Chris Hinchliff MP
North East Herts



North East Hertfordshire Road Safety Report 2026

North East Hertfordshire Road Safety Report 2026

Written and designed by Jack Dobson-Smith

Edited by Chris Hinchliff MP and Lee Skevington

This report is dedicated to all victims of avoidable road traffic accidents in North East Hertfordshire.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the North East Hertfordshire Road Safety Survey 2026 including our brilliant parish councils who work hard to stand up for their local communities.

Additional thanks to the many wonderful local photographers who have made their excellent photos of North East Hertfordshire available under the Creative Commons licence: creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/

Photos for illustrative purposes only.

Published by the Office of Chris Hinchliff MP
6 The Arcade
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 3ES
chrishinchliff.co.uk

Version 1.0, published November 2026.

Printed by Printed Easy
1 Meredews
Works Road
Letchworth Garden City
Hertfordshire
SG6 1WH
printedeasy.com

© 2026 Office of Chris Hinchliff MP



Contents.

Foreword..... 3

Executive summary..... 4

Introduction..... 5

Methodology..... 5

Concerns raised, residents ignored..... 7

The A505..... 8

Speeding through villages..... 10

Poor road maintenance..... 14

HGVs on unsuitable roads..... 18

Walking and cycling..... 22

Recommendations for action..... 26

Quick fixes..... 29

Conclusion..... 33

Summaries of local issues..... 34



Weston Hills Tunnel © Peter O'Connor, CC BY-SA 2.0

Foreword.

Road safety is one of the issues my constituents raise with me more than almost any other.

Whether I'm speaking to residents on the doorstep, meeting parish councils, attending community events or responding to emails, I regularly hear concerns about speeding through villages, dangerous junctions, potholes, heavy lorries using unsuitable roads and the difficulty of walking or cycling safely. Again and again, people tell me the same thing: they do not feel that enough is being done to address problems they have been raising for years.

That is why I launched this survey.

I wanted to shine a spotlight on the road safety challenges blighting the communities I represent. The response was profound. People from towns, villages and hamlets across North East Hertfordshire took the time to share their experiences, identify local problem areas and put forward practical suggestions for improvement.

What emerges from the responses is a detailed and compelling picture of the challenges facing our roads. While every community is different, several themes come through consistently. Residents are concerned about speeding through village centres and residential streets. Many have lost confidence in the safety of parts of the A505. Others highlighted the impact of deteriorating road surfaces, increasing levels of HGV traffic on unsuitable routes, and the lack of safe infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

Perhaps the most striking finding is that these concerns are rarely isolated. In many communities, residents are dealing with a combination of speeding traffic, poor road conditions, limited pedestrian infrastructure and growing pressure on roads that were never designed for current traffic levels. Taken together, these issues are affecting not only road safety but also people's quality of life, their willingness to engage in active travel, and their confidence in using local roads.


A505 © N Chadwick, CC BY-SA 2.0

North East Hertfordshire's A505 is one of the deadliest roads in the country.

This report is not intended to be a comprehensive technical assessment of North East Hertfordshire's road network. Rather, it is a record of what residents themselves have told me. It reflects their experiences, their frustrations and, importantly, their ideas for how things could be improved.

Throughout the survey, residents demonstrated a clear understanding of the challenges facing their communities. They identified specific locations where action is needed, shared examples of what is and is not working, and offered practical recommendations grounded in lived experience. That local knowledge is invaluable and deserves to be taken seriously by decision-makers.

I would like to thank everyone who took part in the survey and shared their views. Your contributions have helped create a powerful body of evidence about the road safety challenges facing communities across Hertfordshire and what could be done to address them at long last.

My hope is that this report will help ensure those voices are heard and that it contributes to a constructive conversation about how we create roads that are safer, more accessible and better suited to the needs of the people who live with them every day.

Chris Hinchliff MP
Member of Parliament for
North East Hertfordshire



Executive summary.

This report presents the findings of a road safety survey conducted across North and East Hertfordshire. Residents from towns, villages and hamlets shared their experiences of using local roads and identified the issues they believe pose the greatest risks to safety and quality of life.

While the specific concerns varied by location, the responses reveal a number of common challenges affecting communities across the area, from speeding and dangerous junctions to poor road maintenance and inadequate infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

To better understand those concerns, the survey gathered responses from residents across North and East Hertfordshire's communities, including Ashwell, Ardeley, Barkway, Baldock, Braughing, Buckland, Buntingford, Chipping, Cottered, Furneux Pelham, Great Munden, Letchworth Garden City, Little Berkhamsted, Meesden, Nuthampstead, Puckeridge, Reed, Royston, Sandon, Standon, Therfield, Thundridge, Tonwell, Westmill, Wyddial, and many others. The result is a detailed picture of the road safety challenges people face every day across the constituency.

While every community has its own concerns, five themes emerged consistently:

1. Safety concerns on the A505.
2. Speeding through villages and residential areas.
3. Poor road maintenance and potholes.
4. Heavy goods vehicle traffic on unsuitable roads.
5. Insufficient infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

The A505 stood out as one of the most frequently raised concerns in the survey. Residents described dangerous junctions, excessive vehicle speeds and a long history of serious collisions and near misses, particularly around Ashwell, Odsey and the route between Baldock and Royston. Many believe the current situation is unacceptable and called for lower speed limits, improved enforcement and junction redesigns.

Speeding was the issue that united almost every community. Residents repeatedly described traffic moving too fast through villages and residential areas, making roads feel unsafe for pedestrians, cyclists, schoolchildren and older residents. Time and again, people stressed that signs alone are not enough. They want effective enforcement and measures that physically slow traffic down.

The condition of our roads was another major concern. Residents highlighted potholes, damaged road surfaces, poor drainage and neglected pavements. For many, this is not simply an inconvenience. Poor road maintenance creates real safety risks, particularly on rural roads and for cyclists and motorcyclists, while increasing costs for motorists and undermining confidence in the transport network.

Many communities also raised concerns about heavy goods vehicles using roads that were never designed to accommodate modern freight traffic. Residents described the impact on road safety, road conditions and quality of life, particularly in smaller villages where narrow roads, limited pavements and historic layouts leave little room for large vehicles. There was strong support for directing HGVs onto more appropriate routes wherever possible.

The survey also highlighted widespread concern about the lack of safe infrastructure for walking and cycling. Residents pointed to missing footways, inadequate crossings and disconnected cycling routes that make it harder for people to choose active forms of travel. Many felt that safer infrastructure would not only improve road safety but also support healthier lifestyles, reduce congestion and strengthen local communities.

The survey also made clear that residents have been raising a great many of these concerns for many years, if not decades, without resolution.





Introduction.

Road safety is a significant public policy issue, affecting communities of all sizes across North East Hertfordshire. The area contains a diverse road network, including strategic routes, rural lanes, village high streets and residential streets, all serving different functions and presenting different challenges for road users.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of road safety concerns identified across the constituency and to bring together evidence relating to the condition, design and operation of the local road network. It highlights patterns of concern raised, often ongoing for years, and in some cases decades, across different communities and examines the factors most frequently associated with perceived road safety risks.

The report considers a wide range of issues, including vehicle speeds, junction design, road maintenance, traffic volumes, heavy goods vehicle movements, pedestrian safety and cycling infrastructure. While individual locations face distinct challenges, many of the themes identified recur across multiple towns and villages.

By collating this information into a single document, the report aims to support discussion between residents, local authorities and other stakeholders about current road safety challenges and potential opportunities for improvement. It is intended as a contribution to the ongoing consideration of how the road network can best meet the needs of those who live, work and travel in North East Hertfordshire.

Methodology.

This report is based on responses to a road safety survey conducted across North East Hertfordshire between 31 July 2026 and 27 September 2026. The survey invited residents to identify road safety issues in their area, indicate how long those issues had been ongoing, and suggest practical steps that could be taken to address them.

The survey consisted of three open-ended questions:

1. What is the main road safety issue in your area?
2. When was this first reported / how long has the issue been ongoing?
3. In your view, what are the easiest steps the council could take to resolve it?

A total of 275 responses were received.

Respondents were required to provide contact information and were asked whether they consented to their comments being included anonymously within this report. Only responses where consent was provided have been quoted.

Responses were reviewed and categorised by both location and issue type. Common themes, recurring concerns and frequently proposed solutions were identified. Where multiple respondents referred to the same road, junction, or traffic issue, those responses were considered together in order to assess the prevalence of concerns within an area.

This report draws primarily on residents' descriptions of road safety issues and their suggested remedies. The findings therefore reflect the experiences and perceptions of respondents rather than a technical assessment of the highway network.



Weston Hills Tunnel © Peter O'Connor, CC BY-SA 2.0

Concerns raised. Residents ignored.

The survey responses make clear that we have a Highways service that is not responsive to the needs of the communities it is supposed to serve; that, for whatever reason, it does not take seriously the very pressing priorities of our many towns and villages across North East Hertfordshire. This needs to change.

Taken together, these responses paint a clear picture. Residents do not want grand promises or endless consultations. They want practical action on problems that affect their daily lives. While the challenges vary from place to place, the message is remarkably consistent: people want safer roads, better infrastructure and a transport network that works for everyone.

It is time to end the years of inadequate communication and bureaucratic inertia. Parish councils across North East Hertfordshire are doing tremendous work to speak up on behalf of their residents but too often they are ignored and their issues treated as a secondary order matter. This must not continue.

Perhaps the most important overarching recommendation arising from this report is for a regular, at least quarterly, meeting between HCC Highways Officers and parish councillors across North East Hertfordshire to discuss key road safety concerns and the progress being made towards tackling them. This is essential for ending the cycle of despair as issues are raised, noted, left unresolved, deteriorate, and are raised again only for the cycle to repeat.

