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Review the Parish council's position on the need for traffic calming measures for Ford End and discuss the actions taken to date

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Reason for the meeting

- Ford End traffic calming issues have been a recurring item at parish council meetings over recent years and the parish council have decided that the subject should be reviewed

Objectives of the meeting

- Inform the meeting about Ford End traffic issues
- Summarise the issues and successful initiatives
- Share information and data
- Gather feedback

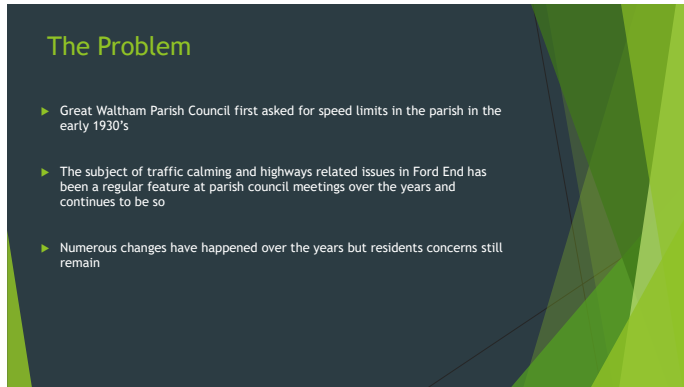
Format

- Begin with a presentation. The presentation is intended to remind councillors and inform members of the public of the work that has been carried out
- The presentation will be followed by public questions

Parish Council debate

- The parish council will debate and agree what should happen next

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THE PROBLEM

In preparation for this presentation around 150 documents dated between 2008 and 2016 were reviewed. These ranged from minutes of parish council meetings, e-mail correspondence between GWPC and Essex Highways and all of the associated reports and attachments.

I didn't have access to anything before 2008 but I have no doubt that there would have been a considerable number. Similarly I haven't counted the number of references since 2016 but it is very likely there would be a similar number.

My point is probably the most important one to make. There is a substantial amount of evidence that the parish council have not stopped making requests and representations to Essex Highways to make improvements to road safety through Ford End village. There are a number of reasons why we haven't achieved as much as we had hoped which will become evident as we go through the presentation.

Anyone who has lived in Ford End for a long time will recall a number of changes that have happened over the years but the road safety concerns still remain:

- **Initially with the introduction of a 40mph speed limit**
- **Re-classification from an A road in 2008 – formerly the road was the A130 and was changed to the B1008 when the A120 from Gt Dunmow to Braintree was opened and the A131 bypass was constructed. In agreeing to the reclassification the DfT stipulated that the route is still**

the one to be used should an event occur on the A131 or A120 and as such there is no weight limit on the B1008

- **Introduction of the 30mph speed limit, previously it was 40mph**
- **Installation of the three vehicle activated signs**

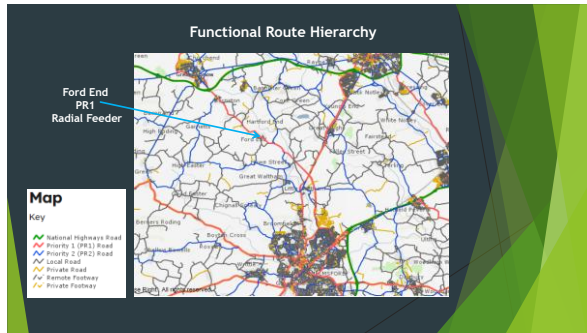
Refer to Slide 3 Notes

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- **THE CHALLENGE**
- Essex Highways state that the B1008 is strategically important in their road network and as such they will not support any measures that will impede the flow of traffic or cause it to take an alternative route
- The B1008 is Priority Route 1 (PR1)
- There is insufficient road width and line of sight distances through the village for some physical traffic calming options

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Essex Highways designates routes according to their importance

B1008 through Ford End is designated as a PR1 route (radial feeder indicates it is a final journey route into or out of town centres)

PR1 policy states: It is essential that traffic on these routes remains free flowing, that they are maintained to the highest standards, and that unnecessary obstructions are removed promptly.

