

# Can the A4103 through Cradley Parish be made safer?

## Research report

### 1. Background information

In the last few years, Cradley Parish Council has carried out a number of initiatives to improve road safety in the parish. These have included traffic speed measuring on the Bosbury road with a view to installing automatic signs, obtaining survey figures with the aim of getting speed limits reduced on the A4103 and successfully reducing the speed limit through Cradley to 30mph.

On Wednesday 21st September 2016, two vehicles were involved in a serious collision on the A4103 at Ridgeway Cross. West Mercia police confirmed that the accident was reported to them at 2.05pm and that one out of the three men involved was air-lifted to hospital.

A telegraph pole was knocked out of position and a 15 metre length of protective wall surrounding Birch Farm House was destroyed. A road closure and diversion were put in place and the roads re-opened almost 6 hours later at 8.50pm. The road closure and diversions caused significant traffic problems throughout Cradley, particularly during school pick-up time.

In order to repair the damaged wall, a stretch of the A4103 will be closed and three-way traffic lights put in place. Due to concerns about the speed of traffic (which the Traffic Light installers observed as moving 10-20mph faster than 50mph limit), drivers approaching the lane closure and lights will be given a 90 metre stopping distance.

Two more collisions occurred at the same junction during October 2016. The first on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October and the second on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.



Photographs: Rupert & Isobel Manning



## 2. Estimated cost of the collision

The Department of Transport estimated that the total cost of a serious injury collision on a rural road would be £ 220,524\*. This estimate includes the cost of injuries, delays, diversions, police time, highway officers' time and the knock-on effect on businesses.

The direct cost of the collision on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September cannot yet be quantified but will include:

16 police officers @ £ per officer per hour	£TBC
Air ambulance	£2,500
NHS expertise for minor injuries, serious chest injuries and shock	£TBC
Personnel sick leave/recovery	£TBC
Wall repairs	£25,000
Vehicle repairs/replacements	£TBC
BT line repairs and pole replacement	£TBC
Post Accident Repair Traffic Management	£TBC

## 3. Should the speed limit be reduced along approximately 2.3 miles of the A4103 through Cradley Parish?

### Arguments for:

1. The 50mph speed limit means local people feel vulnerable using the parish junctions that link to and from the A4103
2. The 50mph speed limit will deter people from visiting local businesses – particularly The Red Lion, Cradley
3. The last fatality in our parish on the A4103 was in May 2013 and local people regularly witness or experience near-misses.
4. The success of Cradley C of E Primary School means that, over the last few years, the number of cars transporting children to and from the school via the A4013 has increased.

### Arguments against:

1. Cradley Parish Council has already dedicated significant time and effort trying to achieve road safety improvements without success.
2. The stretch of road does not meet the criteria for speed reduction because of a relatively low numbers of dwellings.
3. The stretch of road does not meet the criterial for speed reduction because fatality and injury numbers are not high enough.

\* source:

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/244913/rrcgb2012-02.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/244913/rrcgb2012-02.pdf)

## **4. Informal feedback from a small sample of local people**

### **Witness to the serious collision on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September**

#### **Isobel Manning, Cradley Resident & Business Owner**

“As soon as I heard the terrible screeching and smashing noise I knew what had happened. I rang 999 and asked for all three emergency services. Then I went out on to the road. Two people were lying down on the side of the road. I saw the smashed car – and couldn’t believe anyone would have come out of it alive. It was terrible.”

#### **Near miss. Resident & Business Owner D – Aged 50. Male.**

“Three years ago I left to travel to work at 6.30 am just as a shower of freezing rain began falling. As I approached Millbank Garage from Cradley, my car slid down the hill on to and across the A4103. I was lucky. The A4103 was not busy at the time. If the same circumstances had occurred half an hour later, I dread to think what would have happened. Certainly a car travelling at 50mph would not have been able to avoid me.”

#### **Witness. Resident K – Aged 40. Female.**

We live at the top of Tanhouse Lane, adjoining the main Hereford/Worcester Road. This road, in our opinion, feels like an accident waiting to happen. The speed of vehicles zooming past our house is incredible; easily 70mph+ at times. This is particularly true of motorcyclists who race down this road at all times of day; I have even seen motorcycles pulling 'wheelies' as they head over the brow of the hill; terrifying. In addition, the dual carriageway section as you head out of Cradley towards the right turn is exceptionally dangerous as cars don't always realise that those pulling into the right lane are using it as a turn-off lane to turn into the main Bromyard road on the right, and not as an overtaking lane. All of the above make this stretch of road exceptionally dangerous and the current speed limit feels too high. We would endorse a 30 mph zone on this road, through and beyond Cradley, probably as far as Fromes Hill, at which point the road widens.

#### **Resident M – Aged mid-70s. Male.**

“I feel extremely vulnerable when turning into Cradley at Ridgeway Cross. I am always very worried while I wait to turn with fast moving coming up from behind me.”