Parish councils are uniquely placed as a link between communities and other tiers of local government. It is vital that they are viewed as an asset rather than as a nuisance.

Part of the frustration also lies in the fact that many of the solutions that would make a tangible difference to local road safety concerns are simple and should be straightforward. We all know that local authority budgets are tight and that funding for local roads is not limitless.

However many of the suggestions are so reasonable and straightforward that the associated costs cannot be argued as a barrier, especially given the investment of over £180 million from the national Labour Government for Hertfordshire's highways.



Stapleford © Office of Chris Hinchliff MP

The A505:
A deadly stretch of road.

Few issues generated as much concern in this survey as the A505. Residents from Ashwell, Odsey, Sandon, Royston, Barkway, Baldock and surrounding villages repeatedly raised concerns about a road they feel has become increasingly dangerous to use. While particular locations were mentioned time and again, especially between Baldock and Royston, the message from residents was consistent: too many people no longer feel safe travelling along or crossing the A505.

A problem residents have raised for decades
One of the strongest themes to emerge from the survey was frustration that these concerns are not new.

Many residents described the dangers on the A505 as a longstanding problem, pointing to a history of serious collisions, fatalities and near misses at key junctions. Some respondents recalled local campaigns dating back decades, while others said they have been raising the same concerns for years without seeing meaningful action.

Research provided by the House of Commons Library indicates that there were **586 deaths and serious injuries in 1,721 collisions** over the 45 years between 1979 and 2024, a rate of 34%. (Department for Transport, 2026)

The language used by residents was stark. The A505 was described as a "death trap", "lethal" and "frightening". Many people said that using some junctions feels like "taking your life in your hands".

What stood out was not just concern for their own safety, but concern for young drivers, older residents and families who rely on these roads every day because there is simply no practical alternative.

For many respondents, it is seen as a longstanding failure to address known risks on one of the area's most important transport routes.

Junctions that residents believe are unsafe
The survey results make clear that concern centres primarily on the junctions connecting local communities to the A505, which were repeatedly identified as some of the most dangerous locations in the area.

The junction at Odsey, serving Ashwell and Ashwell & Morden Station, was mentioned more than any other. Residents described poor visibility, short distances to accelerate, uncertainty over priorities and the challenge of crossing fast-moving traffic travelling in both directions. Several respondents said they actively avoid certain manoeuvres, particularly right turns, while others reported taking longer routes simply because they feel safer.

1 in 3 collisions on the A505 result in serious injury or death.

According to Department for Transport road safety open data 1979-2024

Similar concerns were raised about Slip End and Cat Ditch Lane. Residents described these as locations where traffic appears suddenly over hills or approaches at high speed, leaving little time to judge whether it is safe to pull out. Several referred to collisions they had witnessed personally or pointed to a history of serious accidents at these junctions.

Flint Cross was also highlighted repeatedly. Residents reported that heavy traffic flows make it difficult to turn onto or across the A505 safely, creating conditions where drivers can feel pressured into taking risks.

The message from respondents was clear: people should not have to gamble with their safety in order to complete everyday journeys.

Department for Transport (2026) Road safety open data. GOV.UK.
Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/road-safety-open-data.

Speed is at the heart of the problem
If there was one issue that residents felt made every other problem worse, it was speed.

Across the survey, respondents argued that vehicles are travelling too fast for a road with so many junctions, turning movements and crossing points. Many felt that the current speed limits do not reflect the realities of the route and that excessive speed is reducing reaction times, making collisions more severe and leaving drivers with little opportunity to join traffic safely.

Residents repeatedly described vehicles accelerating between enforcement points and travelling at speeds that make it difficult to assess gaps in traffic. For those emerging from side roads, many said the experience can feel intimidating and unpredictable.

There was strong support for reducing speeds along the most hazardous parts of the corridor, particularly through the introduction of a 50mph limit. However, residents were equally clear that changing the signs alone would not be enough. Again and again, respondents pointed to the need for effective enforcement, with average-speed cameras receiving particularly strong support.

Small problems contributing to bigger risks
While junction design and speed dominated responses, many residents also drew attention to issues that may appear minor but can have serious consequences.

Overgrown vegetation, long grass and poorly maintained verges were frequently cited as reducing visibility at junctions. Residents reported particular difficulties during the summer months, when sightlines can become obstructed and approaching vehicles are harder to spot.

Many respondents argued that better maintenance would be a relatively straightforward and cost-effective way to improve safety, helping drivers make clearer judgements while reducing risk at already challenging junctions.

What residents want to see happen
Although opinions differed on the exact solution, there was broad agreement that the current situation is not sustainable.

Residents repeatedly called for:

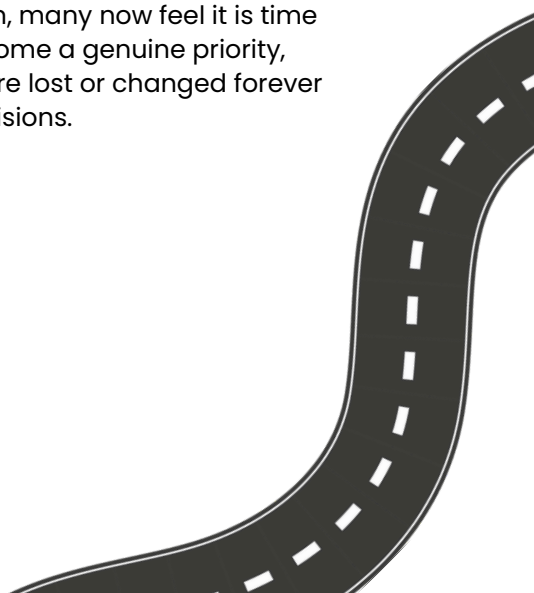
- Lower speed limits on the most dangerous stretches of the A505.
- Average-speed cameras to improve compliance.
- Improvements to junction layouts, including new roundabouts where appropriate.
- Safer arrangements for vehicles turning across the carriageway.
- Improved road markings and signage.
- Better maintenance of verges and vegetation.
- Infrastructure changes that reflect current traffic volumes rather than those of decades ago.

Additionally, respondents wanted a recognition that the concerns being raised are neither isolated nor new.

Conclusion
The A505 emerged from this survey as one of the most significant road safety concerns facing communities across North East Hertfordshire. Residents describe a road where high speeds, challenging junctions, poor visibility and growing traffic volumes combine to create a sense that the route is a literal death trap.

People from different villages, travelling for different reasons and using different parts of the route, arrived at much the same conclusion: the status quo is not good enough.

Residents understand that there is no single solution. But they also believe that the evidence for action is overwhelming. After decades of concern, many now feel it is time for the A505 to become a genuine priority, before more lives are lost or changed forever by preventable collisions.



Speeding through villages: residents let down.

If there was one issue that united residents across the survey area, it was speeding.

The message from respondents was clear: too many vehicles are travelling too fast through places where people live, work, walk, cycle and go to school.

For many residents, speeding is affecting their quality of life, making communities feel less safe and discouraging people from active travel. Just as importantly, many respondents expressed frustration that the problem has been identified time and again without meaningful action being taken.

A problem found in every community
Unlike some road safety concerns that are concentrated on a particular road, speeding was raised almost everywhere.

Residents described vehicles travelling through village centres, residential streets and rural roads at speeds they felt were clearly inappropriate for local conditions. Many reported seeing drivers exceed speed limits on a daily basis, particularly on roads entering villages and through residential areas where people rightly expect traffic to slow down.

What stood out in many responses was the sense that this is not a new problem.

Residents spoke of years, and sometimes decades, of reporting concerns through surveys, consultations and community campaigns. While many welcomed initiatives such as Community Speed Watch, there was a widespread feeling that evidence had been collected repeatedly but had not resulted in the changes people were hoping to see.

Communities that no longer feel safe
Throughout the survey, residents described how excessive vehicle speeds affect pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, schoolchildren, older residents and anyone simply trying to cross the road safely.

In Braughing, respondents described feeling unsafe on narrow pavements and when crossing the B1368, particularly at busy times of day. Parents worried about children walking to school, while others raised concerns about roads near bus stops, shops and community facilities.

Residents in Barkway reported similar fears, particularly around routes used by children attending the village primary school.

In Ashwell, respondents pointed to vehicles ignoring the village's 20mph limit, including in areas close to places where children play. Others highlighted speeding traffic on roads entering the village, arguing that drivers are often carrying excessive speed from rural roads into residential areas.

In Little Berkhamsted, residents described how speeding affects everyday life. Something as simple as walking a dog, accessing a footpath or crossing the road was said to feel increasingly unsafe because of the large volume and speed of traffic passing through the village.

Again and again, respondents returned to the same point: roads should feel safe for the people who live alongside them.

Villages becoming rat runs
A recurring concern was the growing number of vehicles using villages as convenient cut-throughs between larger roads.

Residents in Little Berkhamsted, Braughing, Barkway and Buntingford reported increased levels of through-traffic and argued that roads designed to serve local communities are increasingly being used as shortcuts.

Many blamed a combination of housing growth, congestion on major routes and sat-nav systems directing drivers through villages to save time.

Residents described roads with narrow carriageways, blind bends, parked vehicles and limited pavement space, all features that make excessive speed particularly dangerous.

Bigger vehicles, bigger concerns
For many residents, speeding understandably becomes even more alarming when larger vehicles are involved.

Respondents frequently referred to HGVs, buses, agricultural vehicles and quarry lorries travelling through villages at speeds they considered inappropriate.

Residents reported vehicles mounting pavements, struggling to negotiate bends and damaging road edges and verges, as well as local properties. Others described the experience of walking alongside large vehicles on narrow roads as intimidating.

Several respondents also highlighted the impact on noise and vibration, arguing that a large vehicle travelling too quickly through a village can seriously affect residents' day-to-day quality of life.

