

2013

Aldbourn Traffic Plan



Introduction

Aldbourne is taking part in the Marlborough Area Board traffic initiative. This provides support and resources to Parish Councils to address issues relating to traffic, movement and village quality. With the support of Wiltshire Council, it aims to help participating parish councils to agree principles and priorities, and prepare plans for local actions as well as future County Council highway priorities.

This Traffic Plan has been prepared by the Traffic Working Party, with support from Hamilton-Baillie Associates, on behalf of Aldbourne Parish Council. It aims to describe the key concerns of the residents, and propose solutions, both short and long term, for action both locally and by Wiltshire Council. It is intended to provide guidance for any future investment and maintenance programmes, as well as any future development proposals.



Notes:

1. References to the Community Plan are to the Aldbourne Community Plan published in Autumn 2011. During the development of the plan, every household in the village received a questionnaire to record residents' views on a variety of matters, including traffic.
2. Throughout the text, 'Post Office crossroads' refers to the junction of the B4192 with Marlborough Road and Castle St.
3. Traffic Working Party members: Diane Powell, Neil Howard, Keith Warren and Michael Cowan.

Acknowledgements:

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Aldbourne Village

Aldbourne lies in a triangle between Marlborough, Swindon and Hungerford, and is within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is a very picturesque village, much of which is designated a Conservation Area, and contains over 80 listed buildings. Many features of historical interest or significance remain today, including two village pumps and the Market Cross. It is a growing village: the population has increased by 12% in the last ten years and is now over 2000, living in approximately 800 dwellings.

The village is situated on the B4192, which is the main route between Swindon and Hungerford. In addition to the B4192 entering and exiting the village (on West Street and South Street) there are five further vehicular routes leading into the village. These roads all converge on The Square which lies at the heart of the village. The Square, with its duck pond and The Crown pub, is one of the key spaces in the village, together with The Green which is overlooked by both St Michael's church and The Blue Boar pub.

The village has two churches, a library, a primary school, two pre-schools, two pubs, a Sports & Social Club and the Memorial Hall. In addition several businesses are located in the village including the Post Office Store and Café, the Co-op, two garages, a hairdresser, takeaway, and numerous small businesses such as pet care, taxi service, home decorators, child care, garden design, various therapists, and small builders. The village has its own website and a magazine, the Dabchick, which is published bimonthly.



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There are numerous clubs and societies active in the village; the December 2011 Dabchick magazine included a list of over 60 different groups as diverse as WI, Tennis Club, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, Silver Threads, ALEC (Light Entertainment), Children's Book Group, Gardening Club. The Aldbourne Band (established in 1835) competes very successfully in national competitions and performs several concerts a year in the village, including the Pond Concerts, Proms on the Green in August and the Christmas Carol Concert. Recently a Youth Training band has been formed and performed its first concert. All of this contributes to a very strong sense of community, as demonstrated by enthusiastic support for regular events such as the Carnival, Church Fete, Community Markets, Aldbourne Show, Band concerts, Beating the Bounds and, this year, the Jubilee celebration events.

Aldbourne receives many visitors: it is often visited by people interested in the 101st Airborne division, one of whose units (Easy Company) was based here during WWII and was the subject of the TV series Band of Brothers. An episode of Dr Who was also filmed here. There are numerous good walks in and around the village, one of which (the Aldbourne Circular route) often features in walking publications.

In summary, Aldbourne is a vibrant village, with many well used facilities, thriving businesses and a strong sense of community.

Policy Context

In 2011 the Aldbourne Community Plan surveyed residents' view on a number of matters affecting the village. The survey found that traffic in the village, more specifically speeding and parking issues, was one of the residents' greatest concerns. As a result Aldbourne Parish Council resolved to take action to try to improve pedestrian safety by reducing speeding and dangerous parking in the village.

