

MAGNOLIA ROAD, HAWKWELL - PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF DRIVING

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask Members to consider a request by several residents and recreational users of Magnolia Road to restrict traffic movement along the Public Right of Way, and the content of the resultant replies from the informal consultation process.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Magnolia Road is a public footpath, but is also a private street over which the public have vehicular access. It is only maintainable at public expense to footpath status, the frontagers are also responsible for the maintenance.
- 2.2 It is joined in the east to Rectory Road at the outskirts of Ashingdon, and then runs in a north westerly direction parallel to the Liverpool Street – Southend Railway line. It emerges in the west on to White Hart lane, Hockley, where it crosses the railtrack via a brick built bridge.
- 2.3 The location of Magnolia Road is indicated on the attached map (11/2274/A).
- 2.4 Relatively narrow in width and for the greater part of its length having an unmade surface, it can be described as being located in a rural environment on the urban fringe, providing access for plot-land developments in Durham Road, and Lincoln Road, and also to the Rochford Hundred Rugby Club. The Rights of Way network in this area – including Magnolia Road – is also considered to have great amenity value for walkers and riders, and is also used by school children as a route to Greensward School.
- 2.5 Due in part to the success and popularity of the Rugby Club, but also to its availability as a short-cut, in recent years there has been a notable increase in vehicular traffic both during the week, and especially so on Saturdays during Rugby Club home fixtures. This has not only resulted in environmental damage to verges, ditch-lines, and hedgerows, but has also resulted in reports of several accidents and near-miss incidents involving walkers, and horse-riders. In addition, there are regular incidents of fly tipping and the dumping of stolen cars.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 In the interests of safety, and to preserve the environment, the Highways Department, were asked by residents and their representatives at the north western end of Magnolia Road to consider the merits of restricting the movement of through traffic by erecting a lockable barrier across the right of way at the location also indicated on the map.
- 3.2 Following the usual informal consultation process in which all the residents and landowners affected by the proposal were also consulted, the following written responses were received.

4 OBJECTIONS

- 4.1 Fifteen (15) written objections were received whose comments are summarised below:

1 Objectors	Objections	Comments
1. Mrs Smith Durham Road	Strongly objects – lived there 33 years, feels they need both ways in and out otherwise there would be occasions when they would be blocked in due to fires, abandoned cars etc. Traffic problems on rugby club days would be excessive if there was only one route available.	Traffic problems already exist on Rugby Club home fixtures, but may increase as there are only two suitable passing places.. There have been incidents of arson in the area in the past, a repeat may well result in fire tenders preventing the ingress and egress of residents if one access is blocked off for a short period of time. However, this could also happen on many estate roads in the Rochford area, and is therefore not a situation unique to Magnolia Road.
2. M Drinkwater Woodlands Road	Landowner in Magnolia Road. Regards access to White Hart Lane as an emergency access as essential.	The emergency services should not be unduly inhibited as they have keys for unlocking barriers. A gate was installed in Gusted Hall Lane, Rochford in 1988 following a similar situation as is currently arising in Magnolia Road.
3. Mr & Mrs Gibson Magnolia Road	Landowner in Magnolia Road – protesting in strongest possible terms. Problems of fly tipping,	Incidents of fly-tipping and abandoned cars are already occurring, but may increase if a lockable barrier is

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| | arson, and abandoned cars will increase if the right of way is blocked off. Feels maintenance of the surface at the eastern end is long overdue, and more people would use that end if the surface was repaired. | introduced. The District Council cleansing department do not feel that there will be a significant increase in fly tipping as a result of the road no longer being a through route. Magnolia Road is maintainable at public expense to footpath status only. It is not a byway. |
| 4. Mr Thornback
Lower Road | Considers the resultant lengthy detour a nuisance, and is concerned about delays to emergency vehicles should the need arise. | The detour route along Rectory Road is indeed lengthy. Emergency vehicles, however, do carry the necessary key to unlock barriers. |
| 5. Mr Goodchild
Magnolia Road | Strongly objects – most environmental damage has been done by rugby club to increase parking facilities, not by traffic. Maps should be amended to indicate that the best route for access is from Rectory Road. | Hedges were faced back to improve access and cut down by the Rugby Club to enlarge parking facilities, but the continuing damage being done to ditches and verges is coming from other sources besides Rugby Club supporters – ie “through” traffic using Magnolia Road as a short-cut to Rectory Road. The Highway Authority has been in contact with Ordnance Survey, who have agreed to consider submissions for amending maps and street atlases. However, original maps would still be in circulation. |
| 6. Mr & Mrs Roberts
Durham Road | Resident for 45 years, runs boarding kennels, regularly uses route to Hockley – strongly objects to increased time getting to vets. Worried about getting blocked in if Rectory Road end was closed for any reason. | The detour route along Rectory Road will increase journey time to Hockley. Emergency vehicles will temporarily obstruct access if called to fire etc and bollards were in situ at western end. |
| 7. Mr Swanson
Durham Road | Resident for many years and regularly uses Magnolia Road to get to Hockley. Feels it is a right for local people to use it. Highway Authority should | Highway Authority could consider access for cars only, but provision at western end for access to delivery vehicles and small tankers to remove domestic effluent will still be |