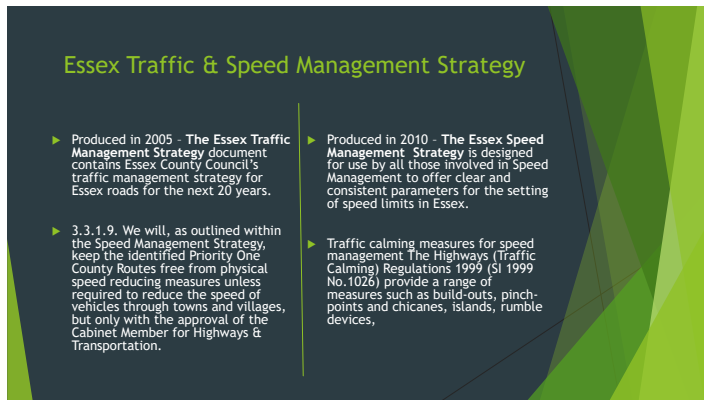
The B1008, shown on the plan as a PR1 also extends around Gt Dunmow (as far as Little Easton) and into Chelmsford (as far as the Police station). Incidentally, there is a weight restriction and numerous traffic calming measures along Broomfield Rd.

For reference only:

- **Priority 1**
- Inter-urban routes – routes which link towns and cities together and to the Trunk Road network, for example A130, A120, A414, A127 (Green) These routes will carry large volumes of high speed traffic through and around Essex. It is essential that traffic on these routes remains free flowing, that they are maintained to the highest standards, and that unnecessary obstructions are removed promptly.
- Radial-feeder routes – final journey route into or out of town centres, for example, A129, A1016, A138, A1114, B1008 (Red) These routes feed traffic to and from the inter-urban routes (to their final destination) and carry large volumes of traffic during the peak hours when people are trying to access/leave town centres. They will normally be developed areas in towns and village centres. It is essential that traffic on these

routes remains free flowing, that they are maintained to the highest standards, and that unnecessary obstructions are removed promptly. They will normally have car park guidance systems and traffic signals to aid the flow of traffic and manage areas of conflict between the different modes and hierarchies. Therefore it will be necessary to check and, if required, adjust the systems regularly.

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Essex Traffic & Speed Management Strategy

- ▶ Produced in 2005 - The Essex Traffic Management Strategy document contains Essex County Council's traffic management strategy for Essex roads for the next 20 years.
- ▶ 3.3.1.9. We will, as outlined within the Speed Management Strategy, keep the identified Priority One County Routes free from physical speed reducing measures unless required to reduce the speed of vehicles through towns and villages, but only with the approval of the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation.
- ▶ Produced in 2010 - The Essex Speed Management Strategy is designed for use by all those involved in Speed Management to offer clear and consistent parameters for the setting of speed limits in Essex.
- ▶ Traffic calming measures for speed management The Highways (Traffic Calming) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999 No.1026) provide a range of measures such as build-outs, pinch-points and chicanes, islands, rumble devices,

Highways have two policy documents that relate to the road.

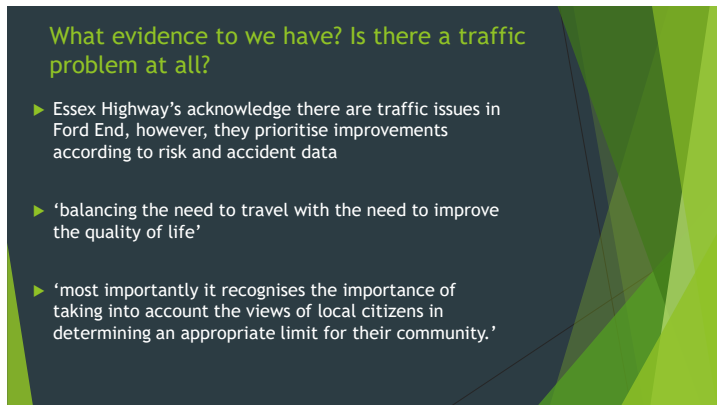
The Traffic Management Policy states: We will, as outlined within the Speed Management Strategy, keep the identified Priority One County Routes free from physical speed reducing measures unless required to reduce the speed of vehicles through towns and villages, but only with the approval of the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport.

Highways have acknowledged that there are traffic issues in Ford End, evidenced by the steps they have taken over recent years and the support they have given to more recent initiatives

An example is the 20mph variable advisory speed limit outside Ford End school which was approved by the Cabinet member against his officers recommendations

The Essex Speed Management Strategy details traffic calming measures that could be considered – build outs, chicanes, islands etc. However, many are not suitable for the narrow carriageways and limited line of sight through the village

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What evidence to we have? Is there a traffic problem at all?

