

Traffic in Cottingham Village.

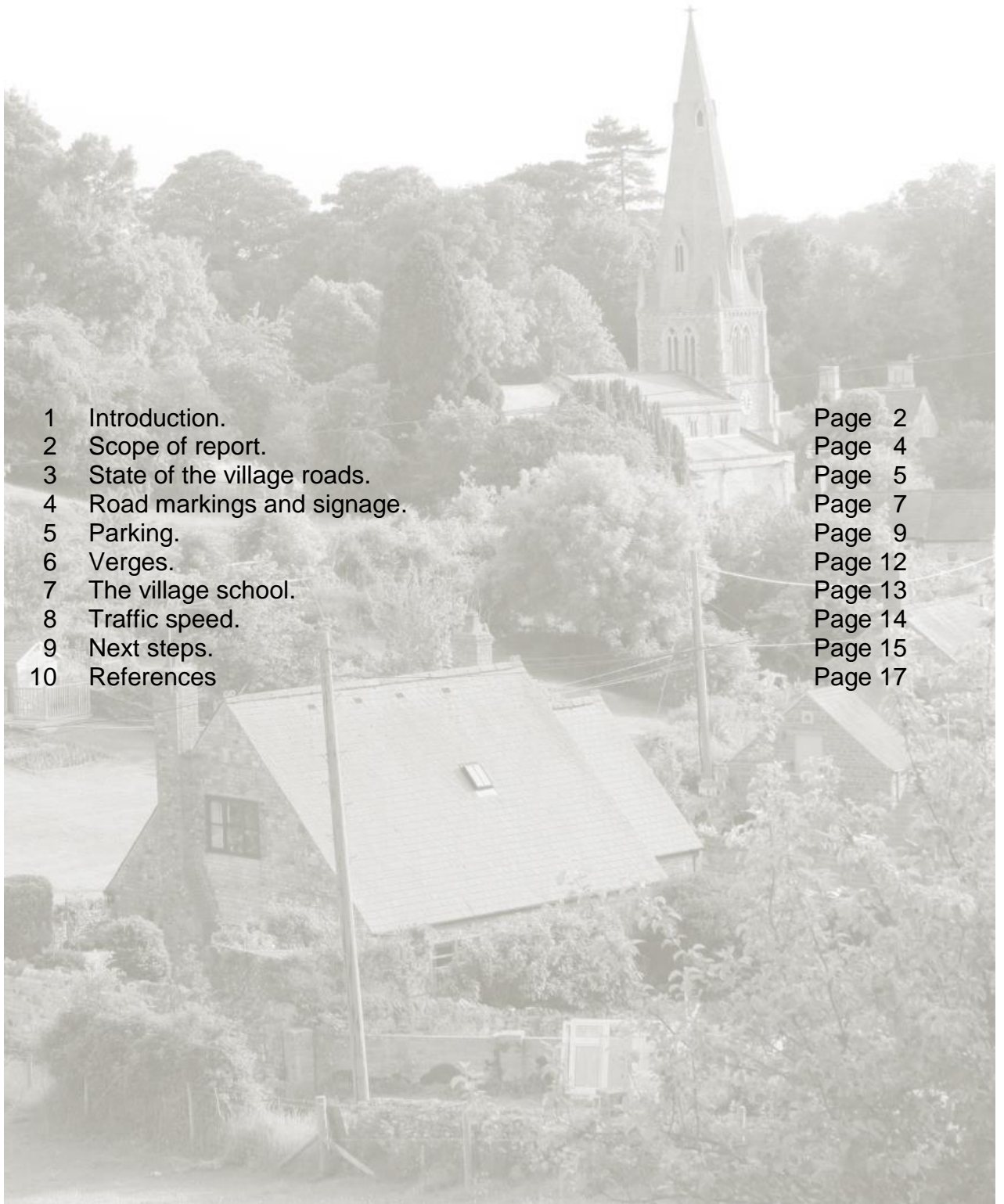


A report by the Cottingham
Parish Council,
Northamptonshire.

Version 4

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1. INTRODUCTION.

It has been four years since the writing of the first report “Traffic in Cottingham Village; August 2016”.