Safety on school journeys
Few issues generated stronger feelings than the safety of children.

Across the survey, residents repeatedly highlighted roads near schools where speeding remains a concern. Villages including Barkway, Braughing, Buntingford and areas around Baldock and Royston were frequently mentioned.

Parents described situations where children must cross busy roads or wait at bus stops next to fast-moving traffic. Several respondents warned that current conditions amount to "an accident waiting to happen".

Many residents argued that roads around schools should be treated as a priority for both enforcement and traffic-calming measures, particularly during the busiest periods of the day.

What residents want to see change
While communities differed on the precise solution, there was broad agreement that action is needed.

Many respondents supported:

- More 20mph limits in village centres and residential areas, prioritising those that are explicitly calling for one.
- Lower speeds on approaches to villages.
- Extended low-speed zones around schools and community facilities.
- More consistent speed limits that reflect how roads are actually used.

Residents often argued that current limits fail to account for vulnerable road users or the character of many village roads.

Signs alone are not enough
One message came through particularly strongly: residents do not believe that changing speed limit signs alone will solve the problem.

Again and again, respondents called for stronger enforcement.

Residents suggested:

- Average-speed cameras.
- Fixed speed cameras.
- Mobile enforcement units.
- Greater police visibility.
- New enforcement technologies.

Many acknowledged that Community Speed Watch schemes help demonstrate the scale of the problem but argued that meaningful behavioural change is unlikely without more visible enforcement.

This is an area that would benefit from greater collaboration between Hertfordshire County Council's Highways Team and Hertfordshire Constabulary.



© Malc McDonald, CC BY-SA 2.0


Chipping © Office of Chris Hinchliff MP

Making drivers slow down
Alongside enforcement, many residents expressed support for physical measures that make speeding more difficult.

Suggestions included:
- Raised tables and speed humps.
- Chicanes and road narrowing.
- Village gateway features.
- Traffic islands.
- Priority give-way systems.
- Vehicle-activated speed signs.

A common view was that well-designed traffic calming is often more effective than signs because it compels drivers to adjust their behaviour rather than simply asking them to do so.

More than a road safety issue
Residents repeatedly emphasised that speeding affects far more than collision risk alone.

Many described:
- Traffic noise disrupting daily life.
- Reluctance to cross roads.
- Reduced willingness to walk or cycle.
- Anxiety among parents and older residents.
- Erosion of village character.
- A loss of enjoyment of public spaces.

Some respondents reported changing their behaviour altogether, avoiding certain routes, driving rather than walking short journeys or discouraging children from travelling independently.

For many, speeding has fundamentally changed the way they live.

Case study: Speeding on A & B roads
Many residential villages feature roads that see daily speeding incidents. Chipping and Buckland's communities are divided by the A10, the A119 feeds into Stapleford and Waterford, and the B1368 cuts through Hay Street and part of Braughing, among other areas. Residents continue to demand action from the council to tackle dangerous driving which needlessly puts lives at risk.

Conclusion
The survey leaves little doubt that speeding is one of the issues residents care deeply about.

Although the locations vary, the concerns are consistent. People across North East Hertfordshire's villages and residential communities believe excessive vehicle speeds are making roads more dangerous, reducing quality of life and undermining confidence in walking, cycling and using local public spaces.

Just as striking is the sense of frustration. Many residents feel they have spent years reporting the same concerns only to see limited progress. They do not believe the problem is a lack of evidence. Instead, they feel there has been a lack of action in response to a systemic problem.

The message from the survey is clear: residents want safer speeds, stronger enforcement and road layouts that put communities first. They want roads where children can walk to school safely, where older residents can cross with confidence and where villages are prioritised as places to live, rather than shortcuts for road traffic.

For many respondents, tackling speeding is central to securing safer communities.



Little Berkhamsted © Acabashi, CC BY-SA 4.0

Poor road maintenence: potholes and pavements.

Concerns about road maintenance emerged as a significant theme throughout the road safety survey, with respondents from across Hertfordshire highlighting the deteriorating condition of roads, pavements and verges. Residents repeatedly linked poor maintenance directly to road safety risks, arguing that potholes, damaged road surfaces, inadequate drainage and neglected infrastructure are creating hazards for motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and other road users.

A widespread concern across NE Herts
Concerns about road maintenance were raised by respondents from a wide range of villages, towns and rural communities. Many described deterioration in road conditions as a visible and growing problem, with some reporting that defects often remain unrepaired for extended periods despite repeated reports to the Highways Team.

Respondents frequently stated that road surface conditions have worsened in recent years, particularly on rural roads and minor routes that receive lower levels of maintenance. Many felt that roads were no longer being maintained to an acceptable standard and that repairs were often reactive rather than preventative.

The impact of potholes on road safety
Potholes were among the most commonly cited maintenance concerns in the survey. Residents reported encountering potholes on village streets, rural lanes, main roads and key commuter routes.

While potholes present an inconvenience for drivers, many respondents emphasised their wider safety implications. Drivers described being forced to swerve suddenly to avoid defects, increasing the risk of collisions with oncoming traffic, parked vehicles or vulnerable road users. Others noted that potholes can cause loss of vehicle control, particularly in poor weather conditions or at night when defects are less visible.

The concern was particularly acute among cyclists and motorcyclists. Several respondents argued that potholes represent a serious hazard for two-wheeled road users, where even relatively minor defects can result in falls, injuries or collisions. Poor road surfaces were frequently identified as discouraging cycling and reducing confidence among those who would otherwise choose active travel.

Rural roads under particular pressure
Many responses highlighted the condition of North East Hertfordshire's rural road network. Residents described country lanes and village approaches suffering from uneven road surfaces, edge deterioration, subsidence and inadequate repairs.

Several respondents noted that narrow rural roads often leave drivers with little option but to travel over damaged sections of carriageway. This was considered especially problematic where large agricultural vehicles, HGVs and increasing traffic volumes place additional strain on roads not originally designed for modern levels of use.

Residents in rural communities argued that road deterioration can be exacerbated by heavy rainfall, flooding and drainage problems, leading to recurring defects that repeatedly require repair.


Little Hadham © Nigel Cox, CC BY-SA 2.0

Poor surface quality beyond potholes
While potholes dominated many responses, concerns extended more broadly to the overall quality of road surfaces.

Respondents referred to:

- Uneven carriageways.
- Surface cracking.
- Patchwork repairs that quickly fail.
- Loose road material and debris.
- Rutting and edge erosion.
- Faded road markings.
- Damaged kerbs and road edges.

A recurring criticism was that temporary repairs often provide only short-term solutions, with defects reappearing after a relatively short period. Many residents called for more durable repair programmes that address underlying problems rather than repeatedly patching the same locations.

Risks to pedestrians and pavement users
Poor maintenance concerns were not confined to roads themselves. A substantial number of respondents highlighted the condition of pavements and footways.

Residents reported broken paving, uneven surfaces, vegetation encroachment and trip hazards that make walking more difficult, particularly for older people, wheelchair users, parents with pushchairs and those with mobility impairments.

Several respondents argued that damaged pavements increase the likelihood of people walking on the carriageway instead, creating additional risks for both pedestrians and drivers. Concerns were especially prominent in village centres and residential areas where walking forms an important part of daily life.

Drainage and flooding issues
Many respondents linked road maintenance concerns to drainage problems.

Blocked drains, standing water and surface flooding were frequently cited as contributing factors to road deterioration and safety risks. Residents reported situations where potholes become concealed beneath water, making them impossible for road users to avoid safely.



Flooding was also described as creating additional hazards, including reduced visibility, vehicle damage and increased stopping distances. Several respondents suggested that better drainage maintenance could prevent many road defects from developing in the first place.

Concerns for active travel
The survey revealed a clear link between maintenance issues and efforts to encourage walking and cycling.

Residents frequently stated that poor road and pavement conditions discourage people from travelling actively. Cyclists reported avoiding certain routes because of dangerous surfaces, while pedestrians described choosing not to walk short journeys due to concerns about pavement quality and accessibility.

Many respondents argued that improving maintenance standards would not only enhance safety but also support wider objectives relating to public health, active travel and environmental sustainability.

Calls for better maintenance and investment
Throughout the survey there were repeated calls for greater investment in road maintenance. Respondents frequently advocated:

- Faster repair of potholes and road defects.
- More frequent road inspections.
- Long-term resurfacing programmes rather than patch repairs.
- Improved pavement maintenance.
- Better drainage management.
- More proactive maintenance of rural roads.
- Clearer communication about repair schedules and reporting processes.

Many residents expressed frustration that defects often appear to be repaired multiple times, leading to concerns about value for money and the effectiveness of current maintenance regimes.

Quality of life and economic impacts
Beyond safety concerns, respondents identified broader consequences arising from poor road maintenance.

These included:

- Damage to vehicles.
- Increased repair costs for residents.
- Delays to journeys.
- Reduced confidence when driving or cycling.
- Negative impacts on local businesses and visitors.
- Perceptions that public infrastructure is being neglected.

For many respondents, the condition of roads was viewed as both a practical safety issue and a visible indicator of wider infrastructure challenges facing their communities.


Wellpond Green © David Howard, CC BY-SA 2.0

Conclusion
The survey results demonstrate that poor road maintenance and potholes are a major concern for residents across Hertfordshire. Respondents consistently linked deteriorating road and pavement conditions to increased risks for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, particularly on rural roads and in villages.

While potholes featured prominently in responses, residents highlighted a broader range of maintenance issues, including drainage failures, damaged pavements, fading road markings and inadequate long-term repairs. The survey suggests strong public support for a more proactive approach to maintenance, with greater emphasis on preventative investment, durable repairs and the upkeep of infrastructure.

Addressing these concerns will be essential for improving road safety outcomes, supporting active travel, reducing vehicle damage and maintaining public confidence in Hertfordshire's transport infrastructure.



