

Appendix 7 - Stakeholder Feedback

- Alfriston Parish Council
- Conserve Alfriston Group
- Residents and Businesses
- Cuckmere Buses

- Alfriston Parish Council

ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

The below responses are to the ESCC questionnaire following the trial traffic signal and 20mph speed limit scheme, Alfriston

Q1. "Other"

Q2. Alfriston Parish Council

Q3. BN26

Q4. BLANK

Q5. *At times the pedestrian situation within the area controlled by traffic lights has seen some improvement due to more certainty as to the direction from which traffic will approach. There have been comments regarding increased speed of traffic through the section under lights control. There were fewer vehicles mounting some sections of the footway (particularly from Chestnuts Star Lane). However, Southbound vehicles on a green light were mounting the narrow pavement section, at speed, in the section from Chestnuts to outside the Wingrove. More Northbound vehicles mounted the pavement section in North Street, North of Market Square, due to queues of Southbound traffic held at a signal, or unable to navigate into Mkt Square (due to congestion).*

Q6. BLANK

Q7. *We are aware that there were some challenges for businesses and residential properties relating to deliveries and bin collections.*

Q8. BLANK

Q9. *Comments received have been very varied. In general, the feedback is that whilst the specific challenge the Trial scheme was looking to mitigate (namely vehicles mounting the pavements in the "narrows") has seen improvement, the scheme has moved the same issue North and South of "the narrows", whilst creating new issues of safety, traffic congestion in Market Square and North Street, increased "rat running" through West St and the Car Park, increased pollution and increased speed. Feedback is that the Trial Lights scheme does not provide a village-wide solution to traffic management. In attempting to focus and fix a specific issue, it creates new safety issues that do not currently exist.*

Q10. *Strongly disagree*

Q11. **Please see response to Question 9.** *Comments received that the accident that occurred at the Star Lane/High St junction would not have happened if this Lights trial had not been in place.*

Q12. BLANK

Q13. BLANK

Q14. BLANK

Q15. BLANK

Q16. ***Please see "Observations & Issues Raised" below***

Q17. BLANK

Q18. *There is widespread consensus that a reduction in Traffic Speed throughout Alfriston (not Just the High Street) would be very positive. This view is strongly supported by APC.*

Q19. BLANK

Q20. ***Please see response to Question 18.***

Q21. BLANK

Q22. ***Please see response to Question 18.***

Q23. BLANK

Q24. ***Please see response to Question 18.***

Q25. BLANK

Q26. ***Please see response to Question 18.***

Q27. BLANK

Q28. ***Please see response to Question 18.***

Q29. BLANK

Q30. BLANK

OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS RAISED

- The accident at Star Lane, caused by increased speed and reduced caution of drivers travelling through the section under traffic light control

- Constant "near misses"

- The safety issue of walking along pavements including:

Southbound vehicles mounting the pavement outside the Wingrove at speed as they are travelling through a Green light

Northbound traffic mounting the pavement outside Badgers tea room

Increased speed through the length of the High Street and North Street, with vehicles "rushing" their approach to green lights and continuing at greater speed after exiting the traffic light zone

- West side of Market Square became a 'roundabout' when queuing Southbound traffic reached the Market Cross, impacting negatively on the community space there.

- Constant smell and increase in car exhaust fumes in the centre of the village
- Considerable Southbound traffic queue lengths, often queues going back down North Street, and at times, past the entrance to the Willows Car Park.
- Weavers Lane getting blocked as not wide enough for cars to pass if cars are waiting at the lights
- The fact the lights broke down on several occasions
- The monitoring equipment being taken away during the trial
- There is a need for proper management of vehicle Parking in the centre of Alfriston
- Regarding the Traffic Light "solution" any traffic problems have just been moved or caused additional problems in other areas of the village

CONCLUSION

We welcome any initiative to reduce speed throughout the village but consider that this can be done more effectively by means of highway design and traffic calming measures such as village gateways/ build outs, changes in road surface etc. Traffic lights have been shown to exacerbate speeding and 20mph signs alone seem to have little impact on speed, especially when opportunities for enforcement are negligible. We would like to see more attention given to appropriate measures to address driver behaviour and would welcome the opportunity for further discussion with the highway authority to develop these proposals.

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL – VICTORIA RUTT

11 Highfield Road, Horam, East Sussex, TN21 0ED
Telephone 01323 870212 Email clerk@alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk
www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk

ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

Sent via email to:

Andrew Keer Andrew.Keer@eastsussex.gov.uk

James Vaks james.vaks@eastsussexhighways.com

Tuesday 18th September 2018

Dear Andrew and James

I am writing on behalf of the Parish Council re a number of issues relating to the traffic light trial in Alfriston. This letter will be published openly.

Firstly, and most importantly, on Monday some Councillors witnessed two extremely close (a matter of inches) near misses when vehicles travelling northbound at speed on the green light nearly collided with vehicles attempting to turn left out of Star Lane onto the High Street. The Parish Council believes that the traffic light system, by virtue of encouraging higher speeds from those on a green light, has created a significant safety hazard at Star Lane that did not exist before the trial began. Councillors fear that it is only a matter of time before an accident occurs at this junction. We therefore ask you to halt the trial now so that this does not occur.

Councillors have also expressed concern at the lack of width in Weavers Lane, where traffic has to queue at the lights controlling the exit from Weavers Lane, and believe there is insufficient width should two moderately larger (SUV size for example) vehicles meet. Councillors are concerned that an accident will occur here, although it is likely to be less serious than if one occurs at Star Lane junction.

Councillors have expressed their disappointment that you have produced and put into circulation your ESH questionnaire without any consultation and without even having the courtesy to provide a copy in advance to the Council. Councillors believe that once again you have produced a consultation document that is directed to achieve the answers that you want to hear, rather than giving respondees the opportunity to speak for themselves. The Council is particularly alarmed that the questionnaire is so car driver-centric in its questions (although they are equally unsurprised as that is what this traffic light system is in reality). In particular the Council believe it is wholly wrong that the only question directed at pedestrians concerns only their experience between Star Lane and Weavers Lane and completely ignores the rest of the High Street, Market Square, North Street and West Street, all of which is, on first impressions, suffering adversely as a direct result of this trial. Councillors urge you to tear up the current questionnaire and start again, and perhaps consult the Council in advance and accept any comments Councillors may have as to content.

Once again Councillors ask that ESCC publish the objective criteria by which they will measure the success or failure of this trial. It is not an answer to this question to say that you are collating speed data, traffic count etc. That is merely an answer to the question

'what data are you collecting'. Councillors believe that for any trial or experiment to be valid and to withstand scrutiny there should be objective baseline criteria established before the trial begins.

Finally, could you please inform us of the locations at which you are collecting air pollution data and which are covered by camera recordings. For instance, is air pollution data being collected in Weavers Lane? It would greatly assist all of us in understanding the complete ambit of this trial.

Yours sincerely

Victoria Rutt
Clerk and RFO to Alfriston Parish Council

Copied to:

Cllr Nick Bennett
Cllr Stephen Shing
CC Giles York
Maria Caulfield MP

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL – VICTORIA RUTT

11 Highfield Road, Horam, East Sussex, TN21 0ED
Telephone 01323 870212 Email alfristonpc01@btconnect.com
www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk

ALFRISTON PARISH COUNCIL

Cllr Nick Bennett
Lead Member for Transport and Environment
East Sussex County Council
Sent via email: Cllr.Nick.Bennett@eastsussex.gov.uk

Monday 13th August 2018

Dear Cllr Bennett

RE: HIGH ST TRAFFIC SIGNAL TRIAL – 16/09/18 to 18/10/18

I am writing to you on behalf of Alfriston Parish Council, as the member of Alfriston Parish Council holding the Portfolio responsible for matters related to the Highways.

Whilst we have not been formally informed, we understand that your traffic signal trial will be conducted from September 16th to October 18th. Can you please confirm these dates are fully confirmed so that we can inform residents in our community?

We appreciate that for a trial to be conducted effectively, there needs to be defined objectives, clear and effective methods of measurement and data analysis comparison to a baseline assessment. Ultimately this enables an objective assessment of the success or failure of the planned trial. With this in mind, can you please provide us with a list of the measurement Criteria that will be used for your Trial?

If this is not included in your Criteria, in addition, can you also please provide information regarding the following questions specifically:

Data Collection - please provide information regarding *WHAT* empirical data that will be collected and *HOW* and *WHERE* this will be collected, which will include:

1. Traffic Flow data
2. Traffic speed data
3. Extent of queuing
4. Safety Hazards / Incidents
5. Types of Road users i.e. Equestrians, slow moving road users, pedestrians
6. Measurement of # of vehicles “rat-running” around Weavers lane, Deans Rd etc
7. Will residents and High St users be asked for, or able to provide feedback as to their own experience of the trial and if so, what format will this take

Would you also provide more information on the implementation of the Trial so that we can assess and inform the community of any (maybe as yet unforeseen) impact on their day-to-day lives?

Trial Implementation & Monitoring – please provide more information on how your Trial will be conducted including:

1. How will you manage illegal Parking on the High Street?
2. Within the area under trial (not just between Traffic Signals) how will you manage road users making deliveries (specifically deliveries to The George Inn, The Star, The Apiary, Chestnuts tea rooms, Wallow, Objet Trouve and Chevans), refuse collection vehicles, and general access to residential properties on the High St?
3. How will you replicate the required road signage (box junctions, stop signs, lines etc) and will there be any road marking?

With regards to the proposed Trial set-up and removal, a business owner has contacted APC concerned that, the ***all-day road closures on 16 September and 14th October***, will involve traffic being diverted away from the village altogether.

These closures have been scheduled for the busiest days of the trading week and represent a serious threat to the trade of all the business in the village. To mitigate this impact, did ESCC consider set-up and removal during a weekday or evening and why was this option not selected? If the current plan is implemented, will ESCC please guarantee that the 'Businesses Open as usual' signage will be deployed alongside the 'Road Closed' signage? In addition, the business owners have asked what the arrangements are for compensation for loss of trade in these situations.

In summary, please confirm a) whether the "all-day closure" information is correct b) whether ESCC have considered alternative dates and times for Trial set-up & removal c) how you plan to mitigate the impact of any road closures and d) how businesses will be compensated for any loss of trade.

Finally, we would request that following the Trial completion, ESCC provide a full report to APC detailing all of the findings of your trial.

Yours sincerely

Keith Halliday

Copied to:

Cllr Stephen Shing cllr.Stephen.Shing@eastsussex.gov.uk

James Vaks james.vaks@eastsussexhighways.com

Andrew Keer Andrew.Keer@eastsussex.gov.uk

CLERK TO THE COUNCIL – VICTORIA RUTT

11 Highfield Road, Horam, East Sussex, TN21 0ED

Telephone 01323 870212 Email alfristonpc01@btconnect.com

www.alfristonparishcouncil.org.uk

- Conserve Alfriston Group

Business and Trader Survey Regarding ESCC Traffic Lights // November 2018

In November 2018, Conserve Alfriston volunteers surveyed Businesses and Traders on the ESCC traffic light trial, asking two questions (the same questions as were asked in January 2017, after the last ESCC consultation):-

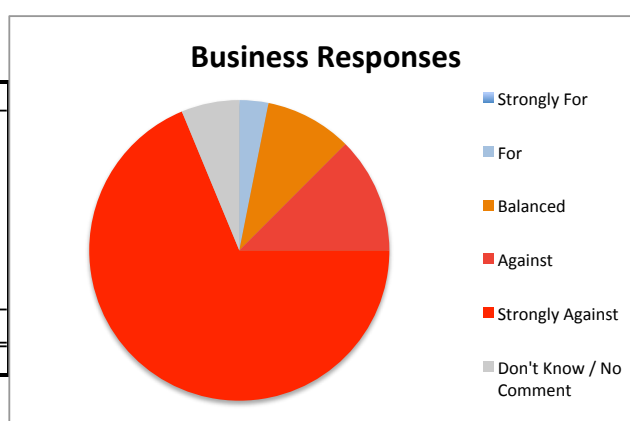
- 1) Following the recent trial, are you [*strongly for/for/no opinion/against/strongly against*] ESCC's traffic light scheme?
- 2) Relative to the current layout, will ESCC's scheme be *beneficial* or *detrimental* to your business?

There are now c. 37 businesses along the central Alfriston route, who we believe represent the overwhelming economic turnover in the village, and we were able to ask 32 for their views (three were vacant at the time of the survey). The responses were as follows:-

Q1: Following the traffic light trial, are you [*strongly for/for/no opinion/against/strongly against*] the ESCC Proposals?

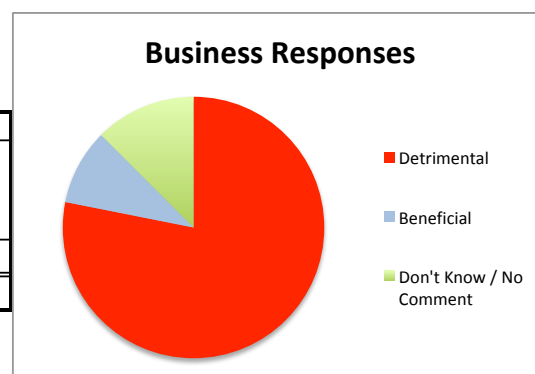
| Response Category | Responses | Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Strongly For | 0 | 0% |
| For | 1 | 3% |
| Balanced | 3 | 9% |
| Against | 4 | 13% |
| Strongly Against | 22 | 69% |
| Don't Know / No Comment | 2 | 6% |
| Total | 32 | 100% |

[One "balanced" respondent answered "balanced", leaning to "for".]



Q2: Relative to the current layout, will ESCC's proposals be beneficial or detrimental to your business?

| Response Category | Responses | Percent | Decisive |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Detrimental | 25 | 78% | 89% |
| Beneficial | 3 | 9% | 11% |
| Don't Know / No Comment | 4 | 13% | |
| Total | 32 | 100% | 100% |



Key Points:-

- Having experienced the trial, Alfriston's businesses remain, overwhelmingly, strongly against ESCC's scheme. **82% were *against*, including 69% who were *strongly against*. Just 3% (one business) was in favour.**
- ESCC has expressed concern about the traffic situation having a detrimental impact on people's lives and business. Our survey shows that **89% of businesses who expressed an opinion believe that ESCC's scheme will be more detrimental**. Just 11% (three businesses) who expressed an opinion believe it will be beneficial.

(*Volunteers were able to speak to 32 of c. 37 businesses in the Village centre (3 were vacant). We would be happy to hear from the remaining businesses with their view.)

Some businesses also made comments alongside their survey feedback:-

"A disgrace and a shambles."

"A potential disaster for the village economy."

"Good for us, bad for the rest of the village. Traffic not on pavement is good BUT caused backups elsewhere in village so NOT a solution to the traffic problems."

"Location of lights was bad."

"Made ill by the pollution. Business seriously impacted. Only two sales during whole month."

"Negative impact on our business."

"Something must be done." (about the traffic situation)

"Something needs to be done." (about the traffic situation)

"The council do not care for business."

"Took £3 in total in 10 days of the trial. Many leaving early because of the traffic and unpleasant environment. Had previously been on the fence." (regarding the scheme)

"Unmitigated disaster for the business."

Conserve Alfriston

Diary Feedback Group Report

3 December 2018
v5 Distribution

Contents

1. Summary
2. Process
 - a. Collecting Feedback
 - b. Analysing Feedback
3. Findings
 - a. Feedback themed by ESCC criteria
 - b. Feedback themed by Village Life criteria
4. Conclusion

1. Summary

'Conserve Alfriston' have conducted a survey of the experiences of people in the village during the Phase 1 traffic light trial. The feedback was collected on a *per experience* basis, and we have broken the results down into responses from Residents, Visitors and Traders, and those passing through. Having experienced the trial, the respondents demonstrated overwhelming opposition to ESCC's traffic light scheme.

Of the 397 responses received, just over half the feedback came from visitors and those passing through (214, 54%), with the others from residents and traders.

Every group was overwhelmingly of the opinion that the lights had made things worse. Overall, 338 (85%) of replies said things were worse, and 44 (11%) said things were better. (15 (4%) saw no change.)

The table below shows the most commented on topics (sometimes more than one per form), themed by ESCC and additional village criteria. Congestion and speed were most commented on. For every topic except paving, over 75% of comments were that the lights had made things worse; many were over 90%.

| Rank | Topic | Comments | % saying lights make it worse |
|------|--------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Congestion | 109 | 92% |
| 2 | Safety / Pedestrian/ Accidents | 98 | 83% |
| 3 | Speed | 69 | 87% |
| 4 | Queueing | 67 | 99% |
| 5 | Air Quality | 66 | 98% |
| 6 | Journey time | 56 | 96% |
| 7 | Redistribution | 46 | 93% |
| 8 | Quality of Life | 28 | 100% |
| 9 | Pavementing | 23 | 48% |
| 10 | Noise | 20 | 100% |
| 11 | Business | 13 | 100% |
| 12 | Large Vehicles | 12 | 75% |
| 13 | Anger. Aggression (Road Rage) | 11 | 91% |

The table shows that the traffic signals made things worse in every case but one – paving. Here, an improvement was noted in one area, but it was balanced by negative responses elsewhere. Respondents noted increases in speed through the village and rat running, as well as increased congestion and journey times. As one respondent noted:-

"1) Cars/vans lorries still mount the kerb; 2) Vehicle speeds higher through lights when one way system created; 3) Turning left out of Star Lane is dangerous; 4) Queueing at various points away from the lights has increased in time and vehicle numbers resulting in higher pollution; 5) I wish I could say something positive about the scheme!"