On a national level the Localism Bill aims to give local communities more power to influence local events. This is particularly significant at a time when cuts in government spending limit the scope for conventional Highways solutions to traffic problems. 'Manual for Streets 2' (published by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation in September 2010) emphasises that streets should be places in which people want to live and spend time in, and are not just transport corridors. In particular, the manual aims to reduce the impact of vehicles on residential streets by asking practitioners to plan street design intelligently and proactively, and gives a high priority to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport. Following on from this the Marlborough Area Board has been exploring new possibilities in the management and maintenance of rural communities – hence this Traffic initiative. Other counties such as Dorset, Hampshire and Kent are also exploring fresh approaches to rural highway design, with publications such as Traffic in Villages: a Toolkit for Communities by Dorset AONB outlining new ways to create safe low-cost environments.

Design Principles

This Traffic Plan aims to address several concerns but there are two underlying principles: firstly to promote safety of pedestrians and drivers in the village by reducing speeds and increasing driver awareness of their environment; and secondly to prevent the spread of “urbanisation” in the village by enhancing the key spaces, addressing parking congestion and reducing street clutter.

Gateways and Entry Points

There are seven roads providing entry to the village. Currently these entrances are marked with an Aldbourne sign and a 30mph sign. White gates acquired some time ago have recently been installed at the entry points in West St and Oxford St. Traffic is routinely observed travelling into the village at speeds in excess of 30mph on all of these roads but the Community Plan survey showed that the B4192 (West St and South St) and Oxford St are the ones where pedestrians are considered most at risk and vehicle accidents are thought more likely.

Key Areas

'The Square'

The Square, together with The Green (see later), lies at the heart of the village and the Conservation Area, and many of the most historical features and village characteristics can be found here. The duck pond is here, so too the Crown pub, which dates back to the early 18th century along with other buildings such as Ivy House. The library, the village noticeboard and the Old Forge (recently re-opened) are also to be found here. As such villagers are often seen stopping to chat as they pass backwards and forwards in their daily routines.

‘The Green’

The Green also lies at the centre of the conservation area, and is overlooked by St Michael’s church and the Blue Boar pub. Residential buildings, mostly listed because of historical interest (many of them can trace their origins back to the 1700s), lie on all four sides. It is widely regarded as Aldbourne’s finest feature and is the setting for many village events such as the fete and church services, Band Proms concert, Community Markets, the Easter Eggstravaganza and the Carnival and Feast fairs, to name a few.

Generally speaking there are few concerns about The Green from a traffic perspective although inconsiderate parking at the top end sometimes makes access difficult. The Parish Council has been in prolonged correspondence with Wiltshire Council about completing the line of setts which edge the Green – to date a suitable product has not been found. The Square, however, is of concern for many reasons, as described later.

Key Concerns

General

The village is situated on the B4192 which is the main route between Swindon and Hungerford. It is also the diversion route used to redirect traffic whenever the M4 is closed between J14 and J15. Satellite navigation systems also highlight this optional non-motorway route.

In addition to the B4192 entering and exiting the village (on West Street and South Street) there are five further vehicular routes leading into the village: Marlborough Road, Ewens Hill, Castle Street, Lottage Road and Oxford Street. Thus a total of seven roads all converge in the centre of the village, leading to a high volume of traffic at all times of the day and week.

The public bus service provides transport to Swindon, Marlborough and Hungerford, but the majority of residents use cars or vans for regular journeys to work, training or study. Less than 20% of Community Plan survey respondents regularly use bus services (generally because frequency and times of services do not match the demand). This again contributes to the volume of private vehicle movement through and within the village.

New building work (most recently Valley View and Barnes Yard) has periodically contributed to the increase in both number of dwellings and population. This in turn leads to an increase in the number of vehicles in the village.

The B4192 bisects the village, with approximately half of the dwellings lying to the north and half to the south. The shops, public houses, school, library, churches and halls, which are central to the way of life, are all situated in the heart of the village, with the majority north of the B4192. However, one very important, and frequently used, facility, the Post Office Store and Café, is to the south of this main road. Recreational facilities at the tennis club, football field and Palmers Field also lie south of the main road. This layout means that there is a considerable amount of pedestrian traffic crossing this very busy road at all times of the day and every day of the week. The road bends on entering and leaving this section meaning that there is no single stretch providing good visibility for safe crossing. There is no zebra or pelican crossing, simply a red strip of tarmac showing the least dangerous place to cross. This red strip has now become very dilapidated following building development in Barnes Yard, next door to the Post Office. We have monitored actual pedestrian crossing lines and only about 50% of people who cross

actually take the route marked by the red strip. This suggests that simply replacing the red strip may not be the most effective course of action for this area.

