

Traffic In Dedham

dangerous driving.



Many of the issues that our village faces are a result of us being “a political island” completely bounded by other authorities.

We of course are Colchester Borough Council, whereas across the river is Suffolk (Babergh) and to the south and east is Tendring District Council. This is where our traffic problems began as few of us can have failed to notice the massive development of new housing in Manningtree, Lawford and Mistley. Tendring reaps significant financial gain from this development whereas Colchester BC was not even involved in the decision-making process.

The result is that much of the increase in traffic uses the lanes of Dedham to access the A12 via Birchwood Road and Stratford St Mary. Historical data from our Community Speed Watch team shows that that traffic volume has increased considerably along with associated problems of speeding and

This seems to be counterintuitive with the drive elsewhere in the country for a sustainable approach to the environment and particularly in reducing emissions. We do after all live in an A.O.N.B.

So Dedham is left with the issue of how to manage the traffic. The responsibility for traffic management lies with Essex Highways who work under the strict guidance of the “Essex Speed Management Strategy”. In order to initiate any change the Parish Council has been working on a Local Highways Plan. This is a lengthy and complicated procedure because we know that replacing a few signs will not solve the big issues, and we must be careful not to shift the problems from one area to another. With this in mind we have been working on a plan for the whole village. This is an outline of the proposals we are making to Essex Highways.

- **DATA COLLECTION** In order to prove that we have a problem (I know, I know!) data needs to be collected. DPC is willing to support Essex Highways by collecting data in areas that they would not normally cover. To support our case we have been collating outline data collected by our Community Speed Watch that was previously only passed on to the police. Many thanks to CSW for their excellent efforts

- **GATEWAYS.** Dedham is a series of hamlets, and many drivers are not aware that they are passing through the village let alone that it is in an AONB. We do have Gateways but they are not very visible. For example, you would need a machete to even see the ones on Coggeshall Road. We would like the Gateways to be more visible and informative.

- **UNIFIED SPEED LIMIT.** Speed limits vary enormously throughout the village. This coupled with a lack of signage makes it very confusing for drivers-even those of us who have lived here for years. We would like to see a uniform 30mph throughout the village except in the village centre. We are aware however that this is one of the most difficult things to change.

- **VILLAGE CENTRE 20 MPH LIMIT.** We believe that this should run from the bottom of Castle Hill right through to Stratford Road and include Mill Lane. This would make it much easier for residents crossing and parking in the High Street and Mill Lane. Most importantly it would make it safer for our children to walk to school.

- **LANE NARROWING.** Our rural lanes were not constructed to deal with the volume and weight of traffic now using them and this contributes to the poor state of our roads. Strategic narrowing would help to control speed and discourage unsuitable vehicles from using our lanes.

- **VAS SIGNS.** Lewis Barber our Essex County Councillor is working hard to provide us with more “Vehicle Activated Signs” that can be moved around the “hot spot” areas. Research shows that the “Smiley Face” type are most effective.

As stated before we are very much dependent on the support of Essex Highways to achieve any of this. We would also like to discuss the possibility of average speed cameras and low noise rumble strips. There remains the question of what can we as a village do whilst we are waiting for decisions from Essex Highways? The obvious answer is to stay within the speed limits ourselves. As well as making the village a safer place for us and our children it may well have the bonus effect of slowing down the person behind you using Dedham as a “rat run”.

Also please support our Community Speed Watch, a friendly wave or thumbs up is always welcome and if anyone can spare a few hours a month they could run even more checks. They really do have an impact especially in the light of the limited resources Essex Police have to offer. Meanwhile we will keep you up to date with any progress and please keep emailing your incident reports.

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