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| | consider restricting access to cars only. | necessary. |
| 8. Mrs Hazle
Lincoln Road | Residents of Magnolia, Durham and Lincoln Roads use route daily, and should not lose right of access. Strongly objects. | See previous comments. |
| 9. Mr & Mrs Edwards
Magnolia Road | Traffic problems on rugby club days would be excessive if there was only one route available. | See previous comments. |
| 10. Mr & Mrs
McKinnell | As above, plus concern about lack of access for emergency vehicles if one route is blocked off. If proposal goes ahead road repairs are needed at eastern end. | See previous comments. |
| 11. Mr Laban
Durham Road | Restricting access at one end will increase surface damage at east end, which is already badly pot-holed. Access to White Hart Lane in an emergency is essential. Most residents would be disadvantaged by proposal, whilst only two would benefit. | See previous comments. |
| 12. Mr Drinkwater
White Hart Lane | Use of Magnolia Road takes some distance off of journey for local residents going to work or shop in Hockley. Due to developments each end of Magnolia Road it is not surprising that there is an increase in traffic. Mini Bus business at 'The Olive Branch' will create more hazards to walkers if they can only use one route of access. | The alternative route using Rectory Road will indeed increase journey times to Hockley. Two members of staff from the Area Office measured the increase in distances and journey times between the junction of Durham Road with Magnolia Road to the White Hart Public House at the junction of White Hart Lane with Rectory Road on two different occasions. The Rectory Road route took 7 minutes to cover 2.4 miles. The Magnolia Road route took 5/6 |

minutes to cover 0.9 miles. Forcing all mini-bus traffic west may well result in more hazardous conditions for those on foot and horse, although most inconsiderate driving is likely to come from non-residents.

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| 13. Mr & Mrs Neave
Rectory Road | Damage to Magnolia Road would increase if most traffic was restricted to eastern end resulting in an increase in cost to property owners to maintain area fronting property. Will do more good to implement a weight/width restriction. | Increased traffic flow east may result in further surface damage to Rectory Road end of right of way. Highway Authority could consider introducing a width restriction, but provision for the needs of the two properties at the western end will still be necessary. |
| 14. Mr & Mrs Glynn
Lincoln Road | Lived in area 41 years. Proposal would be detrimental to all those businesses that trade from the affected roads. There are only two passing places in Magnolia Road. Traffic movements would be severely impeded during match days. Concern raised about possible accident on railway line. Plot-lands were established 100 years ago – the access roads were installed for benefit of landowners. | The proposal could prove detrimental to the businesses that trade from the affected roads. Traffic conditions on match days may deteriorate further if one access route was denied to spectators. The situation from 100 years ago has changed dramatically, and the drastic increase in vehicular traffic over the last few years has produced highway user safety issues that now require attention. |
| 15. Essex Police | Cannot support a new Order primarily based on environmental issues. Chief Constable can only support new Orders that are introduced to deal with proven road safety problems or improvement to traffic flows. Experience would indicate that there would be a high rate of non compliance. The issue of keys for emergency services is not practical and therefore the Chief Constable is mindful to object to the proposal. | Although there is one recorded injury accident, when a cyclist was dismounted following collision with an obstruction in the lane, there have been several 'near miss' incidents (one very serious), and much anecdotal evidence to support the proposal on safety grounds. |

5 Support for the Proposal

- 5.1 There were fourteen (14) written responses and one e-mail response in support of the proposal whose comments are listed below.

