

# Marnhull Village Traffic Survey

Produced by a sub-group of the  
Marnhull Neighbourhood Plan Committee,  
last updated: June 2025



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## 1 Introduction and rationale used

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Marnhull Neighbourhood Plan about the status of the road network and footpath infrastructure and potential for issues to be addressed. It has used data from Dorset Council, the Highways Agency and local knowledge to identify existing and potential pedestrian hazards and pinch points.

1.2 Given the proposed development in the village (based on extant planning permissions), the population and related car ownership is likely to grow and could see an additional 420+ cars on the roads<sup>1</sup>.

1.3 The report offers recommendations to alleviate the risks posed by the additional traffic and pedestrian activities resulting from the proposed developments. An early draft of this document was shared with Dorset Council on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024, and their feedback has been taken into account (see Appendix 1).

1.4 The report has now been published as part of the supporting documents to the draft Marnhull Neighbourhood Plan, and will be finalized as part of the Plan.

## 2 Existing Situation

2.1 Marnhull is a village and civil parish located in the north of Dorset. It lies three miles north of Sturminster Newton (by road), about 4 miles east of the smaller town of Stalbridge and is situated close to the county boundary with Somerset. The parish is divided by the B3092 which connects to the A357 to the south and the A30 to the north. This road is important for commercial and local traffic because there is no major North—South Road in the county.

2.2 There are no A Roads in Marnhull. The single B Road (the B3092) runs to the south side of the village, connecting south to Sturminster Newton and north towards Gillingham. The B3092 is full of twists and turns as it passes through the village, except for a straight patch, Crown Road, which runs from the Crown Pub north to Lamberts. The existing character of the road network consists of rural, narrow roads that often lack pavements and have limited traversable verges. This has created natural traffic calming; however, this does not always prioritise pedestrian safety. In this instance there are no off-road routes that are suitable for people with buggies or mobility impairments.

2.3 Burton Street and New Street act as the central spines for Marnhull's settlement pattern. Church Hill provides an important connection between the northern and southern branches of the village and access to a housing cluster to the east. Sackmore Lane acts as an important link providing connections between both major branches of Marnhull. Furthermore, the fingerpost at Peters Finger signposts traffic down Sackmore Lane to Fifehead Magdalen. Sodom Lane is used to leave the village and join the B3092 northbound. Mowes Lane is well used as a cut through to Cox Hill and on to Stalbridge or Dorchester. This is also used by traffic from Shaftesbury as the quickest route towards Dorchester and Weymouth. Many of these roads are very narrow, and some (including Sackmore Lane and Hains Lane) are below 4.5m (particularly where hedges line either side), making it difficult for two cars to pass or to safely overtake bicycles. Furthermore, these lanes are used by farm vehicles which have increased over time in both size and weight, along with cyclists and horse riders.

2.4 Given the linear settlement pattern, the network of roads and lanes significantly contribute to Marnhull's overall character. The hamlets, which together form Marnhull, offer a distinct character as these areas are linked by country lanes but crucially separated by green gaps of farmland in between.

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<sup>1</sup> April 2024 – recorded 256 new homes consented. 2021 Census recorded at least 1.64 cars per household (Source <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> TS045 - Car or van availability)

Footpaths and bus services play an important role to facilitate multi-modal movement through and beyond the village, however cars are the most used form of transport<sup>2</sup>.

2.5 There are several industrial estates to the Northwest and North of the village and a proportion of traffic associated with these passes through the village. For example, Cefetra Wessex (one of the major traders of grains and animal feed raw materials in the UK) serve the South and South-West regions from the Henstridge Trading Estate, resulting in a large volume of traffic some of which passes through the village. The village roads are also frequented by other HGVs – for example lorries from Pulham Steels Ltd (based at Pulham Business Park) have been observed passing through the village along New Street presumably to avoid them having to negotiate the very narrow pinch point in Sturminster Newton.

2.6 Marnhull also has many miles of footpaths linking all the hamlets and farms including the Hardy Way which crosses Mowes Lane.