Also the evidence suggests that:-

- the lights have not addressed the issue of safety overall – the narrows feel safer but the rest of the village feels less safe; for example:
 - *“I feel less safe walking down the High Street”*
 - *“Two accidents within three days of lights being put in place; congestion at Weavers Lane; cars now racing off once lights change”*
- mounting of the pavement still takes place, but now more widely throughout the village; for example:
 - *“Dangerous! Driver mounted pavement after going round lights – pedestrians had to leap out of the path”*
 - *“Difficult to get into North Street. Had to mount pavement”*
- the effect on the quality of life of the villagers has been detrimental; for example:
 - *“Appalling tailbacks; cars leaving engines running; terrible fumes”*
 - *“It's all rubbish, makes a real chaos!!!”*
- visitors will be put off from visiting in future; for example:
 - *“As a disabled driver, I can no longer visit the village as I am no longer able to stop and get out.”*
 - *“Village one big traffic jam, causing health risk or fumes. A thoroughly unpleasant visit. A place to avoid.”*

It is clear from this feedback that in trying to solve one problem in isolation – the paving in the narrows – the lights made safety and quality of life far worse throughout the village, for locals and visitors alike.

Having experienced the trial, the respondents demonstrated overwhelming opposition to ESCC's traffic light scheme.

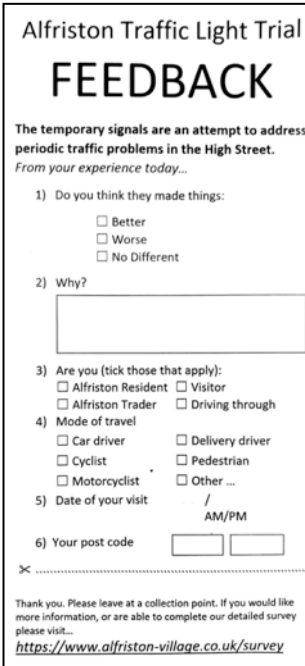
2. Process

a) Collecting Feedback

Conserve Alfriston supporters produced a simple feedback form to capture the effect that the temporary traffic signals had on people's lives and journeys in the village. The form deliberately asked an open question to enable people to record whatever was important to them at a particular day and time. Individuals were free to complete multiple forms to record different events at different times.

The forms were freely available from several village businesses, who also collected completed forms.

As the form specifically referred to the effect of the signals (the ESCC Phase 1 trial), any forms that referred to an experience after their removal (Phase 2) were discounted.



The form is titled "Alfriston Traffic Light Trial FEEDBACK". It contains the following sections:

- Introduction:** "The temporary signals are an attempt to address periodic traffic problems in the High Street. From your experience today..."
- 1) Do you think they made things:** Three checkboxes: ☐ Better, ☐ Worse, ☐ No Different.
- 2) Why?** A large rectangular text box for an open-ended response.
- 3) Are you (tick those that apply):** Four checkboxes: ☐ Alfriston Resident, ☐ Visitor, ☐ Alfriston Trader, ☐ Driving through.
- 4) Mode of travel:** Five checkboxes: ☐ Car driver, ☐ Delivery driver, ☐ Cyclist, ☐ Pedestrian, ☐ Motorcyclist, ☐ Other ...
- 5) Date of your visit:** Two boxes for day and month, followed by a slash and a box for AM/PM.
- 6) Your post code:** Two boxes for the post code.
- Footer:** "Thank you. Please leave at a collection point. If you would like more information, or are able to complete our detailed survey please visit... <https://www.alfriston-village.co.uk/survey>"

After collection, each form was given a unique number and its data entered into a spreadsheet. For this purpose:

- where a respondent had ticked both visitor and driving through, they are counted as driving through; and
- where a respondent had ticked both resident and trader, they are counted as residents.

It did not prove possible to correlate the specific experiences described with particular events; although the form asked for the date and time of an event, in many cases this was incomplete. Additionally some respondents used one form to cover multiple events – to give their experience over, say, one whole week.

b) Analysing Feedback

The main "Conserve Alfriston Response to the 2018 ESCC Traffic Trial" report discusses the suitability and consistency of ESCC's criteria for measuring the impact of the trial, both from the August 2017 stakeholder meeting and from previous communications. We also apply additional criteria of importance to villagers. For consistency, they are used here without further comment.

The feedback forms were designed to allow respondents to comment as they wished but for the purpose of this report, the responses have, where possible, been categorised using these headings. As the data is qualitative, the categorisation is a matter of individual judgment. However, the results of the survey are extremely clear so that any small variation in percentages would not change the overall picture.

The majority of respondents' comments addressed more than one of the points. Where cited in the main body of this report discussing the individual criteria, for clarity only the relevant part has been presented.

3. Findings

a) Feedback themed by ESCC Criteria

1) Overview of Community Feedback

This report as a whole constitutes community feedback. Here we present an overview of the responses, starting with the table below. This summarises overall feedback numbers, split between residents, visitors, traders, and those driving through.

397 forms were completed reporting on the four weeks the traffic lights were in place.

Of those, 44 felt that the traffic signals had made their experience better, 338 (85%) worse and 15 no different.

| | Total | Resident | Visitor | Trader | Passing through | No category |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Better | 44 (11%) | 17 (13%) | 21 (13%) | 1 (2%) | 5 (10%) | 0 (0%) |
| Worse | 338 (85%) | 116 (86%) | 130 (80%) | 40 (98%) | 45 (88%) | 7 (100%) |
| No Change | 15 (4%) | 2 (1%) | 12 (7%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (2%) | 0 (0%) |
| Total | 397 (100%) | 135 (100%) | 163 (100%) | 41 (100%) | 51 (100%) | 7 (100%) |

As can be seen, an overwhelming majority (80%+) in every group stated that the traffic lights made their experience in the village worse. Typical comments included:

- *"Much faster than when had to negotiate other cars. 2) Very aware of stationary traffic 3) Noise and pollution Cars rushing to get through lights. 4) Revving up to go along road 5) Just aware of cars now - not shops any more. 6) Unsightly queues"*
- *"It creates more of a road block than before at the narrow points"*
- *"Chaos"*
- *"(Don't do it!!!) Caused more problems than before for people"*
- *"Any improvement in the narrows offset by large frequent queues elsewhere. Visual disbenefit, higher pollution, likely back to Waterloo Square"*
- *"Pollution! From stationary traffic. Confusion! Frustration. Disrupted the look of the village. Very unhappy villagers that know the best solutions and they have been completely ignored. Non Democratic!"*
- *"Worse, far worse for people and businesses on the High Street, unfortunately, probably better for cars from other roads in the village"*
- *"It was OK before without lights, it just needs people to be thoughtful"*

- *"The village has become a standstill. Pollution!! Problem now for North Street. Ridiculous"*
- *"This is a DISASTER. We are a village, not a town. We have managed perfectly well without traffic lights for centuries. The pollution alone due to idling cars is DIRE. Why don't the Council spend money on more serious issues. LEAVE THE VILLAGE ALONE. GO BE BUSY SOMEWHERE ELSE"*

It is worth noting that not all of the small minority who felt that the traffic signals made their journey better or no different were unequivocal in their feedback. Typical comments included:

- *"How dangerous and congested is the traffic without lights? But certainly with lights the traffic was fast"*
- *"There's still too much traffic, too much passing traffic (Not stopping here) and I saw annoyance caused by the t[raffic] lights"*
- *"Felt safer - no cars on pavement. Cars need to be slowed down though"*
- *"Flow control - better. No traffic on pavement - better. Speed of traffic - faster. Too many HGVs - deliveries only?"*
- *"Traffic had to be stopped to enable pedestrians to cross. Busier than I'd expected"*

Briefly, we note some uncategorised comments. Around ten people said the lights were in the wrong place and a few others made alternative suggestions (eg bollards).

2) Has Traffic Speed Increased?

Yes, according to the village feedback. The table below shows the number of comments regarding increased speeds or speeding.

| | Number | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Mentioning this topic: | 69 | - |
| Things are better: | 8 | 11% |
| Things are worse: | 60 | 87% |
| Things are no different: | 1 | 1.5% |

Summary:

- The majority of respondents who mentioned increased speed or speeding noted the problem of cars speeding up to get through the lights.
- References to incidents of speeding were not just restricted to the Narrows and North Street, but were throughout the village.

- Even those that thought the lights made their experience better, cited that they found the speed of traffic faster with the lights than without.
- Across the two topics, it seems that when the road is clear, speeding has increased, and when traffic levels rise, congestion is more severe than previously.

Key Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *"Fast traffic at higher volumes on west street, ignoring speed and apparently frustrated at c.6pm"*
- *"Nearly got knocked down by speeding"*
- *"Traffic speeding through village trying to get through green traffic light. Very dangerous!"*
- *"Seems to concentrate the traffic, so it all goes through en masse at speed, making it more dangerous for pedestrians"*
- *"Traffic speeding through the village when the lights are green"*
- *"Cars drive faster through the village when they have right of way"*
- *"Traffic (esp. lorries) speeds up through when its on green, instead of creeping as now"*
- *"Traffic speed through village has increased"*

3) Are there operational issues within the system?

Too few commented on this to provide a table. However, the traffic lights themselves failed on at least three occasions.

Key Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *"Faulty traffic lights, seems to be up to residents to divert traffic"*
- *"Traffic flows well when the lights fail... crossing road no longer hazardous and horse riders appeared again."*
- *"Lights out of order. Much more peaceful with slower flowing traffic without lights on"*
- *"Quieter noise as lights failed"*

There were comments on the operational problems of loading and unloading in the village centre, which are summarised later in this report.

4) Is illegal on-street parking impacting the operation of the signals?

Again, there were very few comments on this topic. Of the seven forms, three were pleas for enforcement and the remainder noted that parking was occurring. It is not clear whether they referred to long term parking or short term loading.)

However, the vast majority of parking in the High Street was deterred by the cones, and prevented by the lights queue (or congestion)

5) Have there been any changes to journey times through the High Street?

Yes. Responses overwhelmingly (96%) reported that journey times had increased. The table below shows the number of comments regarding increased journey times.

| | Number | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Mentioning this topic: | 56 | - |
| Things are better: | 1 | 2% |
| Things are worse: | 54 | 96% |
| Things are no different: | 1 | 2% |

Summary:

- The majority of responses mentioned particular instances when their journey time through the village had increased, in some cases substantially. This is despite the fact that the trial was not held during the peak summer period.
- Although a couple of responses refer to particular circumstances – eg the presence of the dustcart - generally reports were about the journey being held up due to the traffic lights.
- The respondent who noted things were better noted that this was because continual traffic was slowed down; the person noting that things were no different commented that there would always be traffic delays.

Key Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *"It took me 8 minutes to get through Alfriston in the middle of the day, midweek. Imagine what it would be like in the height of summer!"*
- *"Traffic was held up with cars everywhere with nowhere to go. Took a lot longer than usual"*
- *"Time to transit village longer than before lights."*
- *"10 minutes from Star Lane to red light at Weavers Lane.irate motorbike driver in front."*
- *"It held my journey up by at least 20 minutes"*
- *"Cleaner unable to get into village on time. Coming from Polegate"*
- *"50 minute transit"*

6) Are signals causing congestion?

Yes, according to the feedback. The table below shows the high number of comments made regarding congestion, gridlock or sheer volume of traffic.

| | Number | % |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Mentioning this topic: | 109 | - |
| Things are better: | 7 | 6% |
| Things are worse: | 100 | 92% |
| Things are no different: | 2 | 2% |

Summary

- Supporting the reports of journey times, the feedback showed levels of increased congestion throughout the trial period.
- The feedback paints a picture of the village frequently being at a standstill.
- Although without the lights the village can be at a standstill, we contend that this happens less frequently, clears more quickly, and is more widely distributed – hence this overwhelming feedback.
- Across the two topics, it seems that when the road is clear, speeding has increased, and when traffic levels rise, congestion is more severe than previously.

Key Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *"More congestion, traffic tailbacks to car parks and Deans Place. Traffic tail back causing difficulty passing outside Badgers."*
- *"Causes massive congestion. Total gridlock!"*
- *"Awful. Queues a long way back. Increased congestion."*
- *"The flow of traffic is far worse with the traffic lights. A big backward step"*
- *"Chaos and gridlock at noon on a Sunday is near unprecedented; honking horns, massive queue, foul air"*
- *"Coming into village from Drusillas direction, we were in a queue of 50 or so cars. Five cars passed only, going in the opposite direction. In all our frequent visits to the village traffic has never been a problem"*
- *(It was better because) "it's a nightmare to drive through Alfriston"*
- *"Now the village gets jammed all day long"*

7) Is traffic being redistributed to other roads?

Yes, according to the feedback forms. The table below shows the number of comments made regarding traffic being redistributed to other roads – 93% said things had been made worse, and no-one thought things were better.

| | Number | % |
|--------------------------|--------|-----|
| Mentioning this topic: | 46 | - |
| Things are better: | 0 | 0% |
| Things are worse: | 43 | 93% |
| Things are no different: | 3 | 7% |

Summary

- There are reports of traffic trying to find other routes around the village; rat-running.
- Congestion/queues sometimes started outside the core of the village and ran through the village.

Key Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *"Again, massive queues down North Street and many cars using West Street to bypass High Street"*
- *"Traffic tailed back down North Street and also drivers take a route passing primary school. Hold ups and rat runs occur"*
- *"It creates a rat-run for the cars."*
- *"More cars going up Sloe Lane trying to avoid congestion and using the free car park to exit Alfriston."*
- *"Very congested in the Square and North Street. Have seen cars speed up Star Lane and down Weavers Lane to beat traffic lights"*
- *"Problem has been moved down into the dual carriageway part of the High Street. Nothing solved."*
- *"Traffic backed up beyond car park almost to Milton Street turn off. Got through. Traffic backed up beyond Deans Place. You couldn't make this up."*

8) Are vehicles queueing back to Market Square?

Yes, and beyond. The table below shows the number of times queues are commented on.

| | Number | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Mentioning this topic: | 67 | - |
| Things are better: | 0 | 0% |
| Things are worse: | 66 | 98.5% |
| Things are no different: | 1 | 1.5% |

Summary

- The feedback cites queues stretching not just back to the Market Square, but to either end of the village and beyond.
- The queues then often create congestion and gridlock throughout the village.

Key Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *"The bottleneck of traffic starts at the entrance to the village (by the pay car park)"*
- *"Constant queue of traffic throughout North Street"*
- *"Long traffic queues down North Street. Difficult to turn into West Street due to oncoming traffic"*
- *"Again, massive queues down North Street and many cars using West Street to bypass High Street"*
- *"Had to queue in traffic coming into village at 6.45pm and that has never happened at that time until traffic lights"*
- *"Build up of traffic waiting at each end"*
- *"Gridlock back to the square"*
- *"Gridlocked - by village shop pedestrians couldn't cross road safely. Terrible queues. Took 10 minutes before moving."*

9) Can vehicles clear the stop line in a single cycle?

Based on the above feedback about gridlock, congestion and long, long queues, it would appear that people felt that this was often not the case.

10) Have there been any changes in air quality?

Yes; this was the third most commented on topic. Respondents cited concerns about increased pollution (including noise) caused by the congestion, queues and gridlock during the trial.

| | Number | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Mentioning this topic: | 66 | - |
| Things are better: | 0 | 0% |
| Things are worse: | 65 | 98% |
| Things are no different: | 1 | 2% |

Summary

- Air pollution (and noise pollution) was frequently cited as a reason why the respondent's experience of the traffic lights was negative.
- Visitors suggest that it is no longer a pleasant place to linger because of the fumes from queuing and stop-start traffic.
- Residents and traders have commented on the adverse effect such pollution has had on their lives and, where they are a trader, their livelihood.

Key Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *"Pollution! From stationary traffic"*
- *"Big increase in traffic queues throughout the village and increased pollution"*
- *"Pollution from stationary vehicles waiting many minutes at traffic lights"*
- *"There are now HUGE queues of cars spewing out at house while waiting for the lights. Notice the 'turn off engine' signs in shops!"*
- *"Appalling tailbacks; cars leaving engines running; terrible fumes"*
- *"Lines of traffic waiting with engines switched on - POLLUTION! I could not open my windows or doors"*
- *"Sitting having tea in The Apiary with stationary car engines pumping out fumes and constant noise is not pleasant!"*

11) Pavementing occurrences

There were considerably fewer comments on pavementing than might have been expected. Of the 23 comments regarding it, opinion was split as to whether the lights made an improvement.

| | Number | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Mentioning this topic: | 23 | - |
| Things are better: | 12 | 52% |
| Things are worse: | 11 | 48% |
| Things are no different: | 0 | 0% |

Eleven responses noted that the lights stopped pavementing (presumably referring to the narrows), eight of these expressing the view that the pavements are safe to walk on again.

Ten responses reported an increase in pavementing, presumably referring to the central North St/Market Square /upper High Street area. (An assumption for pavementing occurring in the narrows has been that it is due to drivers not seeing far enough ahead. They are forced to pavement when they come across an oncoming vehicle they can't pass. But with the lights, pavementing is being increased in places where there is a clear line of vision.)

Key Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *"Felt safer - no cars on pavement. Cars need to be slowed down though"*
- *"Felt safer - no cars on pavement, easier to cross road. Cars still travelling too fast - 20 mph limit needed"*
- *"Not going up on pavements safer, town isn't gridlocked. Quicker to get through"*
- *"Gridlock in market square. Some people trapped against wall by cars on pavement in North Street. Very dangerous."*
- *"Traffic tail back causing difficulty passing outside Badgers. Cars, vans and campers have to use pavement."*
- *"Angry drivers mounting pavements in main High Street"*
- *"Long queue coming into village from south. Oncoming traffic driving on pavement outside Wingrove"*

12) Improve quality of life for businesses and villagers

The fact that the overwhelming majority of the feedback received from businesses and villagers states that their experience of the traffic light trial was worse than without the lights suggests that the scheme would not improve the quality of life for businesses and villagers overall.

| | Number | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Mentioning this topic: | 28 | - |
| Things are better: | 0 | 0% |
| Things are worse: | 28 | 100% |
| Things are no different: | 0 | 0% |

The feedback suggests that by trying to solve the occasional problem caused by the narrowness of 'The Narrows' with traffic lights has simply moved the problem to the rest of the village, with the result that the quality of life in the village as a whole has been negatively impacted. You can see this above in the comments about redistribution of traffic, queuing, pollution, congestion and air quality.