Elsewhere on the B4192, for pedestrians entering the village from the south there is a pavement on the west side of the road but this stops at Glebe Close, forcing pedestrians to either continue on the road or to cross at a point of limited visibility in order to continue on pavement. Entering the village from the west, there is pavement on one side only, again forcing pedestrians who live on the other side to either walk on the road or to cross at a point of limited visibility.

Speeding

For many years villagers have expressed concern about the number of vehicles travelling at speed through the village, and the subject has been discussed at numerous Parish Council meetings. One villager went so far as to acquire, at his own expense, a Speed Indicator Device (SID) and collated data for many months until he was obliged to remove it. His data showed a significant number of vehicles travelling at speeds in excess of 30, 40 and 50mph at several different locations in the village. In April 2012 a Metrocount survey was carried out in South St and the data showed that the 85th percentile was 39.1mph (the 85th percentile is the speed at which 85% of the traffic is travelling at or below). This meant that this location became eligible for the rota to receive visits by the official SID. Speeding is actually of even greater concern to villagers in two different areas: the Post Office crossroads (because of risk to pedestrian safety); and Oxford Street, approaching the junction with Lottage Road (because of risk of vehicle collision).

Parking

There has been a steady increase in the number of vehicles parking in the village during the day for owners to use facilities such as the Co-op, Post Office and other businesses, and during the evening / overnight by residents. Many households now have more cars than parking spaces and the streets and key spaces are becoming quite congested. A particular problem area during the day is the Post Office crossroads, where vehicles park on three of the four corners (sometime all four corners) creating visibility problems for vehicles turning into and out of Marlborough Road / Castle Street, and restricting visibility for pedestrians trying to reach or leave the shops or recreational facilities on the other side. Parking at the lower end of Oxford Street (west side) is a problem during the day and night because it restricts visibility for vehicles emerging from Lottage Road. Cars speeding down Oxford Street towards this junction exacerbate the problem. See photo on p12.

Next Steps

The following pages describe several options for improvements which could address the speeding or parking problems identified above. These should now be given further consideration and wider consultation with stakeholders and other interested parties to determine which would be the most effective.

Focal Point 1: The Post Office Crossroads

Post Office Crossroads – as previously mentioned this area is of great concern due to the high risk of pedestrian accident or vehicle collision

Annotations to aerial photo:

1. 'West Street'
2. 'Barnes Yard' new housing development
3. 'Community Junction' community youth centre and shop
4. Post Office Café and Deli shop
5. 'Marlborough Road'
6. 'Castle Street'
7. 'Dabchick's Delight' Indian takeaway
8. Cut-through towards 'The Crown' public house
9. 'The Square' leading Eastwards to 'South Street'
10. '12 The Square' House private residence
11. 'Toad Hall' private residence
12. Access to 'Barnes Yard' from 'West Street'/'The Square'
13. Red strip across road, now badly damaged by construction work at 'Barnes Yard'



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Options to explore:

1. Bar vehicular traffic from using the cut-through (8) that runs from the B4192 into The Square towards The Crown. This would: (i) reduce the crossroads effect outside the Post office; (ii) improve pedestrian safety in The Square by removing fast moving vehicles using The Square as short cut; (iii) enhance The Square area generally.
2. Bar vehicular traffic from using the alley that runs from the B4192 into The Square between the Old Bakehouse and Community Junction. This would improve pedestrian safety in The Square by removing fast moving vehicles using The Square as short cut and enhance The Square area generally.

