

ESBG Active and Sustainable Travel Report

One of the objectives of the ES&BG Neighbourhood Plan is to:

Reduce concerns over road safety and help community health and well-being by improvements to road layout, parking and traffic management hardware and by actions to encourage more walking and cycling.

This overall objective will be realised by the objectives for policy ESBG17:

- *Safer roads – improved physical layout & traffic management hardware*
- *More walking/cycling – safe paths/cycleways*
- *Right-sized parking capacity in settlement centres which have parking bays in open/shared areas.*

Historic development of the parish and its transport links

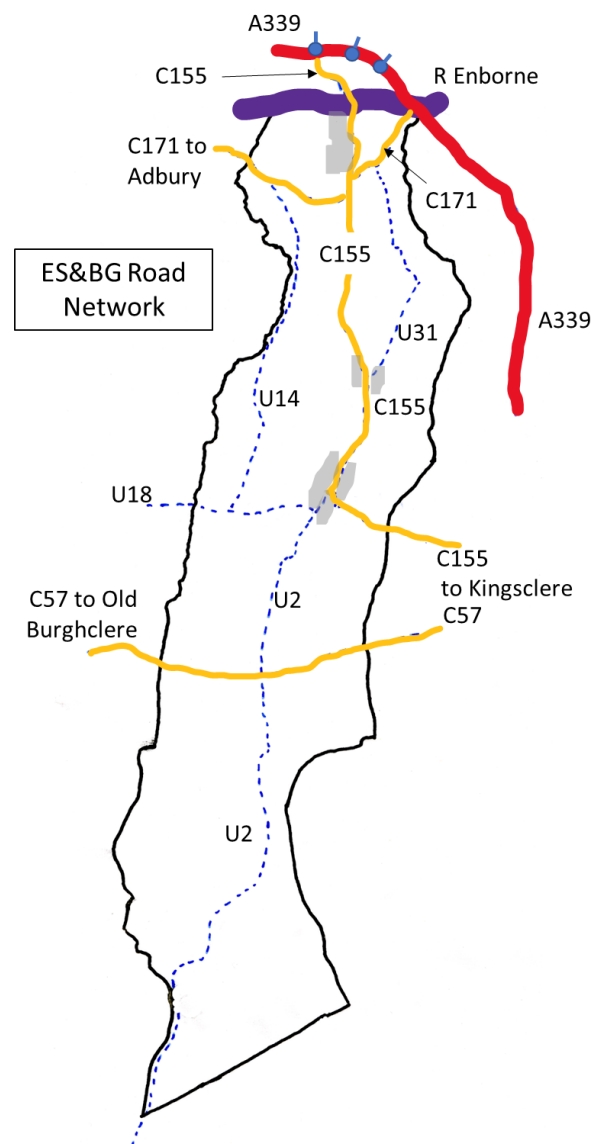
- The River Enborne is a natural barrier to the north, historically bridged by fords in Bishops Green and Sydmonton Common and a crossing at Knights Bridge. The Clere Escarpment crosses the parish to the south carrying the Wayfarers Walk which is an east-west route based on old drovers paths. The southern boundary of the parish is an old Roman (perhaps pre-Roman) road known as Portway from Silchester to Old Sarum
- Originally two long thin areas of small settlements (Ecchinswell/Ecchinswell Green/Brocks Green/North Ecchinswell and Sydmonton/North Sydmonton), that were combined into today's Civil Parish of Ecchinswell Sydmonton & Bishops Green. As a result, two long north-south lanes developed in the northern half of the parish following north-south streams. Ecchinswell was the more significant settlement with two parts (Itchingswell and Itchingswell Green). Sydmonton has remained smaller and basically developed around Sydmonton Court (historic home of the Kingsmill Estate) although near today's Bishops Green, there is the scattering of homes known as North Sydmonton and the wooded Sydmonton Common.
- Bishops Green did not exist as a material settlement until the 20th century and was initially enlarged in phases to accommodate staff from the Greenham Common airbase and then partially redeveloped and expanded in the early 2000s. It is now the biggest settlement in the parish.
- Ecchinswell has slowly evolved and expanded over the 19th and 20th centuries with a mix of larger and smaller dwellings initially serving the local agricultural community and more recently as accommodation for people working outside the parish.
- Sydmonton has barely grown over the last century with new homes occasionally being built to accommodate agricultural workers
- Historic north-south routes/paths
 - a) From the Knights Bridge crossing (or the ford at what is now Bishops Green) through Ecchinswell, south over Watership Down and then through Ashley Warren/Hare Warren towards Whitchurch. This has evolved to be the "main" C155/U2 north-south route through the parish although it is an unclassified C/U road with some single lane stretches.