#### **Witness. Resident & Business Owner P – Aged XX. Female.**

“A reduced limit starting at Storridge would be even better. Over the years there have been a number of serious accidents and near-misses on this stretch of the main road too. On at least two occasions a few years ago, when it was really icy, lorries sped round the bend near Vinesend and crashed at the junction.

“On another occasion a car misjudged a bend and ended up hitting the garden wall of the detached house next to the (Alfrey) farm buildings on the other side of the road.

“Some time ago a driver hit the back of a car turning off the A4103 into a track.

“A solar powered sign which flashes up with a speed limit reminder would be a good start.”

**Witness. Resident & Business Owner S – Aged early 60s. Female.**

“Traffic, and especially lorries, thunder down past blue-ginger far too fast. There have been a few times when vehicles have gone off the road into the hedge opposite Home End Farm. It would seem that vehicles coming down too fast (and speeding up when they come out of the Ridgeway Hill speed limit) can easily lose it on this bend.

“Other examples of drivers losing control include a late-night caravan and car almost having a head-on collision in March 2015, a van driver checking his Sat Nav and ending up in the hedge and another driver coughing so much his vehicle also ended up in the hedge.”

**Witness. Resident T – Aged mid-40s. Female.**

“There have been at least 3-4 collisions every year at the Bromyard road / 4103 intersection... and based on the amount of horns we hear there have been many more near misses.”

## **5. What action should Cradley Parish Council take?**

Councillors can rely on Herefordshire Council to investigate the most recent A4103 accident and decide if new road safety measures can/need to be implemented.

Or councillors can:

1. Request a presentation and copy of the accident report from Herefordshire Council.
2. Request the very latest accident data from Herefordshire Council.
3. Carry out a short but clear online survey of parish residents and businesses to quantify near-misses, un-reported accidents and to seek consensus on the best way to improve safety on the A4103.
4. Monitor actual speeds by hiring speed measuring equipment.
5. Develop a clear, forthright campaign that includes contacting key decision makers, involving the local community and calling on support from the local media.
6. Decide which working group should take agreed action/s forward .

## **6. Newspaper articles**

**Worcester News – 10 November 2014**

A LORRY driver received emergency medical treatment after his heavy goods lorry overturned and landed in a hedgerow on the A4103 at Storridge.

The man, who is believed to be in his 20s, was freed by firefighters from the cab of the lorry after it overturned outside Millbank Garage at about 4.10pm. Although the man was able to move, he was unable to open the door and ambulance crews worked closely with firefighters to free him. He was treated for minor facial injuries at the scene before being taken to Hereford County Hospital for further assessment and treatment. The lorry driver has been freed from the cab and his injuries are not thought to be serious.

The overturned lorry has blocked the Hereford Road near Millbank Garage, Storridge, Cradley this evening. A section of the road is closed and drivers have been via the B4220 toward Bosbury. The lorry has now been fully stabilised.



Photograph: West Mercia Police

**Malvern Gazette – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2016**

TWO elderly men have been injured after a crash between a small car and an HGV.

The crash happened at just after 2pm yesterday (Wednesday) at the junction of the A4103 and B4220 at Stony Cross, near Cradley. Two ambulances, a paramedic area support officer and the Midlands Air Ambulance from Strensham were sent to the scene. A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman said: "On arrival crews found a car that had lost most of the bonnet.

"There was also a lorry that had front end damage which had ended up in a brick wall.

"The front seat passenger of the car, a man in his 70s, had suffered serious chest injuries as well as abrasions.

"He was treated at the scene and immobilised before being airlifted to the major trauma centre at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham.

"The driver of the car suffered minor injuries and was shaken by what had happened. After being assessed, the man who was in his 80s, was taken to Worcestershire Royal Hospital as a precaution.

"The man driving the lorry was uninjured. However, the situation could have been very different. A trampoline that was just behind the wall the lorry collided with had been crushed. Had there been anyone on it the situation could have been very serious."

Firefighters from Malvern and Droitwich, as well as the police, were sent to the scene of the incident.

It involved a seven tonne lorry and a car, which crashed into each other and a telegraph pole.

A spokesman from Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service added that the telegraph pole was damaged and left leaning, and BT had been contacted to fix the pole.

## **6. Contacts**

### **Herefordshire Council**

Traffic Accident Investigator

Simon Hobbs

Simon has advised that:

1. Road accident data and a copy of the incident report can be requested via County Councillor Patricia Morgan.
2. Official representations from the Parish Council will have to be raised through Balfour Beatty. Balfour Beatty are responsible for managing the highway network on behalf of Herefordshire Council.

### **West Mercia Police**

Traffic Management Advisor

Ian Connolly

Corporate Communications (Stratford)

Road Traffic Collisions

Witness Care and Traffic Unit

Operational Support

Kidderminster Police Station

Habberly Road

Kidderminster

Worcs

DY11 6AN

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**10<sup>th</sup> November 2016**