

WARBOYS RESIDENTS AGAINST NUISANCE TRAFFIC (W-RANT)

A REPORT© FROM A SURVEY OF THE HIGH ST AND STATION RD

The survey of primarily the High St and Station Rd residents ran between 17 August and 11 Sept 20. It was initiated and carried out by a Group of Warboys High St Residents (Warboys residents for 35 years or more) who (and reportedly others) had previously each individually sought some action from the Parish Council (PC) to deal with their concerns in some way. The PC had reportedly decided that nothing could be done. Because the traffic issues, in the Group's view, had increased to intolerable levels - and before asking the PC again - the group thought it best to determine, by means of a simple survey, how widespread and deep-rooted were the concerns about High St traffic, if indeed, at all. (Annex A is a Copy of the Questionnaire used).

Whilst this was a resident-initiated survey, back-office, IT and email support for it + independent monitoring / reporting of it was carried out by Community Roadwatch(UK) CIC free of charge.

The 3 primary aims of the survey* were simply to:

1. Determine how many residents along the High St and Station Rd believed there was a PERSISTENT issue/nuisance from traffic,
2. Identify the type of traffic that disturbed them most, how and when,
3. Gather ideas of what might be practical for the Parish Council to do / consider / fund to address the issues of its residents.

**Please note: The survey was not, as rumour tried to portray it, designed to protest, interfere, restrict or curtail in any way any legal or considerate aspect of the functioning of the farming business that is central to Warboys and many – but not all - of its residents' livelihoods. That's why the word 'Persistent' was used as it is understood that 'harvest times' are always opportunistic where LEGAL haste and intensity is sometimes vital 24/7 to ensure the freshness of the product.*

AIM 1. To Determine how many residents along the High St and Station Rd believed there was a PERSISTENT nuisance from traffic

Total Surveys issued to =	201	dwellings
Total Surveys returned =	54	surveys
% Surveys returned =	27	%
% 'Yes' Persistent Problem =	29	%
% 'No' Persistent Problem =	15	%
% 'Undecided' Persistent =	20	%

Notes on the Stats

1. Of the 27% of surveys returned, almost 1/3 (13 out of 20 returned in the High St) and (11 out of 17 returned in Station Rd) – a significant number - indicated that some types of traffic create a persistent problem to a disturbing nuisance level.
2. Unfortunately, and disappointingly, 17 surveys - whilst returned and counted as returns - were either Anonymous and unhelpful or abusive with one being anonymous and seriously profane.

AIM 2. To Identify the type of traffic that disturbed them, how and when.

Three Types of 'nuisance' traffic were identified as:

1. HGVs in the High St that because :

- a. Their weight (18t +) causes serious vibration in a number of houses
- b. Their sheer width causes blockages when cars are parked at the kerb when 2 cars can just pass each other but even cars have to stop once an HGV enters the High St and all have to give way to it.
- c. On top of a+b , there is the well-publicised serious risk to health from pollution (exhaust fumes, carbon particulates and microscopic tyre particles) related directly to speed and load. These levels become significant when start-stop manoeuvres by HGVs (& tractors) occur in the narrow 'tunnel' created by houses in a built-up area.