- ▶ Essex Highway's acknowledge there are traffic issues in Ford End, however, they prioritise improvements according to risk and accident data
- ▶ 'balancing the need to travel with the need to improve the quality of life'
- ▶ 'most importantly it recognises the importance of taking into account the views of local citizens in determining an appropriate limit for their community.'

Is there a traffic problem?

Highways are correct in saying that there is a lack of death and serious injury data to make the case for traffic calming measures through Ford End.

There are local authorities around the country who implement safety measures without relying on accident data. Cornwall was the first county to begin installing average speed camera systems in rural villages.

The introduction to the Speed Management Strategy makes reference to **'balancing the need to travel with the need to improve the quality of life'** and,

'most importantly it recognises the importance of taking into account the views of local citizens in determining an appropriate limit for their community.'

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Engagement

- ▶ Ford End Road Traffic Committee was formed following the 2015 Village Design Statement Survey
- ▶ Objective of the group was to reduce the speed and weight of vehicles travelling through Ford End village and to provide safe crossing places
- ▶ 2016 Public meeting held in the village hall with 80+ attendees
 - ▶ ECC Highways attended

Engagement:

The Village Design Statement Survey carried out in 2015 highlighted a number of resident concerns:

- The speed of vehicles using the B1008 through Ford End,
- The number of large vehicles that continue to use the road and
- The absence of safe crossing points throughout the village.
- The Ford End Road Traffic Committee was formed as a result of seeing the feedback
- In 2016 a public meeting was held in the village hall, attended by over 80 residents and two representatives from Essex Highways

For reference if needed:

- Residents of Ford End were asked if they would like to see traffic calming solutions at Ford End. 62% of respondents stated they would.
- 68% were in favour of narrowing of the main road at each end of the village (i.e. chicanes)
- 64% were in favour of Zebra crossings on main road.
- 62% were in favour of further speed restrictions.
- A further question stated, as a pedestrian, do you feel safe walking on the pavements on the main road? 80% of respondents stated that that do **not** feel safe walking on the pavements on the main road.

- 38% of respondents included additional comments specifically related to the need for traffic calming measures in Ford End.
- The additional comments made particular reference to three issues – firstly, the speed of vehicles using the B1008 through Ford End, secondly, the number of large vehicles that continue to use the road and thirdly, the absence of safe crossing points throughout the village.
- One respondent commented: ‘We have to try and walk to school across the main busy road at rush hours with a buggy and 3 children, (from our house) there is no path or pavement to walk on to get to school and cross the road safely.’

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Successes & Actions

- ▶ Residents should form a speedwatch group
- ▶ Residents should plant flowers to add to the village appearance
- ▶ Offer of meetings with Essex Highways
- ▶ 40mph buffer zone at the Chelmsford end of the village
- ▶ Resurfacing at site of regular accidents
- ▶ 20mph variable advisory speed limit outside primary school
- ▶ 40mph buffer zone at the Dunmow end of the village is in the LHP funded list for 2022

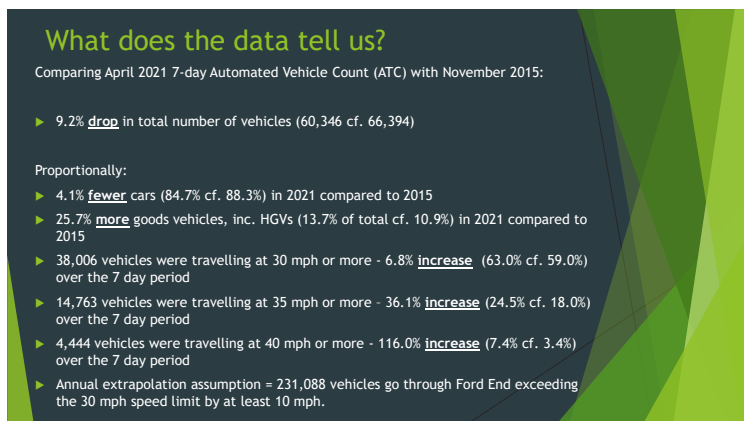
But - the traffic problems still exist

Following the public meeting a number of measures have been tried:

