

Pedestrian Safety statement

Good evening Councillors, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you this evening.

The issue I would like to bring to your attention is concerning pedestrian safety within the village of Combe Down. The particular area of concern is the zebra crossing on North Road between the junctions of Stonehouse Lane and The Firs.

The crossing is well used by local residents who have children at Combe Down Primary School and by residents using the facilities in the village, however on a daily basis traffic fails to stop to allow pedestrians to cross safely. The traffic often is travelling too fast along North Road, the crossing itself is well worn and the beacon on The Firs side of the main road is covered by trees. In addition the pavement at the top of The Firs is particularly narrow which leaves pedestrians feeling vulnerable as they wait to cross. For people with pushchairs and for wheelchair users the narrow pavement makes using the crossing even more difficult as there is insufficient room to turn to face the crossing and see the traffic approaching. In addition, because the crossing is so close to The Firs and Stonehouse Lane junctions, drivers that are turning out onto the main road find themselves upon the crossing immediately and this is an extra problem.

Looking to the future and the development of the Foxhill site, traffic is going to increase quite significantly and something needs to be done as a matter of urgency. I have canvassed local residents and been told about numerous 'near misses' that have occurred and that will continue to occur until something is done. For children walking to and from school it is especially dangerous, if drivers don't see me at the crossing they are not going to see my children. The strength of feeling within the local community about this issue is strong and I have a petition to present to you today that has ----- signatures that support my call for a change to be made.

In May I did email my concerns to the transportation department and I am happy that they have responded with some positive actions for improvement. They have committed to repainting the crossing, adding 'slow' to the road, adding some additional signage and have contacted the owner of the trees to get them cut back from the beacon. Nevertheless I feel strongly that more could be done to make the crossing safer for all who use it. My suggestions are:

1. A barrier/railing is installed on the narrow side of the pavement to offer protection for pedestrians and that this pavement is widened.
2. Signage needs to be improved to alert drivers to the crossing, perhaps a traffic activated warning sign would be the most effective?
3. The speed limit on North Road could be reduced to 20mph to coincide with school start and finish times (like they have at Ralph Allen School) so drivers are aware that there is a large (primary) school nearby.
4. The trees that cover the beacon need to be maintained at all times.

5. The road markings need to be maintained at all times.

These ideas would no doubt improve things however I do feel that for pedestrians to be best protected 2 more radical actions should be taken, these would be:

1. The crossing is relocated so that it is not so near the 2 junctions of Stonehouse Lane and The Firs, a move of only a few metres in the direction of Farris Lane could ease the problem.
2. A 'pelican' or 'puffin' crossing, essentially a crossing with traffic lights replaces the zebra crossing in an improved location.