

# COMMUNITY HIGHWAYS SCHEME

## PROPOSAL BY HARTING PARISH COUNCIL

### Part 1 - Issues, needs and/or initiatives and benefits

1. South Harting is a beautiful and thriving village, nestling below the South Downs about five miles south east of Petersfield. It has an estimated population of 765, out of total parish population of approximately 1200. It has three schools - a pre-school, a forest school, and a primary school - a shop, two churches, a pub, a village hall, commercial premises at Church Farm, public gardens and a playing field. The village is an important entry point to the South Downs National Park and attracts many visitors to the village pub, shop and visitor accommodation. It is a popular stopping point for walkers on the South Downs Way. The centre of the village was the first in West Sussex to be designated a Conservation Area, and it is dominated by one of the most important buildings in the county, the Grade 1 listed Church of St Mary & St Gabriel.
2. Unfortunately, however, the village has a very long-term and serious traffic problem, which now needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
3. The main Petersfield to Chichester Road (the B2146/2141) runs through the heart of the village. It is heavily trafficked, carrying in the region of 1500 to 2000 vehicles a day in each direction. During the recent Goodwood Festival of Speed the hourly rate increased by approximately 50%.
4. Coming from Petersfield the final half mile of the B2146 into the village is a wide downhill straight – an invitation to speed. The road passes immediately adjacent to the playing field (just feet from the village tennis court). Pedestrians cross the road in two places, one to the playing fields from the footway on the north side of the road, and one where public footpath 3544 crosses the road. Many cars and motorbikes overtake on this section of road increasing the risk to pedestrians and playing field users parked at the side of the road. It passes the access to the Church Farm commercial premises, before entering a very dangerous section past the Congregational Church, narrowing to 6.4 metres wide with poor forward visibility and no verge or pavement. It puts pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles into direct conflict with each other. This is an area where a serious accident is waiting to happen. Indeed, a speeding vehicle recently overshot the Give Way sign at the junction outside the old Ship pub and demolished a listed wall.



Road narrows by Congregational Church



Demolished listed wall by Ship T-junction

5. Approaching the village from Chichester and Emsworth, the road runs downhill towards the point where pedestrians have to cross to access South Gardens, the children’s playground, Diggers Pre-school, the Scout Hut, Parish Council-owned open access woodland and the footpath links leading up to the South Downs Way. Immediately after this point it reaches a very dangerous section beside the Parish Church, where the road narrows to 5.1 metres, again with no verge or pavement, and again putting pedestrians and cyclists into direct conflict with vehicular traffic. Recently a pedestrian was hit by a passing car’s wing mirror but fortunately not injured. A more serious accident could well occur.

The existing 30mph signs on this approach road are poorly positioned and almost invisible, as can be seen from the photograph below.



Entrance into village heading north, 30mph signs are badly positioned and visibility is poor



Road narrows by Parish Church



Crossing point to South Gardens and play area

6. The village also has two road connections direct to the A272 (the C7 North Lane leading to Nyewood and Rogate, and C26 Elsted Road to Iping junction). The C7 runs downhill into the centre of the village. There are houses on both sides of the road, most of the road is narrowed to one lane of traffic by residential parking, and there is much pedestrian and cyclist activity at the bottom outside the village shop. The C26 carries over 500 vehicles per day in each direction, runs downhill and narrows as it enters the middle of the village after the Tipper Lane junction
7. In addition to the volume of traffic, speeding is a serious problem on the entry roads to the village as shown in the attached traffic data (see Appendix 1). In 2019 the Parish Council purchased a Speed Indicator Device and has installed it at Points A, B and C on the attached map (see Appendix 2) on a three week rotational basis, with a fourth location on the southern edge of Nyewood (not part of this application). The speed indicator device is positioned, in each case, well within the 30mph zone. The data (summarised below) show a serious speeding issue on all three routes into the village:

Point A (South Gardens) for the period 7 to 27 May 2022 shows:

- Average, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and maximum speeds entering the village of 24.2, 27 and 60 mph
- Average, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and maximum speeds leaving the village of 27.8, 32 and 94 mph.

Point B (Elsted Road) for the period 1 June to 17 June 2022 shows:

- Average, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and maximum speeds entering the village of 30.5, 37 and 71 mph
- Average, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and maximum speeds leaving the village of 36.9, 43 and 77 mph.