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- b) From the ford near the SW corner of Sydmonton Common south through Sydmonton Court up to Ladle Hill. Today this is a mix of very narrow rural lanes (U14) and private roads that are also public footpaths or bridleways
- The modern A339 running east-west to the north of the parish was added after WW2 following the establishment of the (now dismantled) airbase at Greenham Common. The old road ran across the Common from Newbury and Greenham village to Knights Bridge and Headley.
 - There are east-west lanes following old links between Kingsclere and Burghclere/Old Burghclere one via Ecchinswell (C155/U18) and one via Sydmonton (C57).
 - There has never been a railway in the parish – the old Newbury to Winchester line ran through Burghclere/Old Burghclere just to the west.

Today's situation

- A network of narrow rural lanes has largely replaced old paths and tracks – there are no A or B class roads in the parish. Most of the lanes will, with care, allow two cars to pass but larger vehicles have to find passing places or go onto the verges. There are a number of pinch points that will allow only one vehicle to pass most notably at the bridge on the C155 over the River Enborne on the northern boundary of the parish entering Bishops Green, the stretch of the C155 from North Sydmonton past the entrance to North Ecchinswell Farm and the tight series of bends and a bridge over the stream to the east of the Royal Oak in Ecchinswell on the C155 road to Kingsclere.
- The main routes through the parish and the settlements have a mix of 30/40mph restrictions. Speeding is a major concern to residents and the cause of regular incidents/accidents – so far fortunately without serious injury or death. There are particular concerns over the main route through Bishops Green, in the narrow and restricted view areas in the middle of Ecchinswell and on the routes between Bishops Green and Ecchinswell and through Sydmonton.
- None of the roads through the parish are designed to be significant transit routes (most have parts that are U grade roads) although the C57 road through Sydmonton is becoming



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increasingly used to access the A34 junction near Old Burghclere and Highclere Stud. However, when there are incidents or maintenance closures on the surrounding major roads, Sat-Navs often redirect drivers through the parish. This can create inappropriately high volumes of car traffic for the roads especially at the pinch points.

- Of more concern are bigger vehicles failing to notice the 20ft length restriction on the C155 Ecchinswell Kingsclere road and then getting stuck and/or damaging the bridge as has happened several times in the last 5 years. (Very few commercial vehicle now seem to use the special Sat-Navs with warnings about height/weight/length restrictions.)
- The overall volume of traffic especially the number of bigger vehicles means that the road surfaces, substructure and edges are in an increasingly poor/fragile state especially where there are drainage ditches and culverts/spring-lines under the road.
- Very few of the roadways have pavement footpaths. There are good pavements in the denser housing areas (Ash Road/Eagle road in Bishops Green and Oakfields/White Hill in Ecchinswell) and a stretch of footpath from the north end of Eagle Road up the main route to the A339. The absence of footpaths, the rather narrow lanes and the speed/frequency of traffic means that walking or cycling between the settlements and/or to destinations outside the parish is only attractive to confident pedestrians/cyclists.
- There is an extensive network of footpaths in the parish but these are routed and with a level of accessibility that makes them attractive for leisure use but impractical for errands or travel to work/school etc.
- Houses in the more densely populated parts of the parish (Ash Road/Eagle road in Bishops Green and Oakfields/White Hill in Ecchinswell) have little or no parking within their curtilages and hence rely heavily on street parking.
 - In Eagle Road and the Vivid housing in Ash Road there are allocated spaces that partly meet total demand but with an increasing number of cars and larger work-related vans, there is significant over-spill.
 - In Oakfields there are parking areas with no allocation and some garages for rent – although the parking was revised in 2019, it is still short of demand.
- For the rest of the parish, houses mostly have sufficient parking within their curtilages.
- There is extensive public parking at Ecchinswell Village Hall but parking at Bishops Green Village Hall is very limited and not at all matched to the Hall capacity.