As one respondent noted, the lights made things *'Only better at our location (Chestnuts). Seems like not a good solution.'*

Key Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *"Horrible to have so many cars lined up through village (main part) -fumes + noise + build-up"*
- *"Traffic jams; more noise and pollution in village for longer"*
- *"Added polluting car fumes to Square and High Street. And not solving the congestion"*
- *"I was unable to walk down Weavers Lane because it was jammed with traffic"*
- *"Horrible red/green glow in historic high street at night"*
- *"Noise of traffic right outside my door - especially very noisy motor bikes giving customers a heart attack!"*
- *"Traffic speed through village has increased. Noise has increased. Walking in or crossing street is dangerous"*

13) An improvement for all the village

As is demonstrated throughout, the feedback is that the scheme has emphatically not improved things for all the village. The improvement in the narrows is outweighed by overall feedback showing a worsened situation elsewhere.

The traffic lights have worsened the situation in the village as a whole, and according to the feedback forms, has done so for all groups: residents, traders, visitors, and passing through.

b) Feedback themed by Village Life Criteria

ESCC did not include criteria that we, as villagers, feel important. These are discussed next.

1) Safety, Accidents, and Pedestrians

Whilst the traffic light trial focussed on safety in the Narrows, the feedback comments report that the village as a whole is more dangerous with the lights than without.

| | Number | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Mentioning this topic: | 98 | - |
| Things are better: | 16 | 16% |
| Things are worse: | 81 | 83% |
| Things are no different: | 1 | 1% |

51 forms included specific mention of danger or feeling unsafe, the difficulty of crossing the road, and accidents or near misses (5 involving pedestrians).

One long-time resident commented: *“Within 36 hours you doubled the number of accidents that I have seen in 30 years”*.

There were three separate mentions of emergency vehicles being held up.

Only 18 respondents mentioned that they felt safer or found it easier to cross the road during the trial.

Key Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *“Accident on junction Star Lane and High Street. Van t-boned car”*
- *“Nearly run over in the car park by someone trying to avoid traffic! Very angry drivers!!”*
- *“Pedestrians are at risk”*
- *“Gridlocked - by village shop pedestrians couldn't cross road safely”*

- *"Traffic speeding faster. I almost had a collision at weavers lane junction"*
- *"Traffic too fast - felt vulnerable on the pavement"*
- *"Danger to people on the street up Star Lane. Difficult crossing road. Feel unsafe on bike"*
- *"Large vehicle zoomed round the corner into Star Lane. Had to flatten myself against the wall. Tried to cross the road to shop in the Village shop"*
- *"I feel less safe walking down the high street"*
- *"Dangerous for walkers and dogs trying to cross"*

2) Tourism and Business Viability

Our village has long been known as a tourist hotspot. As recently as July 2018 it was listed among the top 27 UK villages by the Daily Telegraph.

However, the feedback from visitors suggests that they may think twice before coming again, were the traffic light scheme to go ahead.

Of the 163 forms from visitors, 80% said their experience was worse with the lights against 13% who said it was better. Key comments include:

- *"Comment from a Swiss friend, 'now I have seen the chaos because of the traffic lights'"*
- *"On my way to the Village Shop overheard comments in a) French b) German: 'Pity to let an old village be spoilt by traffic like this'"*
- *"The scheme seems to have destroyed the atmosphere of the village without improving the traffic situation."*
- *"The village is no longer as attractive and I imagine that traders must be suffering"*
- *"As a regular visitor this time town would appear to be dead. Will think twice before coming again"*
- *"No reason to stop, people turning around, more congestion, aesthetically not good"*
- *"A quite unnecessary modern intrusion into a tranquil village atmosphere"*
- *"Fumes, noise, congestion. Spoils the village for locals and spoilt for visitors"*

3) Loading and Access

A concern for the viability of village life is the ability for businesses and residents in the central area load and unload near to their premises/residences.

Whilst critical to those in the central area, numerically this affects relatively few locals or visitors, so there were few (8) forms commenting on it. Those that did noted the conflict between the needs of the lights and the needs of loading.

Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *"Will not deliver to Alfriston if lights are chosen option" (from a DHL delivery driver)*
- *"Unable to get to Star Inn and George delivery points"*
- *"Dustcart and cars in village centre means traffic at complete standstill"*
- *"Because I have to collect dustbins in High Street, makes traffic build up more"*
- *"Bins not emptied" (from two local businesses)*
- *"Makes more congestion in village while unloading"*
- *"We experienced the owner of the Apiary being abused by a very aggressive motorist while loading outside"*

4) Large vehicles

Given other surveys and ongoing photographic evidence, to our surprise, relatively few (12) comments mentioned large vehicles specifically.

| | Number | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Mentioning this topic: | 12 | - |
| Things are better: | 3 | 25% |
| Things are worse: | 9 | 75% |
| Things are no different: | 0 | 0% |

Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *"Stop... large vehicles using route as a rat run."*
- *"Too many HGV's – deliveries only?"*
- *"Large vehicles can't pass causing havoc. Lights changed 4 times before there was any progress"*
- *"Lorry got stuck Tuesday night and chaos followed"*

5) Environment (Noise, Road Rage, Landscape)

31 forms commented on noise and road rage, the majority of these being concerned about the increased noise from vehicles. Overwhelmingly (97%) of comments said the traffic lights made the situation worse.

| | Number | % |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Mentioning this topic: | 31 | - |
| Things are better: | 0 | 0% |
| Things are worse: | 30 | 97% |
| Things are no different: | 1 | 3% |

Quotes from Feedback Forms

- *“Engines running; music blaring from cars making this peaceful town unnecessarily noisy”*
- *“Noise pollution in the village centre at all hours”*
- *“Angry drivers mounting pavement...”*
- *“Angry drivers, more speeding”*
- *“Greater noise...” [the scheme] “removes courtesy of drivers”*

4. Conclusion

The forms asked an open question allowing people to record daily comments on their experience.

The overwhelming feedback from all groups is that the lights made things worse for every reporting group, on almost all relevant criteria. Of the 397 responses received, 85% felt that their experience was *worse* because of the traffic lights, 11% felt it was *better*, and 4% felt there was *no change*.

Congestion was the concern most cited. When the road was clear, cars sped up to beat the lights, and pedestrians in the busiest parts of the village – the High Street and the Market Square – felt less safe.

And visitors agreed with residents that the signals ruined the village – in terms of aesthetics, pollution and noise pollution.

It is clear from this feedback that in trying to solve one problem in isolation – the paving in the narrows – the lights made safety and quality of life far worse throughout the village, for locals and visitors alike.

Having experienced the trial, the respondents demonstrated overwhelming opposition to ESCC's traffic light scheme.

Conserve Alfriston Response to the 2018 ESCC Traffic Trial

3 DECEMBER 2018
V17 COMPRESSED / DISTRIBUTE

“Unmitigated disaster for the business.”

- Trader

“Very unhappy villagers that know the best solutions and they have been completely ignored. Non-democratic!”

- Resident

“I personally was almost crushed by a van during the trial, reversing onto the pavement just south of Badgers to allow another vehicle to pass southbound.”

- North Street Resident, commenting on our photos.

*“Traffic backed up...
you couldn't make this up.”*

- Through Driver (Resident)

*“Village one big traffic jam causing health risk...
A thoroughly unpleasant visit.
A place to avoid.”*

- Visitor

Contents

1. Summary
 1. Summary
 1. Key Findings: Phase 1
 2. Key Findings: Phase 2
 3. Deeper Lessons From the Trial
 4. Recommendations
 2. Introductory Images
2. Overview of Response Papers and Data Sources
 1. Diary Feedback
 2. Business Survey Feedback
 3. Traffic Observation Group Monitoring
 4. Photographs and AEG/Apiary Video
3. Trial Context
 1. Location, Density of Pedestrians, Pre-Planning
 2. Contrast with Other Trials
 1. ESCC Rebuttal of Incremental Approach / Quasi-Shared Space
 2. ESCC Rebuttal of Conserve Alfriston Proposals
 3. Timing / Record of Activity
 4. ESCC Criteria
 5. ESCC Questionnaire Format and Reporting
4. Findings: Phase 1: Traffic Lights, 20mph Limit and High Street Cones
 1. ESCC Criteria
 1. Overview of Community Feedback
 2. Has Traffic Speed Increased?
 3. Are there Operational Issues within the Signal System?
 4. Is Illegal Onstreet Parking Impacting the Operation of the Signals?
 5. Have there been any changes to journey times through the High Street?
 6. Are signals causing congestion?
 7. Is traffic being redistributed on other roads?
 8. Are vehicles queuing back to Market Square?
 9. Can vehicles clear the stop line in a single cycle?
 10. Have there been any changes to air quality?
 11. Pavementing Occurrences
 12. Improving Quality of Life for Villagers and Businesses
 13. An Improvement for all the Village?
 2. Village Life Criteria
 1. Safety, Accidents, and Pedestrians
 2. Tourism and Business Viability
 3. Loading and Access
 4. Large Vehicles
 5. Environment (Noise, Road Rage, Landscape)
 6. A final note on Village Life
5. Findings: Phase 2: 20mph Limit and High Street Cones
 1. Overview
 2. Village and ESCC Criteria, by location and topic
6. Postscript: After the Trial
7. Conclusions, Lessons and Recommendations

1. Summary & Introductory Images

1. Summary

This paper provides an overview of Conserve Alfriston's response to the recent ESCC traffic light and 20mph trial in Alfriston. It brings together evidence from several supporting documents and groups including diary feedback from those in the village, a business survey, traffic observations during the trial, and still and video imagery. These are detailed in section 2, and all paint a mutually corroborative picture.

Conserve Alfriston has long asserted that it would be a mistake to install traffic lights in our High Street to manage the traffic in one specific location. We have instead argued for a pan village- and valley- solution that manages traffic over a wide area, that limits large vehicles, and that changes driver behaviour before the centre of our village is reached. We have attracted demonstrably high levels of democratic village and stakeholder support - both for our approach, and also in opposition to the ESCC proposal.

This was therefore not just a highway engineering trial, important though the engineering aspects were. This was an opportunity for ESCC, following a long gestation period, to win over sceptical or undecided hearts and minds by showing how the traffic lights would practically benefit our village.

We believe that the trial failed on both these counts, but it did provide important lessons for a future incremental solution - one that we now suggest may need to accept that cars mounting pavements in the village centre can be reduced but not eradicated, and therefore needs to be managed.

Key Findings: Phase 1

- Having experienced the trial, people completing the the diary survey, the online survey, and the business survey all show continued high levels of opposition to the traffic light scheme. This came from all groups - residents, traders, visitors, and through drivers using the village centre. Several local businesses expressed concern for their viability.
- Under normal conditions, the traffic situation is not ideal but congestion and therefore traffic flow moderation broadly occurs across four locations: the southern High Street (the "narrows"), the central High Street, Market Square and (the top of) North Street.
- This is an holistic system, and village surveys and anecdotal impact reports clearly showed that a village wide approach that would improve traffic management throughout was needed, not a proposal designed to solve one narrowly defined problem whilst ignoring others.
- The traffic lights were designed to address just one of these areas, and as expected, conflicting traffic and pavement mounting in the southern part of the High Street was greatly reduced, to near zero. Several people and businesses in this area felt that things were better for them, but worse for the village overall. Some residual traffic conflict, and speed increases between the lights were reported.
- The positive effects in the narrows were outweighed by the displacement of traffic problems elsewhere.
- At medium>high traffic levels, once broadly free to move through the narrows, traffic built up at the other pinch points, increasing congestion in the village centre, and creating long queues at both ends of the village.
- Traffic queued through the Market Square and frequently into North Street. Queues sometimes reached the village outskirts to north and south. Some drivers diverted up West Street and through the Dene car park.

- As a result, pavingting was observed to increase drastically along North Street, and was also observed in the central High Street, the Market Sq outside Emmett and White/Old Bank, (and along the Wingrove wall to the south).
- The central pinch points affected are around the heart of the village, where there are greater densities of people (on pavements and crossing the road) and businesses. Overall, the traffic lights therefore increased the risk to pedestrians.
- At lower traffic levels there were reports of more speeding and acceleration as drivers tried to beat the lights or move off from queues.
- As a result, villagers experienced far greater noise, and reported air pollution. This could occur at any time, not just during traffic conflict.
- Deliveries in the central area were not provided for and were made almost impossible by the traffic lights. Where parking was attempted in the centre, they could disrupt traffic. If the delivery vehicles parked further away, large loads were observed being moved on foot, in the road.
- Large vehicles continued to cause congestion and pavement mounting at the pinch points, and the traffic lights did nothing to stop them.
- Briefly, we contrast the extensive pre-planning and modelling for this trial with the far lower resourcing of developing/trialling two previous proposals before they were, in our view, unreasonably dismissed. The first was an incremental quasi-shared space approach (inappropriately trialled using barriers), and the second our own Conserve Alfriston proposals (none of which were constructively developed or trialled).
- We detail our concerns with the ESCC response survey in the paper. We also note that ESCC ran a village consultation on two traffic light proposals (options A&B) but are trialling a system that is a material change from both. The village has not been asked if it wants this configuration (let alone an alternative solution) and this question is not asked in the questionnaire.
- Overall safety and quality of life were not improved, but worsened by the traffic light trial, and ESCC's previous assurance that providing this solution for the narrows would benefit the entire village has been disproved.
- Looked at in a pan-village context, the trial was a failure both in engineering terms and in winning over the hearts and minds of those most affected by it. However, it did bring to light some deeper lessons, which are detailed below.

Key Findings: Phase 2

- Phase 2 (20mph and cones in the High Street) was far less disruptive to the village and attracted less feedback.
- Unsurprisingly, it was unable to address the issue in the narrows.
- 20mph - as a standalone solution - was found to be inadequate, but did not have any negative effects.
- However, the cones relieved congestion in the central High Street by keeping it clear from long term parking, whilst enabling short term loading. As previously, they appeared to have support from many villagers - as of early December, they are still in place.
- There was some evidence that the cones displaced High Street congestion to the top of North Street, increasing queues and pavingting there, but not to the same degree as the traffic lights.
- Once again, we observe the movement of congestion (and any resultant pavingting) from one location to another, rather than its resolution.

Deeper Lessons from the Trial

- Previously, paving in the narrows had been largely attributed to a lack of visibility - drivers committing to go forward before they know there is oncoming traffic. The trial showed that unless encouraged to behave differently, drivers also paved in places where visibility is not an issue but congestion is.
- Rather than encouraging this positive behavioural change, the hard engineering solution increased negative driver behaviour by a) removing uncertainty and responsibility, b) encouraging people to try to beat the lights, and c) increasing road rage as a result of congestion. This approach is not part of the solution.
- It appears that with high volumes of traffic, especially that includes large vehicles, congestion and paving will occur somewhere in the village. At present it is distributed at around four locations along the central corridor. Seeking to address just one in totality (through the lights), to the exclusion of the others, moves and focuses the issues elsewhere, also increasing localised speeding and acceleration. (Even the less intrusive Phase 2 trial appeared to demonstrate congestion and paving being moved from one location to another.)
- It therefore seems likely that congestion and paving mounting cannot be stopped completely (without extremely drastic measures that would not likely be countenanced). It therefore has to be reduced where possible - and managed where not - across the village.
- Attempts to accommodate large vehicles and through traffic are in conflict with the desire to improve safety, environmental conditions and village life in the centre of Alfriston, given its special status in the National Park.
- ESCC had previously been unwilling to develop "non-standard" solutions as it has believed that a standard solution - traffic lights - could acceptably solve the problem. This has been disproved.
- Fundamentally, by showing that the village centre cannot cope with traffic which is not managed elsewhere before arriving at traffic lights controlling just one zone, the trial has supported Conserve Alfriston's central assertion that a pan village- and valley- wide approach is needed.

Recommendations

- When we presented our petition, we noted that "The (anecdotal) evidence base and the experience of villagers is that traffic problems occur throughout the village and are often related to large vehicles. A solution that seeks to improve things in one area but has negative secondary impacts in the heart of our High Street and the Market Square where there are most pedestrians, and also does not address the large vehicle problem, is bound to attract criticism on grounds of effectiveness as well as appropriateness."
- This has now been seen to happen in practice, and we ask that ESCC learns the above lessons from this trial and responds positively to villagers clearly stated concerns and suggestions.
- ESCC should therefore abandon its traffic light proposals and the hard engineering approach which is inappropriate in this setting and has not worked. It should also abandon its focus on trying to completely solve issues in one area, instead embracing the pan-village solution that villagers demonstrably want, and that traffic evidence supports.
- This implies moving to a solution that makes incremental improvements in all areas in order to gain support.
- If paving cannot be totally prevented (indeed, some argue it is what the low-rise pavements in the village were designed to support), it may be that for the good of pedestrians, designating quasi-shared space is the best way to manage the expectations of, and improve the behaviour of, drivers.
- ESCC should therefore work constructively with the village on what it so clearly asked for many months ago. The lessons from the trial show that an end to end modular scheme of the form that Conserve Alfriston proposed is required. This has the potential to improve the situation for all the village, thereby engendering support, and thus enabling ESCC's priorities to align with those of our community,

2. Introductory Images



Four pedestrians and
a pavementing car; North Street



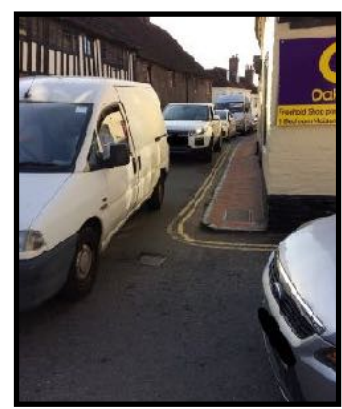
Market Square congestion



Pedestrians crossing through
gridlock and roundabouting



Congestion manoeuvres



Conflict, pavingting, and queues between the lights



**Pavementing,
High Street**



**Congestion in and out
of the village**



2. Conserve Alfriston Response Papers: Summary

A significant number of people in our community have given their time to carry out different studies during the trial, findings from which we have consolidated within this response. This paper is designed to be read in conjunction with the other supporting documents that have been provided.