Proposers	Views on Proposal	ECC Comments
1. Essex Bridleway Association	Have lodged claim to upgrade Magnolia Road from footpath to bridleway. More horse riders are likely.	Horse traffic in the area may increase should Magnolia Road be upgraded from public footpath to bridleway.
2. Hawkwell Parish Council	Very concerned at the amount of traffic. Suggest width restriction if opposition is too great.	Width restriction may not be practical as delivery lorries (household goods) will have to reach properties in western end of Magnolia Road. Small tankers are also employed to remove domestic effluent.
3. Mrs D Haydon White Hart Lane	Very concerned at increase of volume and speed of traffic. Upset at environmental damage inc surface of right of way.	Highway Authority are looking at ways to protect verges and ditches, and the water supplies to the properties at the western end of the lane. Extra (deterrent) signing at the White Hart Lane end is being organised, which may also help.
4. Mr Smith Landowner of 'Cobbletrees' since 1940s	Upset at Rugby Club widening and re-surfacing track, even buses can now access from White Hart Lane end. Ditch lines are now damaged and filling in. Speeds of vehicles are high during night-time hours. Has witnessed vehicle and horse riders meeting head-on, on blind bends.	Positioning of wooden bollards at verge edges may help in reducing incidents of verge damage.
5. Mrs E May Hamilton Gardens	Frequent horse rider in Magnolia Road. Vehicles show no consideration for others. Had near-miss experience unnerving her horse. Lorries fill lane, no room for horses to step off.	Comments are typical of those who use the right of way for its amenity value. Should the proposal be rejected, the Highway Authority could look for areas where passing points can be constructed.
6. Mrs Ward Bosworth Close	Stables horse locally and frequently uses Magnolia Road.	As above.

Similar comments to above.

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| 7. Mrs Robinson
Bramerton Road | Knocked down by vehicle whilst putting horse in field. Weekend traffic to the Rugby Club is dreadful and some have no consideration for horse riders. | As above. |
| 8. Ms Mapes
Cromwell Road | Frequent horse rider and carriage driver, weekend traffic is very bad inc speeds. | As above. |
| 9. Miss Himsley
Bramerton Road | Frequent horse riders and carriage driver, weekend traffic is very bad inc speeds. | As above. |
| 10. Mrs Drinkwater
White Hart Lane | Local dog walker. Vehicles are a hazard inc mini-bus company based in Magnolia Road. | Mini-Bus Company will have to make all traffic movements via White Hart Lane, if barrier is introduced to east of 'The Olive Branch'. However, they are sympathetic to the proposal, and should drive with due care and attention. |
| 11. Mrs Cork
White Hart Lane | Resident for 25 years, and has noted deterioration in that time. Property/water supplies have been damaged by vehicles. Speeding by vehicles particularly bad at night. Surface damage makes it difficult to walk on. There are not many facilities for walkers and horse riders – vehicles are now spoiling it for them. | Should the proposal be rejected, the Highway Authority to consider erecting bollards on the verge areas to safeguard water supplies, fire hydrant, verges and ditch lines. |
| 12. Mr Holland
Helena Close | Regular walker – vehicular traffic has become worse over last few years to extent that it is now dangerous to use the footpath. Now a potential safety hazard. | A traffic census commissioned by the area office recorded 259 vehicle movements in and out of Magnolia Road on Thursday 31 January 2002, and 716 on Saturday 2 February 2002 – a home fixture for the Rugby Club. |
| 13. Mr & Mrs Booth
White Hart Lane | Concerned about volume of traffic – inc large vehicles – and the damage they are doing to the | As above. |

environment. Horse riders and walkers are particularly vulnerable.

14. Mr Bunker White Hart Lane Resident for 15 years – aware of increase in traffic. As above.

15. Mrs T Chapman CC Member Has been consulted and supports experimental 9 month closure.

6 OPTIONS

6.1 Proceed with the closure, notwithstanding the objections.

6.2 Introduce a closure on an experimental basis for nine months to see if the objectors concerns are realised.

6.3 Introduce a width restriction to remove large vehicles.

6.4 Do nothing and maintain *status quo*.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Please note the comments submitted by Essex Police – 4.1(15)

8 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 It is anticipated that the natural environment will begin to recover should the proposal proceed, with the exception of the hedge-line which was removed to provide extra parking facilities adjacent to the Rugby Club playing field.

9 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Funding for the project will be found from the locally determined budget.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 A temporary closure order will have to be introduced.

11 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Please note the comments submitted by Hawkwell Parish Council – 5.1(2).

12 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS:**

That notwithstanding the objections for the proposal, Magnolia Road is subject to an experimental closure for 9 months at the location indicated on map 11/2274/A.to see if the objectors concerns are realised.

Background Papers:

All correspondence and the results of traffic surveys are held by the Area Manager at the South Area Office, Rayleigh on File No T/2/11/HAWKWELL.

For further information please contact Peter Craig on 01268 771458.

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