Objectives and Deliverables

<p>“Slow the pace” of traffic on our narrow roads.</p>	<p>Change the “drivers view of the road” to slow traffic without damaging “sense of place”.</p> <p>Focus on perceived narrowing of roads and enhanced visibility of resident activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 30 mph limit & “Slow the Pace” measures on C155 through Bishops Green ➤ “Slow the Pace” projects in Ecchinswell & Sydmonton (C155, C57, U2) ➤ Moving 30mph limit on the C155 road from Kingsclere to Ecchinswell so it starts at the village boundary sign. ➤ All repair and improvement of roads must include “slow the pace” action ➤ All developments must include “slow the pace” at point of access and on roads within. <p>Back Lane (U14), Featherbed Lane (C171) & Hyde Lane (U31) to be designated “Quiet Lanes”</p>
<p>Minimise transit traffic especially HGVs</p>	<p>Work with HCC to eliminate/minimise HGV traffic in inappropriate locations</p> <p>Ensure signage preventing transit traffic is correctly sited and highly visible</p> <p>Ensure roads are suitable for local agricultural activity</p> <p>Any new rural business activity must be scaled and appropriate to the road network</p>
<p>Safer footpaths & cycle ways for key routes.</p>	<p>New developments should have safe foot access to settlement facilities</p> <p>“Slow the Pace” & “Quiet Lane” projects with a focus on pedestrians/cyclists/riders</p>
<p>Improving access to Public Rights of Way</p>	<p>Work with Landowners to optimise year-round accessibility. On many paths, with the help of HCC Countryside service and co-operation with landowners, stiles have been replaced by gates that improve access. There are however a small number of stiles remaining that limit access.</p>
<p>Parking capacity matches demand</p>	<p>Design Standards to set minimum parking capacity for all developments</p> <p>Work with Sovereign/Vivid to optimise capacity in Bishops Green/Ecchinswell</p>

Many of these items are projects included in Section 6 of the ES&BG NP.

Speeding: Four key priorities:

1) 30 mph limit PLUS “slow the pace measures” on the main C155 route through Bishops Green between the Enborne bridge and Hyde Lane

Criteria for a 30 limit from HCC traffic management policy (from 2014 <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/road-safety/TrafficManagementPolicyGuidanceJanuary2014.pdf>) and specifically the section on Rural Speed Management are:

30 mph speed limits are common in built-up areas such as city and town streets, and residential areas. The Village 30 project provided an opportunity for any village in Hampshire to make a bid for a 30 mph speed limit where 20 or more fronting properties existed within a 600 metre length of road. This resulted in around 130 villages throughout the county being provided with new 30 mph speed limits, changes which are considered to have improved community life and enhanced safety for all road users. This project is now complete and any new requests for speed limits must be individually assessed and prioritised.

30 mph limits will not generally be provided in roads that do not meet the aforementioned fronting properties criteria (unless there is a particular accident history that cannot be addressed by other means). This is to help maintain drivers’ association of 30 mph limits with built-up areas. The combination of visible road geometry and local features such as junctions, limited forward visibility, pedestrian crossings, schools, recreation grounds and public amenities, as well as the pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian activity, can help support the need for a lower level speed limit. However, other important assessment criteria involve the accident history and current vehicle speeds. Locations with higher numbers of recorded injury accidents and vehicle speeds which are already close to or below a proposed speed limit are usually given higher priority. It should be noted that where a system of street lighting exists the use of speed limit repeater signing is strictly prohibited by legislation. The street lighting alone indicates to drivers that they are within a 30 mph speed limit.

Specifically the stretch we want limited

- is ~800-900m long
- has entrances to 12 homes/premises
- has a pavement cross-over not far from the Enborne bridge that has to be used if you are walking to/from the A339
- has 2 bus stops – one with a shelter where the bus often waits for many minutes in the road on a blind bend
- has the only entrance to Ash Road with 100 + homes with likely 200+ residents’ cars and large number to daily vehicle movements inc access to Village Hall and the shop
- has two entrances to the ends of Eagle Road with 88 homes and likely ~ 200 residents’ cars and large number of daily vehicle movements including the bus service using Eagle Road to turn around
- has the entry to Rooksfield with ~ 10 homes
- has the entrance to Hyde Lane
- has a bad record of excess speeding (a recent Parish Council traffic survey and others submitted with recent planning applications show typical speeds of 40+ mph with many instances of much higher speeds)
- has a recent history of 3 significant accidents (none properly recorded by the Police) in the latest of which death or serious injury was only avoided by pure luck
- has street lights in the road which would normally indicate a 30 mph limit

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Each of these might not meet the criteria but the combination makes a strong case reinforced by the strong wish of residents for a reduced limit.