We have previously been concerned that the presentation of the worst aspects of traffic flows in the village has suggested that there is almost a continuous traffic crisis, when traffic flows acceptably most of the time (given the dimensions of our roads) and impacts/incidents (throughout the village), whilst of understandable concern - especially to those involved - are not daily. We do not want the evidence and imagery we present in this paper to imply continuous crisis.

Our rationale is to demonstrate the effects of the trial and we naturally focus on conveying its shortcomings. However for much of the time traffic flowed unremarkably - as it would have done without the lights and their overall negative impact on the quality of life and safety in our village. We do, however, contend that the situation was frequently made worse by the lights, especially in key locations. At high traffic volumes, congestion was worse and built up more quickly. At lower volumes, photographs are less dramatic, but accelerations, speeding and noise pollution increased by day and by night.

These contentions are not just our view: they are overwhelmingly evidenced by the feedback that we collected from villagers, businesses, visitors, and people passing through.

1. Diary Feedback

Feedback from villagers, businesses, and visitors was obtained by making short, simple flyers available which enabled people to give daily reports on their experiences during Phase 1 of the trial. 398 feedback forms were received, returned to collection boxes at several village shops. The responses are discussed in the Diary Feedback Group Report, which looks at the number of favourable and unfavourable responses on relevant topics, and provides several quotes from the respondents.

Interestingly, just over half the feedback came from visitors and those passing through (214, 54%), with the others from residents and traders.

Every group was overwhelmingly of the opinion that the lights had made things worse. Overall, 338 (85%) of replies said things were worse, and 44 (11%) said things were better. (15 (4%) saw no change.)

The table below shows the most commented on topics (sometimes more than one per form). Congestion was of most concern; paving was least. Quantitative analysis of qualitative data is approximate, but for every topic except paving (where views were split), 75%+ of comments were that the lights had made things worse, with many topics in the 90%+ range.

| Rank | Topic | Comments | % saying lights make it worse |
|------|---------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Congestion | 109 | 92% |
| 2 | Safety / Pedestrian / Accidents | 98 | 83% |
| 3 | Speed | 69 | 87% |
| 4 | Queueing | 67 | 99% |
| 5 | Air Quality | 66 | 98% |
| 6 | Journey time | 56 | 96% |
| 7 | Redistribution | 46 | 93% |
| 8 | Quality of Life | 28 | 100% |
| 9 | Pavementing | 23 | 48% |
| 10 | Noise | 20 | 100% |
| 11 | Business | 13 | 100% |
| 12 | Large Vehicles | 12 | 75% |
| 13 | Anger. Aggression (Road Rage) | 11 | 91% |

Many quotes were heartfelt; for example:-

“As a disabled driver I am no longer able to visit the village as I am no longer able to stop and get out.”

“Just get rid of this bloody disgrace. Just for our mental health. I can’t take much more.”

“Lights will cause more problems with blocked roads all over the village especially at busy times. This attempt is just that! It is not a solution that’s been thought through. You have failed in making this a democratic process.”

“Village one big traffic jam causing health risk or fumes. A thoroughly unpleasant visit. A place to avoid.”

As an example of the minority view, one person commented *“It’s much safer and far less stressful. Love it”*.

2. Business Survey Feedback

In 2016, ESCC noted that ‘Tourism is key to the village economy, helping to support a number of pubs, hotels, restaurants, cafes and shops, the majority of which are on the High Street.’ At the start of 2017, we carried out a business survey and presented it to ESCC, showing that those businesses were opposed to the traffic light proposals put forward at the initial consultation.

We have repeated the survey (obviously, including businesses in the narrows) following the trial, and both surveys are provided in an accompanying document. We were able to contact all but two businesses along the central corridor.

- Having experienced the trial, Alfriston's businesses remain, overwhelmingly strongly against ESCC's scheme. **82% were against, including 69% who were strongly against. Just 3% (one business) was in favour.**
- ESCC has expressed concern about the traffic situation having a detrimental impact on people's lives and businesses. Our survey shows that **89% of businesses who expressed an opinion believe that ESCC's scheme will be more detrimental.** Just 11% (three businesses) who expressed an opinion believe it will be beneficial.

Many quotations from business owners during the survey further show how concerned they are about the impact of the trial:-

"Unmitigated disaster for the business."

"A disgrace and a shambles."

"Took £3 in total in 10 days of the trial. Many leaving early because of the traffic and unpleasant environment. Had previously been on the fence." (regarding the scheme)

"The council do not care for business."

"A potential disaster for the village economy."

ESCC is correct to recognise the importance of these businesses to the village economy - but they overwhelmingly remain opposed to the traffic light scheme.

3. Traffic Observation Group Monitoring

Traffic Observation Group volunteers carried out regular observations before, during, and after the Phase 1 trial, seeking to identify changes to traffic flows at key points around the village. Their findings consisted of numeric counts of traffic and relevant incidents, and informed comments from the experience of observers who watched traffic flows over many hours. Their results are provided in a separate paper.

The core findings of this work were that during the observation periods:-

- The traffic lights appeared to solve the problem of pavement mounting in the Narrows. However, increases in speed in this area were also noted.
- Pavementing improvements in the Narrows were at the expense of the rest of the village.
- The queues for the southbound light frequently extended towards and down North St. There were resultant large increases in pavement mounting along North St.
- The Market Square sometimes became congested with traffic moving around it, and there was stop-start traffic in the village centre queuing for the lights.
- Traffic increased along West Street and through the Dene car park as it diverted away from North Street.
- To the South, traffic paved along the Wingrove garden wall to the Tye Road.

4. Photographs and AEG/Apiary Video

A picture can be worth a thousand words and it is hard to convey in this semi-formal paper how much concern and distress has been caused in some parts of the village by this trial. This is better conveyed in the accompanying documents, which contain almost 200 images, grouped thematically, showing what happened (primarily in the village centre, but also in the narrows and elsewhere) during the trial.

- The first paper features images of pavingting in the High Street and North Street, and numerous images of general congestion during the trial.
- The second paper covers other topics, including the effect on pedestrians, rat running, conflict in the southern High Street when the lights failed, roundabouting in the Market Square, and more.

In addition, we are grateful to the Alfriston Emergency Group and The Apiary who recorded video during the trial. These sources illustrate a number of the findings in this paper and we cross reference where appropriate.

3. Trial Context

Before discussing the trial itself, we briefly note the context in which it occurred. This was not only an engineering trial - it was also an opportunity for ESCC to win over the hearts and minds of a previously sceptical village.

1. Location, Density of Pedestrians, Pre-Planning

Location

The Phase 1 trial was of a traffic light scheme solely designed to resolve the issue of paving in the southern High Street, the “narrows”. (ESCC have also cited congestion as a secondary concern to be addressed.)

However, this singular focus does not tally with the repeatedly expressed concerns of our village. Both surveys and anecdotal incident reports have clearly shown that what the village wants is a village-wide approach that will improve traffic management throughout, not one that focusses solely on this one location, an important component though it is.

We contend that it was therefore misguided of ESCC to solely carry out a study of paving in the narrows as a justification for this trial, which was predicated on answering the wrong question.

Density of Pedestrians

The key safety and quality of life issue that ESCC give for the proposed intervention is the regular mounting of pavements by vehicles, and that pedestrians, whether on pavements or crossing the road, do not feel safe. This is not an academic issue - the risk is that a car will strike a pedestrian (or building) and cause injury.

The other factor in this impact risk equation is where most pedestrians are located. We have repeatedly told ESCC (but it has not been acknowledged) that most pedestrians are around the central High Street and Market Square where there are most businesses. The central area is also the area where directional flows are most complex. In addition, given the northern location of village coach car parks, the great majority of pedestrian visitors approach the village via North Street (or West Street). (Whilst the narrows are important, and businesses and residences there need access, the Tye can provide an alternative pedestrian through route for many foot journeys south of the OCC hall.)

Therefore whilst we wish to see the situation in the narrows improved (and have proposed multiple measures to do so), we have previously expressed the concern that finding an *absolute* solution for the narrows through traffic lights could worsen the safety situation overall. This, we suggested, would happen if moving bad traffic behaviour, including paving, from the narrows to the busy village centre (or creating stop/start queuing traffic there) would greatly increase the risk of an impact accident in the village, not decrease it.

Pre-Planning

Prior to the trial, ESCC commissioned a Bristol consultancy to model the effect of traffic lights. We understand its report predicted long queues past the market square, and expressed concerns about gridlock. The consultancy also noted that the Market Square was an important focus of village life and may experience negative effects that would be unpopular.

ESCC took the decision to move to the detailed design stage in September 2016, and at that meeting it was agreed that a detailed design, cost estimate and programme would be re-presented to the Lead Member in Spring 2017. The trial took place 2 years after the initial decision, and so not only were ESCC able to choose its timing; there was also plenty of time, and the Bristol modelling data, to determine where best to put the lights and how to configure them in order to make the trial a success and to minimise the predicted negative effects of the scheme.

2. Contrast with Other Trials

We briefly contrast the extensive preparations and modelling for the recent traffic light trial with the way other proposals for traffic management in Alfriston have been approached by ESCC. We are concerned that ESCC has greatly prioritised resources for its preferred solution, but has not adequately explored other options that have had demonstrable village support.

ESCC Rebuttal of Incremental Approach / Quasi-Shared Space

Many villagers have argued for an incremental, quasi-shared space approach - in which pedestrians are given priority, cars are slowed, and the historic relative absence of segregation between pavements and the highway in the village centre is recognised - over many years. ESCC's background history of the Alfriston traffic issue states that a core element of an incremental approach was trialled and the congestion was so bad that the trial had to be stopped after a few days, and therefore it could not be taken forward.

We note that ESCC's trial of Colin Davis' incremental proposals in 2011 did not follow the modular or quasi-shared space model. Instead, it consisted of simply, brutally, putting barriers at the edge of the footway in one location only to prevent drivers from using it. This was in no way an adequate representation of what an incremental quasi-shared space approach would involve (arguably, it is the exact opposite), whereby visible guidance would be given for vehicles of the need to change behaviour over a wide area, pedestrians would have priority, and the existing porous boundary between the pavements and the carriageway would be recognised/removed rather than hardened.

In contrast to the recent sophisticated experiment with traffic lights, no modelling or it would seem, detailed planning, took place before the trial. It was not a realistic model, and it unsurprisingly failed, leading to the incorrect assertion that the incremental / quasi-shared space option had been shown not to work.

ESCC Rebuttal of Conserve Alfriston Proposals

Conserve Alfriston put forward a village- and valley- wide solution which was modular, consisting of numerous interventions that could reduce congestion and paving around the village (including the narrows) in an appropriate way. This framework of proposals attracted huge support from villagers and other senior stakeholders, achieving a wider consensus than any other approach.

We do not believe that our proposals were reviewed in the constructive way that their evident democratic support warranted. We do not agree with ESCC's rationale for this, which (in brief) was erroneously based on two fallacies. Firstly, the proposals were assessed in the context of the continued but unsupported assertion of the "problem" being defined as being solely in the narrows - when we had shown that this was not the case and that we were addressing a wider issue.

Secondly, our modular proposals were pitched at both our exhibition weekend and to ESCC as being the start point of a developmental process for which we sought input. We asked "for the support of ESCC in working with us to develop and implement our proposals" as we wanted to work alongside highways engineers to make our framework compliant. Yet this did not happen. Instead of developing them with the village as requested, ESCC instead took the proposals absolutely literally, narrowly critiquing elements and returning a brief report on why they were non-compliant with Highways regulations.

Therefore, with the exception of the 20mph limit, not one of our numerous proposals has been constructively developed, let alone trialled. No wonder that one daily feedback form respondent commented on why many villagers were so upset by the effects of the recent trial:-

"Very unhappy villagers that know the best solutions and they have been completely ignored. Non-democratic!"

3. Timing / Record of Activity

Prior to the trial, ESCC were encouraged to run it when the roads were busiest - felt to be in mid-summer - to properly test the proposed system.

However, September was felt to be the earliest that was feasible, and then there was a further implementation delay meaning that the four week Phase 1 traffic light trial commenced on Monday 17th September.

- During week one of the trial, the lights operated sporadically, failing during the week, restarting briefly, but then not operating over the first weekend as no support was available.
- They operated throughout week two but by then the ESCC cameras had been removed - we were told they were needed elsewhere. It was therefore the start of October before ESCC video of the effect of the lights was consistently recorded.
- In Phase 2 (15th October to 11th November), ESCC cameras were present from Wed 31st October onwards.
- The traffic monitoring group could not operate all day, every day but did monitor many weekday peak time hours consistently.

4. ESCC and Village Criteria

At meetings prior to the trial, stakeholders asked for clarity on the success/failure criteria for this experiment. We did not feel that they were clear, and neither was the response to the more recent written question put from APC in this regard.

However, we understand that at the August stakeholder meeting, 10 criteria were put forward, so we have used these here and in our other papers as a basis for our comments on whether the trial was a success. (Cars mounting pavements is not one of these criteria. Nor is safety, or the experience of pedestrians.)

In addition, some of the clearest ESCC drivers for action came in a communication from Cllr Carl Maynard in November 2016, in response to a request for the safety record that justified ESCC's proposed traffic intervention in Alfriston. Three key points:-

1. Key to the rationale was "traffic related problems such as congestion caused by vehicles trying to pass one another, vehicles mounting the pavement causing problems for pedestrians and vehicles damaging the pavement and striking buildings in the High Street."
2. "The County Council has to be open to requests for action to address traffic related problems across the county where these are having a detrimental impact on people's lives and business." We have paraphrased this as "quality of life" for people and businesses.
3. "The proposed scheme will address the specific traffic problems that affect this section of the High Street and which adversely impact on all residents, businesses and visitors in Alfriston." The clear implication here is that the solution will be an improvement for all the village.

We have added these three criteria into the ESCC list that we address. We also note that the response stated that those most affected by the proposals were those in the High Street, the Market Square, and North Street.

One of the 10 ESCC criteria was community feedback, of which this report is a part. Villagers' key concerns include both safety and quality of life throughout the village, and where possible we have addressed them using the ESCC criteria, broadening them where necessary to include the village as a whole. However, other village concerns include business viability, loading and access in the village centre, and environmental aspects, which are not covered by the ESCC criteria, and are discussed separately.

5. ESCC Questionnaire Format and Reporting

We now briefly review the survey form that ESCC provided in hardcopy and online to collect feedback on this trial. As was the case with the ESCC consultation prior to moving to the design stage, there is criticism of the ESCC questionnaire from villagers, from the Parish Council, and from ourselves. Aspects of the questionnaire do not follow from ESCC's stated criteria for the trial, and do not respond to earlier comments from either villagers or the Bristol consultants with regard to what aspects of the trial would be important.

- ESCC have acknowledged that the Phase 1 system trialled was a "material change" from the A/B traffic light options which the village had previously been consulted on. However, our request to ESCC to come and present the new proposal to the village was ignored, and this questionnaire does not ask the basic

question of whether respondents wish this layout to go ahead. This basic question has therefore never been asked about this layout.

- The only reference to pedestrian safety is whether people feel safer on the footway in the area controlled by lights. Pedestrian safety elsewhere is not mentioned (and neither is safety when crossing the road), despite our previous comments to ESCC highlighting where there are most pedestrians.
- Other questions refer to drivers, riders, cyclists and equestrians - those primarily using the High Street for transport and through journeys, not using it as an amenity and supporting villagers/businesses “quality of life”.
- Despite the previously expressed concerns of the Bristol consultants, villagers, and businesses, and the “all village” assertion of ESCC, there are no questions about the effect on people around the central Market Square, North Street, or on alternative routes through the village.

We therefore feel that the questionnaire criteria are narrow in focus, not fully consistent with stated aims, and may lead to downplayed reporting of the negative consequences of this trial around the village.

4. Findings: Phase 1: Traffic Lights, 20mph limit and Cones

This section discusses Phase 1 of the trial, incorporating traffic lights, cones in the central High Street, and a 20mph speed limit.

1. ESCC Criteria

1. Overview of Community Feedback

This document brings together community feedback from our daily feedback survey, our business survey, our traffic surveying, and from imagery. You will see that the overwhelming response from each of these sources to the Phase 1 trial is overwhelmingly negative.

The diary feedback captured the views of many visitors and those passing through the village (54% of feedback forms) as well as locals. On every measure except paving (where views were split), 75%+ of comments thought the lights made things worse (often 90%+). Congestion was the subject that most people commented on, followed by safety, speed, and queueing.

The business survey showed that 82% of businesses were against the scheme, including 69% who were strongly against. Just 3% (one business) was in favour. In addition, 89% of businesses who expressed an opinion believe that ESCC's scheme will be detrimental to their business. Just 11% (three businesses) who expressed an opinion believed it will be beneficial. Qualitative comments were extremely critical of the lights.

The traffic monitoring group reported that vehicles mounting the pavement in the narrow southern High Street has sharply declined - but far from being a solution, they found that traffic-related problems were displaced elsewhere, particularly into the village centre where paving along North Street rose enormously, and the busy Market Square frequently became congested with cars travelling in many directions. Rat running in West Street and the Dene car park was noted. This is consistent with the overwhelming negative feedback from our surveys.

Our imagery depicts incidents of pedestrians being made less safe, of paving, of congestion, of roundabouting in the Market Square, and of other issues elsewhere in the village.

2. Has Traffic Speed Increased?

During the Phase 1 trial, three key factors were changed that might influence traffic speed (and accelerations/decelerations) through the village.

1. The traffic lights; changing driver expectations of right of way;
2. The cones, reducing the amount of undesirable long term parking in the central High Street and making through passage easier when the way was clear;
3. The 20mph speed limit.

We received several comments from villagers of their experiences along the central corridor (87% of diary feedback respondents said things were worse), the Observation Group monitors carried out a limited number of measurements using a commercial speed gun, and AEG videoed speeding in the narrows.

Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

"Traffic speed through the village has increased, noise has increased, walking in or crossing the street is dangerous."