The figures below show some other possibilities and use the following colour-coding:

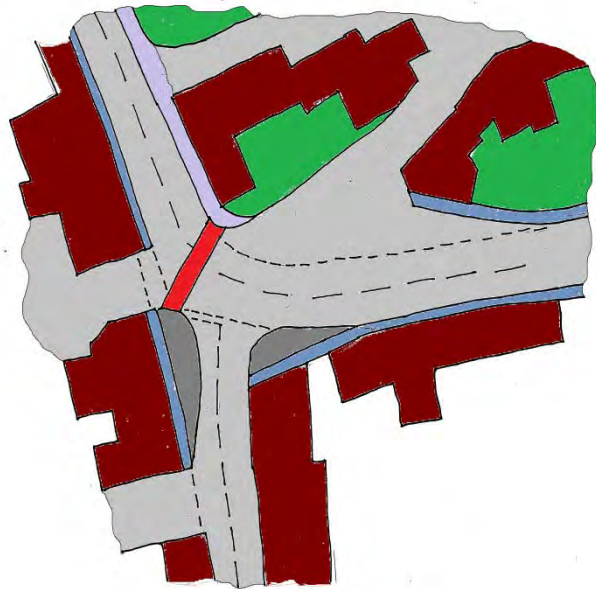
- Light grey: tarmac road.
- Dark grey: tarmac of different colour, used for parking.
- Red stripe: 'preferred crossing' indication (now severely worn).
- Light blue: raised pavement for pedestrians.
- Lavender: unraised zone for pedestrians.
- Brown: buildings.
- Green: private unbuilt fenced-off areas.

Other possibilities to explore:

The **figure on the right** shows the current usage. Some ideas for alternatives are given below.

3. Creating a junction area that has no road markings. **See figure below.** Stripes across the road (lavender) mark the boundary of this area. This proposal allows us to experiment with various parking arrangements – on the North or the South side of the Eastwards road.

4. Create a 'Piazza' (!). The junction area becomes a village feature with, perhaps, an outdoor table-tennis table outside the Community Junction and chairs and tables either directly outside the Post Office or outside 12 The Square, for the Post Office Café.



5. Changing the priority of traffic by creating a T-junction. Priority from West Street (B4192) to Marlborough Road and vice versa. Give way from 'The Square' (South Street) to West Street (B4192). Prior example of give way on the same road number: The Hare junction at Lambourn (B4000). Junction would actually be a staggered cross-roads (with Barnes Yard being the fourth road).
6. Distinctive surface where four ways meet. This suggests an area for pedestrians to cross.
7. Place a distinctive feature where four ways meet.

8. Put a kink in South Street. Traffic runs straight past 'Dabchick's Delight'. This then allows parking in front of Toad Hall and the other houses on that side of the road. The junction of the four roads is then a normal 4-way junction instead of being staggered. This changes the need for pedestrians to cross diagonally across the road into an easy crossing across Marlborough Road and a more difficult crossing in front of traffic giving way from South Street (which is easier to cross because the traffic already has to stop there to give way).
9. As directly above but with a four-way give-way at Barnes Yard / West Street / South Street / Marlborough Road. **This is shown on the right.**



Focal Point 2: The Square and Library



This section relates to the area between The Crown and the library, incorporating the pond.

Once a central meeting point, now however, the Square is an amorphous sprawl of tarmac which is mostly used as a short cut and a car park. The duck pond is virtually barricaded off by parked cars meaning a core part of the village's natural character is almost invisible. The pump is isolated. We would like to see changes to the layout and parking to move cars away from the pond area, make the pond more visible and give pedestrians shorter crossing points across the tarmac. Different materials such as cobbles or setts would increase the appeal of this area and promote it as a feature of the village. Changing traffic flows (for example by closing the two alleys that lead in from the west and are used simply as short cuts) would improve pedestrian safety in this village core. Creative soft landscaping using trees, shrubs, and borders could help return the area to its old self. The Village Green group is proposing to plant fruit trees throughout the village to form a community orchard for the entire village to enjoy – creating space in The Square for this purpose is another option to explore.