### 3 Overview and Analysis

3.1 Marnhull has one B road and no A roads. The main arterial route is the B3092 and that passes through the village. Speeds are limited within the village (between Sodom Lane and Schoolhouse Lane) to 40mph, reducing to 30 mph between the Church Hill / New Street junction and just east of Church Farm. In parts the section of the B3092 through the village has no footways.

3.2 Key destinations in and around the village include the two Primary Schools (St Gregory's on New Street and St Mary's on Old Mill Lane). The main employment areas are located outside of the parish.

3.3 The traffic surveys conducted by Dorset Council during the week of May 11 to 17 2021 concluded that, over the key roads of Salisbury Street/Church Hill/Burton Street/Sodom Lane and New Street, there are already an average of 143.4 vehicles on the move at 0800h, and a similar level (154.4 vehicles on the move) at 1500h.

3.4 The 2021 census records that Marnhull has 18.3% households with 2 cars or more versus the North Dorset average of 9.1%<sup>3</sup>. The proposal to add an additional 256 dwellings to a village with limited work opportunities and minimal bus routes may add an extra 420+ cars to the current road network. The lack of frequent bus services to and from the nearby employment areas and towns may be a contributing factor to the high percentage of vehicle ownership<sup>4</sup>.

3.5 Marnhull is comprised of several hamlets which have organically grown and lack a network of safe footways on the current road system. This leads to a hazardous situation for pedestrians and was a key point of concern in the parish survey<sup>5</sup>. Response to the survey highlighted:

- At least 2 in 5 respondents said that the lack of safe walking routes troubled them “a lot”
- Over half of the respondents were concerned about traffic speeds “a lot”
- A significant proportion of the respondents were concerned about hazardous on street parking and dangerous junctions.

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<sup>2</sup> 2021 Census recorded 88% of people commuting to work travelling by car or van (Source <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> PP013 - Travel to work)

<sup>3</sup> <sup>3</sup> Source <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> TS045 - Car or van availability

<sup>4</sup> Bus Routes CR3 [https://moovitapp.com/index/en-gb/public\\_transportation-line-CR3-South\\_West-2106-1833670-176772571-0](https://moovitapp.com/index/en-gb/public_transportation-line-CR3-South_West-2106-1833670-176772571-0) and CR4 [https://moovitapp.com/index/en-gb/public\\_transportation-line-cr4-South\\_West-2106-1833642-169020406-5](https://moovitapp.com/index/en-gb/public_transportation-line-cr4-South_West-2106-1833642-169020406-5) have limited frequency (one bus typically every 2 or 3 hours) and do not run beyond 7pm or over the weekend, and therefore do not provide a suitable alternative to the car for many journeys, particularly journeys to work and social / leisure activities outside of the village.

<sup>5</sup> Parish Survey undertaken 2023 – to which approximately 500 responses were received, representing more than half the households in the parish.