Furneux Pelham © Office of Chris Hinchliff MP

HGVS on unsuitable roads: villages as freight corridors.

Across North East Hertfordshire's rural communities, one concern came up repeatedly: the growing number of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) using roads that were never designed to carry them.

From narrow country lanes to historic village centres, respondents described communities struggling to cope with increasing volumes of lorry traffic. While they recognised the importance of freight to the local economy, many felt that their villages have become convenient shortcuts for vehicles travelling between larger roads, industrial sites and distribution centres.

Too many communities are carrying a burden they were never designed to bear.

Villages feeling the pressure
Concerns about HGV traffic were raised in communities across North East Hertfordshire, including in Great Munden, Hay Street, Little Berkhamsted, and Nuthampstead.

Residents described increasing numbers of large lorries travelling through villages on routes originally intended for local traffic.

Many felt that growth in freight movement, housing development and the increasing use of sat-nav systems has led to more heavy vehicles being directed through communities where roads are narrow, visibility is poor and space is limited.

Respondents frequently described situations where two large vehicles cannot pass safely, forcing drivers onto verges, pavements or road edges. Others reported regular congestion and near misses where large vehicles struggle to navigate roads that simply were not built for modern freight traffic.


Nuthampstead © Philip Jeffrey, CC BY-SA 2.0

Safety concerns for vulnerable road users
One of the strongest themes in the survey was the impact HGV traffic has on people who are not travelling by car.

Residents repeatedly expressed concern for pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, mobility scooter users and children sharing roads with large vehicles. In villages with narrow pavements, limited verge space and restricted visibility, many respondents felt there was very little margin for error.

Parents were particularly concerned about children walking to school or travelling around their communities independently. Several respondents questioned whether children should have to share village roads with a constant flow of large commercial vehicles.

Cyclists were also highlighted as particularly vulnerable. Residents noted that narrow carriageways and poor road surfaces already create challenges for cyclists, and that those risks increase significantly when large vehicles pass at close proximity.

Many respondents felt that the design priority for village roads should be the safety of the people who live there.

Historic villages facing modern traffic
A recurring point made by residents was that many Hertfordshire villages pre-date the modern road network by hundreds of years.

Respondents highlighted roads characterised by:

- Narrow carriageways.
- Sharp bends.
- Limited visibility.
- Historic buildings close to the road edge.
- Restricted pavements.
- Tight junctions and pinch points.

Many argued that these features make regular HGV traffic fundamentally inappropriate.

Residents described lorries becoming stuck, mounting kerbs, struggling to negotiate bends and causing significant disruption while attempting to pass through constrained village centres. Even where accidents do not occur, respondents felt that the sheer presence of large vehicles creates an environment that discourages walking and cycling.

Several residents argued that people should not feel intimidated simply because they want to walk to the shops, visit a neighbour or cross the road in their own village.

The impact on roads and infrastructure
Many respondents linked the increase in HGV traffic directly to the poor condition of local roads.

Residents described heavy vehicles contributing to:

- Potholes and road surface deterioration.
- Verge erosion.
- Cracked road edges.
- Damage to drainage systems.
- Structural wear on rural roads.

A common frustration was that many local roads appear unable to withstand the volume and weight of modern freight traffic. Residents often felt that repairs simply fail because the underlying problem remains unchanged.

Several respondents also highlighted damage to signs, kerbs, grass verges and other village infrastructure, arguing that the cumulative impact of large vehicles is becoming increasingly visible across rural communities.

Speed and driver behaviour matter too
Respondents also reported instances of lorries travelling at speeds they considered inappropriate for village environments, particularly where roads are narrow and footways limited.

Several residents noted that a collision involving an HGV is far more likely to result in serious injury because of the size and weight of the vehicle involved. Others described near misses where pedestrians, cyclists or motorists were forced to take evasive action.

Whether or not an accident occurs, many respondents said the volume and speed of freight traffic creates an atmosphere that feels intimidating and unsafe.

More than a road safety issue
The impact of HGV traffic goes well beyond safety alone.

Residents frequently referred to:

- Excessive noise.
- Vibration affecting homes.
- Disturbed sleep.
- Concerns about damage to older buildings.
- Reduced enjoyment of public spaces.
- The gradual erosion of village character.

In communities where historic buildings sit close to the road, some residents expressed concern about the long-term impact of repeated vibration from passing lorries.

For many respondents, HGV traffic has become a quality-of-life issue that affects how people experience their villages.

Schools and residential areas
Particular concern was expressed about roads serving schools, parks and residential neighbourhoods.

Residents questioned why large freight vehicles should routinely pass through areas where children walk to school, where older residents cross roads regularly and where visibility may already be limited by parked vehicles.

Many respondents argued that freight traffic should be directed towards the most appropriate routes, leaving villages free to function as places to live rather than corridors for through-traffic.

Case study: Whitehorse Junction, Baldock
This set of crossroads opposite the Old White Horse pub in Baldock has been the site of two fatal accidents and several incidents involving lorries. With rustic buildings hanging over the road, HGVs routinely veer across it to make the turning, putting pedestrians and cyclists at risk. A ban on HGVs is the solution.


Great Munden © Malc McDonald, CC BY-SA 2.0


Little Berkhamsted © David Howard, CC BY-SA 2.0

What residents want to see change
Although specific proposals varied, there was broad agreement on the direction of travel.

Residents called for:

- Weight restrictions on unsuitable roads.
- HGV bans except for local access.
- Better enforcement of existing restrictions.
- Improved freight route management.
- Clearer signage for lorry drivers.
- Changes to sat-nav routing.
- Traffic-calming measures in village centres.
- Greater use of strategic roads for long-distance freight movements.

Many respondents also argued that councils, freight operators and navigation providers should work together to reduce the number of vehicles being directed via unsuitable routes.

Support business but protect communities
Importantly, most respondents recognised that freight plays a key role in supporting the local economy.

Residents acknowledged the need for deliveries, agricultural traffic and access for local businesses. The concern was rarely about essential journeys. Instead, people repeatedly raised concerns about through-HGV traffic using village roads simply because they represent the quickest route between two larger roads.

The survey results suggest that residents are looking for balance: ensuring businesses can operate effectively while protecting communities from traffic that offers little local benefit but creates significant local impacts.

Case study: Neale Drive, Buntingford
Neale Drive in Buntingford offers a prime example of this issue. It is a quiet residential road that is being used as a cut-through for lorries every single day, with poorly located signage largely to blame. Residents have raised the issue repeatedly with Hertfordshire County Council, but have seen no action yet.

Conclusion
The survey reveals widespread concern about HGV traffic across North East Hertfordshire's villages and rural communities. Residents repeatedly described roads that were never designed for modern freight movements but are increasingly being used as through-routes for large commercial vehicles.

The consequences identified by respondents extend well beyond road safety. Residents linked HGV traffic to road damage, noise, vibration, reduced quality of life and growing concerns about the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and children.

Respondents rejected the idea that this is an unavoidable consequence of modern transport. Instead, they argued that better planning, more effective routing and stronger protections for rural communities could reduce many of the problems they experience day-to-day.

The message from residents is clear: villages should be places where people can walk, cycle, shop and spend time safely. They should not become freight corridors simply because no one has challenged the way traffic is being routed through them.


Nuthampstead © Bikeboy, CC BY-SA 2.0



Plain White Lorry © Bob Harvey, CC BY-SA 2.0

Walking and cycling: encouraging active travel.

One of the clearest messages to emerge from this survey was that many residents feel North East Hertfordshire's roads are designed primarily for vehicles, with everyone else expected to fit around them.

Across both urban and rural communities, respondents raised concerns about missing pavements, unsafe crossings, disconnected cycling routes and infrastructure that makes walking and cycling more difficult than it should be. Many described a situation where choosing to walk or cycle often feels less like a genuine transport option and more like taking a risk.

For residents, this is about independence, freedom of choice, health, safety and ensuring that people of all ages can move around their communities confidently without always needing to get behind the wheel.

A network that doesn't join up
A recurring frustration throughout the survey was that walking and cycling routes often feel disconnected and incomplete.

Residents described pavements that suddenly end, cycle routes that disappear at difficult junctions and connections between communities that simply do not exist. Many reported situations where part of a journey feels safe, only for the infrastructure to disappear unexpectedly.

Several respondents noted that they would be far more likely to walk or cycle if routes were continuous and connected. Instead, many feel forced into fast traffic or onto roads that were never designed with active travel in mind.

The problem, as many residents see it, is not necessarily a complete lack of infrastructure. It is a lack of joined-up infrastructure.

Pavements that are missing, narrow or difficult to use
Concerns about pavements emerged in communities across the survey area. Residents reported roads where pavements are:

- Too narrow for comfortable use.
- Missing altogether.
- Obstructed by parked vehicles.
- Encroached upon by vegetation.
- Difficult to navigate with a wheelchair, mobility scooter or pushchair.
- Poorly maintained and uneven.

For many people, these issues determine whether a journey can be made safely at all. In rural communities, respondents frequently described roads linking villages that have no pavements despite being used regularly by walkers, commuters and schoolchildren.

Several residents explained that walking often means stepping onto grass verges or into the road itself whenever traffic approaches. Older residents and those with mobility difficulties were identified as being particularly affected, with many respondents arguing that accessibility considerations are too often overlooked.

Cycling still feels unsafe for too many people
The survey also revealed widespread concern about cycling infrastructure.

Many respondents felt that cycling is regularly encouraged in principle but not properly supported in practice. Residents described a shortage of dedicated cycle routes connecting villages, schools, railway stations, employment centres and town centres.

Where cycling infrastructure does exist, respondents often described it as fragmented, inconsistent or poorly maintained. A common complaint was that cycle routes frequently disappear at roundabouts, junctions or other complex locations, forcing cyclists back into fast-moving traffic.

