

## **Tern Lane Traffic Improvement Survey.**

### **Introduction**

Tern Lane is located in the northern part of the village of Longdon upon Tern and is accessed off the apex of a steep right hand bend on the B5063 coming from the High Ercall direction and vice versa from the main village.

Tern Lane continues outside the Rodington Parish and into the Ercall Magna Parish (?) up to Tern Farm. Just past the farm at the top of the lane, the road turns into an unsurfaced farm track which follows the old road to Crudgington which was once part of Tern Lane.

Tern Lane has been somewhat forgotten in the current Parish / Borough Councils' traffic debates, as it is on the outskirts of the village. Generally traffic approaching the village from High Ercall regularly reach speeds of 70 mph on the long straight and fails to slow adequately to meet the 30 mph limit. Egress from Tern Lane onto the B5063/Cotwall Road, is therefore dangerous. The corner turning into the lane is blind and steep and traffic swings out to get round the bend. Just to confuse things, the speed limit signs on the lane at this corner show both the National Speed Limit and 30 mph. Several complaints to the TWC Highways have resulted in nothing happening to resolve this and motorist visitors to the livery, haulage trucks and delivery drivers are free to choose which speed they prefer.

Many of the residents live here because the lane used to be relatively safe and quiet, the houses back onto open fields and people enjoy the lack of street lighting and access to the countryside. The lane is used by residents and dog walkers from the village. Small children are now again found in the family houses and there are visiting grandchildren and relatives and plenty of pets.. The gardens and houses front straight out on to the Lane and traffic speeds are dangerous for residents.

Traffic speeds on the Lane have become dangerous. The lane has a poor road surface and bad drainage because of collapsed drains, both, no doubt made worse by the increase in huge lorries hauling various farm equipment and crops,(potatoes, sugar beet, maize etc) with resultant rattling of windows, doors and walls.

Residents are keen to have their views included in the overall improvements to traffic issues in Longdon upon Tern, which is being negotiated between the Parish Council and the Borough Council.

## Methodology and Results

A paper survey was hand delivered with the Village Voice to each Tern Lane household that falls within the Parish of Rodington. Residents were given 4 days to complete the survey which consisted of 3 questions. (see attached questionnaire). Of 20 questionnaires delivered 13 were returned giving a 65% response rate.

Some respondents took the opportunity to comment more widely on traffic issues in the area generally but all referred to Tern Lane during their answers. Those not directly relating to Tern Lane have been categorised separately.

The first question was an open invitation to say what people thought would improve traffic matters generally. This question was designed to elicit a broad response and to think about issues other than speed.

The following two questions related specifically to signage at the access/egress of Tern Lane and traffic speeds on the Lane.

50% of the responses to the question of improving traffic issues in Tern Lane, related to speed on the Lane and the approach to it.

Suggested solutions were:

### The correct speed limit signage on the lane



The picture clearly shows the speed control signs on entry to Tern Lane, displaying both 30 mph and the National Speed Limit

There have been numerous requests from residents to the borough council over the years to have this corrected , all to no avail .



As this picture shows the problem is reversed on egress from Tern Lane with drivers having a choice of either 50 mph or 30mph

Suggestions were “ SLOW” painted on the road and Speed Bumps in the lane.

A reduction in the Speed Limit on the Lane was suggested and more speed enforcements on the corner of the main road as vehicles approach.

At question 2 , “do you agree with a 20 mph speed limit on Tern Lane ?” 100% of respondents circled “ yes”.

### **Heavy Goods Vehicles and the state of the road**

50% of comments about the traffic issues on the lane related to the heavy lorries using the lane to go up to Tern Farm. Not only are the lorries are destroying the road surface and are a contributory factor in the collapse of the old surface water drainage in the lane leading to frequent flooding, but 17% of residents said these lorries are a disturbance to their quiet enjoyment of their homes. .

Suggested solutions to this were to:

- Make the lane a designated Quiet Lane / Home Zone
- Make a turning point for delivery vehicles.
- Re- establish the old track / road from Crudgington to Tern Farm and designate this specifically for heavy farm vehicles lorries.
- Re surface the road

The issue of Signage was also picked up in Question 3 which asked more specifically about road and traffic signage with 30% of respondents on this pointing out the incorrect speed limit signage on the lane .

Other suggested signs are: “ Reduce Speed Now” , “ Please Drive Carefully “ “ No Footway” “ Pedestrians” “ No Through Road” “ Unsuitable for HGV’s”

### The Approach to Tern Lane from High Ercall

We asked about signage on the lane entrance ; residents though were more concerned with the issues of speeding traffic coming from High Ercall and the dangers of pulling out, turning in and crossing the road there.



As the photographs show traffic approaches Tern Lane on a steep bend coming from High Ercall, often at high speeds. Pulling out and turning in, particularly because of the steep turn into Tern Lane from the main road, is hazardous with the speeding traffic from

both directions.



Traffic coming from High Ercall seems to be encouraged to speed because of the long straight before the village signs of 30 mph. Traffic along here frequently exceeds 70 mph and over the years there have been a few serious

accidents on the straight itself. Traffic coming from the village also increases speed in anticipation of the straight ahead.



As you can see from the picture the 30 mph road signs are barely visible, they are too small and obscured by the hedge; although the chevrons are visible this is because the hedge has been cut recently.

Residents are suggesting clearer signs above the level of the hedge with a sign indicating there is a junction ahead. Residents are suggesting better hedge maintenance and cutting to make sure the signs are visible and vision coming into and out of the lane is better.

A further suggestion is to stagger the speed limit on the approaching road so that traffic is slowed from the National speed limit to 40 mph and then to 30 mph before the bend. 40 mph could start before the stables and farm on the left hand side with 30mph starting by the new bench and footpath gate.

Residents spoke of rumble strips and " SLOW" painted on the road.

An additional issue raised during the survey is the need for some indication of people crossing on the apex of the bend to reach the new footpath.



## Conclusions / Recommendations

There are many suggestions included from the survey not all of which are included below, there may be others which the Parish Councillors think should form part of the recommendations. The issues raised are important to the residents of Tern Lane as shown by the high response rate to the survey.

- The speed limit signage at the entrance to Tern Lane must be corrected and a speed limit of 20 mph introduced to the Lane.
- Regular maintenance of the hedges at the entrance to Tern Lane and along the approach road from High Ercall should be instituted.
- It is recognised that creating a quiet lane / home zone would be quite an undertaking for the Parish Council although potentially could help to pave the way for a solution for other rural areas.
- The HGVs are a problem for some residents in the lane particularly in the early hours. Lorries are damaging the road surface and are disturbing the peace and quiet. While residents understand that the farm must function and this is an agricultural area, the size and frequency of these vehicles has increased over the years. Potentially a preliminary discussion with the Farm owners may help the situation. The parish of course could open discussions with the borough council about making the lane unsuitable for HGVs over a certain weight limit.
- It is important not to clutter the entrance/exit to Tern Lane with lots of distracting signs at eye level however signs painted on the road surface and rumble strips would be a solution to this. Planters along the roadside from High Ercall would help motorists to recognise they were entering a residential area, together with a "Pedestrians Crossing" warning sign.
- The road surface in Tern Lane should be added to the borough Highways maintenance rota.