### Do any of the following within the parish cause you direct concern?

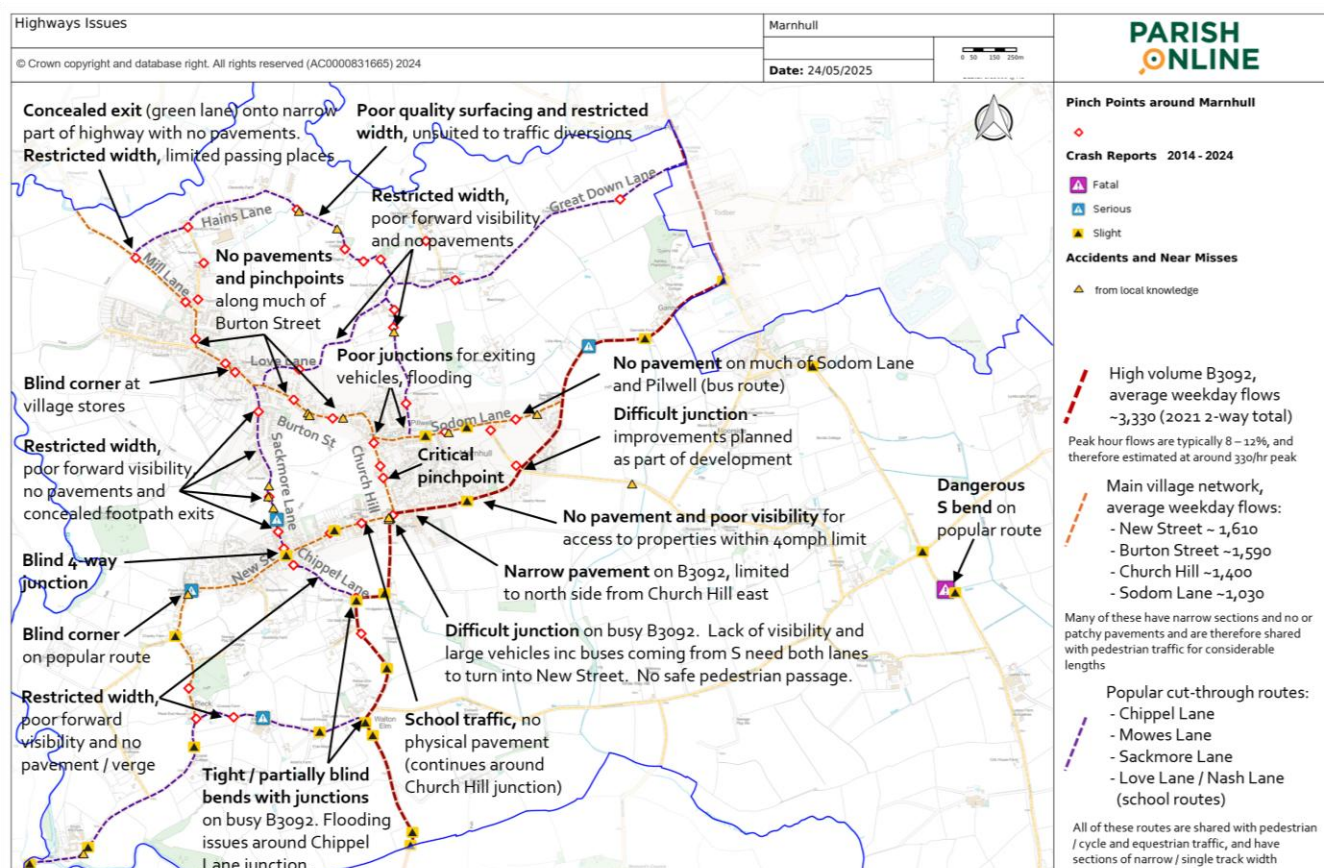
	Speeding traffic	Unsafe on-street parking	Dangerous junctions)	Lack of cycle routes	Lack of safe walking routes	Lack of safe riding routes
Yes a lot	252 54.4%	175 40.0%	206 47.0%	62 15.0%	177 41.5%	50 12.1%
Yes, a little	146 31.5%	167 38.1%	142 32.4%	117 28.4%	139 32.6%	96 23.2%
Not really	65 14.0%	96 21.9%	90 20.5%	233 56.6%	110 25.8%	267 64.6%

3.6 Residents were asked via the parish survey to help identify key pinch points where only 1 vehicle can pass at any one time and where the area lacked safe walking routes. Key areas identified included: Burton Street; Chippel Lane; Church Hill; Mill Lane; New Street; Sackmore Lane; and Sodom Lane. The nature of these roads and surrounding buildings or hedges make it difficult to alleviate these issues, and the potential for traffic calming measures is explored further in this report.

3.7 Marnhull has no long-term infrastructure to support the zero-emission target set by the UK government. There are no charge points or safe cycle routes<sup>6</sup>.

