

Villagers unite to stamp down on speedy drivers

A GROUP of residents in Plaxtol have vowed to unite villagers in the fight against dangerous traffic.

Individuals from various Plaxtol organisations, including the Women's Institute, parish council, Footpath Group and parents from Plaxtol Primary School, have formed The Safe Lanes Working Group to solve the problem of drivers speeding through the village.

Elaine Webb, one of the leading members of the group, said: "In Plaxtol we want our lanes to feel safe and enjoyable for everyone and traffic speed has a real impact on that. Many people simply drive too fast. Traffic speed and road safety are real areas of concern for people living here. Most can give examples of dangerous driving they've seen in the village."

The group, which includes parish council chairman Gary Starling, has drawn up a two-part plan of action to reduce speed.

Their tactics shy away from conventional traffic calming measures such as speed bumps or chicanes, reflecting concerns that such installations would be unsympathetic to the character of the village.

Part one of the group's plan involved identifying the most dangerous traffic spots in the village by carrying out a community-wide survey.

Residents have contributed feedback on what they believe are the most dangerous roads in the village.

Mr Starling said: "None of the results so far surprise me. We are a rural village with national speed limits only yards before the village entrances and some parts of the village, despite having houses both sides, are not protected by the 30mph zone."

The feedback from the survey has been fed into a Google map showing the most troublesome areas such as School Lane and Brook Lane. The black spots will be tagged with new signage which, according to campaigners, "will send a clear and simple message, direct in its message that Plaxtol is a Safe Lanes area".

Later in the year the group will ask residents to sign the Safe Lanes Driver Pledge, indicating they are committed to driving within the speed limits with due care and attention.

The inspiration for the scheme came from a successful initiative in Mayfield.

Each person who signs the pledge will receive a Safe Lanes Driver sticker to display in the back window of the car which the organisers hope will create mobile traffic calming measures.

Mr Starling added: "The overall aim is to try to educate all our road users and eventually convince them to sign up to drive safely through our village.

"We will be promoting the safe driver scheme through the WI, Men's Society and at the annual general meeting of the parish council."

Miss Webb added: "There's a strong community spirit here and we're confident that everyone will want to support us by signing the pledge and declaring their commitment to make Plaxtol's lanes safe lanes."

Report by Harriet Cooper

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