2. Tractors everywhere but generally only when:

- a. **Speeding** – tractors are by law limited to 20 or 25mph in Warboys (what they can achieve or do in the NSL is not of concern for this survey nor the residents). Excessive levels of noise are directly associated with concerns about excessive (illegal) speeds all day most days. Logs of tractor movements can be made available on request.
- b. **At inappropriate speeds for the loads / trailer capability being towed** – many residents expressed concern that, whilst fully accepting and appreciating that the harvest needs to get from A to B with the minimum of delay, that should not mean heavy loads of straw should be transported / towed with scant regard to the Tractor + Trailer combination's capability to brake sharply and safely. Even if trailers had ABS and were able to stop safely in the event of an 'Emergency Stop' the load – that's sometimes large, round and unsecured - endangers both the driver and residents at speeds over 20 mph.
- c. **Creating overnight Noise 24/7/365** – In communities where vibration and noise is a real disturbing factor residents have sought, many successfully, formal limits being imposed between the Government-recognised 'Night /Quiet Hours' of 11pm and 7am.
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/noise-nuisance-and-neighbours> - refers
- d. **During harvest time**, with it being an opportunistic event, no one objects to legal, reasonable , considerate, seasonal 24/7 harvest operations. However, outside of this tolerated season, questions were raised about the need to transport the growing number of loads of straw, during the quiet hours. These activities seems to be accepted by the PC and remain unchallenged purely because they are 'farming' related and 'to be expected in a farming community' where people bought their houses knowing it had farming at its heart. A valid retort, except, when people bought their houses 35+ years ago the farm traffic intensity was not so great nor were the tractor speeds and associated noise so much. So, the residents ask '**what has caused it all to change'? What planning permissions have been granted by the PC to allow this nuisance to become so bad and accepted officially.**

3. Noisy/Speeding Private Motorbikes and Cars (colloquially called 'Boy Racers') - certainly almost all survey contributors mentioned the 'Boy Racers' with modified exhausts making a real racket at night and over the weekend (Sunday especially when the High St is clearer). Residents ask: **Why is this anti-social nuisance apparently becoming acceptable to both the Police and the Parish Council? And when will the new (Aug 2020) Noise Measuring Equipment acquired by the Police be used in Warboys to bring these disturbingly noisy vehicles to account.**

AIM 3 - Gather ideas of what might be practical for the Parish Council to do to/consider/fund to address the issues of its residents

Naturally, the residents had some ideas that were not practical such as speed cameras (£20k a time). However, listed below are 3 of the suggestions that CRW deems practical.

- 1. To Deal with HGV Transits** - CRW has determined that many High St transits originate from the St Ives/Pidley route and where HGV surveys for Pidley are ongoing, so to protect the **High St** residents suggest:
 - a. Having '**Unsuitable for HGVs**' signs at the A141 roundabout and the Clock Tower. If that fails seek a ...7.5t limit (except for loading) if (b) does not work.
 - b. Request CRW to manage a series of Lorrywatch sessions to identify the HGVs transiting the High St and causing the vibration, pollution and blockages. The Parish Clerk can then send a standard letter to CEOs of these companies requesting they use the alternative route via the airfield B1040.
 - c. Have double yellow lines along the whole length of one side of the High St.

2. To Deal with Excessive tractor speeds (and the resultant noise)

Problem: Seasonal tractors operating at a legal and constant 20 or 25 mph (legal max) - and from radar speed checks those are few and far between as already reported to the Parish Council - are generally accepted in good faith in a farming community. However, especially over the last 3 years or so, the complaints and concerns have grown because of the sheer persistent high and apparent year-on-year increase in the volume of out-of-season, un-covered straw-drawing tractors some with unsecured loads (photo proof available) that are being driven at high speeds with massive loads by young people some reportedly on the phone.

Apart from creating nuisance noise levels excessive speeds also cause straw to be drawn from the loads and deposited in drains that then flood. One farmer-supporter during quite a 'rant' actually states in his anonymous survey return that tractors do no more than 30 mph in Warboys. This proves that possibly the farmers do not know what their tractors' speed limits are. The nuisance from these tractors, whilst perhaps acceptable to day-workers (who are exposed for just part of the day) or farm-workers (who are used to the noise) – are noticed and cause stress to those folk who remain at home during the day – i.e. parents with young children, shift-workers, the unemployed, those shielding or quarantined, the retired etc - some of whom have been understanding residents for more than 35 years. The anxiety, stress and annoyance is caused by the sheer volume, excessive speeds and associated noise that have apparently increased proportionally with tractor capability year on year to nuisance levels that should not be dismissed out of hand as 'normal' or 'to be expected' in a farming community. The NFU advises* that the speed limits and Roadworthiness checks (that are probably not always observed especially for tractors / trailers used on the public highway) are defined [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tractors-regulations-on-use/tractors-and-regulatory-requirements-a-brief-guide-september-2017):