It is still proving difficult to improve the situation around the village. Cottingham village still suffers from a lack of space to park vehicles and there are a number of problems concerning the state of the village roads. Grass verges are in some areas in a poor state of repair, primarily by overuse for car and van parking. A growing concern is the amount of weed growing on pavements and in roads, allowed to spread these plants will eventually destroy the fabric of the surfaces they are growing on. There is growing concern about the safety of the major road junctions outside the village but still within the Parish and approaches have been made to the Authorities to look to improve these junctions.

We have had some successes, the white lines outside of the village school have once again been re-painted, we have held a community speed watch and the information obtained from the speed warning sign which was temporarily installed on Corby Road has proved useful. A number of potholes have been repaired.

Faced with falling Council revenues it is understandable that the Highways Department of Northamptonshire County Council have been forced to even out spending across the county. Nevertheless, Cottingham Parish Council continually requests work to be carried out to improve the conditions for traffic and pedestrians throughout the village.

The dilemmas faced when attempting to obtain improvements have been reported in previous Traffic Reports (Traffic in Cottingham Village 1, 2, & 3). These are still current and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future:-

- 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.

Looking to the future, Cottingham will have a Neighbourhood Plan which will hopefully be completed this year. If accepted by the examiners and the village residents, the plan should give the Parish Council more authority to demand improvements. In addition, there will be a new Unitary Authority created in 2021, how far this will affect our ability to create change remains to be seen. Certainly the acceptance of the Neighbourhood Plan and the inception of the Unitary Authority will have considerable influence on our ability to continue improving life for the residents of the village.

2. SCOPE OF REPORT.

The following still apply:

- 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 authorities 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, possibly 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.

(Traffic in Cottingham Village; August 2016)

3. STATE OF THE VILLAGE ROADS.

Cottingham, in line with other Parishes, has suffered through lack of investment in the repair of its roads. What follows are examples of road surfaces which are in need of attention. . Although Ripley Road, Blind Lane and Mill Road, are the roads whose surfaces are most in need of attention there are a number of other roads which require repair.

There is considerable disquiet concerning the sunken drainage grates on Corby Road between Mill Field Avenue and the Old Harborough Road. So far representation to the Highways Department of the County Council has yielded no results.



Ripley Road (Top)



Ripley Road



Rockingham Road



Blind Lane



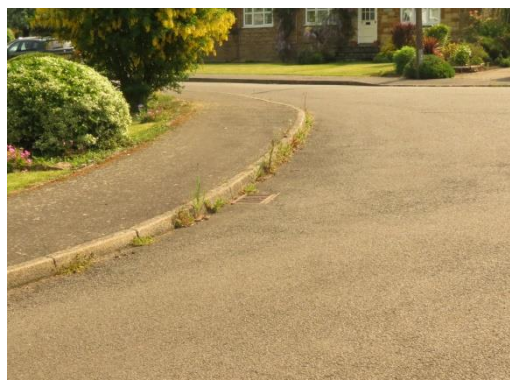
High Street



Mill Road

An increasing cause for concern is the weeds which are growing on the village roads and footpaths as can be seen by the photographs below. A number of footpaths are now so overgrown that only half of the paths remains tarmac. Left untreated the weeds will eventually damage the road surface and possibly lead to blocked drains

The Parish Council is well aware of this problem and is at present attempting to restart weed spraying in the village.



Bury Close



Grass growing in the road on School Lane

4. ROAD MARKINGS AND SINAGE.

Road markings (white lines) are beginning to fade leaving a number of give way markings to become barely distinguishable. Thankfully, one of the most important areas, that of the zebra crossing outside of the Primary School, is generally kept in good order.

The Zebra Crossing and the surrounding central road markings were improved by the County Council for a second time after the road surface deteriorated.



Faded Give Way line at the junctions of:



Windmill Close and Stonepit Drive.



Ripley Road and Rockingham Road



Blind Land and Welland View Road



Bury Close and Berry Road

The owner of the hedge shown opposite has cut back the hedge to reveal the sign. A suggestion made by the Parish Council that the sign should be crooked at the top to allow the sign to protrude from the hedge was refused by the County Council. The County Council's preferred option was that the hedge should be cut back to improve the view of the sign. Whether they have contacted the owner is uncertain.



5. PARKING.

Village parking continues to be a major concern and attempts made by the Parish Council to improve the situation are constantly frustrated.