- Speedwatch group set up by volunteers who continue to carry out regular speed checks at points through the village
- The parish council applied for and was granted permission for residents to plant wildflowers in the area around the village sign
- From 2016 to the present time meetings have taken place at intervals with the lead members for Highways, initially with members of FERTC and then by members of the parish council
- Requests for physical traffic calming measures have not been supported – build outs, chicanes, raised kerbs, crossing points – due to insufficient road width and lack of clear sight
- A request was also made for 30mph countdown markers leading into the village but these were turned down by the DfT
- The parish council has made applications for improvement to the Local Highways Panel, some of which have been successful –
 - 40mph buffer zone Chelmsford End,
 - resurfacing at accident site,
 - 20mph variable/advisory speed limit outside the school
 - 40mph buffer zone for the Great Dunmow end of the village is in the LHP funded list for 2022

More recently the previous and current lead members for Highways have supported the parish council's proposal for traffic calming – an Average Speed Camera system.

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What does the data tell us?

The most recent traffic data we have was taken in 2021.

The measurements were taken outside Ford End school and would have included periods when the 20mph advisory speed limit was in operation.

This period also coincided with the on-going covid situation where many people were travelling less and working from home

However, compared with the 2015 data a number of observations can be made:

1. Over the 7 day period there was **9.2% drop** in the number of vehicles compared to 2015 – 60,000 compared to 66,000 showing a 4% reduction in the number of cars
2. There was an **increase of nearly 26%** in goods vehicles compared to 2015. This includes the largest road vehicles (1.8%), the 3, 4, 5 & 6 axle articulated vehicles – totalling 836 vehicles over the 7 days
3. There was a **6.8% increase** in the number of vehicles travelling at 30mph and above – in total around 38,000 over the 7 days
4. There was a **36% increase** in the number of vehicles travelling at 35mph or more – in total just under 15,000 over the 7 days
5. There was a **116% increase** in the number of vehicles in the number of vehicles travelling at 40mph or more – in total nearly 4,500 over the 7 days

6. Extrapolating the 7 day data over the year over **230,000 vehicles** are likely to have passed through Ford End in excess of 40mph

For reference only:

4.1% **fewer** cars (84.7% cf. 88.3%) compared to 2015 Yes. In April 2021 = 51,137 of 60,346 total (84.7%) compared to November 2015 = 58,643 of 66,396 total (88.3%). Using absolute numbers = 12.8% fewer cars physically (51,137 compared to 58,643). However the point being highlighted is that there are fewer cars as a proportion of the total.

25.7% **more** goods vehicles, inc. HGVs (13.7% of total cf. 10.9%) compared to 2015. Here the absolute numbers have increased (7,237 vehicles in 2015 compared to 8,287 in 2021 = 14.5%), hence the much higher proportional increase (25.7%) on a reduced total. Basically, a mix change where an overall total decrease masks an increase of 14.5% in absolute goods vehicles numbers. Overall suggestion is more goods vehicles on the road at a time when pandemic-related car usages declined (perhaps making the deliveries for things that people would historically have bought themselves via a car journey).

38,006 vehicles were travelling at 30 mph or more - 6.8% **increase** (63.0% cf. 59.0%) During the 7 day period? Yes, so here in November 2015 39,201 of 66,396 vehicles (or 59.0%) of total were 30 mph or over, compared to 38,006 of 60,346 in April 2021. Therefore, the absolute numbers are down by 3.1%, but as proportions of the respective totals are up 6.8%.

14,763 vehicles were travelling at 35 mph or more – 36.1% **increase** (24.5% cf. 18.0%) During the 7 day period? Same logic here, but both absolute and proportion numbers are up. November 2015 absolute number is 11,967 compared to 14,673. Absolute numbers (+22.6%) and proportions of total (+36.1%) both increase.

4,444 vehicles were travelling at 40 mph or more - 116.0% **increase** (7.4% cf. 3.4%) During the 7 day period? Same as above. November 2015 absolute number is 2,251 compared to 4,444. So absolute number up by 97.4% with proportion of total up 116.0%.

Annual extrapolation assumption = 231,088 vehicles go through Ford End exceeding the 30 mph speed limit by at least 10 mph. Observation here is that

extrapolation doesn't take account of presumably significant number of repeat offenders.

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Is the problem Speed or Weight?