Annotations to aerial photo:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. The pond | 22. Cut-through from the Post Office |
| 2. 'The Crown' public house | 23. Post Office junction (see previously) |
| 3. 'The Green' road N. to the actual green open space | 24. Cut-through from 'West Street' |
| 4. 'Four Barrows Clinic' | 25. 'CAN' (Community-Archive-Net) community internet café |
| 5. Also 'The Green' road N. to the actual green | 26. Main parking area on 'The Square' |
| 6. 'Horbroke House' private residence | |
| 7. 'Oxford Street' N.E. to the 'Co-op' shop | |
| 8. The library | |
| 9. 'The Old Forge' | |
| 10. Parking for the library and over-spill parking for the 'Co-op' | |
| 11. 'Ivy Cottage' private residence | |
| 12. Cut-through from 'Oxford Street' to 'South Street' | |
| 13. 'South Street' | |
| 14. 'Glebe Close' cul-de-sac | |
| 15. 'Oxford Street' junction with 'South Street' | |
| 16. Two-way access between 'The Square' and 'Oxford Street' | |
| 17. Working pump | |
| 18. One-way access from 'The Square' to 'Oxford Street' | |
| 19. Bus shelter | |
| 20. 'Pond House' private residence | |
| 21. 'The Gallery' hairdressing salon | |

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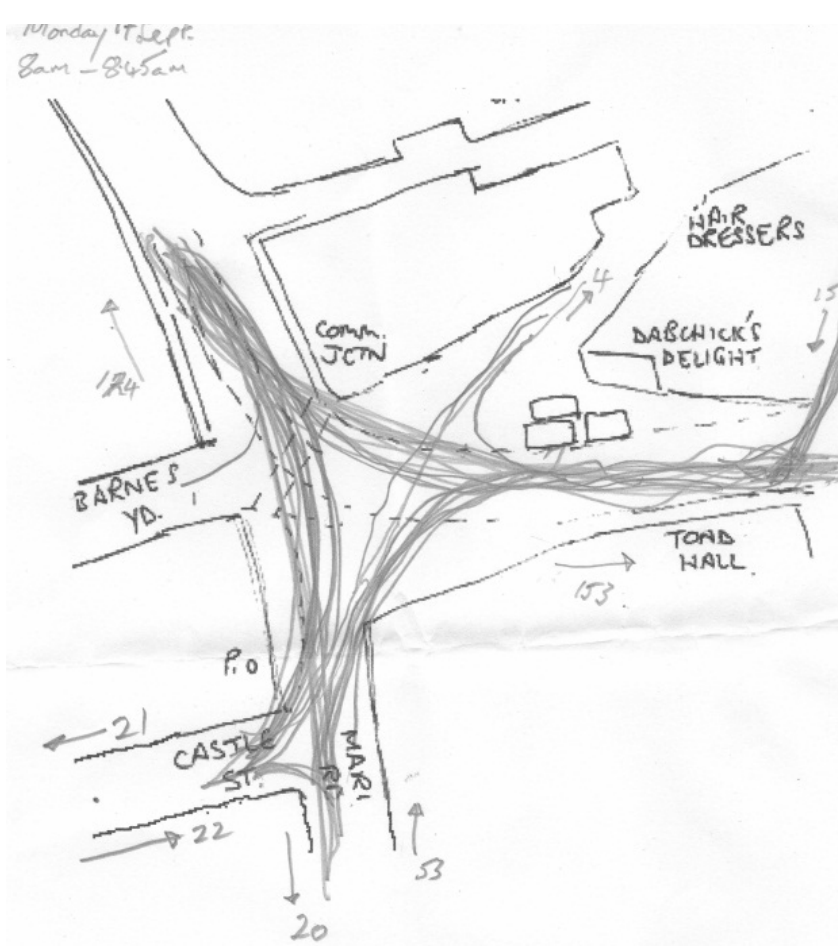
We have monitored traffic flows at various points around the village (see one example, monitoring at the Post Office junction, right). Monitoring traffic through the two alleys that lead into the Square from the West shows they are used more as short cuts than for access to buildings in The Square and the Green. These destinations can just as easily be reached via the junction of South St and Oxford St, and it would therefore seem logical to bar vehicular access to the Square via these two alleys, as recommended on page 7. This could create more space for parking and facilitate our earlier proposal to move parking away from the pond.

Options to explore further:

Shut off cut-through (12) from Oxford Street to South Street past the library. Rearrange parking in front of library, to provide more parking spaces and create an open communal space in front of the library.

