

# Traffic in Cottingham Village.



A report by the Cottingham  
Parish Council.

August 2016

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# 1. INTRODUCTION.

The traffic issues facing Cottingham village are by no means unique. Lack of space to park vehicles is a common issue in villages across England. Old villages designed for a more leisurely way of life find themselves having to deal with modern traffic, often with vehicle numbers that can feel overwhelming. In addition, exceeding the speed limit through villages along with careless and inconsiderate driving can add to the anxiety of residents.

“Cars and lorries are part of our lives, for better or worse. Maintaining and protecting the quality of life against a background of growing traffic volumes is perhaps the greatest challenge facing most rural communities.” (Traffic in Villages Safety and Civility for Rural Roads - A toolkit for communities; Mitchell and Hamilton-Baillie; 2012/13?).

There are a number of dilemmas:-

- How to preserve the rural aspect of the village at times when the number of vehicles on the road is growing. An issue made more difficult by the split between authority highways and authority environmental groups along with a lack of public transport.
- How to avoid mass enforcement of highway regulations which will inevitably lead to the alienation of the residents.
- How to pay for any perceived changes at a time when both County and Borough Councils are facing cuts in budgets and considering that a Parish Council's budget is small.
- How to involve a wide audience in the determination of policy. For example, residents, Borough and County Councils.

This report is an attempt to encapsulate the issues faced by the village of Cottingham. It is a record of the work undertaken by the Parish Council along with references to other English Parishes, who have, and are still, facing similar issues. It further offers suggestions to help alleviate problems arising from the plethora of vehicles which are used by the villagers and their visitors as a necessity in their daily lives.

## 2. SCOPE OF REPORT.

Responsibility for highways rests with the Northamptonshire Highways Department who have been given legal powers under the Highways Act 1980 and in part by the Local Government Act of 1985.

“Outside Greater London the council of a county [or metropolitan district] are the highway authority for all highways in the county [or, as the case may be, the district], whether or not maintainable at the public expense [..].

(Highways Act 1980, ch.66 part 1).

The Northamptonshire County Council also has responsibility for the maintenance of highways which require public funding to maintain.

Verge cutting and maintenance has been accepted as the responsibility of Cottingham Parish Council.

As a Parish Council, Cottingham Parish Council must approach Northamptonshire Highways Authority, possible via Corby Borough Council, if the Parish requires any work involving highways to be undertaken. At a time when Councils are facing budget cuts, finding solutions to the issues raised in this report, which will inevitably incur expense, are going to be difficult. Hence, this report can only be advisory.

### 3. STATE OF THE VILLAGE ROADS.

Whilst the majority of the village's road surfaces are in reasonable repair there are some noticeable exceptions.

Blind Lane.



The parlous state of the road surface immediately outside Cottingham Primary School.

Church Street



## 4. ROAD MARKINGS AND SINAGE.

The majority of road markings are faded and worn. The exception being the recently introduced double yellow lines around the area of the village shop.

Fading zebra crossing outside the village Primary School where the markings are wearing away



Indistinct give way markings at the junction of Mill Field Lane and Corby Road

Faded centre line at the bottom of High Street.



There are few road signs, other than finger posts, but two give pause for thought.

The owner of this house has been good enough to cut the hedge so that it reveals the sign. There has to come a time when the hedge will obscure the sign even if only for a few days until the hedge is cut again. (At the triangle outside the village school).



This is a sign purporting to show the one way system on School Lane. There have been observations that some residents from this small housing estate off School Lane are ignoring the one way warning.

Finger posts (direction signs) are generally in good order but, care needs to be taken to ensure that they are cleaned regularly.

There has been one occasion when a lorry driver found it difficult to turn round and drive out of Berryfield road. Turning for large vehicles is difficult. Perhaps some warning should be given to the unsuspecting.



Is this a bus stop? The bus regularly stops here but, there are no signs either on the road or a post at the “triangle” outside the village school. If it is indeed a bus stop the bus driver is not being helped by parents parking to drop off or collect their children from the school.