"Traffic speeding faster, I almost had a collision at Weavers Lane junction"

"Traffic speeding through narrows both ways when lights turn green"

"Faster traffic at higher volumes on West Street, ignoring speed and apparently frustrated..."

We found that:-

- Villagers did not just note speed increases, but experienced increased accelerations and decelerations at all hours, greatly increasing both danger to pedestrians and noise (plus, reportedly air) pollution.
- It appeared that gaming the lights had the greatest impact on this driver behaviour, then how clear the road ahead was (the cones sped things up, and gridlock/congestion slowed them down) and least strongly, the 20mph limit.
- In the narrows, monitors reported speed increases, presumably as there was assumed to be no oncoming traffic and drivers felt they had right of way. (One person noted that they would rather be struck by a wing mirror going slowly than one moving faster.) AEG video shows this.
- Drivers trying to "beat the lights", and/or queuing encouraged accelerations and decelerations, sometimes rapid. There was stop start traffic when there were queues or gridlock in the village centre, which made things more dangerous for pedestrians.
- The speeds of up to c. 50 mph were reported by the monitoring group.

We do not believe that for ESCC to simply report a change in average speed will necessarily be meaningful, as the regular gridlocks will lower it and mask increases in speed due to lights and cones. These could cancel each other out.

What is more important is the distribution of observed speeds (with maximum speeds identified) in different parts of the village (especially the narrows, the central High Street, North Street, and West Street), and a measure of accelerations and decelerations in the vicinity of the lights as cars attempt to beat them. It is these maxima, accelerations and stop/start flows that are likely to have a greater impact on pedestrian safety than an overall average speed. We therefore ask that ESCC addresses these issues clearly in its report.

3. Are there Operational Issues within the Signal System?

We assume this covers technical failures of the lights, and conflict between the lights in the narrows which they did not prevent.

Technical Issues

The lights failed twice in Week 1 and again later in the trial. Conserve Alfriston assisted by reporting the failure, and at one point covered the non-operational lights up at the Police's request. When the lights failed, paving and conflict returned in the controlled section of the narrows whilst there was an immediate noticeable improvement in the village centre.

Quotes from daily feedback forms did not reflect the issues created in the narrows but did note the improvements elsewhere:-

"Faulty traffic lights. Seems to be up to residents to divert traffic."

"Traffic flows well when the lights fail... crossing road no longer hazardous and horse riders appeared again."

"Lights out of order. Much more peaceful with slower flowing traffic without lights on."



Conflict between the lights



Traffic meeting oncoming traffic between the lights occurred during normal operation. Sometimes cars had passed through a red light; at other times the cause was not clear.

Additionally, in the first days of the trial, a van turning left out of Star Lane did not stop and impacted a car coming northbound up the High Street. (Apiary video refers). An incident of this severity had not been seen before.

Deliveries

These have to be made both around and between the lights, especially as the northern light was sited outside the busy George pub in a location surrounded by business and residences with limited access. This will be discussed in the “Loading and Access” section, but we note that no alternative provision was made for deliveries during this trial and we still do not see how ESCC expects the village to function in this regard.

4. Is Illegal Onstreet Parking Impacting the Operation of the Signals?

This question assumes that the “Operation of the Signals” is the primary concern, and that all parking is undesirable. We do not agree. Illegal long term parking is absolutely undesirable, but the question ignores the requirement for loading and unloading in the High Street, and ESCC have still not explained how they propose to address this. See “Loading and Access” section of this document.

Illegal longterm parking was not a significant factor in the congestion, pavementing, and roundabouting caused by the signals, or operation between the signals. For the vast majority of the time, the signals operated unencumbered. Parking in the area between the signals has not been an issue; and queueing for the signals and widespread, unpredictable congestion prevented parking in the central High Street.

At more off-peak hours, the cones in the central High Street prevented long term parking, but allowed access. This demonstrated the positive effect that the Alfriston Emergency Group cones had already (repeatedly) showed and we hope that their contribution is now recognised by stakeholders. (It was however, important that they were moveable, as some large vehicles could not pass with them in place.)

What is needed is enforcement of a layout that improves traffic flows by stopping long term parking, but also supports village life by allowing (ideally, enforced) short term parking - the Conserve Alfriston solution.

There were only 7 comments from the daily diary forms, of which three were requests for enforcement. Typical of the others was the comment *“Cars parked on double yellow line blocking access.”*

5. Have there been any changes to journey times through the High Street?

At high traffic levels, the signals made things far worse, as is evidenced by the numerous photos of congestion and associated pavementing in the accompanying pack, and by the qualitative reports of respondents to the diary survey (56 comments, 96% saying things were worse). Many people stated how much harder their journeys had become.

Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

"It took me 8 minutes to get through Alfriston in the middle of the day, midweek. Imagine what it would be like in the height of summer."

"Ten minutes from Star Lane to red light at Weavers Lane, with an irate motorbike driver in front."

"Cleaner unable to get to village on time"

"Traffic held up... took a lot longer than usual"

At low traffic levels, we observed traffic queuing unnecessarily for the lights, including, it was reported, an ambulance behind held up for several minutes. There may therefore be a small increase in travel times through the village.

However, the important factor is that at low traffic levels the lights are not needed: without them, traffic can flow and minor conflicts quickly clear. With them, the lights and their negative effects are present 24/7. We maintain that through journey times through the High Street are less important than the effects of the related topic of congestion on pedestrians, safety and quality of village life.

We ask that ESCC discusses journey times through different traffic levels clearly in its report and does not simply report an average.

6. Are signals causing congestion?

Greatly, on a village wide assessment; again numerous photographs are presented in the accompanying pack. This was the number one issue for comments in the diary feedback (109 comments, 92% saying things were worse).

Whilst conflict in the narrows was reduced, the problem was moved into and focussed on the busy central village area, with resultant pavementing.

Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

"Coming into village from Drusilla direction we were in a queue of 50 or so cars. 5 cars passed only, going in the opposite direction. In all our frequent visits to the village traffic has never been a problem."

"It took much longer to travel through and congestion was far worse at the Square and North Street."

"Awful. Queues a long way back. Increased congestion."

"Chaos and gridlock at noon on a Sunday is near unprecedented. Honking horns, massive queue, foul air."

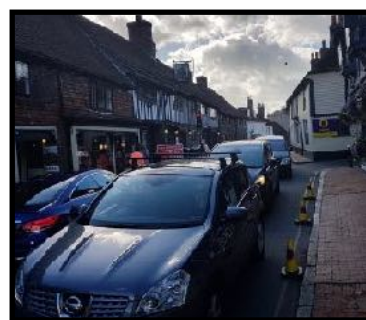
"Causes massive congestion, total gridlock."

"Traffic backed up beyond car park almost to Milton Street turnoff. Got through. Traffic backed up behind Deans Place. You couldn't make this up."

Village Centre

Congestion started easily when the southbound queue approached the Market Square, and gridlock frequently ensued. There was stop/start traffic queueing for the lights in the central High Street. Cars mounted the pavement far more frequently in North Street to pass each other - even with good visibility - and pedestrians were endangered as they crossed the road in the High Street and Market Square. (Numerous AEG videos show the negative effects on traffic and pedestrians.)

A bus was observed dropping passengers in the central High Street by the cones when the Market Square area was congested.



Village Outskirts: North

The queue could reach down North Street all the way to the car parks. This caused greatly increased pavementing along North St, especially the busy pavement between Badgers Tea House and the Market Square where many pedestrians walk each day.



Village Outskirts: South

The queue sometimes reached beyond Deans Place to the south. (Reaching the village from Seaford, a driver reported being flashed a warning by oncoming cars, then came around a corner way before the village speed limit to find stationary traffic in the road.)



Summary

The traffic lights made congestion in Alfriston occur more frequently and to far greater negative effect. Quality of life was massively impacted and villagers were frequently on the street trying to help the situation. Life in the narrows was improved but life throughout the central areas (as well as to the south) was hugely damaged.

Coping with Congestion

Vehicles trying to manoeuvre within the congestion, decreased safety and quality of life, and endangered buildings.



7. Is traffic being redistributed on other roads?

In order to escape the congestion, or just to avoid the reputation of the lights, it was reported that vehicles were using other routes.



Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

"Traffic tailed back down North Street. And also drivers take a route passing primary school. Holdups and rat runs occur."

"More cars going up Sloe Lane trying to avoid congestion and using the free car park to exit Alfriston."

"Again, massive queues down North Street and many cars using West Street to bypass High Street."

"Faster traffic at higher volumes on West Street..."

"I was unable to walk down Weavers Lane because it was jammed with traffic"

The monitoring volunteers noted that there was a marked increase in vehicles using the Dene car park as a through route (and that it may have been still higher if they had not been visible at the entrance).

Observers saw drivers exiting the Market Square northbound via West Street to avoid the top of North Street. West Street (74% increase) and Dene car park flows increased substantially according to the Monitoring Group, as did traffic turning from North St to West St across the Market Square, adding to congestion there. (No substantial changes were seen in Weavers Lane.)

There were conflicting reports and assumptions regarding displacement of traffic through Litlington during the trial. We hope that ESCC had a counter in place there and will report on this.

8. Are vehicles queuing back to Market Square?

Yes, often, and beyond. With a devastating effect on the central village area. (99% of diary respondents said queuing was worse with the lights.)

At low traffic levels it did not occur, but this is not a significant test for the lights system:- it didn't occur in the past, either.

As traffic increased, slowing/queuing of southbound traffic that would be spread throughout the village was concentrated into the area between The George and the Market Square. This led to northbound traffic "roundabouting" around the Market Square. AEG have several video clips of the effect.



Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

"Gridlocked - by village shop pedestrians could not cross road safely. Terrible queues..."

"Gridlock back to the Square."

"Traffic stationary all through main street. Fumes. Gridlock from queuing cars at Market Cross."

"Constant queue of traffic throughout North Street"

Traffic travelled in different directions to make progress. And pedestrians crossed between stop/start traffic.
(AEG videos refer.)



9. Can vehicles clear the stop line in a single cycle?

Given the congestion effects the monitoring group and others saw it is clear that it was frequently not the case at both ends of the system.

Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

"Buildup of traffic waiting at each end."

"Had to queue in traffic at 6.45pm and that has never happened at that time until traffic lights."

"Had to queue in traffic 10 minutes from Berwick and that never usually happens at 6.45pm. Traffic lights cause traffic." (different day)

10. Have there been any changes to air quality?

Several people, including a business owner and visitors, complained about a decrease in air quality. 66 diary comments mentioned it, 98% saying things had worsened. Visible emissions from one van showed how they were distributed in a queue situation (see photo pack).

Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

*"There are now huge queue of cars spewing out at house while waiting for the lights. Notice the **'turn off engine'** signs in shops."*

"Lines of traffic waiting with engine switched on. POLLUTION! I could not open my windows or doors."

"Appalling tailbacks. Cars leaving engine running. Terrible fumes."

"Pollution from stationary vehicles waiting many minutes at traffic lights."

"Stinks of air pollution."

"More fumes by cafe and restaurant/pub/shops" - from a visitor.

11. Pavementing Occurrences

Pavementing in the narrows has been one of the prime drivers for ESCC intervention and measurements of this were taken (solely) in this area in justifying the trial. On this count the trial largely succeeded - our observers noted that pavementing in the narrows dropped to near zero during their observation hours, though we did see some conflicting traffic between the lights (see above). This is not surprising, as the lights were designed to keep conflicting traffic in this region separated.

However, this narrowly defined problem has not been solved; it has been displaced. Traffic issues already occurred throughout the village and the lights have made them far worse, especially with regard to this topic. The accompanying pack shows numerous photos of the pavementing along North Street which increased greatly according to the monitoring group.

Seeing the following pictures, one North Street resident commented *"I personally was almost crushed by a van during the trial, reversing onto the pavement just south of Badgers to allow another vehicle to pass southbound."*



Pavementing in the High Street - with vehicles driving along the pavement - was observed where it previously hardly occurred. (This was only very rarely due to illegal parking which was largely impossible given the queues and cones.)



The monitoring group reported pavement waiting by queuing vehicles by the antique shop and Old Bank in the Market Square, to allow space for northbound traffic to pass into North St. They also saw pavementing southwards beside the Wingrove garden and car park wall in order to pass a line of vehicles queuing for the Weavers Lane lights.

Perhaps surprisingly, pavementing was not a topic that received a lot of comment on the daily feedback forms. The 23 comments submitted were split between those who noted the improvement in one area and others affected by the worsening elsewhere.

Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

"Dangerous! Driver mounted pavement after going round lights. Pedestrians had to leap out of path."

"Oncoming traffic driving on pavement outside Wingrove"

"Drivers trying to beat the lights mounting pavements."

"Traffic tailback causing difficulty outside Badgers... cars vans campers have to use pavement."

"Had to wait ages at the lights. Had to go on the pavement to pass waiting traffic. Dreadful."

"Traffic driving too fast through the village, though, at least, not on the pavement."

"Felt safer - no cars on pavement - easier to cross road. Cars still traveling too fast - 20mph needed."

"Felt safer - no cars on pavement. Cars still need to be slowed down though."

"No driving on the pavements"

"At last the pavements are safe to walk on"

"I drive a wide van, without the lights I have to mount the pavement to pass another vehicle"

12. Improving Quality of Life for Villagers and Businesses

Our surveys of peoples' daily experiences of the trial and of business owners are unequivocal. Contrary to ESCC's stated reason for intervention, the traffic lights were seen by all sections of the community as being hugely detrimental to their quality of life and to the viability of Alfriston's businesses. The detailed numbers have already been presented and so we do not repeat them here.



Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

"Horrible red green glow in historic High Street at night."

"Adding polluting car fumes to Square and High Street and not solving congestion"

"Horrible to have so many cars lined up through village (main part) - fumes + noise + build up"

13. An Improvement for all the Village?

This assurance from ESCC that using traffic lights to solve the problem in the narrows would be good for all the village is demonstrably not the case. We want to see the situation in the narrows improved - but not to the detriment of everywhere else.

As this report has described, the lights had hugely negative reports elsewhere, and the overall feedback from villagers and businesses was extremely negative.

Even in the narrows, only one business supported the introduction of the lights, whilst others noted that even if things had improved for them, they were opposed to the lights being introduced as the overall effect on the village was so bad.

Introducing these lights, and taking action to solve a problem in the narrows with little regard for the wider village situation would be disastrous for Alfriston. Both village opinion and the anecdotal incident evidence that has been provided to ESCC over many years has consistently shown that a pan-village approach is required, and the results of this traffic light trial prove the point.

2. Additional Village Criteria

Our concern for “quality of life” is an umbrella term for everything that makes Alfriston a thriving village for local residents, traders, and visitors; that respects its status as a jewel in the South Downs National Park; that supports the practical requirements of village life, and that prioritises High Street amenity over through traffic.

1. Safety, Accidents, and Pedestrians

The migration of paving to the busy village centre, and the increases in stop/start traffic and roundabouting, have already been discussed, but we stress again how much concern these issues have generated for villagers who feared that the trial greatly multiplied the overall safety risk for pedestrians.

AEG have several video clips of pedestrians in difficulty within the congestion in the central area, and we note that safety was the second most commented topic on the feedback forms, with 83% saying things were worse overall.

Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

“Accident on junction Star Lane and High Street. Van t-boned car”

“Pedestrians are at risk”

“Traffic speeding faster - I almost had a collision at weavers lane junction”

“I feel less safe walking down the High Street”

“By village shop pedestrians couldn’t cross the road safely”

“Traffic too fast - felt vulnerable on the pavement”

There were reports of emergency vehicles being delayed at the lights, reversing in congestion or having to turn back the way they had come. These came from the traffic monitoring group and other villagers.

2. Tourism and Business Viability

A key aspect of the health of Alfriston is that it has a successful local economy. We have already lost our Post Office (partly due to overzealous parking restrictions, according to its owner) and other shops are up for sale. It is critical that Alfriston's businesses are supported.

Our survey of the businesses along the village centre showed overwhelming opposition to the traffic light scheme (as did our previous survey which we presented to ESCC alongside our petition). Alfriston's business community has not been won over by this trial - far from it.

- Having experienced the trial, Alfriston's businesses remain, overwhelmingly, strongly against ESCC's scheme. 82% were *against*, including 69% who were *strongly against*. Just 3% (one business) was in favour.
- ESCC has expressed concern about the traffic situation having a detrimental impact on people's lives and business. Our survey shows that 89% of businesses who expressed an opinion believe that ESCC's scheme will be more detrimental. Just 11% (three businesses) who expressed an opinion believe it will be beneficial.

Many quotations from business owners answering the survey further show how concerned they are about the impact of the trial, and how they feel that ESCC does not support them:-

"Unmitigated disaster for the business."

"A disgrace and a shambles."

"Took £3 in total in 10 days of the trial. Many leaving early because of the traffic and unpleasant environment."

"Had previously been on the fence." (regarding the scheme)

"The council do not care for business."

"A potential disaster for the village economy."

Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

"The congestion has been awful to the point people are avoiding the village and business has plummeted."

"Customers put off by traffic lights, having to encounter busier High Street."

"Fumes, noise, congestion. Spoils the village for locals and spoilt for visitors."

"Places could lose trade due to people changing accommodation next time they visit." (visitor to The George.)

If ESCC supports businesses, and wants to see Alfriston thrive economically, it should heed the very strong concerns of those who run businesses here regarding the effect that the trial and the lights have had on them. Their opposition to the scheme following the design stage was ignored; now they have seen the scheme in operation - and their concerns for their futures remain.

3. Loading and Access

Several businesses and households along the central area have no alternative access except from the High Street. ESCC have repeatedly been asked how loading and access for these properties are expected to take place, both between the lights and in the central High Street, if traffic lights are instituted. No measures were put in place to support this during the trial.

The lights, and associated congestion/gridlocking made normal loading near impossible in the High Street outside the lights controlled zone, and difficult within it.

Within the controlled zone, and by the lights, loading had to take place. This was extremely difficult for those involved and sometimes obscured the lights themselves.

One DHL driver remarked:-

"Will not deliver to Alfriston if lights are the chosen option".