April 2021 Automated Vehicle Count (ATC) 7 day Summary :

- ▶ Avg. 9,383 vehicles each weekday passed through Ford End
 - ▶ 60,346 total for the week extrapolates to 3.1 million annually
- ▶ Over the 7 days 8,287 (13.7%) were goods vehicles, including 910 HGVs
 - ▶ Avg. 167 HGVs each weekday
- ▶ Total 8,287 goods vehicles extrapolates to 430,924 annually
 - ▶ Of which 47,320 will be HGVs
- ▶ HGVs can assist in slowing overall traffic speed
- ▶ Would a weight restriction improve or worsen the situation?

Is the problem caused by vehicle speed or weight?

- Goods vehicles and HGV's make up for around 14% of vehicles passing through Ford End each day This percentage includes all vehicles other than vehicles classified as cars – from 2 axle trucks and buses to six axle articulated vehicles

Avg. 9,383 vehicles each weekday passed through Ford End

60,346 total for the week extrapolates to 3.1 million annually

Over the 7 days 8,287 (13.7%) were goods vehicles, including 910 HGVs

Avg. 167 HGVs each weekday

Total 8,287 goods vehicles extrapolates to 430,924 annually

Of which 47,320 will be HGVs

- Even at lower speeds goods vehicles present a hazard to pedestrians, in part because of the condition, the narrowness, and in some places the absence of pavements alongside Main Rd
- They can assist in slowing other traffic speed
- For that reason would a weight restriction improve or worsen the situation?

However, it should be noted that Highway's use average speed data and 85 percentile data (the speed that 85 percent of drivers will drive at or below under free-flowing conditions) to determine safe speed limits. On this

occasion the average speed was calculated at 31.5mph and the 85 percentile speed was 35.8mph.

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Essex Highways Position

- ▶ They do not support any physical traffic calming measures that impedes the flow of traffic or causes it to take an alternative route
- ▶ They do not support a weight limit

BUT

- ▶ They stated they would not object to Average Speed Cameras (ASC)

Essex Highways Position

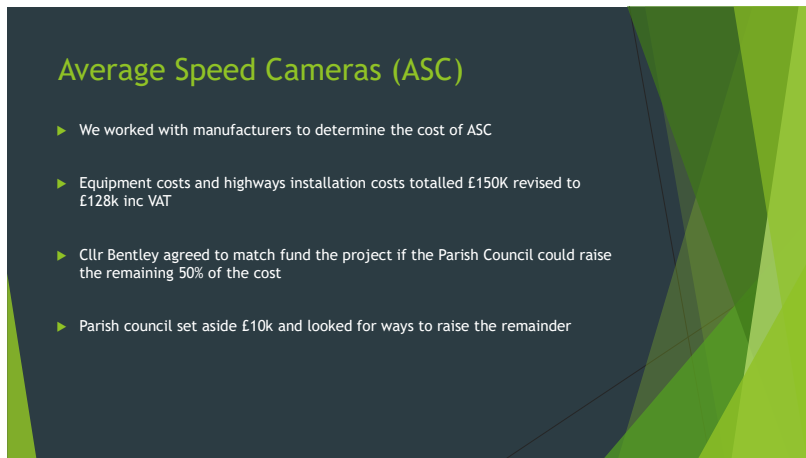
- Highway's have consistently stated they would not support a measure that impedes the flow of traffic or causes vehicles to take an alternative route – but this **could** be authorised by the lead member for Highways – permitted in the Essex Traffic Management Strategy Policy
- They have stated that because of the roads importance they do not support a weight limit
- Highways do not object to measures that ensures traffic travels within speed limits and therefore would not object to an average speed camera system
- **Following is taken from technical note using 2015 data for reference only:**

Up to date ECC Highways data for the B1008 through Ford End village is not available but information provided in the TECHNICAL NOTE – Ford End, Chelmsford, issued in 2016 by ECC Highways quotes historical traffic survey data detailing the volume, speed and make up of traffic over three previous surveys. In one survey approximately 63% of vehicles exceeded the 30mph speed limit. Based on the quoted ECC figure of approximately 10,500 vehicles per day this would equate to over 6,600 vehicles per day exceeding the speed limit. There are two points of note: Firstly, the report quotes a lower percentage based on the assumption that only vehicles travelling in excess of 35mph would receive a Police prosecution. It is the opinion of GWPC and FERTC that this is a discretionary power belonging to the Chief Constable of Police and has no relevance to road safety. Secondly the surveys were

conducted on or near to a double bend with two junctions – a slower section of road.