Reducing the limit may well not have much impact but if combined with some proven “Slow the Pace” measures applied to and around the road (see case studies in <https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Traffic-in-villages.pdf>) should deliver the desired reduction in speeds and safety. The Neighbourhood Plan will also be pursuing this.

2) “Slowing the Pace” in Ecchinswell and Sydmonton. The measures used in the case studies in this report (<https://www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Traffic-in-villages.pdf>) and in other examples are proven to work and should be applied

- a) in the very narrow parts of Ecchinswell (C155/U2) not only on the main north-south route (C155/U2) but also the very tight route (C155) to Kingsclere
- b) to the route north from Ecchinswell (C155) especially by the church, past the pond, on the straight stretch past Ratts Cottages and through Brock Green

all of this is a 30mph zone but speeds are often found to be much higher

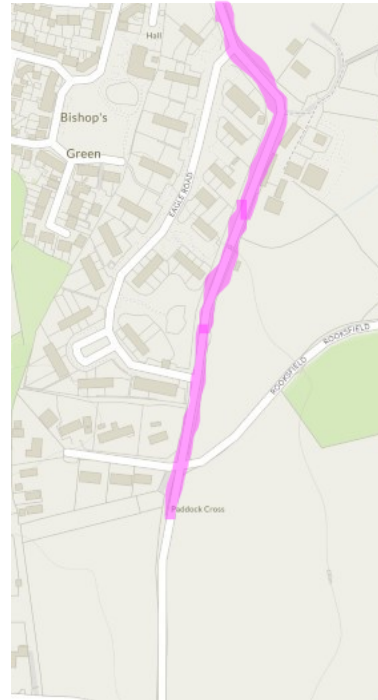
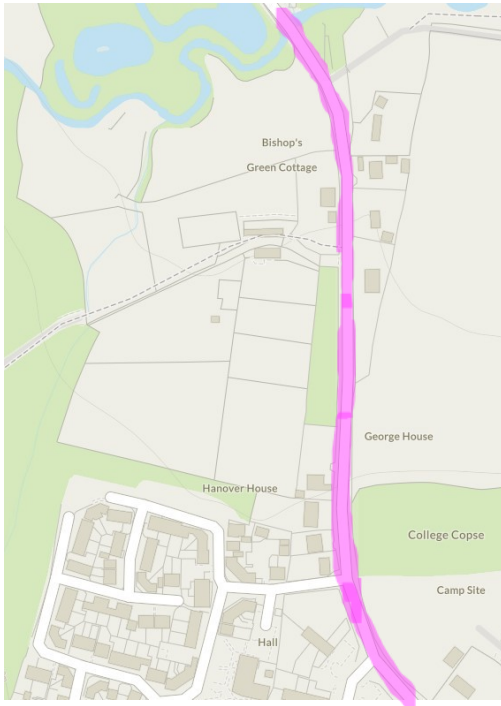
- c) approaches to the very narrow/dark passage on the C155 past North Ecchinswell Farm, the entrance to North Sydmonton House and up to Sun House – this is a 40 mph limit with frequent “near misses”

For the centre of Ecchinswell around the school, village Hall and pub the north-south road is very narrow with significant pedestrian activity at certain times of day and a 20mph zone could support other “slow the pace” changes/installations.