In an attempt to alleviate the parking problems, Parish Council representatives asked Corby Borough Council to allow oversize van parking on the garage site off Bancroft Road (middle photo.) and for small van and car parking to be allowed on the site off Berryfield Road (bottom photo.). Corby Council refused this request in 2018 on the grounds of tenancy agreements.



Parking outside the old Factory on Rockingham Road. Attempts were made to cost the resurfacing of an extended area to allow for parking without causing damage to verge. Unfortunately, the cost of the modification proved prohibitive



A large amount of work has gone into investigating the possible change to the use of the land at the top of Glover Court to provide car parking space, which could help with school parking problems. The pumping station which is owned by Anglian Water requires demolition should the area be used as a car park. Corby Borough Council has claimed ownership of the land and requested that the Parish Council be responsible for its upkeep. Underneath the ground there are reported to be tanks which would make the ground unsafe for car parking



There are a number of examples of inconsiderate parking on pavements like this car parked at the end of School Lane. Sadly drivers still regularly park across the tactile pedestrian crossings made for disabled people.



This bus driver has been asked on a number of occasions not to block the entrance to School Lane when collecting children for school.



It is worth noting that The Highway Code tells us you must not stop or park in the following locations, except when forced to do so by stationary traffic:

1. Near a school entrance (see specific section above)
2. Anywhere that would prevent access for emergency vehicles
3. On a bus or tram stop, or a taxi rank
4. On the approach to a level crossing
5. Opposite or within 32 feet of a junction, except in an authorised parking bay
6. Near the brow of a hill or humpback bridge

7. Opposite a traffic island or another parked vehicle (if it causes an obstruction)
8. Where you would force another vehicle to enter a tram lane
9. Where the kerb has been lowered to help wheelchair and mobility vehicle users
10. In front of an entrance to a property
11. On a bend
12. Where you would obstruct a cycle lane
13. A tram or cycle lane during its period of operation
14. A cycle track
15. A pedestrian crossing, including the area marked by the zig-zag lines
16. On the carriageway or the hard shoulder of a motorway (except in an emergency)
17. Taxi bays (as directed by the upright signs and road markings)
18. A road marked with central double white lines, even if a broken white line is on your side of the road, except for dropping off, picking up, loading or unloading

6. VERGES.

Parking on verges remains a problem, especially where there is sufficient room. Kerb damage does not appear to have increased but, there are still examples of damaged kerbs which have yet to be rectified. Photograph shows damage on High Street.



The RAC suggests that parking on pavements in London is illegal but, that is not the case elsewhere in the country although Parliament is debating the possibility of making it unlawful on a country wide basis. An earlier bill suggesting this did not make its second reading, Parliament being unhappy about the prospect of enforcing such a ruling in places where streets are narrow.

There is no doubt that such a move would prove difficult to enforce on roads such as Ripley Road and Church Street.

7. THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

Several initiatives have failed to improve the parking at school run times.

The land in Glover Court has been deemed unsuitable for car parking, The Spread Eagle has occasionally helped with the park and stride scheme but, this cannot be guaranteed.

Parents have been approached by both the school and the officers of Corby Borough Council to request more care when car parking, especially around the zebra crossing area on Mill Road. However, such action will only have partial success and the issue continues to cause problems and concern.



The Triangle close to the Primary School

8. Traffic speed

Corby Borough Council placed a traffic radar speed sign on Corby Road at the beginning of June 2018. The last data obtained before the device was removed was 29th May 2019 and covered the period 22nd May to 29th of that month.

The following information was received:

No. of vehicles recorded – 28,244
 Peak times are generally 6.00am and 12 noon.
 The average speed was 28.5 mph
 50 vehicles (0.2%) exceeded 50 mph the highest registered figure being 62 mph.
 1,238 vehicles (4%) exceeded 40 mph.



The peak time for traffic is a surprise, 7.30am to 9.30 am and 3.00pm to 6pm would have been expected.

Community Speed Watch

The Council organised its second Community Speed watch during August/September 2019. Councillors spent approximately. 6hrs with a speed camera issued by the Police.



The results are as follows:

Number of vehicles in one hour passed in both directions.

