County plans traffic-calming for Wheatley

# Drivers 'race at 70mph along village rat-run'

**By Nigel Hanson**

PLANS to stop commuters using Wheatley's rat-run were reviewed at a parish meeting which heard that dozens of drivers were exceeding 70mph in a 30mph zone.

Villagers complained their streets were hazardous for pedestrians because motorists cut through to avoid daily traffic jams at the nearby Green Road roundabout, on the A40.

A spot-check by Oxfordshire County Council over four days last year caught 90 motorists exceeding 70mph in, a 30mph zone on Ladder Hill, one of the main routes into the village.

Many parents will not let their children walk to school because they fear for their safety, which only increases the volume of traffic.

Parish councillors met at the Merry Bells Community Centre, in High Street, to decide on priorities following an exhibition of traffic calming proposals by Oxfordshire County Council.-

Some 400 residents viewed the plans when they were displayed in December. More than half have already filled in feedback questionnaires.

A total of 96 per cent of respondents said they did want "something to be done about the speed and volume of through-traffic in Wheatley".

The plans include:

- Pinch-points to slow down through-traffic
- Reversing the flow on some roads
- Extra pedestrian crossings
- More car parking
- Extending the 20mph zone through the village centre.

Parish council chairman Mr Roger Bell said most villagers Were in favour of most of the proposals, though a few amendments were possible.

He said: "Some of the measures are seriously needed. As things are, some parents won't allow their children to walk to school."

He added that queues at Green Road roundabout caused many of the problems.

"The county council has talked about all sorts of things, such as building an under-pass or a left filter lane. It's a key thing to sort out to stop Wheat- ley being used as a rat-run."

County council senior engineer, Mr David Deriaz, said £57,000 had been earmarked for traffic-calming measures.