### Pinch Points and Hazards

3.8 The following map identified the main hazards that are present in and around the village.



3.9 Marnhull is based around a network of lower-category roads that was not designed for the volume or type of modern vehicles. Many of the roads have sections of restricted width, typically under 5.0m and often less than 4.5m, with no separate footway and no street lighting. Whilst the

<sup>6</sup> The former national cycle network route linking to Gillingham and Sturminster Newton is no longer promoted by Sustrans due to high motor traffic speeds and volumes, and therefore only deemed suitable for experienced users <sup>6</sup>

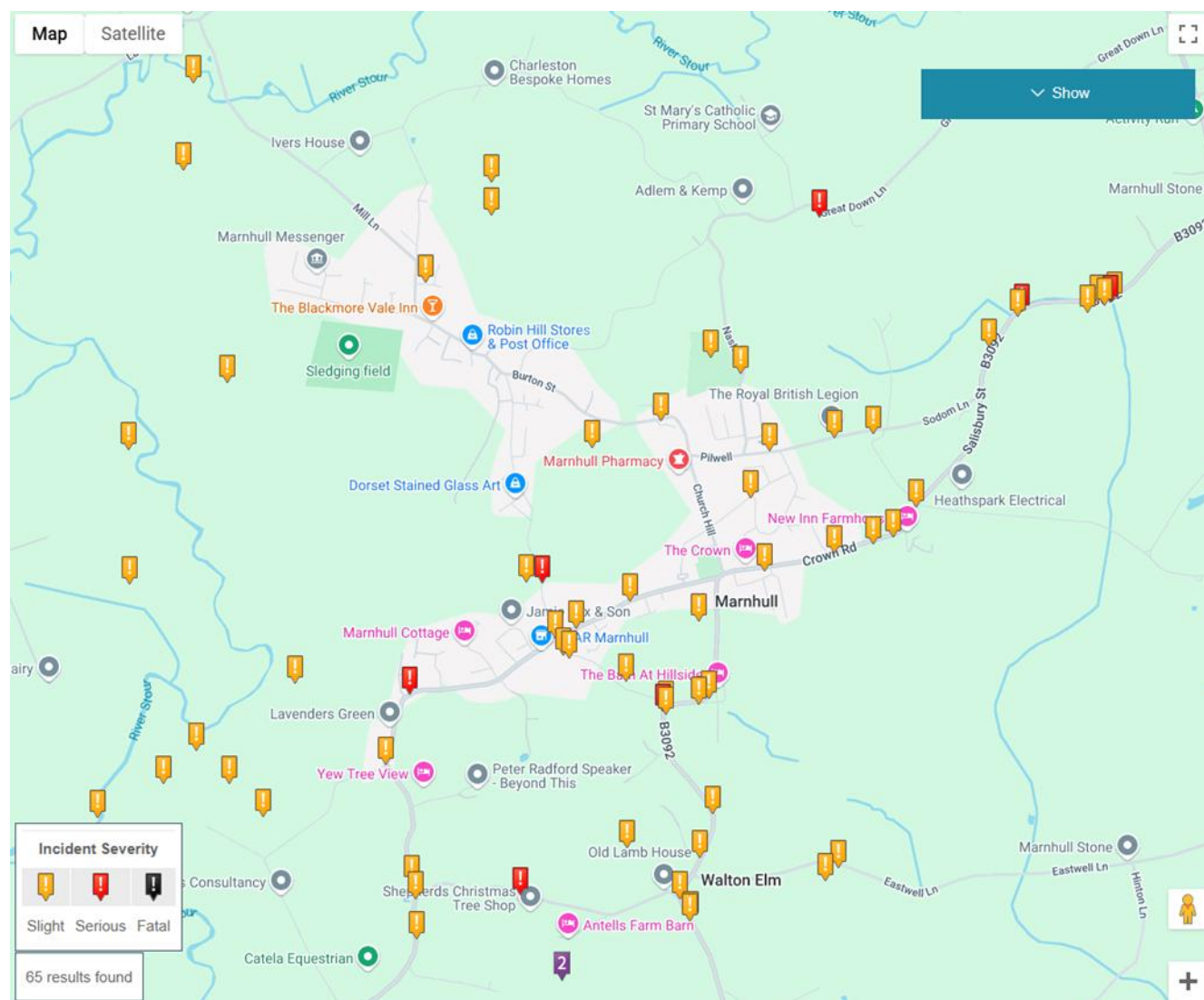
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/about-us/paths-for-everyone/reclassification-of-the-national-cycle-network-faqs/>



B3092 is wider it suffers from relatively sharp bends, and is also plagued by flooding in places. There is often limited visibility and turning space at the junctions, resulting in vehicles using both carriageways and drivers exiting without clear view of on-coming traffic.

