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## **Road Safety Appraisal**

**Holwell Road, Pirton; Waterloo Lane, Holwell; Pirton Road, Holwell and Holwell Road, Holwell.**

### **Introduction**

- 1.1 Focus RM were instructed to undertake a road safety appraisal of the section of road from the Cala Homes construction site in Holwell Road, Pirton, which runs eastwards via Holwell to the junction of the A600 Bedford Road.
- 1.2 For clarity, the route starts from the Holwell Road, Pirton at the 'Holwell Turn', proceeds east to Holwell and into the village via Waterloo Lane, along Pirton Road and onto Holwell Road to the A600 Junction. Walking appraisals were made in both directions.
- 1.3 The brief was not to restrict said appraisal to limited historic data such as road accidents that had been reported to the authorities, but to look forward and consider the implication of the proposed significant increase in HGV traffic (stated as 60 journeys per day or one every 6 minutes) if the Cala Homes proposal outlined in application 17/02807/1 and 17/02778/1 were approved by NHDC. We were also asked to comment on the likely behaviours of drivers when faced with significant delays and the impact this will have on safety, the local environment and infrastructure.
- 1.4 The author of this report together with a respected highly qualified highway safety engineer, an experienced fleet manager and a construction management consultant visited the proposed route on a number of occasions between May 2017 and November 2017. The visit times ranged from 9.30 to 15.30 weekdays and 8.00 to 1.30 on a Saturday morning. The weather varied from sunny and dry to rain.
- 1.5 The western section of Holwell Road, approximately half of the study length, is subject to the national speed limit. This section has a narrow carriageway and number of damaged verges and embankments caused by traffic usage and the inability of the road width to afford adequate passing space. Sections of carriageway alignment are inter-connected by sharp bends affording limited forward visibility.



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- 1.6 The eastern section of Holwell road, through the developed area of Holwell itself, is subject to a 30 mph speed limit. This section is also provided with two alternate-priority shuttle points. Speed humps are present for part of Holwell Road, Holwell. Part of this section is also provided with street lighting along the section with residential frontage access.
- 1.7 In addition to visiting the route and observing traffic along the country roads and lanes, several interviews were conducted with Holwell residents. A few residents provided photographs showing what are reported as the daily vehicles conflicts that occur. Typical photos provided are shown in Appendix 1. While reports of traffic conflicts and collisions were numerous, one resident from Pirton reported that her car was written-off in 2016 on the blind bend of Waterloo Lane leading into Pirton Road. What became clear from our enquiries was that while many collisions had occurred, reporting to the relevant authorities was sparse as most felt that insurance companies were the primary point of contact after an accident.
- 1.8 It was brought to our attention that although Cala Homes propose to direct all its construction traffic via Holwell, no two-way tracking had been undertaken over the entire proposed route. It was further highlighted that Cala Homes submission data referenced in the NHDC Planning Control numbers shown in 1.3 above, confirm that of the measurements taken, there were at least nine (9) locations where road width did not meet the relevant national standards to allow two-way traffic of the type proposed by Cala Homes to pass in a recognised safe manner. Passing could, it appears, be achieved if vehicles reverse back round blind bends into on-coming traffic, which is an unacceptable manoeuvre.
- 1.9 A review of relevant proposed measures in documents submitted by Cala Homes under Planning Application numbers detailed in 1.3 above included references to passing places. Cala Homes are proposing to install passing places to alleviate some of the safety fears raised by their traffic proposal. In one application, there are six (6) passing places proposed – these are on the western side of the route, while their second application does not provide a reference to numbers or location of said passing places. The measures proposed by Cala Homes to limit or stop the proposed passing places being used as



temporary parking areas for car and van drivers rely on drivers reading the signs and complying with suggested restrictions. It is this authors considered opinion that once the passing places are established, they will be used as 'lunch spots' for van and car drivers just as a section of Holwell road to the A600 is at present. Notices would be ineffective as drivers remain in their vehicle and would simply drive off if approached by an enforcement office.