A 7-day automatic traffic count on B1008 Chelmsford Rd, Ford End, commencing Sat 03 Dec 2016, recorded 34,726 vehicles travelling southeast bound and 35,844 northwest bound vehicles. This equates to 70,570 vehicles passing through Ford End village during the seven day period – an average daily volume of 10,081 vehicles per day. The report stated that 11.5% of the total number of vehicles were LGV and HGV's which equates to an average of 1160 LGV & HGV vehicles passing through Ford End village each day. 201 of these vehicles were recorded as being HGV articulated vehicles – 2% of the total.

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Average Speed Cameras (ASC)

- ▶ We worked with manufacturers to determine the cost of ASC
- ▶ Equipment costs and highways installation costs totalled £150K revised to £128k inc VAT
- ▶ Cllr Bentley agreed to match fund the project if the Parish Council could raise the remaining 50% of the cost
- ▶ Parish council set aside £10k and looked for ways to raise the remainder

- Initial costs were calculated to be £150,000. The parish council challenged the cost and worked with the manufacturer to arrive at a revised cost of £128,000
- Cllr Bentley agreed to fund the design stage of the project which has since confirmed the projects viability
- The Local Highways Panel initially agreed to fund 50% of the cost
- The parish council set aside £10,000 towards the project
- Residents came forward offering contributions
- A number of grant applications were made to various sources – National Lottery, Road Safety Charities etc – None were successful
- Cllr Bentley offered introductions to large organisations – then Covid struck and sponsorship options disappeared
- Cllr Scott has looked into ECC budgets to make up the shortfall
- Supported by the Essex Safer Roads Partnership
- Supported by the Head of Essex Roads Policing
- Although supported for 50% funding by the LHP this scheme is not in the list of funded projects for 2022 and will be reconsidered for funding when future LHP budgets are agreed.

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Since 2016 the parish council have debated a number of highways related issues in and around Ford End. Many proposals have been taken forward to highways via the Local Highways Panel

Ford End Bridge In 2018 two members of the road traffic committee provided photographic evidence to Highways showing structural damage to the underside of the bridge (culvert) at the bottom of the hill thought to be caused by the increase in weight and traffic using the route. Highways responded by saying they trusted their engineers assessment of its condition and they would repair the bridge if or when it became unsafe

- **Loss of M11 signs.** In 2014 the parish council applied through the local highways panel to have additional signs fitted at Sheepcotes roundabout that directed HGV's to use the A131 and A120 to access the M11. In the more recent improvement works new signs indicating that the A131 should be used for Stansted were replaced but the M11 signs directing goods vehicles to use the A131 were removed because they no longer conformed with Highways signage policy.
- Changes to village gateways when the 40mph improvement works took place, the new ones are less imposing than the originals
- An application for **40mph extension or Quiet Lane status for Ringtail Green** was made. Highways carried out an ATC and stated the volume and speed of traffic didn't support the application. GWPC challenged and resubmitted the application which was not supported at the LHP committee

- Residents have complained that their properties are damaged by the vibrations caused by HGV's. Highways responded by saying Ford End isn't alone with this problem and that they would deal with any insurance claims they receive.
- Additionally members of the parish council have met with members from Barnston parish council to discuss a joint approach that would address the problem in both villages
- Councillors have met with Cllr Scott in Ford End and separately with our MP Kemi Badenoch

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Funding

In 2022/23 Essex County have allocated a budget of £114,000,000 to highways maintenance and sustainable transport

While the highways budget is very sizable, 11% of the total, it covers many areas - potholes, road resurfacing, bridge repairs, road sign repairs, car park repairs, Public Rights of Way cutting and repairs, Road Safety, Footpaths (i.e. pavement repairs), Winter Gritting and salt provision to PCs, Passenger Transport and Home to School transport.

There are 12 Local Highways Panels which are funded separately. From a budget of £6.4 million the Chelmsford LHP is allocated £700k. Considering the number of applications submitted each year it is always over subscribed and decisions are taken based on population rates, risk and benefits.