Other quotes from daily feedback forms:-

"Causes bigger buildup of traffic at both ends of the village. Unable to get to Star Inn and George delivery points."

"Congestion both ways. Cannot park to deliver. Summer holidays will be even worse."

"Bins not emptied" comments from two businesses

Miscellaneous deliveries/collections had to take place and took their chances of not causing congestion wherever they stopped. However, we know of several deliveries which were simply postponed (eg of logs or of white goods) until the trial was over. This would not be a solution were the lights to be permanent. We also know of elderly people having to walk from the car parks to businesses or properties in contrast to now, when they can be dropped off in the village centre.

Refuse Collection Case Study: Is this ESCC's solution to these issues? Is it safer than now?

Refuse collection during Phase 1 provides a useful study (see images below) in how safe an alternative loading solution might be, as we assume that ESCC would prefer people to park well away from the lights controlled area so that traffic can flow easily.

The refuse cart parked away from the lights, in one example way along West Street. On separate occasions, the collectors picked up from the Market Square and from near the George. In both cases, the natural thing for them to do was to walk in the road with their loads (and they could only do so as there was no congestion

at the time). Walking in the highway in this manner will always be both natural and needed when large items are involved, given the narrow pavements in Alfriston.

Is this the proposed solution in the case of large business and residential loads? It is hard to see that it is safer than briefly parking close to the pickup point.



Banning loading from the traffic light area is simply incompatible with the practicalities of village life for several businesses and residents.

4. Large Vehicles

For many years, villagers have complained about the effects of large vehicles in the village, especially those passing through. They feature in a large number of the reported incidents with both pedestrians and buildings, and there have been regular calls and proposals from Lorrywatch, Conserve Alfriston, and others to manage their access.

Despite this, nothing has been done to reduce their numbers, and nothing was done during the recent trial. Lorries and coaches continued to cause congestion and concern throughout the village.

Traffic lights were shown not to help this, and may indeed make the problem worse if they encourage more through traffic.

Quote from daily feedback forms:-

"Large vehicles can't pass causing havoc. Lights changed 4 times before any progress."



5. Environment (Noise, Road Rage, Landscape)

The traffic lights were present 24/7 and so their negative impact on the village centre was constant. Noise pollution was greatly increased in the vicinity of the lights and far beyond. Vehicles could be heard accelerating as the lights changed, and not just by those in the High Street - we had reports from River Lane and Star Lane. This constant sound from morning to late night was oppressive.

The high levels of congestion increased road rage in the village centre, with reports of angry drivers. (At times, the monitoring volunteers were mistaken for ESCC officials and blamed for the congestion.) Whilst there were reports that road rage in the narrows dropped, we surmise that the overall increase in congestion likely meant an increase in road rage overall. 97% of survey comments on this topic said things had been made worse.

The lights were of necessity temporary, but there is no doubt that the physical presence of the lights themselves in the heart of the high street; the traffic congestion, roundabouting and gridlocking; and the uncontrolled HGVs had a terrible effect on the historic village of Alfriston.

A tourist was heard to remark:- *"On my way to the village shop overheard comments in a) French b) German: 'pity to let an old village be spoilt by traffic like this'."*

Quotes from daily feedback forms:-

"Noise of traffic right outside my door - especially very noisy motorbikes giving customers a heart attack."

"Traffic queues. Unpleasant to look at."

"Horrible to have so many cars lined up through village - fumes + noise + buildup." - from a visitor.

"More stationary cars - unpleasant for pedestrians" - from a visitor.

"Motorbikes waiting by George numerous times. I was woken up by the noise." (Sunday, 8am)

"Woken up at 7am (just after) to constant traffic noise. Also, now with the lights, cars are going much quicker creating higher noise levels.... Places could lose trade due to people changing accommodation next time they visit." (Have stayed in the George Inn several times, always Room 4 on the front.)

6. A Final Note on Phase 1 and Village Life

The Phase 1 trial of traffic lights was a failure on a village wide level. It greatly reduced paving in the narrows but measured on other ESCC criteria and on the concerns of villagers, it had terrible effects - many of which had been predicted both by villagers and by computer modelling.

The centre of the village was often chaotic and less safe. Many villagers were stressed. Businesses were concerned about lost revenues and future viability (even in the narrows, which relies on a successful village centre for its own support). And our environment was destroyed. For most, it was a relief when the lights were removed.

Finally, survey quotes from two visitors:-

*"The scheme seems to have destroyed the atmosphere of the village without improving the traffic situation.
The village is no longer as attractive and I imagine that traders must be suffering."*

*"Village one big traffic jam causing health risk or fumes.
A thoroughly unpleasant visit. A place to avoid."*

5. Findings: Phase 2: 20mph Limit and High Street Cones

1. Overview

The Phase 2 trial of a 20mph limit had a much lower impact on the village and there is less to discuss, so this section of the report is briefer than that for Phase 1 and we cover both village and ESCC criteria in a single section, by location. We received far less anecdotal feedback from villagers regarding Phase 2; the effect of the traffic lights was so powerful that for many, once they were removed, it was as though the trial was over (for good or ill).

We had some comments that the 20mph trial was inadequately modelled - the temporary signs were sometimes knocked over. In addition, in the village centre this was not solely a trial of 20mph; the cones in the High Street were retained and did their job in dissuading long term parking whilst allowing loading.

In the narrows, it is hard to see how a 20mph limit alone would make a difference to the do nothing case. Traffic already moved slowly here because of the uncertainty of meeting oncoming vehicles, and much of it was presumably already travelling below 20 mph. Broadly, the previous sporadic conflict resumed.

In the village centre, the gridlock, congestion, and negative effects seen during the traffic light trial disappeared. (If we had pictures of Phase 2 congestion we would present them - but we were reduced to photographing largely quiet streets and unremarkable loading.)



The cones had a big effect on how traffic flowed in the central area and likely encouraged it to speed up, an effect in opposition to any from the reduced speed limit.

At the outskirts, traffic did not noticeably slow down at the 20mph signs.

We remain supporters of 20mph in the context of changing driver behaviour within a village wide traffic management/calming scheme such as we have proposed - but on its own, 20mph is, unsurprisingly, insufficient.

In the absence of parking enforcement, we also support the use of planters in the High Street as a way of making the beneficial effect of the cones permanent (stopping long term parking but enabling loading) - this was suggested in our proposal and is supported by the Phase 2 trial.

2. Village & ESCC Criteria, by location and topic

Villagers appeared more sanguine about Phase 2 as we received far less anecdotal feedback about it; it was closer to the do nothing case.

The Narrows and to the South

Our observers saw a return to paving in the narrows during Phase 2 and so we infer that quality of life declined for those in this area. Queuing disappeared from the lights at the bottom of the High Street and traffic flowed more easily in the Deans Place region, so any sporadic paving here disappeared.

The High Street and Market Square

We noticed no gridlock and observed much less congestion during this phase of the trial and many villagers reported great relief that the village centre had returned to normal. Indeed, the cones that kept the High Street clear of long term parking meant that traffic flowed better than in the do nothing case, as had been seen when they had been previously placed by AEG, and village transit times may have marginally reduced. Keeping this area clear appears to benefit the Star Lane junction but the monitoring numbers suggest that it did displace queuing to North Street, somewhat increasing paving there compared to the do-nothing case. Roundabouting was greatly reduced in comparison to the traffic lights trial, and queuing past the village square was almost non-existent, cars negotiating their way past each other.

North Street and associated Streets

With less congestion in the High Street, paving in North Street dropped markedly compared to the lights trial, as did queuing.

Our observers did report some increase in paving over the do-nothing case, which we assume was due to traffic that may have previously been held up in the central High Street reaching the top of North Street more easily due to the cones. Congestion along the central axis therefore centred at this point. Once again, we see congestion and paving being displaced from one place to another.

Businesses, Loading and Access

We assume that the 20mph limit had little effect on businesses, with the exception of the necessary loading and access issue. Businesses and households alike were once again able to load and unload and, if done at off peak hours, we observed that this could be done without greatly disrupting passing traffic.

One negative effect of the cones on loading was that they could encourage loading from the George side of the street rather than the Star side, thereby encouraging people to park (or indeed pave) on the double yellow. This could be addressed with appropriate signage, of which there is currently none.

Environment (Noise, Road Rage, Pollution, Conservation)

Across the village, these aspects returned to their do nothing position, though we surmise that the cones will have had a beneficial effect on many of them in the village centre.

In Summary

The trial showed two unsurprising results. Firstly, the very beneficial effect of cones in the central High Street (but alongside an unexpected increase in paving and congestion along North St), and secondly, that 20mph with temporary signage alone does not make a great difference to the do-nothing case (but that does not mean that 20mph, widely supported by the village, is not a component of a wider solution.)

6. Postscript: After the Trial

As of 2nd December, AEG cones are still being placed in the High Street each day, deterring long term parking, allowing loading, and displacing parking to the Market Square.

They are enacting the model that Conserve Alfriston proposed. We suggested that loading only should be allowed in the central High Street during daytime, and a single yellow line in the Market Square would allow brief visits to local businesses. The AEG cones continued presence demonstrates village support for this measure, and its effectiveness.

On 1st December, residents, traders, and visitors came together to celebrate the beginning of Christmas. We gathered in our Market Square, as we imagine villagers have through the centuries to mark important moments in the year.

Traffic was able to make its way past on the other side of the Market Cross.



7. Conclusions, Lessons, and Recommendations

Conclusions

This was not just a highway engineering trial, important though the engineering aspects were. This was an opportunity for ESCC, following a long gestation period, to win over sceptical or undecided hearts and minds by showing how the traffic lights would practically benefit our village.

Our evidence shows that the traffic light trial failed on both these counts, but it did provide important lessons for a future incremental solution - one that we now suggest may need to accept that cars mounting pavements in the village centre can be reduced but not eradicated, and therefore needs to be managed.

Having experienced the trial, those completing the diary survey, the online survey, and the business survey all show continued high levels of opposition to the traffic light scheme. This came from all groups - residents, traders, visitors, and through drivers using the village centre. Several local businesses expressed concern for their viability.

The traffic lights were designed to address just one areas, and as expected, conflicting traffic and pavement mounting in the southern part of the High Street was greatly reduced, to near zero. However, the positive effects in the narrows were outweighed by the displacement of traffic problems elsewhere

At medium>high traffic levels, once broadly free to move through the narrows, traffic built up at the other pinch points, increasing congestion in the village centre, and creating long queues at both ends of the village. Traffic queued through the Market Square and frequently into North Street. Queues sometimes reached the village outskirts to north and south. Some drivers diverted up West Street and through the Dene car park. As a result, pavementing was observed to increase drastically along North Street, and was also observed in the central High Street, the Market Sq outside Emmett & White/Old Bank, and along the Wingrove wall to the south.

These central pinch points are around the heart of the village, where there are greater densities of people (on pavements and crossing the road) and businesses. Overall, the traffic lights therefore increased the risk to pedestrians.

At lower traffic levels there were reports of more speeding and acceleration as drivers tried to beat the lights or move off from queues. As a result, villagers experienced far greater noise, and reported air pollution. This could occur at any time, not just during traffic conflict.

Deliveries in the central area were not provided for and were made almost impossible by the traffic lights. Where parking was attempted in the centre, they could disrupt traffic. If the delivery vehicles parked further away, large loads were observed being moved on foot, in the road. Large vehicles continued to cause congestion and pavement mounting, and the traffic lights did nothing to stop them.

Overall safety and quality of life were not improved, but worsened by the traffic light trial, and ESCC's previous assurance that providing this solution for the narrows would benefit the entire village has been disproved.

The Phase 2 trial (20mph and cones in the High Street) was far less disruptive to the village and attracted less feedback.

Unsurprisingly, it was unable to address the issue in the narrows and 20mph - as a standalone solution - was found to be inadequate, but did not have any negative effects.

However, the cones relieved congestion in the central High Street by keeping it clear from long term parking, whilst enabling short term loading. As previously, they appeared to have support from many villagers - as of early December, they are still in place.

There was some evidence that the cones displaced High Street congestion to the top of North Street, increasing queues and pavementing there, but not to the same degree as the traffic lights. Again therefore, we observed the movement of congestion (and any resultant pavementing) from one location to another rather than its resolution.

Lessons

- Previously, pavementing in the narrows had been largely attributed to a lack of visibility - drivers committing to go forward before they know there is oncoming traffic. The trial showed that unless encouraged to behave differently, drivers also pavement in places where visibility is not an issue but congestion is.
- Rather than encouraging this positive behavioural change, the hard engineering solution increased negative driver behaviour by a) removing uncertainty and responsibility, b) encouraging people to try to beat the lights, and c) increasing road rage as a result of congestion. This approach is not part of the solution.
- It appears that with high volumes of traffic, especially that includes large vehicles, congestion and pavementing will occur somewhere in the village. At present it is distributed at around four locations along the central corridor. Seeking to addressing just one in totality (through the lights), to the exclusion of the others, moves and focuses the issues elsewhere, also increasing localised speeding and acceleration. Even the less intrusive Phase 2 trial appeared to move congestion and pavementing from one location to another.
- It therefore seems likely that congestion and pavement mounting cannot be stopped completely (without extremely drastic measures that would not likely be countenanced). It therefore has to be reduced where possible - and managed where not - across the village.
- Attempts to accommodate large vehicles and through traffic are in conflict with the desire to improve safety, environmental conditions and village life in the centre of Alfriston, given its special status in the National Park.
- ESCC had previously been unwilling to develop "non-standard" solutions as it has believed that a standard solution - traffic lights - could acceptably solve the problem. This has been disproved.
- Fundamentally, by showing that the village centre cannot cope with traffic which is not managed elsewhere before arriving at traffic lights controlling just one zone, the trial has supported Conserve Alfriston's central assertion that a pan village- and valley- wide approach is needed.

Recommendations

- When we presented our petition, we noted that “The (anecdotal) evidence base and the experience of villagers is that traffic problems occur throughout the village and are often related to large vehicles. A solution that seeks to improve things in one area but has negative secondary impacts in the heart of our High Street and the Market Square where there are most pedestrians, and also does not address the large vehicle problem, is bound to attract criticism on grounds of effectiveness as well as appropriateness.”
- This has now been seen to happen in practice, and we ask that ESCC learns the above lessons from this trial and responds positively to villagers clearly stated concerns and suggestions.
- ESCC should therefore abandon its traffic light proposals and the hard engineering approach which is inappropriate in this setting and has not worked. It should also abandon its focus on trying to completely solve issues in one area, instead embracing the pan-village solution that villagers demonstrably want, and that traffic evidence supports.
- This implies moving to a solution that makes incremental improvements in all areas to order to gain support.
- If paving cannot be totally prevented (indeed, some argue it is what the low-rise pavements in the village were designed to support), it may be that for the good of pedestrians, designating quasi-shared space is the best way to manage the expectations of, and improve the behaviour of, drivers.
- ESCC should therefore work constructively with the village on what it so clearly asked for many months ago. The lessons from the trial show that an end to end modular scheme of the form that Conserve Alfriston proposed is required. This has the potential to improve the situation for all the village, thereby engendering support, and thus enabling ESCC's priorities to align with those of our community.

Traffic Observation Group Report

1) Introduction

ESCC installed temporary traffic lights at two points in Alfriston village, from September 16th to October 16th 2018, in order to test whether 'managing' the traffic in this way would help with the problems experienced in the Narrows e.g. pavement mounting and hold-ups due to the narrow carriageway, limited forward visibility, and many drivers taking no notice of a Give Way sign.

A group of Alfriston villagers, concerned about the effects of this unwanted type of intervention (surveys show that a majority of residents and businesses oppose traffic lights, as do the Parish Council) decided to carefully and rigorously monitor the traffic lights trial. This was done through various means. The one reported on here is an 8-week programme of regular observations.

After the lights were removed, ESCC conducted a subsequent trial of a 20mph limit through the village and the placing of cones in the central High Street. However, the focus of our regular observations was on the effect of the traffic lights.

2) Methods.

A total of 44 villagers volunteered to spend time observing and recording traffic behaviour over an 8-week period, and we are grateful to them for their commitment. This number of people was enough to support monitoring over a limited but regular number of hours. Each observation session was two hours long and took place from 4pm to 6pm on all weekdays, and from 7.30 to 09.30 on Wednesday and Friday mornings.

The session times were chosen based on previous all-day (7am to 7pm) monitoring during August. Though this period was out of school term times, the pattern of commuter through traffic, delivery vans, and resident or visitor activity was much the same. We found that the flow of traffic through the village was consistently high throughout the day, with the lowest point being 1pm and a slight peak at 5pm. 4,500 vehicles passed through in the aggregate 12 hours of counting.

The traffic light trial had been originally planned to start at the beginning of September but was postponed till September 17th. So we took the opportunity to monitor those two weeks of normal conditions before there were any changes. The pattern of monitoring therefore was:

- Pre-Trial normal conditions: Weeks Sept 3rd-7th, and Sept 10th-14th.
- Trial of lights (with a notional 20mph limit): Weeks Sept 17th-21st, Sept 24th-28th, Oct 1st-5th and Oct 8th-12th.
- Post-Trial with no lights (but 20mph limit and High St cones): Weeks Oct 15th-19th and Oct 22nd-26th.

In all there were 24 2-hour monitoring sessions during the trial (as four sessions were missed due to non-functioning of the lights) and the same number of sessions without lights.

Four main locations were selected as observation posts: Market Square, the Narrows/Star Lane lights, Weavers Lane junction/lights, and Rose Cottage (where Sloe Lane and the exit from the Dene car park join North Street).

Observers were supplied with canvas chairs and data sheets with columns in which to record counts of particular forms of traffic behaviour and free space to describe incidents of any significance. As requested by ESCC (at the August meeting describing how the trial would be run) the observers did not wear high-vis jackets.

The still images used in this report are illustrative of the issues we saw; they are not always from observation hours. Video evidence is also available, thanks to the efforts of the Alfriston Emergency Group (AEG). We are grateful for their support.

