TRAFFIC AND POLLUTION IN LYNCOMBE HILL, GREENWAY LANE & LANES ADJOINING

Professor Donald Thomas - Greenway Residents Association – Traffic Sub-Committee

The Problem

1. In its minutes, the 2012 AGM of Greenway Residents' Association was "broadly supportive of the scheme to reduce traffic in Widcombe Parade" but "feared increased traffic in Lyncombe Hill and Greenway Lane," undermining work which the council has recently carried out.

2. The B&NES 2011 Rossiter Road consultation process proposed a 10% traffic increase in these minor roads. Greenway has carried out traffic counts for the past seven years, its reports praised and endorsed by the council. The latest puts vehicles at the top of Lyncombe Hill 50% above consultation figures.

3. In 2011 B&NES monitored Lyncombe Hill air-quality. Nitrogen dioxide in vehicle exhaust rose beyond the European Union legal limit for the protection of human health in each of the last three months. Add to this the increasing diesel exhaust, which was identified by the World Health Organisation yesterday [12 June 2012] as causing lung cancer definitely, and bladder tumours probably.

4. Rossiter Road plans reduce westbound Claverton Street dual carriageway to one lane as it passes Lyncombe Hill to Wellsway gyratory. The inner lane would be a dedicated slip-road directing increased traffic into Lyncombe Hill. Some house-front doors and windows are as close as 4 feet to hundreds of daily exhaust pipes. So are many schoolchildren from Beechen Cliff and Widcombe.

An Alternative

1. The dual carriageway should be retained across the foot of Lyncombe Hill, perhaps saving money. For south and west, drivers should be signed to follow this route to the gyratory. They are more likely to do so if they see two lanes free ahead of them, one presumably for Exeter/Bristol and one for the city centre, rather than a pinch-point to negotiate. On the Claverton Street approach there are no road-level house-fronts, far fewer pedestrians. Being open to the north, fumes clear more easily.

3. Rossiter Road plans are a self-proclaimed response to traffic pollution in Widcombe Parade – rightly so. Widcombe Association hired Air Quality Consultants Ltd. to help its case. Any attempt to argue that this is all about "traffic" and not pollution defies the evidence. But neighbouring residential roads should not incur the blight of increased traffic and nitrogen dioxide exhaust fumes which the House of Commons

2010 audit, citing EU Topic Centre, puts at 51,000 UK deaths a year. This is twenty times more than deaths from road accidents, plus a £20 billion annual "ill-health" bill.

It need not be like this. We ask for three things. None compromises Widcombe Parade.

1. Retain two signed lanes westbound across Lyncombe Hill – e.g. 1. Exeter/Bristol 2. City Centre. The uphill turning into Lyncombe Hill to remain as at present, presumably saving money. For 37 years, I have found it traffic-calming rather than hazardous. Indeed, the council has recently installed a look-alike construction at the junction of Wellsway and Old Wells Road.

2. Signage to discourage rat-running to Wellsway via Lyncombe Hill and Greenway Lane.

3. Further measures to protect residents and pedestrians in these minor roads and lanes from the latest B&NES traffic count of over 2,000 vehicles a day.

The Rossiter Road plan should not - and need not - disadvantage its neighbours. They should feel able to welcome it but it in turn must respect them.