Reference if needed:

The £114M Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport revenue spend (11% of the budget) is an annual spend to cover all Highways maintenance - potholes, road resurfacing, bridge repairs, road sign repairs, car park repairs, Public Rights of Way cutting and repairs (including rails/footbridges), Road Safety, Footpaths (i.e. pavement repairs), Winter Gritting and salt provision to PCs, Passenger Transport (mainly bus locator signs, and some subsidised buses) and Home to School transport (i.e., daily transport of entitled children who get free transport if more than 3 miles from their nearest school).

The LHP budget is a capital spend separate from this. The base amount is £4M across the whole County, but this year it was topped up by a further £2.4M. It

is not evenly spread. There is a formula used, which includes length of roads and population in an area. Chelmsford, being one of the bigger area, gets the largest amount - £700K of the £6.4M. (Chelmsford is the wider definition - the whole City Council coverage, so it extends as far north as North End, and as far south (and including South Woodham Ferrers) - so quite an extensive area.

Doing some maths, you can see how widely spread the budget is. There are around 1.5M people in Essex, so the £6.4M equates to around £4 per person. So if you think of the GW parish as 1,000 houses, so about 2,400 people, that equates to an allocation of £9,600. Do the maths for Ford End and its £1,600. To put that in perspective, the northern 40mph is forecast at £10,500.

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It is well documented that the Parish Council has responded to every request to address traffic related and highways related issues in Ford End

Highways has supported some proposals – the 40mph buffer at the Chelmsford end of the village – 20mph advisory variable limit outside the school – part resurfacing of the road, VAS's in three places

However, cost remains the biggest obstacle and there are insufficient funds to cover every request

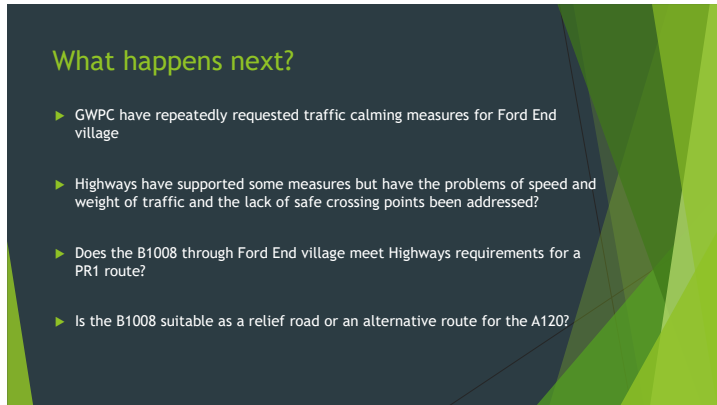
Match funding for expensive projects does not appear to be an option as the PC found out with the average speed camera project

Will the Chelmsford North East by-pass help?

- Many vehicles use the B1008 instead of the A120/A131 towards Chelmsford because it is a well known route which existed before the new section of A120 and sat nav's will direct drivers to use the shortest and quickest route
- While the North East by-pass is seen as a solution to reduce traffic flow in Chelmsford it is unlikely to improve the number of vehicles using the B1008. It will remain the shorter and quicker route to and from the junction at Gt Dunmow and will still be the most direct route for sat nav's
- A120 junction at Gt Dunmow to the new by-pass roundabout using the A120 and A131 will be 12.5 miles – approx 14mins
- A120 junction at Gt Dunmow to the new by-pass roundabout using B1008 and A131 will be 7.2 miles – approx 12mins

- The route to Chelmsford and the A12 will still be 5 miles shorter and a few minutes quicker using the B1008
- Despite securing over £250 million pounds in funding for the north east by-pass and new rail station project no measures have been planned to make the B1008 a less attractive route
- Highways have not proposed any measures to discourage vehicles using the B1008 to access Chelmsford or the North East By-pass

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As far back as 2008 Highways have consistently stated that they will not introduce any measures that will impede the flow of traffic or cause it to take an alternative route.

The Parish Council have tried numerous times to convince them differently but have the objectives to reduce the speed and weight of vehicles travelling through Ford End or to provide safe crossing places been achieved?

Highways insist that as a PR1 – a route of strategic importance they cannot introduce traffic calming measures although they are permitted within their own policies.

Does the B1008 through Ford End village meet Highways requirements for a PR1 route? Probably, given that it meets the requirements set down by the Dft, however is that compatible with the needs of residents in Ford End?

Conclusion

The parish council can accept Highways position that it is not any worse than many other roads in the county and that there are insufficient funds to meet everyone's wishes or it can continue to press Highways for improvements and look for ways to achieve that objective.

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