- 1.10 It is suggested in Cala Homes documentation that the proposed passing places (see 1.09 above) in Waterloo Lane are mitigation measures to aid traffic flow. The passing places will, in this authors considered opinion, do little to alleviate the vehicle conflict zones that will arise. For example, a vehicle leaving Pirton, via Holwell Road and turning the near 45-Degree bend up Waterloo Lane may be faced with a vehicle descending the hill. The vehicle would then need to reverse in a dangerous manner back round the bend, into oncoming traffic. This situation will arise as Cala Homes documentation indicate measured widths along Waterloo lane at a number of points do not meet acceptable standards.
- 1.11 Existing traffic flows in Holwell can be considered reasonably light. Nonetheless, the level of existing flows has still prompted the Highway Authority to introduce traffic-calming measures throughout the village. The imposition of further heavy vehicle activity appears counter to the objectives of the calming scheme that exists in Holwell. Cala Homes have documented the proposed numbers and type of construction vehicles operating during the building works, and these show a substantial increase on the existing flow. However, it does appear that they are a minimum. No figures are given for work trips, ancillary welfare trips and site visitors. The adoption of smaller vehicles (proposed by Cala Homes) to reduce the unacceptable impact of larger vehicles means that more vehicles journeys would be generated. Smaller vehicles are still of significant length and more importantly, of the same width.

On the estimate of Cala Homes, there would appear to be a substantial percentage increase in terms of heavy goods movements that cause the maximum impact and damage on the route through Holwell. The predicted additional traffic and type of traffic on what is a totally inadequate road system though Holwell would in this authors considered opinion have a marked disproportionate impact on the village and its main thoroughfare. It would put lives at risk and the measures suggested by Cala Homes appear to do little to alleviate



the safety risk for road users and the foreseeable potential impact of children playing along the proposed route during school holidays.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

- 1.12 Traffic transiting via Holwell already poses a risk to residents as many instances of vehicle/vehicle collision and conflicts occur daily. The suggested rise in construction vehicles will in this author's considered opinion place undue burden on the Holwell road system and significantly increase the safety risk for Holwell residents and those using the Holwell road system.
- 1.13 There is a significant gap in the analysis of road safety data. This gap relates to the lack of two-way tracking along the entire Holwell route. It is concluded that if two-way tracking were available, it would indicate the substantial shortcomings in the proposal by Cala Homes regarding road safety risk and the viability of the route.
- 1.14 Measures proposed by Cala Homes to make the route safe for residents and road users would not achieve their goal. The proposed passing places (where their location is known) would have no impact on road safety over the route and would if anything, only allow for increased speeding along the route into Holwell from Pirton.
- 1.15 Faced with long delays, due to the foreseeable vehicle conflicts that will occur if Holwell is used by construction vehicles, the frustration of many road users will likely result in person to person verbal conflict and unsafe driving as delayed drivers proceed at speed to try and make up lost time.
- 1.16 It is therefore considered that the substantial increase of heavy construction traffic using the Holwell route will place an unacceptable burden on the local infrastructure and significantly increase the risk to road users and residents of Holwell; particularly children during Saturday mornings and school holidays.

Ken Jordan Bsc CMIOSH MIEMA CEnv

**Director of Safety and Environment**

**28<sup>th</sup> November 2017**



**Appendix 1**



**Photo 1.0** – Taken November 2017 by Holwell resident. Described as typical occurrence in Pirton Road when trucks encounter each other. It would appear that Cala Homes proposal do not address the situation in Pirton Road, Holwell.



**Photo 2.0** – Taken by a Holwell resident September 2017. Example of traffic reversing back round bend from Waterloo Lane into Pirton Road, Holwell.



**Photo 3.0.** - Taken by a Holwell resident November 2017. A large truck and transit van meet each other in Pirton Road, Holwell. The author was informed that the van and following cars had to reverse approximately 50 metres into a farm entrance to allow the truck to pass.