



**PAPER ON WHITELEY PEDESTRIAN ISSUES  
REQUIRING IMPROVEMENT FOR  
'SAFER ACCESS TO SCHOOL'**

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## **Introduction**

This paper has been prepared by the Highways and Transport Committee of Whiteley Parish Council in response to many questions and suggestions received from Committee members, Parish Councillors and Whiteley residents over recent months via telephone, email, letter or in person at our meetings.

## **Overview**

Whiteley is a delightful community to live in. Respondents to our recent Parish Plan (Residents' Questionnaire May 2008) confirmed this when asked what they most like about living in Whiteley. More than two-fifths (43%) of respondents feel that it is the natural setting, countryside and woodlands they like. When asked what they would most like to see happen in Whiteley in the future, over two-fifths (44%) wish to see improved access and reduced traffic.

A major traffic congested area within Whiteley (solely caused by Whiteley residents) is at Gull Coppice, Yew Tree Drive where the Primary School is located nestled within a Local Centre comprising of:

- Two Take-aways
- Convenience Store
- Hair Salon
- Tanning and Nail Bar
- Private Health Clinic and Dentist
- Private Childcare Centre
- Community Centre including Pre-School

This local centre is within the Fareham Borough Council (FBC) boundary however; the approach to the centre for Winchester rate paying residents by footpath or highway is within the Winchester City Council remit. The centre provides inadequate parking for the volume of traffic and has become dangerous – it was anticipated that residents would mostly walk to the Centre and/or Primary School.

The Parish Council has discussed with residents and received various communications explaining why residents do not walk to the centre.

This paper will offer some possible options to improve the current situation and enable a solution to be identified.

## **The Problems**

In summary, it is believed that the current pedestrian network is inadequate and traffic volumes impede the decision to walk.

The problem can be broken down into four areas, namely:

1. The woodland pathway through Gull Coppice floods when it rains – wellingtons need to be worn to progress through this route.
2. The crossing point from (1.) across Yew Tree Drive (YTD) which then leads to the Primary School and Local Centre is only manned by the School Crossing Patrol (SCP) at school opening and closing times. The school has after-school and breakfast clubs at peak traffic times - YTD is very busy and difficult to cross without the SCP. The Community Centre holds many weekend and evening activities for children. Children cannot make their own way to the Centre as YTD is too difficult to cross without an adult present. The presence of the SCP at school times cannot be guaranteed so again parents need to accompany their children at those times too. Unfortunately the traffic does not choose to give way to pedestrians voluntarily.
3. There is no SCP at the YTD / Rookery Avenue (RA) junction. The footpath is only on one side of the road at YTD necessitating in another difficult cross-over a busy junction. This is used by pedestrians from Sorrel Drive, Lovage Road and East Whiteley residential areas (and others when the woodland path is too muddy). Some parents use the 'park and stroll' facility offered by the Solent Hotel (in conjunction with the Primary School) and they need to cross here too. Again children still need to be accompanied by an adult to walk this route.
4. Residents in the 'Herbs' area of Winchester Whiteley have to walk through the garden of the local Public House (Parson's Collar) to access Rookery Avenue from Marjoram Way as the footpath and highway link is not complete. Residents feel intimidated when walking through and the situation is further exacerbated by the recent 'Smoking Law' whereby more patrons are now sitting in the garden of the public house smoking, drinking and using language inappropriate for children. It is difficult dodging tables/seating with pushchairs, scooters and/or a pushbike. Another concern was made from a dog-walker who commented that it is not appropriate to walk through the garden with dogs when food is being served/eaten outside in the warmer months. The present 'unofficial' route is not accessible by bicycle.

## **Proposed Solutions**

1. Improvement to the current pathway through Gull Coppice:  
The pathway cannot be of traditional tarmac construction as streetlights would not be permitted through the woodland however a finer grit surface with new drainage and camber on a higher pathway surface would suffice and resolve the present issues.
2. Ideally a Toucan or Pedestrian crossing would be the perfect solution with associated railings on the Primary School side of YTD.  
Alternatively a 'pinch point' on YTD narrowing the highway to a single lane with a different coloured surface between emphasising that it is a pedestrian crossing point with associated barriers on the footpath preventing children running out into the road. The SCP has often commented that they have stopped children dashing into the road at this point on many occasions.
3. Continue the footpath from Rookery Avenue North up YTD on the woodland side of the road to the crossing point mentioned in 2. to enable all pedestrians to cross at the single point.
4. Construct the footpath only aspect of the Marjoram Way / Rookery Avenue link. This need not be of tarmac construction – a wooden walkway spanning the stream would suffice and be more desirable than the existing route (this is also of wooden construction). This would allow access between Marjoram Way and Rookery Avenue by bicycle which is not currently possible.

## **Conclusion**

Whiteley suffers from an incomplete and inadequate pedestrian network with significant traffic volumes causing further impediment.

The issues detailed in this paper do have simple solutions. The solutions proposed compliment each other meaning a solution to one problem does not create or cause a worsening of any of the existing problems.

If asked to prioritise the proposed solutions on the previous page then the highest priority would be for the scheme described in 2. a crossing point on YTD. If option 3. is considered then this would need to be preceded by the construction of 2.

These solutions could really enhance the pedestrian/cycle network and encourage more residents to make use of our Greenways thus reducing much of the internal vehicular movements. More importantly it would allow children to **walk to school** safely and promote a healthier/greener lifestyle. The 'Park and Stroll' could prove more desirable as a drop off point than Gull Coppice should the children not have to cross a busy road unaccompanied.

This paper meets our criteria set for 'key objectives & strategy issues' for the Highways & Transport Committee 2009/2010 which states "***Encouraging walking & cycling wherever possible, raising awareness of local rights of way and footpaths.***"

## **Recommendation**

That the above paper be adopted at Full Council on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2009 and be forwarded to Andy Hickman at Winchester City Council in response to his letter requesting schemes to be considered for 'Development of a Programme of Local Transport Scheme'