## 5. PARKING.

Village parking is a major concern. It is divisive, causes upset between neighbours and is possibly one of the most difficult issues to deal with. However, we should be aware of any difficulties created for emergency vehicles posed by parking. The photographs below show the parking which occurs at a number of locations around the village.



Church Street



Berryfield Road



Large vans parked on Bancroft Road

Parking outside the old Factory on Rockingham Road. This is off road parking. However, the vehicles parked on the right foreground are parked in an area with no hard surfacing or dropped kerb.



## 6. VERGES.

Overcrowding, particularly on narrow roads, tempts vehicle owners to park on the verge or pavement. Whilst this might seem an understandable approach to ensure free flow of traffic, it often leads to damage to the verge or pavement, can force pedestrians to walk on the road and creates difficulties for the disabled and parents using pushchairs. Parking on verges makes it difficult for the grass to be cut. It is also worth noting that verge parking often happens through force of habit. The village has a number of roads where vehicles are regularly parked on a verge. Whether this is necessary or not is a matter for debate.



Mill Field Avenue. Inconsiderate parking leaving little room for pedestrians



Berryfield Road.



Damage caused by driving over a verge without a drop kerb, Ripley Road.



Bancroft Road.

Perhaps not in the short term but, mounting the verge to park a vehicle will inevitably cause damage to verge or kerbstones.



Kerb damage Bancroft Road



Damaged kerb at the bottom of High Street.



Damaged verge Bancroft Road.



Damaged verge Berryfield Road.

## 7. THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

There can be little doubt that a village school with an intake from a number of villages will require parents to drive their children to school. However, there is opportunity for parents to opt for free school transport providing they meet the Northamptonshire County Council requirements.

The 'school run' inevitably causes problems for the free flow of traffic through parts of the village, particularly around the junction of Mill Road, High Street and Berry Road (The Triangle).



Parking at the start of the school day.

There are far more vehicles than this at the end of the school day, when the parking extends into Berryfield Road and up High Street.

## 8. SOME POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.

### 1. Provision of extra parking places.

Operator licences are required for commercial vehicles with a plated weight of 3.500 kg. or an unladen weight of 1,525 kg. (Gov.UK website "Being a Goods Vehicle Operator"). To gain a licence an operator has to provide details of where their vehicles will be parked, this is the operating centre. Contrary to what has been said there is no lower limit on the number of vehicles operated. The ruling also applies to vans which are hired by the company.



This rule can be enforced by the Highways Authority or the Traffic Commissioner. However, before action to enforce the ruling it would be better to find alternative parking for large vans. There are only a few vans which park on the road when not in use, notably the two shown on page 8. The garage space at the bottom of Bancroft Road could be used to park these vehicles.



The garages on Berryfield Road have space which could be used to park vehicles. The area should be marked out en-echelon with each space being 5 by 2.5 m as recommended by the Stevenage report (Page 18).

This plot of land on the corner of Berry Road and Glover Court could be used as a site for extra parking. If this could be afforded then it could be used to persuade parents delivering and collecting children from school to park here rather than around the school.



There is a covenant limiting the site to leisure use only. The building, covered in ivy, is an old pumping station which would require demolition. However, it has proved difficult to discover who is the owner of the building. Further costs incurred, would be:

- legal fees, particularly the cost of changing the covenant and land transfer,
- clearing the site,
- hard surfacing,
- access from Glover Road, drop kerbs, driveway etc.

The picture on the right shows the only possible access to the site.



This scheme could prove expensive and as with all the parking schemes suggested in this report there will need to be some persuasion of residents and parents of school children to use the spaces provided.

In addition the Council will approach the Landlord of the Spread Eagle public house to see if he would be willing to allow parents to use his car park as part of the Park and Stride initiative.

## **2. Maintenance of road surfaces and signage.**

As shown on page 4, a number of the village's roads are in a poor state of repair. This maintenance is not something that the Parish Council can undertake. The Council needs to constantly remind the Northamptonshire Highways Dept. of the need to effect repairs.