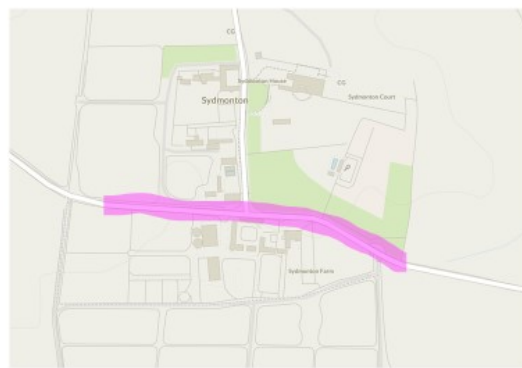
The C57 road through Sydmonton comes from Kingsclere and goes towards the A34 junction near Highclere Stud and the national speed limit (60mph) is applicable. A traffic survey showed typical speeds along this road as ~40mph with some travelling at significantly greater speeds. The section through Sydmonton is narrow and has a number of entrances to houses, farm buildings, stables and footpaths with a mix of vehicle, pedestrian, and significant equine usage. Efforts to get Hampshire County Council to reduce the speed limit have not been fruitful so measures to “slow the pace” are required.



Proposed “Slow the Pace” areas – Bishops Green

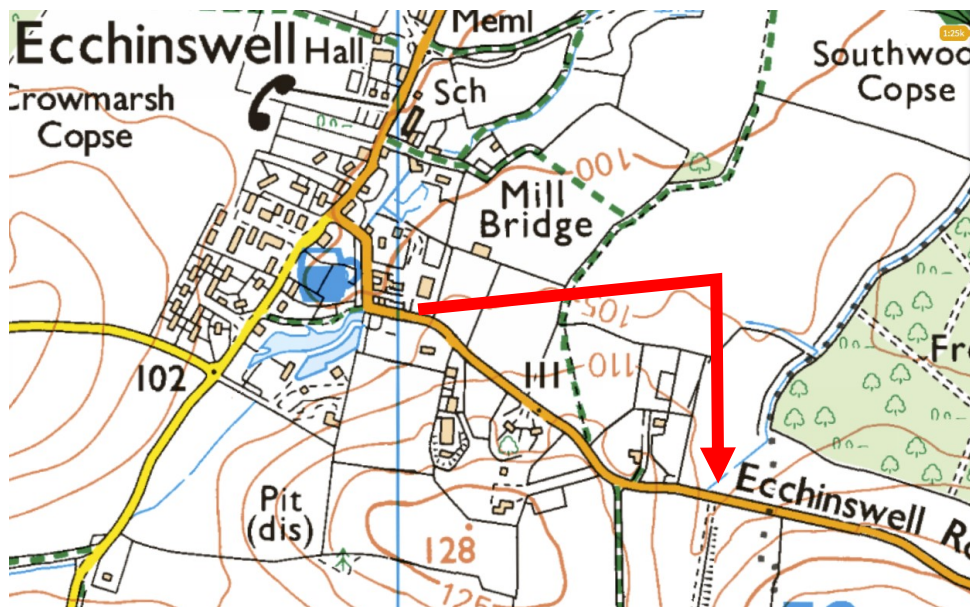


Proposed “Slow the Pace” areas – Ecchinswell and Sydmonton



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3) Moving 30mph sign on the C155 road into Echchinswell from Kingsclere. At present, coming from Kingsclere, the 30mph limit starts just before the sharp turn at the stream. This means the narrow bendy road past the entrances to 8 houses, a stable yard and a footpath that has a staggered crossing of the road are all in the national speed limit area applicable to the whole road from Kingsclere (60mph). A clear 30 mph speed limit starting at the sign indicating entry to the village would be a significant safety improvement when combined with “Slow the Pace” measures. The red arrow shows the relocation required.



4) Quiet Lane Designation for the narrower lanes in the parish

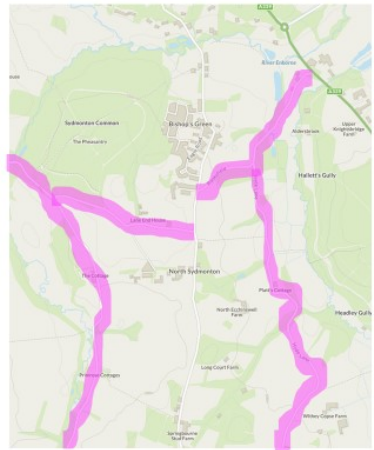
Other rural parishes have found it successful to designate their narrower (single track) lanes used by pedestrians, horse and cyclists as “Quiet Lanes” using special signage. Proposal is to do this for the narrow single track lanes in ES&BG – specifically the C171/U2/U14/U31:



Quiet Lanes – examples & proposals for the north part of the Parish



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Example from Bucklebury



Quiet Lanes proposed for centre and south parts of the Parish



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