Point C (Petersfield Road) for the period 18 June to 9 July 2022 shows:

- Average, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and maximum speeds entering the village of 30.1, 38 and 80 mph
- Average, 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and maximum speeds leaving the village of 36.17, 42 and 93 mph.

It is worth noting that SID records cyclists which reduces the average speeds recorded.

(See Appendix 8 for detailed analysis)

8. As can be seen, it is beyond doubt that traffic calming measures are now essential.
9. The proposed scheme will, in addition to improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists generally, hugely improve access to the two main recreational areas, South Gardens and the War Memorial Playing Field, thereby enhancing the experience of public space for residents and visitors alike. The

South Gardens crossing will be of special benefit to the 160 houses on the former council estate, the majority of which remain as social housing including some families on benefits.

10. As set out above, South Gardens has a children's play area and is used by the Diggers Pre School, the Scout Hut and by walkers heading up to the South Downs Way. It is essential that traffic is slowed and a safe crossing is provided. Similarly, The War Memorial Playing Field is used for football, cricket, tennis, the annual horticultural show, the school sports day and car parking for the annual Harting Festivities which draws a large number of visitors from outside the parish.
11. The proposed scheme will improve access through the narrows by the Congregational Church, make the walk up to the playing fields more attractive and provide a safe crossing point from the footpath on the north side of the B2146 to the playing fields. This will encourage villagers to access the playing fields on foot and by bike, rather than by car.
12. The proposed changes will make journeys within and adjacent to the village more walkable. Because they feel unsafe walking from the centre of the village, residents and visitors tend to drive to somewhere they can park their cars in order to enjoy the many footpaths around the village and on the South Downs.
13. Many residents currently drive to the village shop rather than walking through the narrows or try to cross the southern end of North Lane at its junction with the Elsted Road. Safer pedestrian access to the shop will be a major benefit of the scheme, encouraging greater and more sustainable use.
14. South Harting is also on several popular routes for cyclists, whose safety and enjoyment will be enhanced by the proposed scheme.
15. The scheme will improve air quality by slowing down traffic, reducing both CO<sub>2</sub> and particulate emissions. A recent analysis (see Appendix 3) shows that in the centre of the village the annual average of the polluting particulates PM<sub>2.5</sub> is double the WHO limit. The reading for PM<sub>10</sub> also exceeds the WHO limit, while the NO<sub>2</sub> reading is more than double the limit. Tyre pollution is also a serious problem, with aggressive driving leading to more ultrafine particles entering the blood stream according to a recent survey.
16. The environment will also benefit from reduced traffic noise and vibration, especially at weekends when the village is on the route to events at Goodwood such as the Festival of Speed and the Revival

Meeting, members' meetings, and race meetings. South Harting is also on a route favoured by motorcycle groups and is on a published route in Motorcycle News. The noise made by powerful motorcycles and cars is a very serious blight on the village especially at weekends, from dawn onwards. The location of the village in a sound amplifying bowl under the South Downs makes a bad situation worse.

17. The scheme fits in well with the objectives of the West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-2036 such as

- "safer, more efficient and resilient overall with more walking, cycling..." (p.2) as both routes past the churches give access to the South Downs;
- "tackle inappropriate speed and use of unsuitable rural routes using behavioural initiatives" (p.5);
- Public Health and Wellbeing (pp24-26): this section highlights the problems of obesity and the effect on public health of air pollution and traffic noise. "Walking supports the objectives of the Plan..." but "there are elements of walking infrastructure which do not meet all needs including those of some people with reduced mobility. Examples include where paths are absent, narrow... or where crossing facilities are inadequate or absent..."

## Part 2 - Proposed works or activity

18.

- Introduction of 20mph zone in the centre of the village of South Harting.
- Extension of 30mph zone on the entry roads from west, south and north.
- Designated crossing point with buildouts on the B2146 at the southern entrance to the village to provide a safe entrance to South Gardens, where the play area is located, and the Warren.
- Designated crossing point with buildouts and refuge on the B2146 west of the village at the entrance to the War Memorial Playing Field.
- Pinch point on the same road as it approaches the Congregational Church.
- Designated crossing point with slight buildouts at North Lane/Elsted Road junction.
- Rearrangement of traffic islands at North Lane/Elsted Road junction.