Similarly, the road markings are generally in poor condition. Requests have been made to improve the pedestrian crossing and no parking lines (zig-zag) outside of the village school. In addition the Authority has undertaken to paint white arrows on school lane to make it



“One Way” arrows School Lane

clear that the road is one way complimenting the “Way Out” sign shown on page 6. Further needs to be done to ensure that all the village road markings are clear and not eroded.

The Authority has been asked to provide a “No Through Road” sign at the top of Berryfield Road. (See page 6).

The bus company should be approached to ascertain whether or not the bus is stopping at a designated bus stop (See page 7). This being the case then either the bus company or the Authority should place a “Bus Stop” sign at the triangle. It would be preferable if the Authority could paint the words “Bus Stop” on the road along with the normal no parking lines within the bus stop area.

### **3. Verge parking.**

Parking on verges is difficult to control. There are roads in the village which are so narrow that if vehicles were parked on the road they would effectively block through traffic. This issue is exacerbated by a number of houses not having driveways or dropped kerbs. It is not possible for the Parish Council to insist that residents pay for driveways and/or dropped kerbs. The provision of extra parking areas could alleviate the problem somewhat. In the short term it is suggested that serial offenders who park on the verge where it is unnecessary, or those who block the pavement to such an extent that pedestrians have to walk in the road, are reported to Northamptonshire County Council using their “Street Doctor” web site. Additionally, the local PCO should be asked to place polite notices asking the vehicle owners to be more considerate when they park their vehicles.

If the council considers that verge parking in some areas is unnecessary then it could invest in placing bollards on the verge to deter parking.

### **4. The school.**

With consideration for the safety of school children, a number of options to improve conditions around the school have been considered. These include the possible purchase of bollards, made to look like school children, to warn drivers that their attitude to parking and speeding around the school puts the children at risk. Unfortunately, the cost of these along with the cost of placing 20 mph signs near the school was prohibitive. The only answer to date is to either place no parking lines outside the school or rely on the successful conclusion of the extra parking ideas.

It would be a reasonable assumption that most parents who drive their children to school are aware of the Northamptonshire County Council’s transport policy and they may well have attempted to obtain transport unsuccessfully. Should it be the case that some parents are unaware of the policy, then a number of vehicles could be removed around the school by persuading parents to apply for the transport. Perhaps the school could be approached to advise parents if it does not already do so.

## 9. PARISH COUNCIL PROCESSES.

Cottingham Parish Council has formed a Working Group, whose numbers are made of two Parish Councillors, the Clerk to the Parish Council and a representative of Corby Borough Council. It is the group's responsibility to highlight the issues found in this report and to report to the Parish Council the issues and any progress made. An action plan is produced, an example of which can be seen in Appendix C, which is drawn up by walking around the village and paying cognisance to comments made by villagers. The majority of reporting to both the Borough and County Councils has to date been performed by the Borough Council representative, who plays a leading role in the group's activities.

# APPENDIX A

## OTHER COUNCIL'S RESPONSES TO TRAFFIC ISSUES.

### **1. Verges.**

#### **a) Surrey County Council.**

##### **Protection**

We use three main methods to deter parking on grass verges:-

##### **Timber posts**

These are placed in a concrete foundation approximately 1.5 – 3 meters apart with a visible height of around 600mm.

##### **Tree planting**

Small, young trees (suitable for the public highway) are planted at the required spacing for the type of tree. However, overhead cables, nearby street lighting columns and other street furniture often prevent this.

##### **Prohibition signing**

Signs are placed enforcing the Surrey Act 1985 which prohibits parking on grass verges. These signs can either be installed on their own or alongside timber posts.

#### **b) Stevenage.**

Under a local Byelaw, verge parking in Stevenage is an offence and offenders are liable to prosecution through the Magistrates court. This Byelaw was introduced at a time when vehicles parked on verges was a rarity, but nowadays the problem is so widespread that enforcement under the Byelaw is not practicable, as due to financial restrictions we are unable to constantly patrol the verges to catch offenders.