Several residents argued that confident cyclists may tolerate these conditions, but less experienced cyclists, children and older people are often deterred altogether.

For many respondents, the problem is that they simply do not feel safe cycling.

Communities that are close together but difficult to reach

One striking theme was the number of residents who felt trapped into driving journeys that should be possible on foot or by bicycle.

Respondents from rural areas frequently pointed out that neighbouring villages may be only a mile or two apart but lack any safe route connecting them. High traffic speeds, narrow roads and the absence of dedicated infrastructure combine to make active travel feel impractical.

Residents argued that better links between villages, schools, railway stations and local services would allow many short journeys to be completed without a car.

Many saw this as a missed opportunity, not only for road safety but also for reducing congestion and supporting healthier lifestyles.

Case study: BOAT 46 in Great Munden

A quiet country track in the rural area of Great Munden was the preserve of walkers, cyclists and horse riders for decades, if not longer. However, it has in recent years been designated as a "Byway Open to All Traffic" by Hertfordshire County Council, allowing vehicles to churn up the lane which stands less than 6ft wide. Locals want their rural pathway back for its original purpose.



© Jim Osley, CC BY-SA 2.0

The challenge of crossing the road

Even where people are willing to walk, many respondents reported difficulties crossing roads safely.

Residents repeatedly identified locations where pedestrians are expected to cross busy roads without signal-controlled crossings, refuges or other safety measures.

Concerns were particularly common around:

- Formerly quiet village centres divided by increasingly busy main roads.
- Routes to schools.
- Bus stop locations.
- Shops and community facilities.
- Areas with significant older populations.

Many respondents described standing at the roadside waiting for a suitable gap in traffic, particularly during peak periods. Some reported avoiding certain journeys altogether because crossing the road felt unsafe.

For older residents in particular, several respondents suggested that the lack of safe crossing points can contribute to isolation and make everyday journeys increasingly difficult.

The wider impact on village life

The effect of HGV traffic goes well beyond safety alone.

Residents frequently referred to:

- Excessive noise.
- Vibration affecting homes.
- Disturbed sleep.
- Concerns about damage to older buildings.
- Reduced enjoyment of public spaces.
- The gradual erosion of village character.

In communities where historic buildings sit close to the road, some residents expressed concern about the long-term impact of repeated vibration from passing lorries.

For many respondents, HGV traffic has become a quality-of-life issue that affects how people experience their villages.

Infrastructure only works if it is maintained
Residents were clear that building infrastructure is only part of the solution.

Many identified problems including:

- Broken pavements.
- Potholes on cycle routes.
- Poor lighting.
- Flooding.
- Overgrown vegetation.
- Uneven surfaces.
- Worn and faded markings.

Cyclists frequently highlighted poor road surfaces as both a safety concern and a deterrent to cycling. Similarly, residents noted that a pavement exists in theory only if it is accessible and usable in practice.

There was a strong sense that maintenance and accessibility should be treated with the same importance as new infrastructure projects.

More than a road safety issue
For many residents, better walking and cycling infrastructure would deliver benefits far beyond transport.

Respondents linked safer active travel routes to:

- Improved public health.
- Reduced congestion.
- Lower emissions.
- Greater independence for young people.
- Better accessibility for older residents.
- Stronger and more connected communities.

Many felt that investment in active travel is one of the few interventions capable of improving health, environmental outcomes and road safety at the same time.


© Stephen Craven, CC BY-SA 2.0

What residents want to see
While priorities varied between communities, a number of proposals appeared repeatedly throughout the survey.
Residents called for:

- New segregated cycle routes.
- Continuous footways between communities.
- Wider pavements.
- Additional pedestrian crossings.
- Safer routes around schools.
- Better lighting.
- Improved maintenance of existing infrastructure.
- Safer junctions.
- Lower vehicle speeds in areas with high pedestrian activity.
- Better connections between active travel routes and public transport.

Above all, respondents stressed the importance of creating complete journeys rather than isolated stretches of infrastructure. A route is only useful if people can travel safely from start to finish.

Conclusion
The survey reveals a strong desire for a transport system that works for everyone, rather than solely prioritising motorists.

Residents consistently highlighted missing links, unsafe crossings, poor maintenance and a lack of dedicated infrastructure as barriers preventing more people from walking and cycling. For many, the problem is not a lack of willingness. It is a lack of safe and practical options.

The message from residents is clear: people want to be able to walk to the shops, cycle to school, reach the railway station or visit neighbouring communities without feeling that they are taking unnecessary risks. Creating those opportunities will require a connected network that treats pedestrians and cyclists as an integral part of the transport system.

Hertfordshire County Council needs to give people the confidence to leave their cars at home.



Herts Bridleway © Sludge G, CC BY-SA 2.0

Recommendations for action.

The message from this survey is clear. Residents understand that there is no single solution to the road safety challenges facing Hertfordshire, but they are also clear that the status quo is not working.

Across villages, towns and rural communities, people described problems that have often been raised for years without meaningful progress. The recommendations below reflect the priorities that emerged most consistently from the survey and provide a practical roadmap for improving road safety across the county.

1. Make tackling speeding a priority
In the survey, no issue was raised more frequently than speeding.

Residents repeatedly described traffic travelling too fast through villages, residential streets and near schools, creating risks for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users. While concerns varied from place to place, the demand for action was remarkably consistent.

Hertfordshire County Council should:

- Review speed limits in villages and residential areas where concerns have been repeatedly raised.
- Expand the use of 20mph limits where there is a clear local case.
- Introduce traffic-calming measures on roads entering villages.
- Prioritise communities experiencing persistent speeding problems.

Residents should not have to feel unsafe crossing the road, walking to the shops or allowing children to play and travel independently in their own communities.



Speeding in Chipping © Philip Jeffrey, CC BY-SA 2.0

2. Properly enforce speed limits
One theme came through repeatedly in the survey: signs alone are not enough.

Many residents felt that existing speed limits are routinely ignored because enforcement is inconsistent. While communities welcomed initiatives such as Community Speed Watch, many respondents argued that more effective measures are needed to change behaviour.

The Council should work closely with Hertfordshire Constabulary to:

- Expand the use of average-speed cameras on high-risk roads.
- Increase mobile speed enforcement activity.
- Support Community Speed Watch schemes.
- Deploy vehicle-activated signs in locations with persistent speeding concerns.

Residents want confidence that speed limits are there to protect communities, not simply to decorate roadsides.

3. Treat A505 improvements as a key priority
Unsurprisingly, the A505 emerged as one of the most serious and consistently raised concerns in the survey.

Residents described a road where high speeds, dangerous junctions and growing traffic volumes combine to create unacceptable safety risks. Many highlighted particular concerns around Odsey, Slip End, Flint Cross and other well-known problem locations.

The Council should work with National Highways and neighbouring authorities to:

- Review the safety of key junctions along the route.
- Assess opportunities for lower speed limits.
- Explore average-speed enforcement.
- Improve visibility through better vegetation management.
- Deliver engineering improvements at locations repeatedly identified by residents.

Action on the A505 is long overdue.

4. Shift from short-term repairs to long-term maintenance
Residents are frustrated by a cycle of potholes appearing, being repaired and then reappearing a short time later.

Throughout the survey, many argued that road maintenance has become too reactive and that more emphasis should be placed on preventing deterioration before defects become dangerous.

The Council should:
- Increase preventative maintenance programmes.
- Prioritise resurfacing where patch repairs are repeatedly failing.
- Improve drainage maintenance to prevent recurring damage.
- Accelerate repairs to defects affecting cyclists, pedestrians and motorcyclists.

Safe roads rely on infrastructure that is maintained properly, not simply repaired when it reaches crisis point.

5. Develop a dedicated rural roads safety programme
Many of the concerns identified in this survey are specific to Hertfordshire's rural road network.

Narrow roads, poor visibility, increasing traffic volumes and limited infrastructure create challenges that are often very different from those found in urban areas.

The Council should:
- Combine collision data with evidence from local communities.
- Improve road markings and signage where needed.
- Address visibility issues caused by vegetation growth.
- Prioritise roads where speeding, maintenance issues and junction safety concerns occur together.

A one-size-fits-all approach will not address the unique challenges facing rural communities.

6. Review HGV routing through villages
Residents were clear that the problem is not freight itself. It is freight using roads that were never designed to accommodate it.

Many communities feel that they have become shortcuts for HGV traffic travelling between larger roads and distribution centres.

The Council should:
- Review routes most frequently identified by residents.
- Assess the need for additional weight restrictions.
- Improve signage guiding lorry drivers onto suitable routes.
- Work with freight operators and navigation providers to discourage unsuitable routing through residential communities.

Villages should not be carrying the burden of through-traffic simply because they happen to be the quickest route on a sat-nav.

7. Invest in walking and cycling infrastructure
Many respondents said they would walk or cycle more if they felt it was safe to do so.

Residents repeatedly highlighted missing pavements, inadequate crossings, disconnected cycle routes and poor links between communities.

The Council should:
- Improve connections between villages, schools and transport hubs.
- Expand safe cycling infrastructure.
- Address gaps in walking and cycling networks.
- Provide more safe crossing points, particularly near schools and village centres.

People should not have to choose between driving and feeling unsafe.


© Philip Jeffrey, CC BY-SA 2.0

8. Make routes to school safer
Parents and residents consistently identified roads around schools as areas of concern.

Many felt that children should be able to walk or cycle to school safely but that current conditions often make this very difficult or impossible.

The Council should:

- Review safety arrangements around schools identified in survey responses.
- Improve crossing facilities where needed.
- Strengthen speed management measures.
- Explore ways to reduce traffic conflicts during pick-up and drop-off periods.

Creating safer routes to school would improve road safety while encouraging healthier and more independent travel.