### *Recorded accidents*

3.10 Using collated data from the [www.crashmap.co.uk](http://www.crashmap.co.uk) website for the period January 1999 to December 2023 inclusive, we were able to ascertain there were in excess of 60 reported incidents in Marnhull – averaging 2 – 3 highway accidents a year. The number of actual accidents and near misses is likely to be considerably higher given that many minor accidents and near misses go unreported. The map suggests that accidents are widespread, although perhaps more concentrate on the B3092 and at the locations where there are blind bends / junctions.



### *Traffic Survey*

3.11 A traffic survey was conducted by Dorset Council over the period of 11 to 17 May, 2021. This monitored vehicles from a fixed point on Burton Street, Church Hill, New Street, Salisbury Street and Sodom Lane. The results are summarized below, and were reported in the Marnhull Messenger ( Issue 116, July 2021). The data this provided showed that there was evidence of speeding in all locations, most notably in Church Hill, New Street and Sodom Lane.

#### Salisbury Street (40mph limit)

Direction	Traffic Count	Threshold	Mean Speed
Southwest	1498	40.4	35.9
Northeast	1538	36.7	30.4

#### Church Hill (30mph limit)

Direction	Traffic Count	Threshold	Mean Speed
South	566	37.3	30.8
North	644	31.1	24.0

#### Burton Street (30mph limit)

Direction	Traffic Count	Threshold	Mean Speed
West	694	28.0	22.4
East	711	24.2	18.6

#### Sodom Lane (30mph limit)

Direction	Traffic Count	Threshold	Mean Speed
West	441	32.9	27.0
East	479	34.2	26.4

#### New Street (30mph limit)

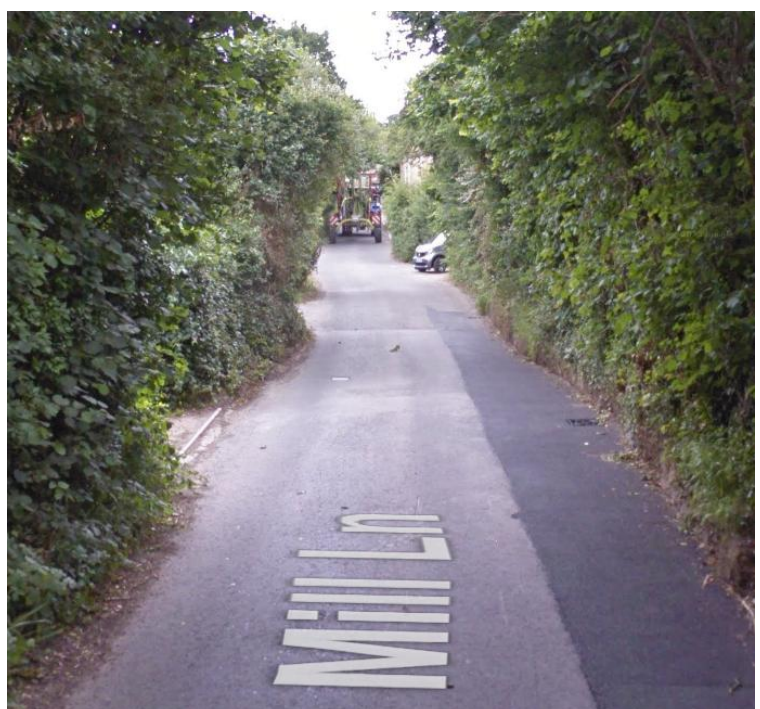
Direction	Traffic Count	Threshold	Mean Speed
East	720	35.4	28.8
West	734	32.3	25.9

#### Mill Lane

3.12 Mill Lane is on the north-western edge of the village, and is the main route to a number of local employment areas as well as Henstridge, Templecombe (and its railway station) and on to the A303 (and from that direction to connect to the B3092 and on to Sturminster Newton).