#### **c) Fareham Borough Council.**

The Council has promoted a number of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) which prohibit parking and driving on mown verges but these have met with mixed success and have been found to be costly to implement and enforce, require both civil and police enforcement and do not apply to pavement parking problems. Areas where they have been most successful are those where there is adequate off-street parking available.

Solutions to verge parking problems are numerous and require a multifaceted approach and combined effort by a number of agencies if they are to be effective.

Enforcement alone cannot address the problem, and without adequate alternatives would only frustrate vehicle users. The provision of additional parking is costly, is dependent on available space and will only yield results if it is placed in close proximity to the destination of users.

**d) Winchester.**

Winchester advocates the provision of more lay-bys in wider verges. Would also like to see closer working between Housing and Highway Authorities to regularise parking and a clear steer to service providers (utility companies and local authorities) to set a good example.

**e) Test Valley.**

Test Valley advocates greater use of grass-cell block treatment to harden grass verges to support disabled and residents' parking in congested areas.

**2. Parking spaces.**

In addition to the Fareham report shown above, Stevenage suggest a width for parking bays.

[Stevenage] standards assume a car parking space of dimensions 5.0m x 2.5m for spaces with short term/high frequency of turnover. For communal residential parking and for longer term/low frequency of turnover parking a minimum space size of 4.8m x 2.4m will be accepted.

# APPENDIX B

## NORTHAMPTONSHIRE'S FREE SCHOOL TRANSPORT REGULATIONS.

There is opportunity for parents to opt for free school transport providing they meet the Northamptonshire County Council requirements. These are:-

“Northamptonshire County Council will provide or arrange free travel arrangements either by a dedicated vehicle or bus pass for the following pupils:

- Pupils aged 4 to 8 attending their nearest suitable or linked school and who live more than 2 miles from that school by the shortest available walking route
- Pupils aged 8 to 16 years attending their nearest suitable\* or linked\*\* school and who live more than 3 miles from that school by the shortest available walking route
- **Pupils aged 4 to 16 years whose walking routes are unacceptable:** where pupils are attending their nearest suitable or linked school and the walking route to school is less than the distances set out above but where the route is assessed as unacceptable to walk in accordance with Northamptonshire County Council's published criteria
- **Pupils aged 8 but under 11 entitled to free school meals or those whose parents are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit:** pupils aged 8 but under 11 entitled to free school meals or whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC) receive free transport to their nearest suitable school if they live more than 2 miles from that school. This 2 mile limit will be measured in the same way as the statutory walking distance. Parents or carers will need to apply to Northamptonshire County Council for assistance once their child reaches the age of 8. If eligibility for free school meals or maximum level of Working Tax Credit ceases, then free transport will be withdrawn at the end of the academic year.

The shortest available walking route can include footpaths, bridleways and other tracks that are not passable by motorised transport.” (Northamptonshire County Council, Free School Transport for Primary Schools; from Northants CC website 2016).