9. Put vulnerable road users at the centre of highway design

A recurring theme throughout the survey was that roads often appear to be designed around the needs of vehicles first.

Future highways schemes should give greater consideration to:

- Pedestrians.
- Cyclists.
- Children.
- Older residents.
- Wheelchair users.
- Mobility scooter users.
- Horse riders.
- Motorcyclists.

A successful road network is one that works for everyone.

A final recommendation
Above all, this survey suggests that road safety challenges should not be treated as isolated problems.

Speeding, dangerous junctions, poor maintenance, HGV traffic and inadequate walking and cycling infrastructure are often interconnected. Communities experiencing one problem are frequently experiencing several at the same time.

Residents are asking for practical action on problems that affect their daily lives. It's time for Hertfordshire County Council to deliver it.


© Philip Jeffrey, CC BY-SA 2.0

Quick fixes.

Easy wins to improve the safety of roads in North East Hertfordshire that the County Council should action as a matter of urgency include:

It should be noted that many of these issues have been consistently raised by local parish councils over many years, sometimes decades, particularly in the case of the Odsey Junction, speeding issues and HGVs.

Refresh faded road markings at Mentley Lane, Great Munden

Issue: Residents and the Great Munden Parish Council repeatedly cited faded markings and poor visibility at the Mentley Lane crossroads.

Recommended action:

- Repaint give-way lines.
- Replace worn warning markings.
- Refresh junction signage.

Why it's a quick fix: Routine highways maintenance with minimal design work and relatively low cost.



Mentley Lane © David Howard, CC BY-SA 2.0



Odsey Junction © Mr Ignavy, CC BY-SA 2.0

Replace or improve warning signs at Odsey Junction (A505)

Issue: Drivers and Ashwell Parish Council reported poor awareness of the dangerous junction.

Recommended action:

- Larger warning signs.
- High-visibility backing boards.
- Additional advance warning signage.

Why it's a quick fix: A relatively inexpensive and straightforward intervention that should yield immediate results

Back Community Speed Watch in Braughing, Barkway and Standon

Issue: Speeding is the most common concern across the survey, with Braughing, Barkway and Standon Parish Councils all calling for stronger enforcement.

Recommended action:

- Support volunteer-led Community Speed Watch schemes.
- Deploy speed-indication devices.

Why it's a quick fix: Low cost and can be implemented quickly in collaboration with local parish councils.



Braughing © Philip Jeffrey, CC BY-SA 2.0

Quick fixes continued.

Repair priority pothole clusters in Sandon, Newnham, Reed and Therfield

Issue: Poor road surface condition is a recurring complaint.

Recommended action:
·Targeted patching programme.
·Prioritise roads with repeated reports.

Why it's a quick fix: With more than £180 million of additional Government funding available for Hertfordshire's roads, there can be no excuse for leaving well-documented pothole hotspots unrepaired.


Newnham © Alexander P Kapp, CC BY-SA 2.0



Hay Street © Robin Webster, CC BY-SA 2.0

Install Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) in Hay Street and Green End

Issue: Residents report vehicles travelling well above village speed limits, particularly on the B1368 corridor.

Recommended action:
- Solar-powered "Slow Down" signs.
- Speed reminder displays.

Why it's a quick fix: A proven intervention that can reduce vehicle speeds at modest cost.

Cut back vegetation and improve sight lines

Issue: Visibility concerns were repeatedly raised at:
- Odsey Junction
- Chapmore End
- Sacombe
- Various rural junctions

Recommended action:
- Hedge cutting.
- Verge management.
- Tree maintenance.

Why it's a quick fix: Usually inexpensive and can immediately improve safety.


Bullsmill Lane © David Howard, CC BY-SA 2.0

Review and refresh school warning signs

Issue: Concerns around schools were raised in Baldock, Barkway, Birch Green and Buntingford.

Potential action:

- Repaint zig-zag markings.
- Replace faded school signs.
- Install flashing signs where justified.

Why it's a quick fix: Small-scale intervention with clear safety benefits.


Barkway © N Chadwick, CC BY-SA 2.0


Nuthampstead © John Sutton, CC BY-SA 2.0

Review village HGV signage and routing

Issue: Complaints from residents and parish councils about inappropriate HGV use in:

- Little Berkhamsted
- Nuthampstead
- Great Munden
- Hay Street

Recommended action:

- Clearer weight-limit signage.
- Direction signs to appropriate routes.
- Enforcement where restrictions already exist, such as in Little Berkhamsted.

Why it's a quick fix: Signage changes are a cost-effective first step prior to introducing new restrictions.

Improve pedestrian crossing points through villages

Issue: Residents struggle to cross roads safely in:

- Braughing
- Buntingford
- Standon
- Westmill
- Puckeridge

Recommended action:

- Build-outs.
- Dropped kerbs.
- Tactile paving.
- Refuge islands where feasible.

Why it's a quick fix: Low-cost step that delivers visible benefits quickly.


Braughing © Bikeboy, CC BY-SA 2.0

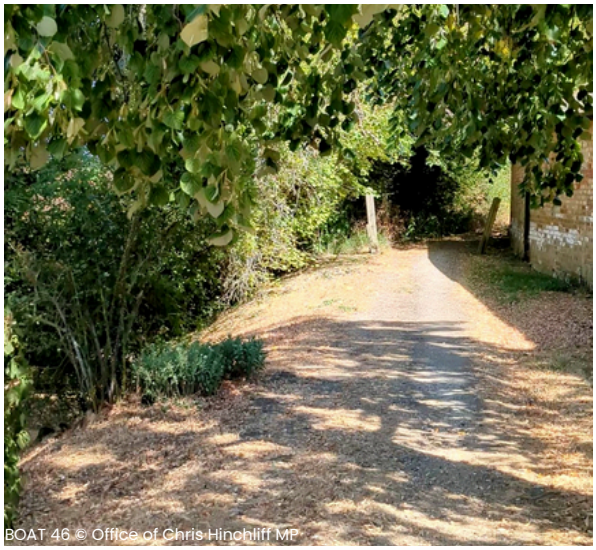
Restrict motor vehicle access on BOAT 46

Issue: A narrow rural track in Great Munden that has long been used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders is now open to motor vehicles, causing damage to the surface and making it less safe and enjoyable for other users.

Recommended action:

- Review the BOAT designation.
- Introduce restrictions on vehicle access.
- Protect the route for active travel.

Why it's a quick fix: A targeted traffic regulation order would preserve the route's character and prevent further damage.



BOAT 46 © Office of Chris Hinchliff MP



Neale Drive © Malc McDonald, CC BY-SA 2.0

Improve HGV signage on Neale Drive

Issue: Poorly positioned signage is directing lorries down a residential road, creating unnecessary traffic, noise and safety concerns for residents.

Recommended action:

- Relocate and improve directional signage.
- Install advance warnings for HGV drivers.
- Monitor compliance and adjust where necessary.

Why it's a quick fix: Better signage is a low-cost intervention that can immediately reduce inappropriate HGV movements through residential streets.

Ban HGVs from the Whitehorse Junction

Issue: Large vehicles regularly struggle to negotiate the crossroads, contributing to serious safety risks at a junction that has already seen fatal accidents.

Recommended action:

- Introduce an HGV prohibition at the junction.
- Provide signed alternative routes.
- Review road markings and warning signs.

Why it's a quick fix: An HGV ban can be implemented through traffic management measures, reducing danger to pedestrians, cyclists and other road users without extensive reconstruction.



Whitehorse Junction © Office of Chris Hinchliff MP

Conclusion

The issue of road safety plays on the minds of many North East Hertfordshire constituents every day. It is about whether people feel safe walking their children to school, cycling to the station, crossing the road to the shops or driving home after work.

The residents who took part in this survey were not simply commenting on individual potholes, junctions or speed limits. They were describing a wider sense that too many of Hertfordshire's roads no longer work as well as they should for the communities they serve.

What stands out most is the consistency of the evidence. Whether people lived in Ashwell, Braughing, Little Berkhamsted, Buntingford, Barkway, Sandon or elsewhere, many were raising the same concerns. Speeding through villages. Dangerous junctions. Roads in poor condition. HGVs on unsuitable routes. Missing pavements and unsafe cycling infrastructure. Different communities, similar experiences.

Residents also made clear that road safety is about more than casualty statistics. It is about confidence. Confidence that children can walk to school safely. Confidence that older residents can cross the road without fear. Confidence that people can choose to walk or cycle without feeling exposed to unnecessary risk. When that confidence disappears, communities become less connected, public spaces become less welcoming and people become increasingly dependent on their cars, even for short journeys.

Throughout the survey, residents demonstrated a detailed understanding of the problems affecting their local areas. They identified specific roads, junctions and locations where action is needed and put forward practical solutions based on lived experience. That local knowledge should not be underestimated. The people who use these roads every day are often the first to spot problems and to recognise when existing arrangements are no longer fit for purpose.

The findings also highlight the need for a more joined-up approach to road safety. Speeding, poor maintenance, unsafe junctions, HGV traffic and inadequate walking and cycling infrastructure are not separate issues. They often reinforce one another. A village struggling with speeding may also lack safe crossings. A rural road damaged by heavy traffic may become more dangerous for cyclists. A lack of walking and cycling infrastructure may push more people into cars, adding further pressure to already congested roads.

Taken together, the responses paint a picture of residents who care deeply about their communities and want to see practical improvements that make everyday journeys safer. They are not asking for the impossible. They are asking for roads that are properly maintained, speeds that reflect local conditions, safer routes for children and vulnerable road users, and a transport network that puts communities first.

Residents have identified the road safety issues affecting them clearly and consistently time and time again, including in this survey. The challenge now is to respond to them.

And that is precisely why the Government has awarded £180,402,000 in additional ring-fenced highways funding over four years, so that local authorities can deliver on local road safety priorities.