3.13 The lane within the village is narrow (too narrow for two vehicles to pass or for a large vehicle to safely pass a pedestrian or cyclist) with no footway and residential properties exiting onto the lane.

3.14 The following photos show the junction with Hains Lane and, although hard to see, the junction with the adopted green lane





route that links to Ham Meadows which is not clearly marked and poses a danger to horses and pedestrians exiting onto the lane.



Concealed entrance/exit to public footpath onto Mill Lane at the junction of Haines Lane. No signage to warn drivers

### *Burton Street*

3.15 Burton Street runs from the top of Mill Lane through to the junction between Sodom Lane and Church Hill at Pilwell. It is the road on which a number of shops / facilities are located, as well as connecting to the north-west via Mill Lane.



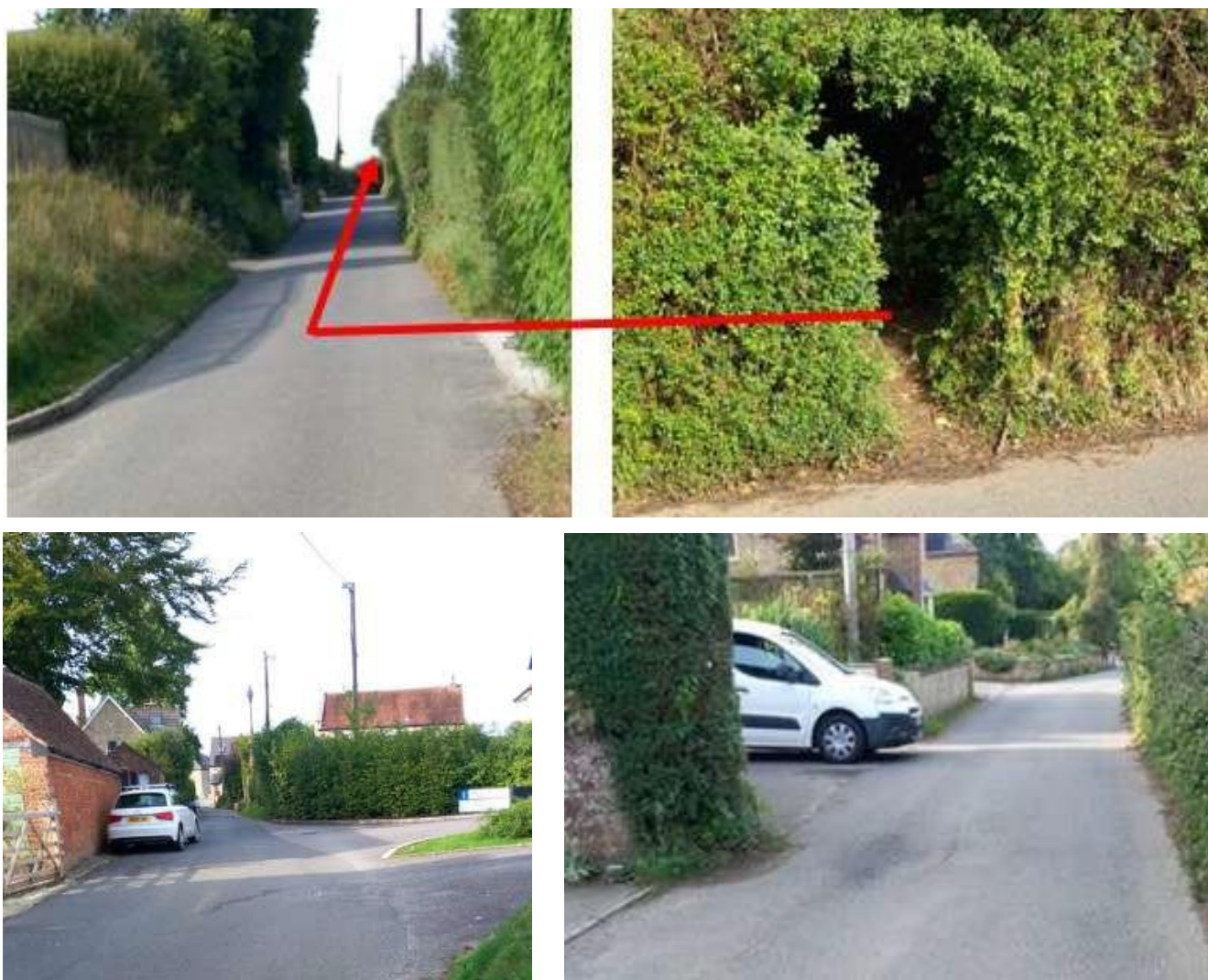
3.16 Other than a short length of footway outside the Methodist Church, there are no footways on Burton Street between Pilwell and Sackmore Lane, a distance of some 650m. This end of Burton Street in particular is considered hazardous for pedestrians walking to and from the village hall, surgery or pharmacy.

