

FRESHFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Traffic Consultation on Dark Lane/Church Hill

1 October to 30 November 2021

Purpose of this consultation

Freshford Parish Council wishes to design a scheme to improve the environment for the residents of Dark Lane and Church Hill. The streets were never designed for cars and particularly not visitor traffic and large commercial vehicles. There is no perfect solution that will meet everyone's needs; some compromise is inevitable and public funds are limited.

Nevertheless, it is vital that residents are consulted at an early stage to understand their views to the possible options available. This consultation is open to ALL residents of Freshford. Obviously, the views of residents of the streets impacted are critical.

Current Issues

- Visitor traffic and commercial vehicles are using Dark Lane and Church Hill, largely due to SatNav instructions, causing nuisance to residents and damaging property.
- Private driveways are used by vehicles that become stuck in attempts to turn round.
- Private property has been damaged - walls, guttering and roof tiles;
- Cars sometimes park on the pavement on Church Hill and along the lower section of Dark Lane, potentially obstructing emergency vehicles;
- The existing signage is inconsistent and confusing. It is also largely ignored.
- SatNav - some Apps continue to indicate that Church Hill and Dark Lane are suitable routes through the village.

Options

These options are not mutually exclusive; it should be possible to use more than one option if it proves feasible, popular and affordable.

1 **Road closure** – 3 possible sites have been suggested:

- a. Top of Church Hill near St Peter's Church;
- b. Bottom of Church Hill at the junction with Dark Lane;
- c. Top of Dark Lane at the junction with Church Lane.

If a Road Closure is implemented, there would have to be a **No Through Road** sign introduced at all of the entry points to Dark Lane & Church Hill.

The detail would be subject to a design by the Traffic Engineers at BANES.

2 **Improved signage**, particularly at the top of Church Hill.

3 **Low Traffic Neighbourhood.**

Low traffic neighbourhoods (LTN) are groups of residential streets, bordered by main or “distributor” roads, used by buses, lorries, and through traffic. In a LTN most of this vehicle traffic is discouraged or removed. The main principle is that every resident can still drive to their premises and get deliveries. It is made impossible to drive straight through from one main road to the next main road.

4 **SatNav Changes**

Anecdotal evidence is that unwanted through traffic is using some SatNav product. All SatNav products use core databases maintained by a few companies. The theory is that if we can influence these database companies to de-classify Dark Lane and Church Hill, they will become invisible on all SatNav products such as Google Maps, TomTom etc.

In practice this option needs to be pursued in association with some of the other physical changes above.

The Parish Council is already in contact with HERE Technologies, part of Nokia Group, who are one of the suppliers of street data to SatNav products.

Advantages and Concerns of the Options

See the map of Dark Lane and Church Hill on the next page.

1 Road closure

Benefits

- It solves the problem. It provides a physical barrier that cannot be ignored and does not rely on technology.
- It is supported by the BANES Traffic Engineer.

Concerns

- Wherever placed, it will inconvenience residents to a small or larger degree. You will still be able to access your property, although via a slight diversion.
- It is expensive, will involve a long period of formal consultation and a Road Traffic Order. It will take some time and could be subject to legal challenges that BANES may not wish to contest.

Possible Road Closures



2 Improved signage

Benefits

- Signage is cheap and relatively easy to implement.
- It will have minimal impact on residents.

Concerns

- Basically, the sad fact is that it doesn't work. It is largely ignored by the majority of due to the proliferation of signage over the years. Drivers have enough to worry about with pedestrians, other traffic, pot-holes, to bother much about signage.
- Drivers following a SatNav tend to ignore road signs, if they see them at all.

3 Low Traffic Neighbourhood

Benefits

- Makes streets safer, healthier and quieter;
- Previous LTNs have seen 15% decrease in traffic;
- LTNs encourage cycling and walking;
- NO THROUGH signs would be placed at the top of Dark Lane, the junction of Dark Lane and New Street and at the top of Church Hill;
- There will be a physical barrier preventing through traffic.

Concerns

- Residents would have only one route to access their premises;
- Emergency vehicles – fire, police and ambulance – would be consulted and would have to support the proposal. They would know of the specific routes to any part of the LTN. With previous LTN consultations, Emergency Services have been supportive.
- A LTN may not evaporate traffic but push it to other streets – High Street and New Road. There is evidence from the Europe and London that LTNs do reduce overall traffic levels.

Your views are sought to the Options above.

1 Road Closure

In Favour

Against

Don't Know

2 Improved signage

In Favour

Against

Don't Know

3 Low Traffic Neighbourhood

In Favour

Against

Don't Know

Further Comments

Name:

Address

Please return to:
Parish Clerk, Freshford Parish Council