Date	Time	Where	35 mph +	No. Vehicles
28/08/19	13.30/14.30	Corby Rd.	1	128
30/08/19	15.00/16.00	Rockingham Rd.	8	126
02/09/19	10.00/1100	Corby Rd.	10	123
03/09/19	14.00/15.00	Corby Rd.	4	110
04/09/19	10.30/11.30	High St.	2	127
08/09/19	15.00/16.00	High St.	2	138
		Totals	27	752

The number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit (27) was 4.5 times higher than the results produced by the survey held in March 2019, when only six vehicles were observed exceed 35mph.

The owners whose vehicles exceeded the 35 mph were sent a letter by the Police warning them of their future conduct.

9. Next steps.

The Council continues to work through an action plan. An example of the March update is shown below. The issues outlined through this report will remain at the forefront of the Council's attempts to improve the quality of life for residents of Cottingham

Action	Update – 3 March 2020
	Present: Tom Russell (TR) Suzanne Preston (SP) David Grayson (DG) Rachel Raj (RR)
1. Maintenance of land parcel next to Berryfield Road	Meeting held with CB Property in January. Cottingham PC has agreed to take on the maintenance of the surfacing, excluding the disused pumphouse.
2. Increase patrolling activity in all areas & enforce where appropriate.	Ongoing with Neighbourhood Wardens and Policing Teams.
3. Vehicle parking on corner School Lane on footpath	Vehicle has now changed to a white Mercedes. DG to take photos and forward to SP.
4. Warden/PCSO attendance at PC meetings	Following a team re-structure and recent review, wardens will be allocated cross-area working and rotated on a 4 month basis. A new generic email facility has been set up. All enquiries now need to be sent through via safer.corby@corby.gov.uk
5. 'Give Way' signage, Mill road	PC requesting for sign to be re-positioned away from hedge-line to improve driver visibility. Initial NCC response is the footway is quite narrow so there isn't the scope to move the sign towards the kerb. Most feasible option is to cut hedgerow back. Response from NCC Highways received. A proposed bracket may be too close to the road edge and be hit regularly by passing vehicles. First option would be for the hedge to be cut back. In light of current circumstances, a proposed letter to the resident may be postponed until nearer Summer time.
6. Walkabout feedback	Has been inconsistent. SP has since advised any feedback will be the responsibility of the Warden tasked with attending the next walkabout. 2 further dates have been confirmed for 2020. September and December dates to be confirmed.

7. Crime statistic information	<u>Neighbourhood Alert link will now be the main source of local crime data.</u>
8. Weed spraying – CBC owned garage areas	Parish Council to make a formal enquiry to CBC.
9. Shared parking provision – Spread Eagle	Landlord is currently allowing access to area at his own discretion. A planning application has since been rejected.
10. Updates to local residents	Ongoing.
11. Feedback to Cottingham Parish Council	Monthly report on agenda. (TR/PT)
12. Cottingham Parish traffic action plan	To be scheduled and completed by May.
13. Continue to tackle parking issues around school drop-off/pick-up times.	1. Warden/PCSO parking patrols – ongoing. Suzanne to liaise with Warden and Policing teams to schedule further patrol activity. School activity postponed until further notice
14. School bus parking on School Lane/High Street junction	Vehicle is in area before Policing shifts start.TR to send photos to PC Brad Wilson as initial step. To be included in report update. Ongoing – Further information to be obtained by TR to be passed on to PC Brad Wilson. Action deferred until further notice.
15. Community Speedwatch	Next session dates to be confirmed by Mike Curtis.
16. TVAS unit, Corby Road	Wardens have completed ladder training. Current team capacity means there's not enough staffing to mobilise the units to other locations. Therefore units will be retained in current locations and Warden Team to oversee charging/replacement of battery units.
17. TVAS units	No further update.
18. Outdated Hunting Lodge Road signage	Suzanne forwarded photos onto Highways. Waiting for response. SP to chase
19. NPT Speedgun Operation	To be postponed for the foreseeable future.
20. Community Engagement	All surgeries postponed until further notice
21. Date of next meeting	Postponed until further notice

Cottingham Parish Council still has its 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.

10. References.

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?).

Cottingham Parish Council; "Traffic in Cottingham Village 2016

TVAS data from Corby Borough Council.

RAC web site; <https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/legal/parking-on-the-pavement/>

The Highway Code