If there is one message that emerges from my constituents in this survey, it is that people want action. They want safer roads, safer communities and a transport network that works for everyone.

By listening to those concerns and acting on the priorities set out in this report, Hertfordshire has an opportunity to make meaningful progress towards that goal.

Summaries of local issues.

Ashwell
Residents overwhelmingly identified the A505, particularly the Odsey (Ashwell & Morden Station) junction, Slip End junction, and links via Station Road, as the area's most serious road safety concern. Many described fatalities, near misses and difficulties joining or crossing fast-moving traffic. Concerns about speeding on Lucas Lane, Station Road, High Street, and approaches from Newnham were also raised. Residents reported these concerns dating back decades, with many citing 20-50 years of complaints.

Residents frequently called for measures to reduce vehicle speeds through the village, including lower speed limits, greater speed enforcement and additional traffic-calming features. Respondents also supported improvements to pedestrian safety and better maintenance of roadside vegetation and signage where visibility is limited.

Ashwell & Morden Station (Odsey Junction)
The junction between Station Road (Odsey) and the A505 was repeatedly identified as one of the most dangerous locations in the survey. Residents described near misses, poor visibility, confusion over right of way and repeated fatal collisions. Many respondents reported that concerns have been raised for 30-50 years, with campaigns for improvements dating back to the 1980s.

Residents overwhelmingly supported the construction of a roundabout at the Odsey junction, which was widely viewed as the most effective way to improve safety for vehicles joining and crossing the A505. Many respondents also called for a lower speed limit on the A505, average speed cameras, improved visibility through regular verge maintenance, and safer facilities for pedestrians and cyclists travelling to and from Ashwell & Morden Station.

Ardeley
Residents raised concerns about road closures, traffic management and the resilience of the local road network, particularly affecting routes between Wood End, Moor Green and Ardeley. Respondents felt rural communities were often overlooked when highways decisions were made. Issues were described as ongoing for at least two years, with some residents reporting concerns stretching much longer.

Respondents supported lower speed limits, additional speed enforcement measures and traffic-calming features to improve safety for residents, pedestrians and cyclists. Many also highlighted the need for better maintenance of rural roads, verges and signage, together with improvements to visibility at junctions and bends.

Baldock
Residents highlighted concerns on the wider A505 corridor, including junctions connecting Baldock to surrounding villages, as well as road safety concerns on Orchard Road, Church Street, the A507, Clothall Road, Wallington Road, South Road, and Weston Way. Issues relating to junction safety, speeding and road condition were commonly described as ongoing for 10 years or more.

Residents suggested a range of measures to improve safety, including additional pedestrian crossings, traffic signals at busy junctions and lower vehicle speeds. Many also highlighted the need for improved provision for cyclists and pedestrians travelling through the town.

Barkway
Speeding was the issue raised most consistently in Barkway, particularly along the B1368 High Street, Royston Road, The Joint, and roads serving the village school. Residents also raised concerns about large vehicles, parking, and pedestrian safety. Many noted that speeding has been reported for 10 years or more, with some stating it has been a problem for decades.

Residents commonly suggested stronger speed enforcement, including speed cameras and average speed cameras, together with a 20mph speed limit through the village. Respondents also supported additional traffic-calming measures, improvements to pedestrian safety and action to reduce the impact of HGV traffic on local roads.

Birch Green
Residents focused on speeding and safety concerns along Old Coach Road, particularly around school traffic and parking. Concerns over speed limits and traffic management have been raised with authorities for approximately 10 years.

Residents called for a reduction in the speed limit on Old Coach Road, with many supporting a 20mph or 30mph limit near the school. Respondents also supported stronger parking controls around school pick-up and drop-off times, alongside wider measures to improve safety for pedestrians and local residents.

Braughing
Braughing emerged as one of the communities most affected by speeding, particularly on the B1368, The Street, Green Lane, Friars Road, Ford Street, Hull Lane, and the junction with Stortford Lane. Residents consistently raised concerns about pedestrian safety, school traffic and large vehicles. Many stated these issues have persisted for 20-30 years, despite repeated surveys and campaigns.

Residents frequently called for lower speed limits, stronger speed enforcement and additional traffic-calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds through the village. Many respondents also supported improvements to pedestrian safety, including safer crossing points and footways, together with better maintenance of roadside vegetation to improve visibility.

Buckland
Residents highlighted speeding along the A10 through Buckland, concerns about turning into side roads, and the suitability of major routes for current traffic volumes. Many described these issues as ongoing for many years and worsening following changes to nearby road networks.

Respondents frequently supported stronger speed enforcement and lower vehicle speeds on the A10. Residents also called for additional warning signage, safer turning arrangements and road design changes to reduce the risks faced by vehicles entering or leaving the carriageway.

Buntingford
Respondents frequently raised concerns about speeding on the Buntingford Bypass, High Street, Church Street, London Road, Baldock Road, and around Millfield School. Pedestrian safety, pavement parking and cycling infrastructure were recurring themes. Many residents felt conditions had worsened over a number of years, particularly with recent housing growth.

Residents commonly supported a town-wide 20mph speed limit, increased speed enforcement and improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Many also called for stronger action against illegal parking and traffic offences, alongside broader improvements to traffic management within the town centre.

Chapmore End
Residents focused heavily on speeding and visibility issues on the B158, including the junction with The Common, Wadesmill Road, and the blind summit near the village entrance. Several respondents referenced accidents and fatalities and said concerns had been raised since the 1980s.

Residents frequently proposed lower speed limits on the B158, supported by speed cameras and other enforcement measures. Many also suggested additional traffic-calming features, clearer road markings and better vegetation management to improve visibility around bends and junctions.

Chipping
Residents highlighted speeding through Chipping on the A10, alongside road maintenance and safety concerns. Many said problems had been ongoing for many years, particularly relating to high vehicle speeds through the village.

Residents proposed speed cameras and other enforcement measures on the A10 to reduce vehicle speeds through the settlement. Many also highlighted the need for improved access arrangements, better signage and measures to make the route safer for local residents.

Cottered
Responses centred on the use of Throcking Road by HGVs and unsuitable diversion traffic, particularly during closures of the A507.

Residents reported raising concerns since at least 2023 and highlighted ongoing safety risks created by heavy traffic.

Respondents called for clearer diversion planning, "Not Suitable for HGVs" signage at both ends of the road, and stronger traffic management measures to prevent inappropriate use of narrow rural lanes.

Furneux Pelham
Residents identified speeding on the road between Furneux Pelham and Stocking Pelham as a significant concern. Respondents described the issue as having existed for as long as they could remember, with very limited enforcement.

Residents supported greater enforcement of existing speed limits on the road between Furneux Pelham and Stocking Pelham, including speed patrols and regular police presence. Many respondents felt stronger enforcement would improve safety for horse riders, pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

Great Munden
Residents repeatedly highlighted the dangerous Mentley Lane crossroads, the junction with the C16, and BOAT 46. Concerns included faded road markings, poor visibility, accidents and inappropriate use by motor vehicles. Most respondents reported these concerns had existed for several years, with some citing more than seven years.

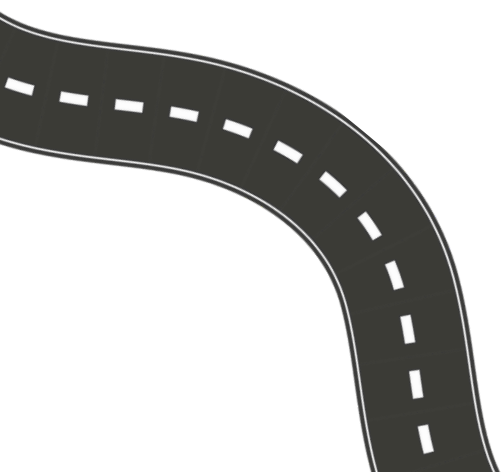
Respondents identified a number of practical improvements, including repainting faded road markings, improving visibility through hedge maintenance and installing mirrors at junctions where sightlines are restricted. Several residents also called for action to address inappropriate use of local byways by motor vehicles.

Green End
Residents highlighted speeding on the B1368 and concerns about HGV traffic using Hay Lane. Respondents reported that traffic speeds and volumes had increased over the last 20-34 years, while calls for enforcement had gone largely unanswered.

Respondents commonly expressed concern about speeding traffic and supported measures including lower speed limits, speed cameras and additional traffic calming. Residents also highlighted the need for clearer signage, improved road maintenance and measures to address the impact of larger vehicles using narrow rural roads.

Hay Street
The dominant concerns related to speeding and HGV traffic on the B1368 through Hay Street, including the junction with Hay Lane. Residents described vehicles travelling well above the speed limit, large lorries mounting pavements and increasing traffic noise. Most reported the issue had been worsening over the last 10-20 years, with some citing concerns dating back even further.

Residents frequently proposed stronger enforcement of speed limits, additional traffic-calming measures and restrictions on HGV movements through the hamlet. Many respondents also called for improved visibility through hedge cutting and verge maintenance, alongside wider improvements to road conditions and junction safety.



High Cross
Residents raised concerns about speeding and growing traffic volumes, particularly on routes linked to the A120 corridor. Many reported issues persisting for many years and felt stronger enforcement was needed.

Respondents frequently called for measures to reduce vehicle speeds on roads passing through the village, including additional enforcement and lower speed limits. Residents also highlighted the need for safer crossing opportunities and action to address increasing volumes of through traffic.

Letchworth Garden City
Residents highlighted speeding and crossing safety issues on Radburn Way, around Gernon Road, Eastcheap, Junction 9 of the A1(M), and key pedestrian routes into the town centre. Many described these concerns as ongoing for 10-15 years or more.