3) Trial Findings

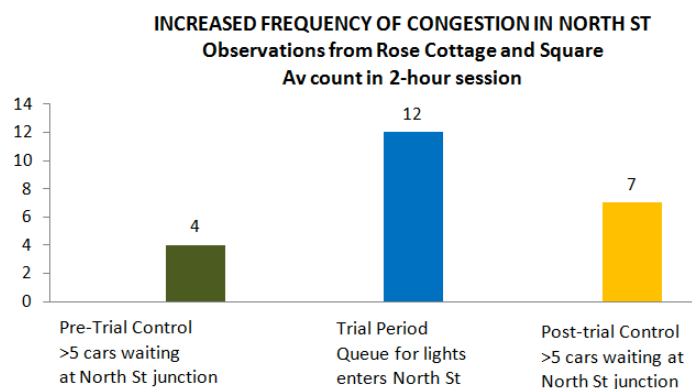
a. Overview.

We observed that, during our monitoring sessions, the traffic lights largely solved the problem of pavement mounting in the Narrows. But this was at the expense of an increase in pavement mounting in North St and the emergence of 'pavement running' (a very occasional phenomenon hitherto) by streams of traffic along the Wingrove garden wall to the Tye Road. And vehicles travelled through the Narrows at high speed. Our monitoring also shows that the presence of the lights also had many other adverse and potentially dangerous consequences throughout the village. The Market Square became congested with traffic moving around it, and there was stop-start traffic in the village centre queuing for the lights. Traffic increased in West Street and the Dene car park as it diverted away from North Street. These issues are discussed below, using the criteria suggested by ESCC and by village groups.

b. ESCC Criteria.

"Are signals causing congestion?" and the related question "Are vehicles queuing back to Market Square?"

The observations show that the Star Lane lights routinely caused queues of vehicles to line the east side of Market Square by the barbers and antiques shop, thus reducing the space for the opposing traffic stream to reach North St. The queue built up down North St on average six times an hour.



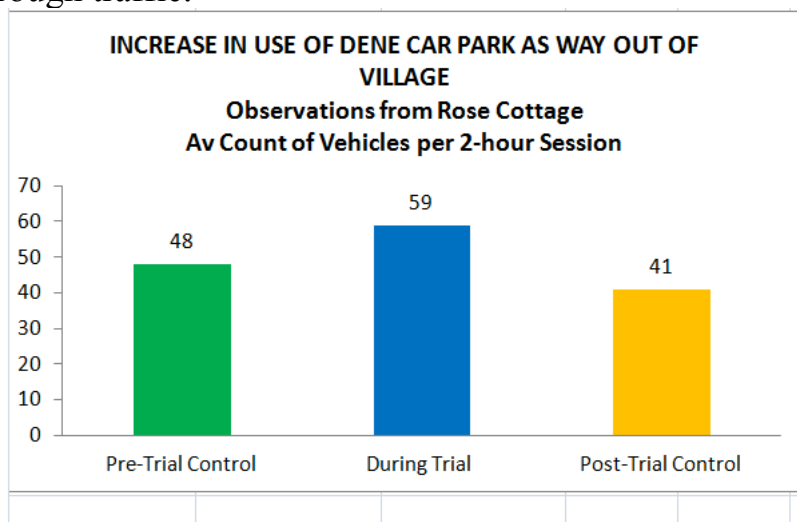
Since this queue was static for minutes at a time it caused difficulties for the opposing stream of traffic to get into North St to continue their journey.



Sometimes the way was completely blocked and caused logjams even in the central High St as well as Market Square.



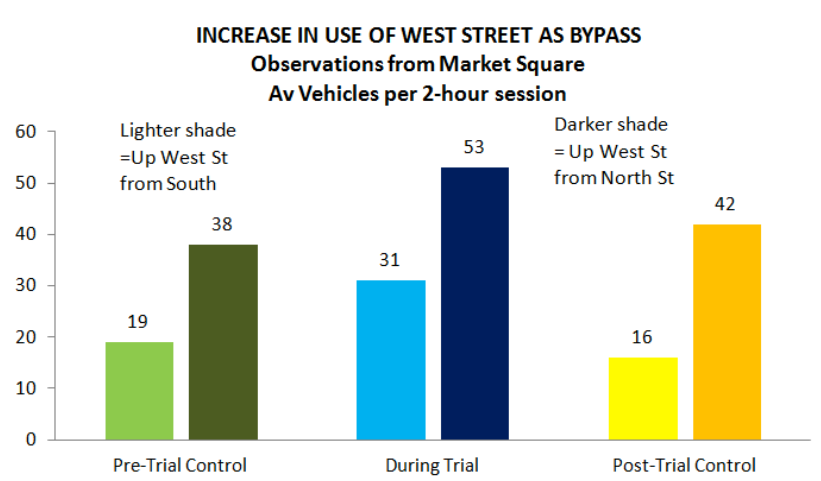
Drivers seeing no way through diverted to the left of Market Cross and attempted to enter North St from an angle; or alternatively they drove straight up West St to exit onto the C39 from the Dene car park, which therefore saw an increase in through traffic.



Upon occasion traffic was at a standstill in Market Square for several minutes at a time with pedestrians having to pick their way between stationary vehicles containing angry drivers.

"Is traffic being redistributed on other roads?"

Observations show that the volume of traffic up West St from the northbound traffic was 74% greater than during the combined Control periods; and that from North St turning right and across the Square to West St (presumably to avoid the queue and opposing traffic ahead) was 35% greater.



On the other hand, our observers did not find vehicles rat-running from or to Weavers Lane round the back roads in order to avoid the High St completely. Nor was the total number of vehicles passing through the centre of the village seen to change significantly while the observations were taking place.

"Can vehicles clear the stop line in a single cycle?"

Observations indicate a clear No to this question, particularly at busy times. At Star Lane and Weavers Lane whenever a queue had built up (8 or more cars), when the lights turned green and the cars moved off, vehicles arriving behind sped up to try to get through before the lights changed. A predictable pattern emerged of the last two or three cars of each stream racing through on amber or red. (See Appendix 3 videos PP slide 7; PP slide 11)

Comments written down by observers at the time include:

Star Lane. Sep 17th 16.17. "Two cars from South sped thru as lights changed so must have jumped WL lights"

16.29. "Car sped up and tooted cars in front to get them thru before lights changed. Car went thru on red"

Sep 25th 17.23 "Several vehicles put foot down trying to beat lights"

Weavers Lane. Sep 26th 8.23. "WL lights green as car came fast from village";

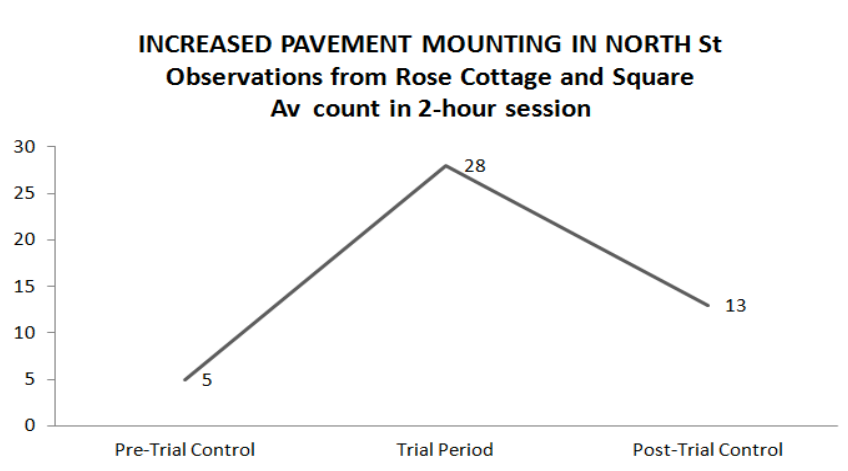
Oct 2nd 16.44 "2 cars went thru red lights at end of 11 car queue";

Oct 9th 16.10 to 17.28. "6 cases of jumping red lights at end of waiting queue"

Reduction in pavementing occurrences.

During the trial observation sessions, we observed no mounting of the pavement momentarily, or driving along a section of pavement with the nearside wheels, within the Narrows. However there were still instances of vehicles meeting between the lights due to driver error.

Pavement mounting by the cottages in North St was far more frequent during the trial than before and after.



Without being able to access the pavements in this way, larger vehicles trying to make their way towards the A27 would have had to wait long periods at the junction of North St with the Square, which in turn would have caused more gridlock events in the Square. Pavement mounting was a necessary strategy.



Similarly, we observed that pavement running southwards beside the Wingrove garden and car park wall, in order to pass a line of vehicles queuing for the Weavers Lane lights into the High St, happened frequently and was a necessary manoeuvre, as the ongoing stream from the village had to clear before it was safe for the northwards traffic to proceed. At busy times the pavement running was continuous. Observer comments at the time include:

Sep 21st 7.52 "All s'ward cars drove on pavement as insufficient space to pass WL queue"

Sep 27th 16.30 "Vehicles mounting kerb at speed outside Wingrove garden"

Oct 3rd 7.30-9.30: Observer counted 51 occasions when vehicles drove on pavement along Wingrove CP wall



Pavement waiting by queuing vehicles by the antique shop and Old Bank also became a feature in the Market Square itself, to allow space for a heavy stream of northbound traffic to pass into North St. An observer commented:

Oct 3rd 17.20 "Southbound vehicles in queue mount kerbs outside Emmett and White (antique shop) to make room for northbound traffic"

And even further down the High St, by the George and the Star, when the northbound stream contained a large vehicle those in the Star Lane queue were forced onto the pavements.



c) Additional Village Criteria

ESCC has stated that it has to "address traffic related problems where these are having a detrimental effect on people's lives and business".

The village as a whole has a similar key criterion which is "quality of life" for residents and visitors and businesses within the entire village by which to judge the success or otherwise of any traffic management intervention in Alfriston, so it is appropriate to ask the following questions.

"Did the traffic lights improve quality of life in Market Square?"

Market Square is the centre and the hub of the village and the place where shoppers meet, visitors cross the road to visit cafes, and residents bring children or dogs to cross to the Tye, the village hall, church etc. During the trial a new term was introduced 'roundabouting' which referred to when vehicles from the south seeing no clear way to enter North St drove to the west of the Market Cross where pedestrians come and go continuously. Cars and vans use the space for parking temporarily while delivering goods. Buses stop there. Cyclists congregate. During the lights trial, when more than one or two cars were roundabouting there was risk of gridlock with the Star Lane queue blocking the eastern side of the Market Square and a two-way mix-up of cars to the west. If a large coach or delivery lorry entered this fray the Market Square turned into a frightening place to be, rather than the friendly space it can be and generally is without the lights.



Pedestrians were particularly at risk in the Market Square. This was due to traffic approaching, often at speed, from several directions at once. The Weavers Lane stream heading northwards could appear at any moment, and often at speed. From the opposite direction vehicles were constantly coming up North St to join the queue, and again frequently speeding up if the lights were green (see Appendix 4 video PP slide 22). At the same time some of the northwards traffic going to the left of the Market Cross caused obstruction to delivery vans parked by the shop facing southwards. What previously (and subsequently) was a relatively safe enclave for pedestrians, bus passengers, residents, children and dogs, became a confusing and threatening area. As one observer noted on Tues Oct 2nd at 16:00, *"Though quite nice day with sunshine nobody sitting at tables outside Singing Kettle"*.

Also, pedestrians were often observed to be bewildered and reluctant to cross the roads. (See Appendix 5 video PP slide 27)

Observer comments include:

Oct 4th 16.38 "Villagers having difficulty crossing road"

Sept 21th 8.27 "Man trying to cross road but oncoming speed too fast"

"In the High Street?"

Two of the most frequented hotels and many of the gift shops are situated on the High St close to the head of the queue for the Star Lane lights. As a result they suffered in addition to congestion already mentioned, from engine noise and exhaust pollution (on one occasion, visible) and became a place that wedding parties, ramblers or visitors to the South Downs would not seek out.

Observer comments from Star Lane include:

Sep 17th 16.28 "Incredibly noisy as cars pull away"

Sep 19th 16.33 "Horn beeping in queue to nudge car in front to move"

Fri Sep 21st 7.19 "Additional noise for residents and guests near lights as vehicles stop and accelerate when lights change. Should be sign telling drivers to cut engines while waiting"

Same day 7.56 "Very loud radio in waiting car"

Sep 28th 17.00 "Fumes were awful"



Finally, we observed the potential for collision in the High St, as traffic at the lights when starting off on green was passed by fast traffic from the south which had jumped the Weavers Lane lights.

"In North Street?"

As has been demonstrated earlier, North St suffered from frequent congestion due to the Star Lane queues blocking the junction with Market Square to the northbound traffic stream. This led to increased pavement mounting. The front doors of the line of old cottages along the west side open directly onto the pavement, with the potential to put a child or dog at risk. For visitors arriving in the Willows coach park, the pavementing and regular traffic congestion made the route into the village unpleasant during busy parts of the day.



"In the Narrows?"

This section of the village welcomed the single direction of traffic at any one time, which (during our observation periods largely removed the potentially dangerous pattern of vehicles mounting the pavement to pass opposing vehicles.

Aspects of the Narrows no doubt improved during the trial but reports from observers using a speed gun suggest that vehicle speed increased due to drivers having a clear road without traffic from the other direction; also it seemed that the last cars in the stream had frequently passed the lights at amber or even red and knew they had to clear the Narrows before the opposing lights turned green. (Speeds of up to 50mph were recorded between the two sets of lights during the Trial on a Bushnell 101911 speed gun calibrated before use on Wed Sept 19th 7am to 8am.)

The increased speed is likely to be of greater potential danger to pedestrians than the previous and subsequent incidents of cautious pavement mounting where necessary to pass another vehicle.

"In the south of the village?"

During the trial, we observed that to the south, the walk from the village towards the Tye Road and Deans Place Hotel was made more dangerous because the fast stream out of the village had to clear the Narrows before the Weavers Lane lights turned green or risk collision with the waiting queue. And incoming traffic from Seaford coming round the bend often unexpectedly met the end of the queue for the Weavers Lane lights. The presence of the waiting queue, sometimes containing large vehicles led to the necessity of the traffic leaving the village frequently having to run along the Wingrove wall opposite Weavers Lane in order to pass. Our observers noted that the area became confusing and uncomfortable for pedestrians walking to the Clergy House via the Tye Road or to the hotel.

"Other aspects of village life?"

Loading and Access: Observations indicated that many delivery vehicles and bin lorries developed new strategies during the Trial. One was to come very early in the morning by 7am or before. Another was to park away from the High St. The bin lorry was seen parked about 50 yards up West Street and the men walked up the High St to collect the wheelie bins from the cafes and pubs and back again, walking in the road. The beer delivery van sometimes parked outside the village stores, from where the men pushed trolleys loaded up with barrels and packs of bottles up and down the High St. (See Appendix 6 video PP slide 12).

An observer in the Square commented:

Sept 26th 8.40 "White's beer van parked outside shop on opposite kerb. Delivering beer barrels and crates to George and Tavern by trundling trolleys back and forth. Man said lights made it much more difficult for them as they didn't want to get caught up in the queues"

Horses and Cyclists:

During the trial the village became an unfriendly place for horse riders and cyclists. Horses, normally a regular feature, were only occasionally seen by our observers.



Our observers sometimes spoke with them. Observer comments include:
Oct 10th 16.49 "Horse rider said unhappy with lights and will not go thru village now. Went up Weavers Lane"
Oct 1st 18.00 "Horse and two cyclists proceeded thru WL lights at green, traffic from village had to be shouted at to slow down"
Sep 26th 17.02 "Two cyclists still coming thru from village when WL lights changed. n'wards traffic had to stop"
Oct 3rd 16.50 "Cyclist passed WL lights at green met car speeding from village by Chestnuts"

Emergency vehicles: Additionally, observers from time to time witnessed ambulances with flashing lights and sometimes sirens having difficulty navigating through the village. Several instances were recorded at the time:

Sep 28th 17.20 "17.20 an ambulance with siren blocked in North St. Went into Willows car park, turned round and went back north"
Oct 8th 16.50 "Ambulance had to reverse then go onto pavement by Badgers to pass queue into Square"

One example particularly illustrates the complication brought by the traffic lights and which can be seen in a video clip in Appendix 7 (PP slide 17). The ambulance approached the Star Lane lights at red and was a few cars back. It wanted to swing out to pass the lights but of course was faced with a solid oncoming stream from Weavers Lane presumably unaware of its presence. Lights still flashing, the ambulance was forced to wait until the lights changed to green. Observers timed its wait as 2 minutes 15 seconds.

Environment: For one month, the picturesque village, where visitors are regularly seen taking photographs and pausing to enjoy refreshments, especially round the Market Square, turned into a confusing, ugly, restless and disorganised place. Before installation, and from the day after removal of the lights, we observed a calmer, more pleasant atmosphere (even though we still have a throughput of 4-5,000 vehicles per day!).

As one observer wrote on their data sheet on the first day of the Phase 2 trial:

"What's happened? Everybody's so nice to each other this morning?"

4) Conclusion

Our monitoring shows that the trial did not work, when measured against the ESCC and the additional village criteria.

Alfriston is an historic settlement with relatively narrow roads lined along the High St with buildings reaching back to the 13th century. Since its main road links the A27 and the A259, its misfortune is to be used as a connecting road. It was not built to accommodate modern traffic. Nevertheless, as our pre and post trial observations show, it copes well with this under normal circumstances, in spite of the fact that there are certain stretches of road, specifically the section between the High St and Weavers Lane, and part of North St, where it is not possible for two vehicles to pass without one driving a short distance over the (low) pavements. In fact, as our observers regularly recorded during the pre- and post-trial periods of the monitoring exercise, by and large drivers become aware that there are hazards to be avoided and generally drive with responsibility and caution in the most difficult sections.

There have been many suggestions of ways to slow traffic entering the village, to indicate priority to outgoing vehicles, and to increase visibility while retaining its natural and historic charm. For example, Conserver Alfriston's valley-wide proposals. The county council has not tried these less intrusive ideas, which would alleviate, though not totally remove, traffic problems affecting the village. Statistics in the public domain demonstrate that Alfriston has in fact got a good pedestrian safety record.

