

The A4 in West Kennett

Slowing traffic, improving amenities

What is the issue?

- The A4 was designed when there was no M4: it's now a much bigger road than is needed, and it cuts up communities like West Kennett.
- The road is dangerous to cross, including for children in the village getting to the bus stop
- It's dangerous also for tourists coming to the Sanctuary/ Long Barrow. And the scale and speed of the road isn't in keeping with a World Heritage Site that attracts tens of thousands of visitors.
- Most other villages on the A4 have a speed limit. But Wiltshire won't put speed limits onto a road that is still so fast and wide, because they would be ignored
- So the expert recommendation is to slow the speed naturally by narrowing the road through the village, which would allow speed limits to be put in place afterwards if necessary.

What have we done so far?

- Villagers in West Kennett (as in Beckhampton) have been lobbying for many years for road changes and reduced speeds.
- This became a recommendation in the Parish Traffic Plan and the WHS strategy. The plans also included footpaths in the verge, where there are none now, a crossing point, and a better bus stop and cycle parking.
- Over the last two years, the Avebury Transport Group through the Parish Council persuaded the Marlborough Area Board to commit a significant sum to the design work

that would be needed before this project could get funding and go ahead.

- The APC also pledged part funding, as did residents through fundraising in West Kennett.
- The initial stage of the consultants' work came up with plans (see [left]) – but they also brought the news that the only scheme that realised the benefits we were looking for would have to be linked to the closure of the West Kennett Avenue.
- This is because the road narrowing while there is still a right turn into the Avenue was assessed to create an unacceptable safety risk.

Possible ways forward

- We could abandon the plans because the linkage with the Avenue works makes this much more complicated. But support for the A4 slowing and other improvements have had universal support in the village.
- We could continue to seek to get a speed limit in West Kennett without narrowing of the road. But Wiltshire Highways have been very strong in resisting that request.
- We could take a position that we would only support Avenue closure if it is linked to the works to the A4.
- We could commission another consultancy to challenge Atkins/Wiltshire Highways views that slowing the speed and reducing the speed is only workable if the Avenue is closed. But this might be expensive and unlikely to succeed.

Any other suggestions or views would be welcome.