# APPENDIX C

## EXAMPLE OF ACTION PLANNING.

Action	Update –May 2016
<p>Present:</p> <p>Tom Russell (TR) Peter Taylor (PT) Suzanne Preston (SP) David Grayson (DG)</p>	
<p><b>1. Investigate communal parking. Potential areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small area near 1 Berryfield Rd.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><u>Berryfield Road Open space –</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Surfacing type</u> – Costing information received from Rutland County Council. Group agreed a site visit would be useful to determine exact costing for Berryfield Scheme. <b>Action: SP to contact Neil Tomlinson for contractor details.</b></li> <li>2. <u>Legal costings</u> - Response received from CB Property Department. No further financial information could be clarified in relation to legal costs. SP has now approached legal services. <b>Action ongoing.</b></li> <li>3. <b>SP to contact Anglian Water re pumping station ownership.</b></li> <li>4. <b>PT to request additional weed spraying from Bob Rutt.</b></li> <li>5. <b>SP to arrange highways meeting with P Donaldson and Eric Drake.</b></li> <li>6. <b>Group agreed to arrange special meeting for Parish Council to discuss current implications of communal parking project. But this could not be progressed further until further information obtained on full cost implication of scheme.</b></li> </ol>
<b>2. Drop kerb issues across parish</b>	No further update.
<b>3. Commercial vehicle parking unsafely top of Rockingham Road</b>	<p>Draft letter in process. <b>SP actioning.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Council vans/parking response</u> - OL not required as vehicles not over 3.5 tonne. Drivers are requested to park with consideration to other road users and do not park on kerbs or grass verges. They must be parked legally at all times.</li> <li>• <b>SP to check clarification for 1.5 unladen tonnage.</b></li> </ul>
<b>4. Increase patrolling activity in all areas &amp; enforce where appropriate.</b>	<p>To be arranged with local PCSO and CBC Neighbourhood Wardens. Issuing of polite parking notices where appropriate. Ongoing.</p> <p><b>Wardens to schedule additional patrolling in June. (James McCabe/Allan Withpetersen).Email sent by SP.</b></p>
<b>5. Bay marking - Rockingham Road</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>SP to investigate plastic-crete option down at Boating Lake. SP waiting for response from CBC Facilities Management. SP to chase.</b></li> </ol>
<b>6. Shared parking provision – Spread Eagle</b>	<p>Opportunity to obtain support of Spread Eagle landlord regarding utilising pub parking space if parking restrictions are approved/implemented in area.</p> <p><b>SP/AH to meet with landlord to discuss further.</b></p>

<b>7. Updates to local residents</b>	Ongoing.
<b>8. Feedback to Cottingham Parish Council</b>	Monthly report on agenda. (TR/PT)
<b>9. Parking issues- 1 Berryfield Road.</b>	Letter posted to No 1 with SP's contact details. <b>No response received.</b>
<b>10. Paving slab enquiry – Berryfield Road</b>	Resident enquiring about the possibility of inserting some slabbing into grass verge to prevent mud/debris tracking onto property when parking vehicle. Would require guidance from Highways. <b>Email sent to P Donaldson 6 June.</b>
<b>11. Continue to tackle parking issues around school drop-off/pick-up times.</b>	<p>1. <b>Warden/PCSO parking patrols – ongoing.</b></p> <p>2. Continue to deliver Park and Stride initiatives in partnership with School. <b>SP to facilitate.</b></p> <p>4. <u>Public buses parking inappropriately on Mill Road/High Street junction.</u> <b>Action: to be revisited by PCSO Hambly.</b></p> <p>5. <u>School bus parking on School Lane/High Street junction:</u> <b>PCSO Anita Hambly to contact company again.</b></p> <p>6. <u>Vehicles parking within bus parking area (not marked).</u> SP to contact NCC Highways for advice re bus lane marking. <b>Ongoing. SP to investigate. Cllr Heggs currently involved.</b></p>
<b>12. DG to draft update report for councillors</b>	<b>DG to action.</b>
<b>13. Date of next meeting</b>	<p><b>Tuesday 5 July, 7pm at T Russell's house.</b></p> <p><b>Special meeting date to be confirmed by TR/PT.</b></p>

# REFERENCES.

Free School Transport for Primary Schools; 2016; Northamptonshire County Council website; [http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Free School Transport for Primary Schools](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/Free%20School%20Transport%20for%20Primary%20Schools).

Highways Act 1980; Chapter 66 part 1.

Traffic in Villages Safety and Civility for Rural Roads - A toolkit for communities; Mitchell and Hamilton-Baillie; 2012/13?).

Traffic reports of Fareham, Winchester, Stevenage, Test Valley and Surrey.

Gov.UK website; "Being a Goods Vehicle Operator", (2016).

Northants County Council; Street Doctor.