Respondents supported improvements to junction layouts, pedestrian crossings and cycling infrastructure to make journeys safer and more attractive. Residents also called for measures to reduce vehicle speeds and improve conditions for all road users in busy urban areas.

Little Berkhamsted
Residents consistently identified speeding, rat-running and HGV traffic on Church Road, Robins Nest Hill, routes towards Epping Green and Newgate Street, and roads subject to TRO 3180 weight restrictions. Many reported campaigning on these issues for 10-25 years, with some noting substantial worsening in recent years.

Respondents frequently suggested introducing a 20mph speed limit and strengthening enforcement of existing HGV restrictions. Residents also supported additional traffic-calming measures, camera enforcement and further action to discourage unsuitable through traffic from using village roads.

Meesden
Residents highlighted potholes and safety concerns on roads around The Beehive, local village roads and rural routes towards neighbouring villages. Most respondents stated road condition issues had existed for several years, with many citing 3-5 years or longer.

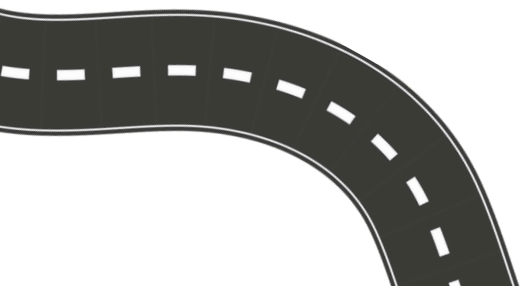
Respondents consistently called for permanent repairs to potholes and deteriorating road surfaces. Additional suggestions included improved warning signage at hazardous bends, better hedge maintenance to improve visibility, and measures to address risks associated with large agricultural vehicles using local roads.

Newnham
Residents repeatedly referenced severe road condition problems on Newnham Road, the route towards the A507, Newnham Green, and roads towards Baldock Services. Speeding entering the village was also raised. Many stated these concerns had been ongoing for 3-8 years, with conditions steadily worsening.

Residents consistently highlighted the need for comprehensive road resurfacing and permanent repairs to potholes, damaged verges and deteriorating road edges. Many also supported traffic-calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds and improvements to drainage and road markings.

Nuthampstead
Residents highlighted speeding through the village and on surrounding routes, including concerns about larger vehicles using roads not suited to them. Some respondents said these issues had been present for many years, in some cases dating back decades.

Residents supported measures to reduce traffic speeds through the village, including relocating speed limit signs, introducing lower speed limits and improving enforcement. Respondents also highlighted the need for action to address inappropriate vehicle speeds on surrounding rural roads.



Puckeridge
Residents raised concerns about speeding, pedestrian safety and traffic management, particularly on roads connected to the A10 corridor. Many felt these concerns had existed for years and required stronger enforcement.

Respondents frequently called for lower speed limits, additional traffic-calming measures and stronger speed enforcement on roads serving the village. Residents also raised concerns about pedestrian safety and supported measures to improve conditions for people walking through the area.

Reed
Residents identified potholes and deteriorating road conditions on roads including The Joint between Barkway and Reed, describing worsening conditions over the last 1-2 years despite repeated reporting.

Residents overwhelmingly focused on the need for comprehensive road repairs and resurfacing, particularly on roads affected by extensive potholes and edge deterioration. Many respondents felt maintenance programmes should prioritise permanent repairs rather than repeated temporary patching.

Royston
Residents highlighted the A505, Flint Cross junction, Barkway Road, and connections between Royston and neighbouring villages. Speeding, congestion, housing-related traffic growth and dangerous junctions were recurring themes. Many described these issues as ongoing for 10 years or more.

Residents frequently raised concerns about traffic volumes and speeds on key routes approaching the town. Suggested improvements included stronger speed enforcement, improved junction layouts and better provision for pedestrians and cyclists.

Rushden
Residents reported excessive vehicle speeds through Mill End, with concerns increasing as traffic volumes have grown. Respondents generally described the issue as longstanding and worsening over many years.

Residents supported a reduction in vehicle speeds through the village, with many suggesting a 20mph speed limit, speed cameras and regular enforcement. Respondents also highlighted the need to improve safety for cyclists, pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

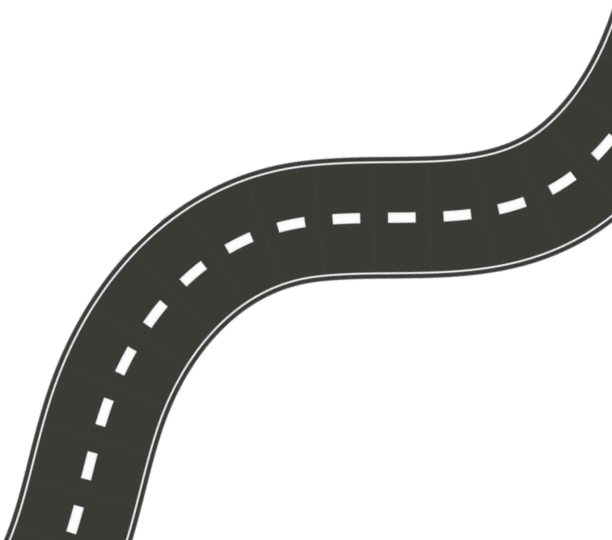
Sacombe
Residents in Sacombe consistently highlighted speeding as the area's principal road safety concern, particularly on routes connecting Sacombe, Dane End and the A602.

Particular concern was raised about excessive speeds near the mini bridge at Sacombe Pound, where residents described near misses, poor visibility and risks to pedestrians, cyclists and families using local roads.

Respondents also highlighted increasing traffic volumes and the use of rural roads by vehicles travelling at inappropriate speeds. Many residents reported that these problems have persisted for many years, with repeated requests for traffic-calming measures, speed enforcement and safety improvements receiving little visible action.

Respondents called for lower speed limits through the village, supported by speed indication signs and enforcement measures.

Additional suggestions included traffic-calming features and safety improvements around narrow sections of road, particularly near Sacombe Pound and the bridge crossing.



Sandon
Residents highlighted the dangerous Slip End junction on the A505, along with concerns about potholes and deteriorating roads approaching the village. Many noted fatalities and serious accidents and said concerns had been raised continuously since at least the late 1990s.

Residents strongly supported major safety improvements at the Slip End junction on the A505, including a roundabout, lower speed limits and enforcement cameras. Many respondents also highlighted the need for improved visibility through vegetation management and ongoing investment in maintaining local roads.

Standon
Residents focused on speeding and safety on the A120, including Standon Hill, Station Road, Cambridge Road, South Road and Stortford Road. Many reported concerns dating back to the opening of the A120 bypass, approximately 20 years ago.

Residents commonly advocated stronger speed enforcement and lower speed limits on routes through and around the village. Many also supported improvements to pedestrian safety, particularly near local services and residential areas, and measures to reduce speeding traffic.

Stapleford & Waterford
Residents frequently highlighted concerns about vehicle speeds on rural roads connecting Stapleford, Waterford and surrounding villages, particularly where narrow carriageways, limited visibility and a lack of walking infrastructure increase risks for local people.

Respondents called for lower speed limits, additional speed enforcement and traffic-calming measures to reduce dangerous driving.

Many residents also supported improved maintenance of road surfaces, verges and vegetation, together with measures to improve visibility at junctions and make conditions safer for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

Therfield
Residents highlighted potholes and road condition problems on routes including Kelshall Tops Road and connections to the A505. Most described these matters as worsening over the last 1-2 years.

Respondents focused primarily on improving road conditions through resurfacing and pothole repairs. Residents also supported greater attention to rural road maintenance and measures to address safety concerns on routes connecting Therfield with neighbouring villages.

Thundridge
Residents reported speeding, particularly on the A10, and concerns about traffic volumes and pedestrian safety. Most stated these issues had existed for 14-20 years or more.

Residents supported stronger speed enforcement, lower speed limits and improvements to road safety along key routes through the village. Many respondents also raised concerns about rat-running traffic and called for measures to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Tonwell
Residents overwhelmingly focused on the A602 Tonwell Bypass, junctions serving Tonwell village, and crossings towards local footpaths and bridleways. Concerns included excessive speeds, dangerous right turns, poor visibility, lack of lighting and difficulties for pedestrians and cyclists. Many respondents said these issues had existed since the bypass opened and had worsened following road improvements completed in 2023, while others reported concerns spanning 10-33 years.

Respondents strongly supported reducing speeds along the A602 through lower speed limits and greater enforcement. Residents also proposed improvements to junction design, better street lighting, enhanced warning signage and safer crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Westmill
Residents highlighted speeding and safety concerns on routes including the A602 and roads connecting Westmill to neighbouring villages. Several respondents described long-standing concerns stretching back many years.

Residents called for lower vehicle speeds on roads connecting Westmill to neighbouring communities, alongside enhanced enforcement and improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Many respondents also supported safer crossing points and improved access along routes linked to the A602.

Wyddial
Residents highlighted speeding and dangerous road conditions on routes including Biggin Hill Road, the Wyddial turning, and roads towards Anstey. Concerns had reportedly been raised repeatedly over many years, with calls for lower speed limits and road improvements.

Residents frequently proposed lower speed limits on roads around Biggin Hill and the Wyddial turning, citing concerns about visibility and vehicle speeds.

Many also supported additional signage, traffic-calming measures and improvements to safety at key junctions.

Wood End
Residents described concerns about road closures, access restrictions and communication from highways authorities affecting Wood End and surrounding roads. Respondents stated these issues had become increasingly noticeable over the last two years, though frustrations with rural transport management were described as longstanding.

Respondents called for better communication and engagement from highways authorities when road closures are planned. Residents also emphasised the need for more suitable diversion arrangements, clearer advance notice of works and greater consideration of the impact of closures on isolated rural communities.


Ashwell © Office of Chris Hinchliff MP