Other possibilities to explore:

1. Retain cut-through from South Street to Oxford Street by bus-stop but shut off the Eastbound route on the other side of the pump. Grass over the small area. Reduce intrusive signage.
2. Realign the Oxford Street junction with West Street to create more of a T-junction. This will also link the pump up with the bus-stop and make crossing the road easier.
3. Narrow the width of South Street by providing a raised pavement or different surface for pedestrians on the North side going between the centre of the village to/from Palmers Field.
4. Additional parking spaces in front of CAN as a result of closing cut-through.
5. Additional parking spaces near hairdressers as a result of closing cut-through.
6. Define parking area on the curve of Oxford Street to create a more definite boundary between The Square and Oxford Street. Remove marking for parking on The Square in front of the pond. This would help to keep The Square itself more as an open space so that the pond isn't hidden by traffic so much of the time. Discourage parking here by putting road markings but this would not be enforced. It would also help pedestrians cross Oxford Street.



Focal Point 3: The West Street Pump Junction

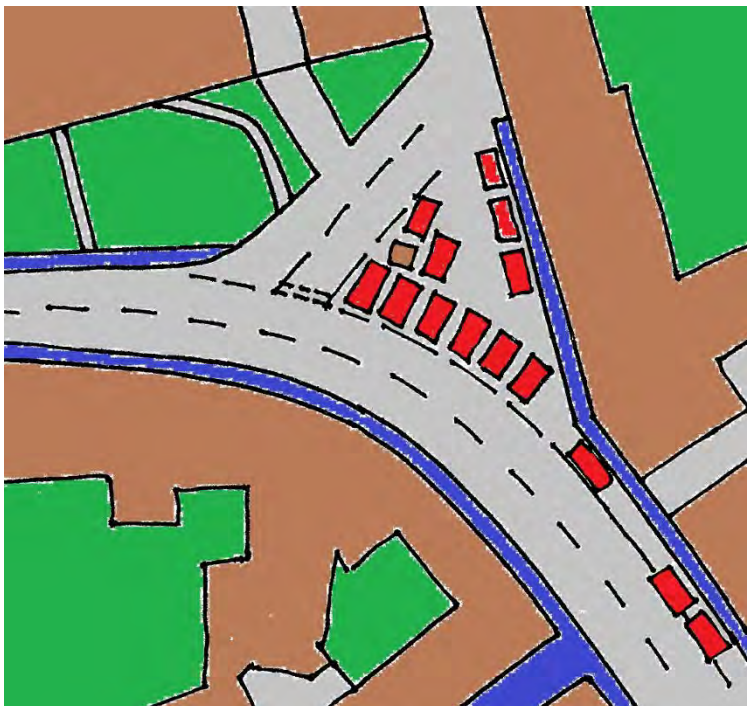
The junction of Back Lane and West St is one of the most frequently used routes for children from the Whitley Road and The Garlings areas going to St Michael's Primary School at the top of Back Lane. The junction is relatively wide with a pump in the middle, one of the village's historic features, surrounded by parked cars. This creates two entrances / exits to Back Lane. The bend in West Street makes crossing the road difficult but crossing the road further to the South is not desirable because of the exposed position of pedestrians to traffic. Concern has frequently been raised about the parking of cars further up Back Lane in the event emergency vehicles needed to gain access to the school or houses there.

Annotations to aerial photo:

1. 'West Street' W. to Swindon
2. 'Back Lane' N. to 'St Michael's School'
3. Parking area
4. Water pump
5. 'West Street Motors' garage
6. 'West Street' towards the P.O. junction



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Possibilities to explore:

1. Close off the South-East corner of the triangle to traffic:
 - a. Creating a 'walking-to-school' path along the East side (blue) and further South so that children walk between the houses and the parked cars rather than between the parked cars and moving traffic.
 - b. This pushes the parked cars out slightly, narrowing the road to slow down traffic approaching the Post Office junction.
 - c. It forces traffic from Back Lane turning left to go around the other side of the pump to a position where turning is safer.
 - d. Provide parking space for more cars.

Focal Point 4: The Oxford Street / Lottage Road Junction

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The issue of safety at the junction of Oxford St and Lottage Rd has been raised many times previously because of the high risk of vehicle collision due to speeding vehicles coming down Oxford Street and the lack of visibility for traffic emerging from Lottage Road. Along with the desire for a pedestrian crossing at the Post Office, it generated the largest response in the open questions section of the recent Aldbourne Community Plan household survey. A solid white line has been painted to discourage parking too close to the junction but visibility is still not adequate. The problem is the speed of traffic coming down the hill (see photo).

