

Water

- Streams, brooks, ditches, rivers, fords, ponds and lakes, wells, village pumps, water troughs, drinking fountains, historic features which used water e.g. sheepwash. Note wildlife and bankside vegetation of streams, rivers, ponds. Are parts of any waterways culverted? Are there flood level marks?

Traffic in Villages Checklist

Bridge designs, materials and name plaques

- Bridges** – historic, modern, construction materials & design, footbridges.
- Plaques on bridges or naming rivers** – material (metal, wood, other), information displayed e.g.name of river, date of bridge etc
- Railway bridges**

Other special historic features

- Milestones** – sometimes they may be just outside your village, obscured by undergrowth or set into modern features e.g. wall or side of building. Are they made of stone or cast iron? What shape are they? Always record any wording. See www.milestonesociety.co.uk

Tollhouses

Public utility furniture

- Post boxes** – pillar boxes (uncommon in villages, mostly in towns), mounted (on walls, telegraph poles or on posts), design, colour and age (Victorian or modern). <http://www.fingerpostsigns.com/save-our-vintage-royal-mail-letter-boxes.php>

- Telephone boxes** – traditional red (iconic K6 type increasingly rare), other colour (sometimes green, cream or grey), modern design <http://www.fingerpostsigns.com/help-save-our-gilbert-scott-k6-telephone-boxes.php>

- Bus shelters** – design and materials, historic or modern. Do the design and materials contribute or detract from the surrounding streetscape?

- Noticeboard** – design and materials. Is it in a place where people can easily read the notices or in a hidden away corner?

Signs

- Nameplates** - Does your village have a village nameplate at the entrance to the village? Design, size and materials, font used (standard highway or unique to village e.g millennium stones etc)? Any additional wording or illustration besides village name? Any other signs e.g Best Kept Village or other local significance.

- Other signs** - Are there any other village name signs e.g on village green or other village location?

- Traditional fingerposts** - see <http://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/our-work/rural-roadsfingerpostproject.html> for audit form to help record important details of fingerpost.

- Other directional highway signs** – a modern sign may be mounted on an old fingerpost or have an old fingerpost roundel attached, old-style warning signs for schoolchildren and the like; old-style directional signs.

- Street nameplates** – materials and style (cast metal old or new, modern, wood, other), how mounted (pole, wall, other means).

- Fire plaques on buildings, historic pub or shop signs, etc**

Other roadside features

- War Memorials and commemorative plaques, market crosses and other scheduled or historic monuments or features.

- Level crossings, other railway features** - are they modern or historic?

Traffic in Villages Checklist

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Features to celebrate particular events - Millennium, accession of Queen Elizabeth the second, inscribed stones or other features.

Anything else that is important, specific or locally distinctive to your village?

Other important information to record on your village sketch map

Modern blister paving set within pavement, coloured road surfacing, road markings including words, arrows, hatching or directions, road humps (note width and shape)

Kerbs - local stone, concrete, conservation, granite, others.

Bollards - material, shape, size, colour, whether reflectors attached.

Local vernacular building style - can often be seen in porches, windows, gables, doors, roof materials etc.

Bus stops - is there a shelter or bench? What style is the bus sign?

Benches - are the design and materials appropriate to its location or are they more suited to a town? Is the bench in a place where you would choose to sit?

Litter bins - Are the design and materials appropriate to its location or is the design more suited to a town setting?

Street lighting - is there any street lighting? If so, what kind of columns and fittings - modern or traditional? What are they made from, what

colour are the columns? Are there any wall mounted street lamps?

Tourism 'brown signs' - Or local business signs?

Cycle route or long distance trail signs

Public Rights of Way network - has a suite of signs to indicate routes, they may be simple wooden fingerposts, small tombstone shaped waymarkers with information chiselled onto stone, newer metal or plastic fingerposts, small metal or plastic discs mounted on existing structure or individual sign customised for location. In each case note details of design, materials, location and wording.

Clutter - this term is most often applied to signs however it can extend to a range of features like street furniture or road markings. Are there spots in your village which you feel are cluttered? A separate audit may be needed to assess this.

Now you have surveyed your village, are there any things which you feel detract from the local distinctiveness and character of your village? Note the top 5 things that you think make your village special and need conserving or enhancing and the top 5 things which you think detract from its special qualities. This will help identify special places and features to enhance your villages' sense of place.



Pirkwicks Arms
BREWERY RESTAURANT

DELLA
CAMILLA

Visual Arts Gallery

FREE HOUSE

Two people sitting at a table outside the pub.

A man walking on the sidewalk.