See Appendix 4 for plans drawn up in 2019.

### Part 3 – Wider community support

19. Support has been obtained for the scheme with 75 signatures out of 90 residents present at the Annual Parish Meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022, and a further 194 signatures subsequently obtained at the village shop, Harting Stores or by email or Facebook

There was also very strong support at the Annual Parish Meeting for the introduction of Community Speedwatch with more than 20 volunteers.

20. Indications of support have also been received from the following stakeholders:

- The Parish Church
- The Congregational Church
- Harting Village Hall
- Harting Stores
- Harting School
- The Diggers School
- Harting Pre-School
- The Harting Society
- The War Memorial Playing Field trustees
- Harting Minibus
- The Scouts
- Harting Climate Action Network (CAN)

Their responses are attached (see Appendix 5), the key points being:

- Need to reduce speed and support for 20mph zone
- Need for safer pedestrian routes by the Parish Church and Congregational Church
- Crossing points to South Gardens and War Memorial Playing Field
- Noise of vehicles, particularly motorbikes
- Parking issues
- Need to reduce carbon emissions

21. The longstanding need is evidenced in the South Harting Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals document (See Appendix 6), produced in July 2009 by Chichester District Council. The Character Appraisal identified “busy traffic along Petersfield Road and The Street” as a “key negative feature” of the village centre and noted “The lack of pavements in parts of The Street is also a serious hazard to pedestrians”. The Management Proposals, produced after consultation with the Parish Council and after a public exhibition in the village in April 2009 followed by a four week public consultation period, proposed as “Recommended Action 5” that “The Parish Council, District Council and County Council will consider ways of improving pedestrian safety and reducing the speed of through traffic in the South Harting Conservation Area. The Action

Plan formulated at the end of the document identified this as a “medium-term project (18m-3 years)”.

In 2010, following a public petition expressing concern about speeding and a public meeting at which more than 50 parishioners lent their support, a sub-committee of Harting Parish Council formulated a Harting Traffic Plan which identified the same problems outlined in the current application and proposed that within the village pedestrians should be the priority rather than traffic. Suggested solutions for reducing traffic speeds included the introduction of pinch points at entry points and a designated crossing point to South Gardens as currently proposed. The Plan was submitted to WSCC in 2012. (see Appendix 7). As a result the junction at the old Ship was modified, but no other improvements were agreed.

## Part 4 – Scheme objectives

### 22. Transport and public

Select all that you believe will have a positive impact

- Costs - provides a cost saving to the local community/road users/council
- Safety - reduces road traffic incidents/fear of crime
- Public space - enhances experience of communal areas
- Journey times - improves journey times and traveller experience
- Mobility and access - reduces barriers and increases accessibility

### 23. Economic growth

Select all that you believe will have a positive impact.

- Employment - creates employment opportunities/improves connectivity
- New business - encourages private investment/opening of new businesses
- Development opportunities - encourages development investment
- Housing - could encourage housing development opportunities
- Regeneration and deprivation - addresses issues in areas of deprivation

### 24. Environmental impacts

- Carbon emissions - encourages alternate transport use or routes
- Impacts on air quality - improves air quality (other than CO2 emissions)
- Impacts on surrounding environment - has a positive impact on noise/vibration/other environmental impacts

## Part 5 – Cost for the implementation of the proposed project

25. The cost is anticipated to be in the region of £200k

## Part 6 – Funding sources

### 26. Parish Council £15k.

The Parish Council also paid £25k for the area used for parking at the entrance to South Gardens in 2019, with this approach in mind, to enable construction of a crossing point.

The Parish Council have applied for a Community Infrastructure Levy grant from SDNPA for funding for the crossing to South Gardens. If successful, this would reduce the WSCC funding by up to £25k

## Part 7 – Supporting evidence

### 27. Appendix 1 – SID data

Appendix 2 – Map of SID locations

Appendix 3 – Air quality survey

Appendix 4 - Plans

Appendix 5 – Traffic survey responses

Appendix 6 – 2009 Conservation Area report

Appendix 7 – 2012 Harting Traffic Plan

Appendix 8 – Detailed traffic analysis

## Part 6 – Authorisation

### 28. Dr Kate O’Kelly - District and County Councillor