Since none of us wants to demolish our village and start again, extra caution when walking the Narrows, and a little inconvenience for a driver who wants fast and easy passage, seems a reasonable price to pay.

If you have any queries about this monitoring work, please contact



Conserve Alfriston

Images from the 2018 ESCC Traffic Trial: Pavementing in Village Centre and General Congestion / Queues

V4 COMPRESSED DISTRIBUTE

Phase 1

1. Pavementing in the High Street
2. Pavementing in North Street
3. Congestion / Queues

Pavementing in the High Street



>>>



Pavementing in the High Street



>>>



Pavementing in North Street



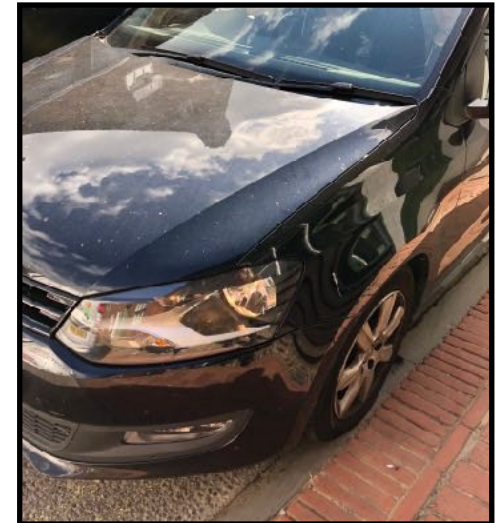
Pavementing in North Street



Pavementing in North Street



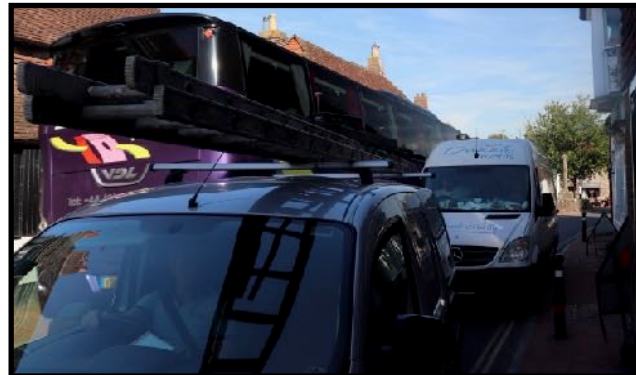
Pavementing in North Street



Pavementing in North Street



Congestion / Queues



Congestion / Queues



Congestion / Queues



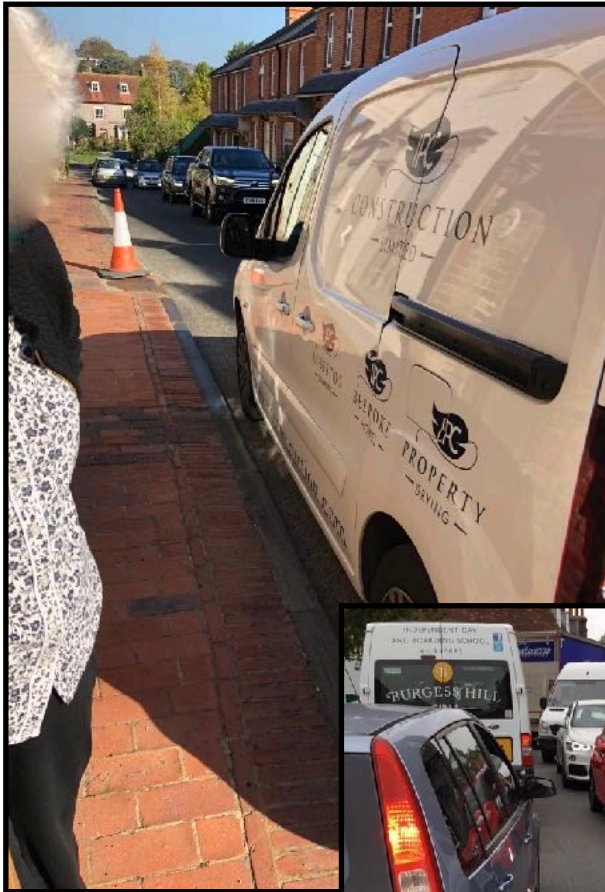
Congestion / Queues



Congestion / Queues (inc. outside village)



Congestion / Queues



Congestion / Queues



Conserve Alfriston

Images from the 2018 ESCC Traffic Trial: Miscellaneous Topics

V6 COMPRESSED DISTRIBUTE

Phase 1

1. Pedestrians and Cars
2. Roundabouting in Market Square
3. Congestion Manoevers
4. Avoiding Congestion via West Street / Coning Sequence
5. Conflict between the Traffic Lights / Ignoring Lights
6. Air Pollution
7. Emergency Services
8. Necessary Loading / Unloading
9. Light Failures

Phase 2: General

After the Trial: Christmas in the Market Square

Pedestrians and Cars



Four pedestrians and a pavingting car; North Street



Crossing the road; High St.



Crossing through gridlock and roundabouting

Roundabouting in Market Square



Roundabouting in Market Square



**Not just roundabouting -
complex flows**



Congestion Manoeuvres



"A van doing a 7 point turn outside rose cottage"



Congestion Manoeuvres



Avoiding Congestion via West Street



Coning Sequence



>>>

>>>

>>>

Conflict Between Traffic Lights / Ignoring Lights



>>>

>>>

Air Pollution

A van showing the pattern of pollution being created from stop/start vehicles



Emergency Services



Police car getting past queue in North Street



Ambulance reportedly held at red light for several minutes in High Street

Necessary Loading / Unloading



Dray delivering to The George



Coal delivery in High St



**Cars
passing
through
red light**



**Refuse
Collection**

Necessary Loading / Unloading - Phase 1 - Refuse Case Study: The Proposed Solution?



- Example 1.
- Refuse truck parked way down West St, and bins walked from Square.
- Note that the natural behaviour is to walk in the road as pavement is too narrow for bins.
- Applies to all other large business and residential loads.
- Safer than briefly stopping near the collect/delivery point?



- Example 2. Walking refuse from Star Lane junction.
- Again, natural behaviour is to walk in road with two bins.
- Impossible if congestion.
- (Ironically, the lights appear to be off at this time.)

Necessary Loading / Unloading - Phase 2 - Not an issue if arranged off-peak



- Log delivery



- Electrical delivery



- Star Lane junction should be kept clear but it can work off peak if needed

Light Failures



- Related pavingting in narrows.

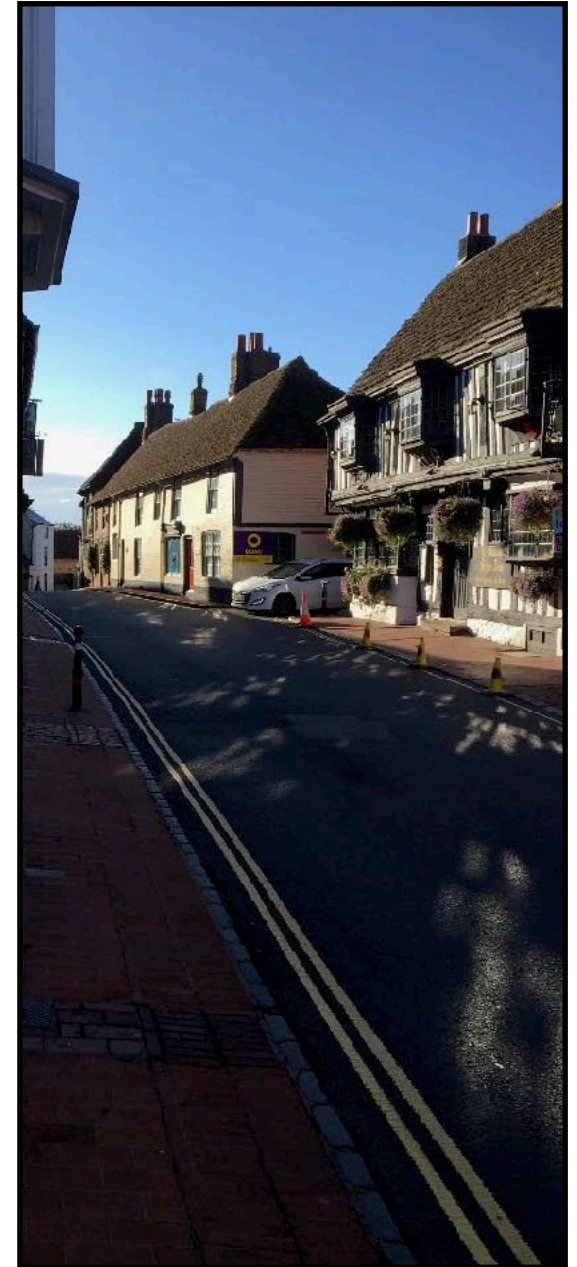


- Morning peak, following day.
- Further conflict in narrows.



- Once little traffic, calmness without lights.

Phase 2



Phase 2



After the Trial: Christmas in the Market Square



- Residents and Businesses

To:-

Councillor Bennett, ESCC

Councillor Shing, ESCC

Chief Executive Becky Shaw, ESCC

Maria Caulfield MP

Neville Harrison, SDNPA

Andy Beattie, SDNPA

Margaret Paren, SDNPA

Dear All,

We are people who live along and/or run businesses in the centre of Alfriston, around the main thoroughfare along the High Street north of Star Lane, Market/Waterloo Square, and North Street. We have been hugely affected and indeed shocked by the negative impacts of the recent Phase 1 traffic light trial and want to urgently bring our concerns to your attention. We are doing this as we do not believe that our concerns have been adequately responded to previously, as this letter will explain.

The four weeks of the traffic light trial have been very upsetting for those of us who live along this central area. The lights have created chaos in the centre of our village under medium-high traffic loads. We want to see an improvement in the traffic situation that helps everyone; whilst we have sympathy with anyone affected by the traffic across the village, and especially in the southern part of the High Street, the effect of the trial has been to split the village geographically, with the worst impacts here. We have seen:-

- Queues extending from the lights to the Market Square regularly, sometimes down North Street and even stretching beyond the village car parks to the north;
- Cars frequently mounting the pavement, for example along the length of North Street and the central section of the High Street, as drivers try to get past each other;
- The Market Square being used as a road divider with northbound traffic passing in front of the Village Store and the Smugglers Inn. In fact there is no one simple flow pattern here; cars start to go in any direction they need to to make progress;
- Gridlocks of cars around the Market Square and along the High Street and North Street;
- Stop/start traffic with increased noise (and, we believe, air) pollution;
- Far greater road rage in the village centre than previously.
- At lower traffic levels during the day and overnight, cars are travelling faster and accelerating more fiercely. They accelerate to catch a green light when the lights change; and there is unnecessary queuing traffic at red lights outside our homes and businesses.
- For pedestrians, the environment in this area is less safe. It has been made far harder to cross the High Street, or to cross to and from the Market Square on either side of the central island.

Not only do our businesses depend upon a welcoming atmosphere, which this trial has damaged, we also need to be able to load and unload, in many cases from the front of our premises. This also applies to some residents in the area. The new parking restrictions, and the unpredictable traffic flows, have made this impossible for many, and we do not understand how this scheme will be made practically viable in a way that enables many of our businesses to function as they do now.

We feel that the quality of our lives and businesses are under severe threat from this ESCC scheme, and so we are writing to you to ensure that our views, along – quite properly - with those from people further along the High Street, are fully represented as the trial is evaluated.

We have heard Rupert Clubb on the radio saying that it is the views of those in Alfriston that are most important. And, as Lead Member, Councillor Carl Maynard stated that “The residents and businesses along the High Street, the Square and North Street are those most directly affected by the current traffic situation”. He also strongly implied that the ESCC solution for the “narrows” would be good for all residents, businesses and visitors in Alfriston.

Yet, at the last ESCC consultation, we understand that 52% of people in this corridor (including the whole length of the High Street) opposed the development of the traffic light scheme. Indeed, 48% were strongly opposed, a greater number than all those, 42%, who were in support. We are concerned that this strong opposition to the ESCC proposals was not referenced in the Lead Member's report prior to the design decision meeting (where overall figures were used), but only came to light subsequently when requested by villagers.

Furthermore, we are concerned that subsequent surveys of visitors, residents and businesses showing both overwhelming opposition to the ESCC proposals, and a strong desire for a village-wide approach, have not received a constructive response that addresses the clear democratic sentiments expressed.

We also understand that your Bristol-based consultants noted that our Market Square is a focal point in our village where queuing traffic would have a very negative impact, and that ESCC moved its original proposed position of the northern signal head away from the Market Square to try to reduce any negative impact there.

We are raising these issues now, as given the new survey form that ESCC has released, we are concerned that history is starting to repeat itself. The question regarding pedestrians' perceptions of safety specifically refers to the area between Star Lane and Weavers Lane, excluding the Market Square and village centre. Other questions are broadly about the ease of passing through our village, not safety and quality of life for residents and businesses within our village, which ESCC stated were the key concerns.

Despite ESCC's previous statements, the input from your Bristol consultants, and the concerns that have been raised with you, there are no specific questions about the effect on pedestrians in the northern part of the High Street, the Market Square, or North Street; the area where there are most pedestrians and businesses. We are

worried that this will mean that concerns about the impact of the trial here will be understated.

We therefore call upon ESCC to undertake that the views of residents and businesses within the village centre (including the whole High Street) are explicitly referenced in any subsequent report on this trial, and that the views of those most directly affected daily are given due weighting.

We ask that ESCC unequivocally states that safety and quality of life is equally as important to the north of Star Lane as it is to the south, acknowledges the need for a solution that improves the situation for all, and therefore makes clear that making the impact of traffic worse in the busy village centre and in North Street is not a solution to improving it elsewhere.

We ask that ESCC takes steps to correct the bias in its questionnaire, by asking about pedestrian safety around the village centre area as well as the narrows south of Star Lane, and asking about residents' and businesses' quality of life in the village as much as it asks about the ease of passing through the village.

Taken to extremes, ESCC's continued focus on the narrows could mean that the trial is considered a success if it simply moves the safety perception issue elsewhere, eg into the busy village centre. This cannot be right. We want to see things improved for the entire village, including our neighbours in the narrows, and we need a solution that reflects this.

Many of us are concerned at the effect that the trial has had on us and are profoundly worried about the future of our lives and businesses; we look forward to an early response from you that addresses these concerns, and would be happy to meet with you.

Regards,

- Cuckmere Buses

Subject:

FW: Alfriston Trial Traffic Signal Scheme

Good morning James,

It has taken people some time to get used to these lights, but generally, we have found them helpful, with some reservations. Our weekday services only pass through twice a day morning, lunchtime and evening and I have had no reports of problems.

For our Saturday and Sunday service 47 Ramblerbus, which only travels southbound on its circular route, we have experienced some delay, which has made the service late during the remainder of its journey. The service is intended to make connections into and out of trains at Berwick (although the May train timetable debacle has prevented that this summer) and we may need to adjust timings if lights were to become a permanent feature. The seasonal service ends on 28th October 2018 and resumes on 30th March 2019.

Our Sunday all year service 126 operates two hourly both ways through the village. Again, southbound journeys have suffered delays, so that the short break in Seaford is even shorter, but travelling northbound, whilst there has been a delay getting into Alfriston, the bus is usually back on time by Polegate.

It is much easier to get through the narrows in the High Street without the hazard of vehicles coming in the opposite direction, but to an extent, this is countered by queuing traffic in North Street, north of the Market Square, which is only just wide enough for confident car drivers to pass, and impossible for a bus to pass cars queuing on that section. Some drivers wait near the exit from the car park once they see the problem, others are oblivious. I don't see an easy solution to this, as having the lights in the centre of the village is right from our point of view because otherwise, our stop at Market Cross would be in the middle of the light-controlled section. Many of our passengers are elderly and inform, so removing the stop from Market Cross would have a very serious impact on the viability of our services. Putting the southbound lights alongside the Willows car park would mean traffic queuing through the narrow section of road by the high path and flint wall, again making passing other vehicles difficult/impossible depending on how far out in the road they are!

Star Lane has been something of a problem as well as cars have still been using it, delaying through traffic within the light-controlled section. The no waiting cones outside the Star Inn have been an essential part of keeping traffic flowing, but some consideration may be needed to parking outside Hicks newsagents and the Singing Kettle, which has always been a problem, but with the loss of spaces alongside the Star, more locals try to use it.

Overall, we are content with the lights subject to the inevitable tweeking to get things right.

I hope that helps.

Kind regards,

Philip

Philip Ayers,
Managing Director,
CUCKMERE BUSES
The Old Rectory,
Litlington,
POLEGATE,
East Sussex,
BN26 5RB.

web: cuckmerebuses.org.uk

Cuckmere Buses is the trading name for Cuckmere Community Bus

James Vaks

Subject: FW: Alfriston Trial Traffic Signal Scheme

Hello James,

This weekend was unusually quiet in Alfriston, but I have had the chance to hear how other drivers have got on during the work and two further points have emerged:

1. When traffic is queuing in North Street, northbound traffic is sometimes diverting via the Dean car park to avoid congestion and indeed a couple of our drivers have resorted to that to save time.
2. At the southern end, when there is a queue of northbound traffic waiting at the lights, space for larger vehicles to pass is very limited if queuing traffic is not tucked well in to the verge and some are mounting the kerb outside Deans Place in order to pass.

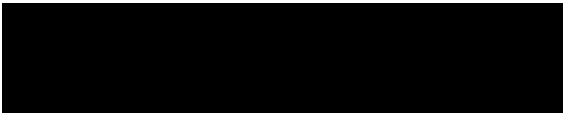
If anything further should come to light this week, I will be in touch again.

Kind regards,

Philip

Philip Ayers,
Managing Director,
CUCKMERE BUSES
The Old Rectory,
Litlington,
POLEGATE,
East Sussex,
BN26 5RB.

web: cuckmerebuses.org.uk



Cuckmere Buses is the trading name for Cuckmere Community Bus

Everyone in our organisation is a Volunteer!

