

KINGS CAPLE PARISH COUNCIL

ADOPTED ROADS IN KINGS CAPLE

In 2019 Kings Caple Parish Council established a Task and Finish Group to recommend arrangements to facilitate the improvement of the condition of public highways in the parish, which had generated widespread public dissatisfaction. The Task and Finish Group had the benefit of advice and guidance from two former parish councillors who had in the past implemented effective systems for such activity. This resulted in:

- the identification of four parish councillors each to be responsible for monitoring the condition of a portion of the parish road network;
- the nomination of a local resident with considerable past experience to co-ordinate and advise on this work;
- active steps to improve working contacts with the parish lengthsman and Balfour Beatty

The road network in the parish

The parish occupies the western portion of a long peninsula formed by an extended loop of the River Wye; most of the parish boundary is thus formed by the river.

There are two C classified roads traversing the parish broadly in a direction a little to the north of east. The more important of these two roads, the C1262, carries traffic into Kings Caple from Hoarwithy Bridge and leaves the parish at a point a little to the east of the old railway line (approximately GR 575299). The C1272 branches off the C1262 at approximately GR 559295 and proceeds to Brockhampton and the B4224.

A number of unclassified roads serve the parish in detail. The U71004 diverges from the C1262 to serve the settlement at Ruxton, then proceeding through the centre of the settlement and rejoining the C1262 at Penalt. The U71005 runs south from the C1262 to the centre of the village where it crosses the U71004 at the Old School. It then runs on south to Sellack Boat and Millditch before returning to join the U71004 near the entrance drive to Poulstone Court. The U71003 is a short stretch of road linking the C1262 and the C 1272. The U71031 is a relatively new road known as Caple Avenue, running from the U71005 a little to the south of the central crossroads at the Old School to the U71004 just to the east of Kings Caple Primary Academy.

Relative usage

The levels of usage variously sustained by the roads identified above differ considerably. Almost all traffic entering or leaving the parish does so on the C1262, mostly via Hoarwithy Bridge. This road directly serves Aramstone, the two properties at the junction with the U71003, Upper and Lower Penalt, and Fawley. In addition to traffic connected with residential or commercial properties within the parish there is traffic intending to join the B4224 and also accessing intermediate settlements such as Much Fawley and How Caple. There is some heavy traffic associated for example with the digester at Much Fawley as well as

with agricultural operations within the village such as the Pennoxstone Court fruit farm, the farm centre at Lower Penalt and the asparagus fields operated by S&A Produce and Cobrey Farm.

The C1272 does not directly pass any residential properties in the parish though it acts as a conduit for a certain amount of through traffic across the Wye to Fownhope, the B4224 and the A438 to Ledbury.

No dwellings are primarily accessed via the U71003.

Some dozen properties at or near Ruxton are approached by the U71004.

As well as normal traffic associated with residential or normal agricultural use, the U71005 carries substantial traffic from four groups of other users.

The centre of the village settlement is approached from the C1262 via the stretch of the U71005 as far as the Old School. Traffic regularly using this section of the road is as follows:

- Traffic serving 80 residential properties. These include all those lying within the village settlement boundary as designated in Kings Cagle Neighbourhood Development Plan as well as others.
- There are sites for an additional 23 residential properties either with extant planning consents or located within sites allocated for development in the NDP all accessed via this section of road.
- In addition to local agricultural traffic, this section of the U71005 provides access to their destinations for the heavy commercial vehicles serving Pennoxstone Fruit farm and the S&A asparagus fields from the C1262. The asparagus season generally runs from early April to the third week in June; the soft fruit season is from May to the beginning of November.
- Kings Cagle Primary Academy generally has between 40 and 45 pupils on roll, of whom at least 80% live outside the parish and access the school over Hoarwithy Bridge, travelling via the C1262, the U71005, turning left at the Old School crossroads and proceeding to Kings Cagle PA via the U71004. Peak times are between 0815 and 0915 and between 1445 and 1600.
- The fishing rights on the river bank both left and right of the footbridge at Sellack Boat are now in the ownership of angling clubs and fishermen constitute an addition to normal residential and agricultural use. Fishermen generally approach from the C1262 and U71005 right down to Sellack Boat.

The traffic described above will generally diverge at the Old School according to its final destination, taking the U71004 to the east or west or continuing along the U71005

It is clear that, though the U71005 is an unclassified road, its northern section takes a substantial amount of traffic which is likely to increase in volume with the construction of additional housing. It is prevailingly narrow and it is only the access

splays to properties on its western side which provide passing places that prevent more serious congestion.

Recurrent maintenance issues

Since 2010 the restraints placed on the HC budget have adversely impacted on road maintenance. Steps taken by the Parish Council have used the detailed maps prepared by parish officers in previous years to improve liaison with Balfour Beatty, work more effectively with the lengthsman and notify faults on a more systematic basis. The steps are showing some limited results. There are, however, some recurrent issues of concern relating to particular locations.

- Apart from problems caused by blocked ditches and grips there are three locations where flooding can occur as a result of the overloading of flowing water courses. Two of these involve culverted streams, one on the U71004 between Mayfields and Fishpool Cottage, one also on the U7004 between Poulstone Court drive and Hill Cottage. These can usually be resolved through action by the landowner. The other location is more difficult; it arises when the Wye bursts its banks and floods as far as the most southerly point of the U71005 between The Boathouse and Shieldbrook. Here the situation can be compounded by the Mill Ditch flooding and problems with blockages of the Welsh Water pipe-line carrying cleaned water down from the treatment plant higher up the U71005.
- The stretch of the C1262 between Lightfields and the U71005 is seriously degraded and requires complete resurfacing. This has been accepted by Balfour Beatty but not so far completed.
- Along the northern section of the U71005 a trench has been taken out on the western side at some point in the past apparently to lay a cable. Though clearly reasonably effectively re-instated, the line of this trench intermittently generates narrow but deep pot-holes. This is a matter of concern on such a narrow but heavily used road.
- The two steep slopes on the sections of the U71005 between a point just above Castle Bungalow and the sewage treatment works (on the western-most slope) and between a point about 100 metres south of the junction with the U71004 and Willow Cottage (on the eastern-most slope) are extremely narrow and affected by a number of springs which can intermittently generate considerable quantities of water, blocking ditches and even washing away stretches of the road surface. The problem is aggravated by heavy farm machinery such as beet harvesters obliterating grips dug by the lengthsman because of the narrowness of the road.

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Chairman Kings Caple Parish Council

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