Additionally, the short-term parking of cars on The Paddocks in order to visit the Co-op shop opposite has also caused problems.

Annotations to aerial photo:

1. 'Oxford Street' towards 'The Square'
2. 'Oxford Street' up the hill ('Baydon Hill') to Baydon
3. 'Lottage Road'
4. 'Co-op' shop
5. Memorial Hall
6. Sports and Social Club
7. Methodist Church and hall
8. Road marked with white strip to discourage parking
9. 'The Paddocks' cul-de-sac



Possibilities to explore:

1. As already noted in the Community Plan, parking cars on the other side of the road would help improve visibility and might also help slow traffic down coming down the hill. The proposed solution is to try to solve the problem locally first with neighbouring residents.
2. Changing the priority of the junction has been suggested previously but it is thought this might make the possibility of an accident more rather than less likely.

Benefits

By implementing one or more of these measures we could significantly reduce traffic speeds through the village. This would create several benefits:

1. People would feel safer walking in the village and be less inclined to use their cars for short journeys. This reduces the number of vehicles using the roads and also reduces the amount of parking required in the village centre.
2. Fewer vehicles and slower vehicles both contribute to a reduction in wear and tear on road surfaces, and would therefore create savings in maintenance costs.
3. The Community Plan identified a need for a Lollipop Person near St Michael's School. These proposals would make the roads safer and remove the need for a Lollipop Person thus freeing up funds for other uses. More parents would walk to school with their children instead of driving them, again reducing vehicle numbers.
4. The Community Plan also identified a very strong desire for a proper pedestrian crossing (pelican, zebra or similar) near the Post Office. We are conscious that this is an expensive solution to the problem. The measures we propose would reduce the number and speed of vehicles traveling through this area, which means we could consider alternative crossing options which are less expensive or which would incur no cost at all.
5. Greater pedestrian numbers would make drivers much more aware of their presence, which would automatically make them slow down as they pass through the village. Slower drivers would make more people feel it is safe to walk.
6. By reconsidering the use of tarmac areas and creating more parking spaces we can better cater for the current parking needs of the village and absorb the inevitable increase in parking requirement in the future.

PLAN – SUMMARY OF OPTIONS

Measure	Location	Responsible	Funding source	Budget	Start	Complete
Encourage / permit roadside parking to slow traffic entering village. Mark spaces?	B4192 (N side of West St) entering village	Parish Council				
Encourage / permit parking to slow traffic entering village. Mark spaces?	Oxford St (E side)	Parish Council				
Tubs & Shrubs to close 'Community Junction alley' (8) to vehicles (short term solution)	Between Community Junction and Dabchick's Delight	Parish Council				
Barrier or similar to close 'Community Junction alley' (8) to vehicles (longer term solution)	Between Community Junction and Dabchick's Deli	Highways?				
Tubs & Shrubs to close 'CAN alley' to vehicles (short term solution)	Between rear of Community Junction and the Old Bakehouse	Parish Council				
Barrier or similar to close 'CAN alley' to vehicles (longer term solution)	Between rear of Community Junction and the Old Bakehouse	Highways?				
Change layout and / or traffic priority at PO to T Junction or 4-way Give Way.	Post Office crossroads	Highways?				
Change colour or material of road surface outside PO to emphasise pedestrian crossing point and alert drivers to pedestrian presence	Post Office crossroads	Highways?				
Change road layout to conventional crossroads.	Post Office crossroads	Highways?				
Tubs & Shrubs to close 'Forge alley' (12) to vehicles (short term solution)	One end (TBA) of Forge Alley	Parish Council				
Re-define parking spaces	Outside library	Highways?				
Close eastern exit of Oxford St onto B4192						

Mark additional parking spaces created by above actions	Outside CAN, hairdressers,						
Re-arrange parking spaces to improve access to pond	The Square						
Move parked cars two feet towards road	B4192 southbound side	Parish Council					
Re-arrange parking	By Back Lane pump						