

## **Willet's Cross Bench Risk assessment.**

### **Background.**

Shorwell Parish Council replaced a damaged seat at Willet's Cross in October 2016, with a rustic bench supplied by Chessil timberyard, carved out of a Cupressus macrocarpa log. A seat had been situated on this spot for many years. The seat was in memory of the Queen Elizabeth 2's jubilee.

Island Roads considered that the bulk of the bench increased the risk arising from a collision, in view of the fact that there was no speed restriction along the roads in any direction. Accordingly they declined to be responsible, and have requested that Shorwell Parish Council take responsibility.

### **Description of location.**

The bench is situated on a triangle of grass at the junction of Corve Hill, Pound lane, and Park lane.

These are all minor narrow roads, and the traffic would be considered light, even during the holiday season, as users are mainly those travelling to Atherfield, Yafford and Thorncross from Newport and Shorwell. In addition there is heavy seasonal use by farm tractors and trailers with potatoes and anaerobic digester feedstocks. The roads are quiet roads much by walkers, cyclists, local dog walkers and occasionally horses, all factors leading to lowering of speeds.

The triangle is on high ground at the top of these roads. The bench itself is set well back at a minimum of one and a half metres from the edge of the road to maximize the safety of those using it, and does not overhang or cause any obstruction to traffic so that it does not interfere with visibility.

Traffic monitoring was carried out by Island Roads in January 2017 ( by Ian Middleton Road safety Engineer). This indicated that although the road is signed as a national speed limit, due to the nature of the road layout and the location of the triangle, speeds are low. The data collected indicated that the average speed was 21 mph, with 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds at 27mph. No vehicle travelled at speeds in excess of 35mph during the data collection. It should be noted that two of the roads are narrow roads with mostly single lane traffic, which has a significant slowing influence.

The roads have recently been re-surfaced and are in good condition.

The majority of traffic passes between Pound Lane and Corve Hill. Traffic coming from Pound Lane has to stop at the junction which should reduce speeds to between zero and 10 mph, Traffic from Corve Hill to Pound Lane has to slow down to turn right, and cross any potential traffic coming from Pound Lane. Traffic coming from Corve Hill to Park Lane would be on the opposite side of the road to the bench and traffic coming up park Lane would collide first with a signpost before it could make contact with the bench.

It should be noted the bench is not cemented into the ground, but situated on the ground and on timber to stop it rolling. This will give the bench an element of give , especially if hit along its longer length as it is likely to be push over reducing impact..

**Risks.**

The principle risk is that of damage through collision by a vehicle. Collision by a bicycle, horse or person is too remote to consider.

**Shorwell Parish Council are aware of a minor risk of injury by an individual climbing over the bench and falling off, or the bench rolling over, but this is assessed separately.**

**The consequence of collision would be :**

1. Damage to vehicle.-
2. Person injury
3. Death of driver or passenger

**Probability of occurrence.**

SPC consider that the probability of any of these events arising is a very low probability in view of lack of historic accidents at that location, speeds recorded at this location as above, and the high level of visibility.

SPC consider that the likelihood of death following an accident through collision is only likely as a result of reckless driving, or high speeds, which could occur through collision with another vehicle or a stationary object at any other location.

**Acceptability of risk.**

SPC consider in view of the above and in particular the remote probability of collision the risk is low and at an acceptable level.

**Mitigation.**

SPC will have responsibility for maintenance and reassessing the risks annually. In particular it will review the condition of the supports, the triangle verges and the road surfaces within 20metres. It will require Island roads to carry out immediate repairs should they become to SPCs attention. If SPC consider the risk level to have increased it will consider appropriate mitigation , such as signage , or realignment.