

# Shillington Parish Council

Including Pegsdon & Higham Gobion

**BEDFORDSHIRE**

<b>Mrs. Karen Cousins</b> <i>Clerk to the Council</i> ☎ 01462-713567 e-mail: Shillingt@talk21.com	'Karaway', 20A Vicarage Close, Shillington, Hitchin, Herts. SG5 3LS.	<i>Chairman:</i> <b>Mrs. Sally Stapleton</b> 26A Apsley End Road, Shillington, Hitchin, Herts. SG5 3LX. ☎ 07711-564489 e-mail: sallystapleton@bntinternet.com
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17th August 2010

The Monitoring Officer  
Central Bedfordshire Council  
Priory House  
Monks Walk  
Chicksands  
Shefford  
SG17 5TQ

Dear Sir or Madam

I'm here this morning to present a petition on behalf of the residents and employers/employees of Higham Gobion, a small hamlet located in the parish of Shillington. This petition has 11 pages and holds 128 names in support of a speed limit, and also includes suppliers and customers to the local businesses and people's homes.

Higham comprises a mixture of 10 residential dwellings, ranging from small semi detached farm workers' cottages to large 5 bedroom detached properties, housing growing young families, middle aged couples and pensioners.

The former Manor Farm at Higham and its surrounding agricultural buildings were sold off to a developer during the 1990s, as this was no longer sustainable and since that time a growing business park has been developing, which now accommodates five separate business concerns. The main business being Davies Veterinary Specialists, who are one of the largest and most diverse small animal referral centres in Europe. This company was founded in 1998 and now employs more than 30 specialist clinicians, 50 nurses and 20 administrators as well as support staff.

The C-140 road running through Higham is a link road from the A1 across country to the A6 at Barton and beyond to the M1 at Toddington. Over recent years traffic surveys have been carried out by Beds Police to measure traffic volumes and speed as these have been on the increase, and are particularly noticeable during the times the Stondon car boot is in operation, on Sunday mornings for 14 weeks from Easter, which impacts on the rural environment by tripling traffic volume over normal commuter traffic.

There have been a number of road traffic accidents on this stretch of highway (although not always within the centre of the hamlet, but within its boundaries, which of course would be influenced by the prevailing limits within the hamlet). Indeed properties have been without power on at least two occasions in the past year (one period for almost a week) when a speeding vehicle, managed to plough through a resident's hedge, taking down power lines and even more concerning almost hitting their daughter in the back garden.

Accessing and exiting homes and the business park has become increasingly more hazardous with the speeding traffic and raised serious safety concerns to both residents and Parish Council. With this in mind, in 2004 Shillington Parish Council allocated their Highways Partnership grant to the provision of an off road pull in/car park hard standing area by Higham Cottages to enable residents a better 'escape route' to exit the main highway, before being back-ended by vehicles.

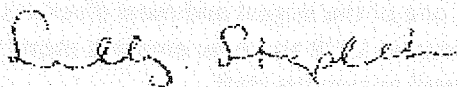
For pedestrians, no footpath exists along the side of the highway, so residents wishing to attend church services towards the top of the hill take their lives in their hands, trying to walk on this busy stretch of highway, with high hedges so no room for escape.

A speed limit will enable a bus stop to be included within this part of the parish. One of the young people living here is now starting Harlington School next term, with other youngsters growing up, who will need this service in the future, and there is nowhere for the bus to safely pull in and collect them due to the traffic speed. Several of the student veterinarian nurses have also advised how beneficial a bus service would be to enable them to reach their place of employment, as indeed would other local businesses benefit from such provision.

Recent meetings have been held with Mr. David Bowie of CBC Highways, our Ward Councillors, Bedfordshire Police, Parish Council and residents, as well as communications with the Centre Bus Company. All agree that this stretch of road requires a speed limit. Indeed speeding traffic through our parish was highlighted as a major concern by residents in our Parish Plan – with actions on the Parish Council to lobby for the introduction of speed limits on our village roads that are currently unrestricted.

The police will not support the bus stop until we have a speed limit in place and Centre Bus has indicated that this is a requirement for the safety of both driver/bus and alighting passengers. There historically exists an 'on request bus stop', however speeding traffic is unsuitable for the prevailing road conditions and prevents residents and business park users being able to stand on the side of the road due to the dangers of being struck by rapidly moving vehicles, where a designated bus stop would indicate to through traffic, a need to reduce their speed.

As a Parish Council we fully appreciate the financial constraints on the CBC budget and are more than willing to work with all partners to achieve both a speed limit and bus stop for the benefit of both residents and the continued expansion of the local businesses, in what is a ruraly deprived area. We would crave your consideration and positive response to our request in this petition.



Sally Stapleton (Mrs)

**Designated Resident Contact in Relation to Petition:**

Mrs. Florence Kerry-Smith

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