

Cllr Neil Laurenson opened the meeting, welcoming all 30+ people who turned up and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

1. John Fraser – Highways Manger commenting on ideas from 4th November meeting, indicating opportunities and obstacles.

- Highways Department have lifted new data from ‘measurement tubes’ on Bilford Road this week that measure speed and volume of traffic.
 - Suggestions for a roundabout at the Bilford Road/Astwood Drive junction are not suitable, and not in a manual for good road design.
 - Refuge or crossings near the junction would be troublesome, particularly with issues of space, and private drives/entrances.
 - It might be possible to consider a controlled crossing, that is zebra or pedestrian crossing, but this would still be awkward – and costly.
 - Flashing speed signs can be an option, says JF. They can be:
 - Effective
 - Relatively cheap and easy to do
 - Short-term beneficial effect
 - Mains connected or smaller battery-powered (short burst use)
 - Councillor Divisional Funds (approx. £1000) can be used for the smaller version
 - A stretch of road needs to ‘qualify’ for a speed camera. JF referred the meeting to the Safer Roads Partnership website (<http://www.srpwestmercia.org.uk>).
 - JF said he had little info on access to Perdiswell Leisure Centre and access to the recycling centre. There was a comment in the meeting that blamed the recycling centre for the direction of traffic on the site.
 - JF agreed to look again at the road markings over the canal bridge and the impact this has on traffic exiting Kingston Avenue.
 - In terms of prioritising roads for added safety measures, JF informed the meeting that Highways Department take account of statistics including accidents – categorised as:
 - A slight accident (such as a reported bump or whiplash)
 - A serious (reported) accident
 - A fatal incidentThe accident and latest traffic data influences how Highways focuses its spend of council money.
- Bilford Road
- JF informed the meeting that the data from the ‘measurement tubes’ fell a long way short of making Bilford Road issues a priority.
 - Mean average speed of 27.4 mph
 - Maximum recorded speed 55 mph
 - 85% percentile 31 mph
 - Highways has artificially narrowed Astwood Road, hatchings on left
 - JF raised short-term merit of a flashing speed sign – but not enforced
 - Changing yellow lines & speed limits involves a (12 m+) legal process

2. Questions to John Fraser

- Bob Queried whether Highways planning worked, suggesting the road hatching didn't work as some motorists don't follow the rules.
- Jenny Asked for lines on the canal bridge (that did previously have hatchings) as the traffic moves too fast approaching Kingston Avenue. Steps (on both sides) down from the canal bridge were suggested.
- Chris Suggested a mini-roundabout at Astwood/Bilford Road junction would be a small obstruction that could improve the situation.
- JF reply Commenting on the mini-roundabout said it would be difficult to achieve, without impacting on residential access.
- Gareth Related efforts by himself and Mary Drinkwater in past years to tackle the matters. Without success. A resident petition was raised some time ago and was objected to by the local shop (not the current owner).
- Jason Is the practical response now to accept the reality of what JF has told the meeting, that cost implications and traffic statistics indicate what is truly possible and what is not at this point? J suggested:
- Hatchings outside the shop
 - Widen the pavements (JF option)
 - Cheap/affordable/reversible options
 - Underpass under the canal bridge
- Karen Accepting that the recorded speed is not excessive; what about the near misses? Traffic and pedestrians have to wait such a long time to exit the Bilford/Astwood Road junction motorists finally take risks. Questioned whether a central island and a cycle lane could help, if they were well marked. Pointed out that a Box Junction at the junction of Drovers Way onto Bilford Road would help flow/courtesy of traffic.
- JF reply In response to a concern that the police don't enforce highway regulations, JF mentioned PACT (Police and Communities Together <http://www.westmercia.police.uk/pact/>) as a way of raising this issue.
- Andy Pointed out that statistics can be manipulated – that the speed of traffic might have been different if recorded nearer the canal bridge, once motorists on Bilford Road had reached full speed on exiting Astwood Road junction.
- Chris It is difficult to cross the road safely at Field Road/Astwood Road junction. Traffic is flowing quickly (28mph?) in both directions and indicators to turn are not always used/cancelled & causes uncertainty. This is an accident spot (statistic) waiting to happen.
- Graham Bilford Road is a long road with 'hazards' at many points, with schools, refuge centre, leisure centre, canal bridge, and several awkward junctions. Don't forget the canal bridge/leisure centre end of Bilford Road. The whole road is a 'rat run' from the City centre to Droitwich, and is made worse now the Park & Ride has been closed.
- Cllr Matt Mentioned that Clare Marchant, Chief Executive of WCC was unable to attend but is willing to meet a representative group to discuss matters.

3. End of this part of the meeting

- Neil thanked John Fraser for kindly attending the meeting and giving open and honest replies to the items raised in the November 2014 and today's meeting.
- Only those interested in continuing to pursue the safety of Bilford Road by setting up an Action Group stayed behind beyond this point.

Meeting closed about 8.45pm

4. Setting up of an action group

8-10 people remained at the end of the meeting to discuss setting up an action group.

- It was agreed again that this should not be 'political', that it should be resident-led.
- Jason agreed to look into the possibility of steps down the (other) side of the canal bridge.
- No one stepped forward to Chair this action group, although one lady is to consider doing so.

The next meeting was set for 11th February, 7.30pm at Perdiswell Leisure Centre

Closed.