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tractors-regulations-on-use/tractors-and-regulatory-requirements-a-brief-guide-september-2017>

Solution: Residents feel that **the Parish Council could do more to approach local farm owners** to request their drivers observe the legal speed limits and be aware of the unnecessary nuisance excesses can cause. Warboys is now a growing **multi-occupational residential** village where unsurprisingly not all residents of the High St & Station Rd are associated with farming. Consequently, the Parish Council should request some consideration / cooperation from the farmers 24/7/365 to reduce the disturbance their noisy farm traffic causes and especially between 11pm-7am (the quiet hours) to those who need a good night's sleep to allow them to function safely in their occupations the next day (parents, drivers, nurses etc).

3. To Deal with Noisy/Speeding Private Motorbikes and Cars – it is accepted that there is little the Parish Council can do about speeding/noisy cars/bikes except try to bring the issue to the attention of the local Neighbourhood Police. However, the Council is criticised by residents for apparently not actually trying or for not recording in the Minutes that it has received complaints and is trying its best to engage or have a dialogue with the Police on these matters especially where speeding or anti-social behaviour is involved that affects the whole of the village. With new Noise Measuring Equipment now in the Police toolbox, it is hoped the Parish Council will endeavour to make transparent requests to have that kit kerbside soon. Also with this speeding problem it may consider asking the Casualty Reduction Officer's advice on how to address it if the policy of TruCams in the hands of local PCSOs is (*unbelievably*) not being entertained by Cambs Constabulary or supported by the ACC and PCC despite the 100% non-proximity contact (driver-operator) advantages under COVID that use of the current laser devices do not provide.

Human Rights – It should be noted that under **Protocol 1, Article 1 of the the Human Rights Act** every single person is entitled to '**enjoyment of property**' and it is a duty of the democratic process to safeguard that fundamental **Right** that others – no matter how big or important or rich or influential they may be (or think they are) - do not have the right to over-ride without good unavoidable reasons. [HERE](#)

Protocol 1, Article 1: Protection of property

Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful **enjoyment** of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-1-first-protocol-protection-property#:~:text=Protocol%201%2C%20Article%201%3A%20Protection,general%20principles%20of%20international%20law.>

Report. Compiled and reported by Community Roadwatch(UK) CIC - from returned surveys, emails, conversations, real-time observations & opinions - on behalf of, and after audit by, the Warboys RANT Group whose identity is known to Warboys District Cllr – Jill Tavener.

Audit. In order for anyone to be able to Audit , the complete batch of 54 surveys (anonymised to comply with DPA/GDPR2018) returned by residents and used as the basis for this report, will be deposited with D Cllr Jill Tavener (less the handful of profane and abusive anonymous ones that will be handed to the Parish Clerk in a sealed envelope so he can see the sort of person – and thinking – that, regrettably, Warboys accommodates.)

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Annex A – The Survey Form used by the W-RANT Group.

HIGH ST/STATION RD RESIDENTS' SURVEY

Please complete these 5 questions and return by Friday 11 Sep 2020, by:

- scanning and sending to W-Rant@roadwatch.org.uk or
- dropping off at:
 - Kim's Chinese Takeaway (Station Rd end) or
 - Amar's Convenience Store (Clock Tower end).

1. Do you believe there is a persistent (rather than seasonal) nuisance problem from HGVs/Tractors + trailers/loads along the High St/Station Rd. YES/NO

Briefly explain your response be it YES or NO

2. If YES to (1), when (time of day) do you perceive that this nuisance is worse?:

3. If Yes to (1), what sort of vehicles cause you the most nuisance and when?

4. If YES to (1), what pragmatic solutions would you like the Parish Council to pursue to reduce this nuisance without transferring it elsewhere?

Please continue/submit on separate sheet if necessary

5. Would you be prepared to keep a log of these nuisances as they occur and append/have your events appended to a common Web-Log. YES/NO

Name: _____ Address: No _____ High St/Station Rd

Date : _____ 2020 Signature: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____