3.17 The historic nature of Burton Street means that the carriageway has a sinuous alignment with limited forward visibility, variable widths along its length, and direct residential frontage access, often with limited visibility for drivers emerging from private drives. There are often parked cars along much of this road, as many of the homes fronting onto this length of road have limited or no off-street parking.

3.18 The size and volume of traffic is also a cause for concern for pedestrians - the photographs show the type of farm vehicles regularly using this road and cars as they approach the blind corner by Robin Hill Stores. These photos were taken shortly after resurfacing work (cars frequently park from the large white doors in the picture right alongside the pavement, which does serve to slow the traffic).

### *Sackmore Lane*

3.19 Sackmore Lane runs north - south connecting Burton Street with New Street. It is used regularly as a cut through and is busy at peak school times. The road is only wide enough for 1 car, with "pass ways" in two sections, that have been incrementally made by cars pulling into the verge (as opposed to their deliberate construction). The narrow nature and curvature of the road, lack of verges means that there are blind bends, and the lane is not wide enough for white lines and limited space for warning signs that will not soon be overgrown. There are no road markings that warn drivers of the dangers, including popular public rights exiting onto this lane.





3.20 Where there are houses, due to their age they often lack driveways or sufficient space for vehicles to park (let alone turn), meaning that owners may park on the road, or leave their vehicles sticking out into the highway.

3.21 The road is used by residents in the north to get to the school on New Street, and be residents in the south to get to the pub, post office and hairdressers on Burton Street, as well as more generally dog walkers and visiting friends in other parts of the village.



### *Chippel Lane*

3.22 Chippel Lane is a single-track minor road that is enclosed by high hedgerows. There is a public footpath that crosses it from east to west. The lane is used as rat run for parents to get quick access to New Street and the school. There are no safe walking routes or passing places. The lower end is also prone to flooding.

### *New Street*

3.23 New Street runs east - west and includes St Gregory's primary school, St Gregory's Church and the Spar convenience store serving this end of the village. As such it is a road that attracts traffic at certain times of the day – particularly school drop off and pick up times. There are footways on both sides, but these are intermittent and there are no real signs indicating the safe routes for pedestrians nor issues linked to the difficult junctions – not only the lack of visibility on the crossroads with Sackmore / Chippel Lane, but also the fact that buses using this route are forced to take wide swings when turning from Schoolhouse Lane into New Street.

3.24 A painted pavement of approximately 90m in length has been introduced outside the school recently. Whilst recognising this is an improvement given the lack of hard standing pavements, there is no signage to warn drivers of their proximity to pedestrians.



3.25 At peak times school traffic and buses have difficulty negotiating their way down New Street towards the junction of Church Hill and Schoolhouse Lane.



3.26 There is only 1 warning and a speed limit sign which is on the west to east route along New Street. It is partly hidden by overhanging trees. Vehicles parked on the road obscure the yellow zig zag school warning road signs too. Parked cars outside the school obscure the vision of children who may be crossing the road.

3.27 It is also noted that the existing footway along Butts Close is overly narrow on the eastern side adjoining the westernmost bungalow, which means more vulnerable users have to cross and re-cross (or walk in) this road.

#### *Crown Road, Church Hill, New Street, Schoolhouse Lane Junction*

3.28 These three roads form the main arterial routes through the village for traffic driving from Shaftesbury, Todber and East Stour through to Sturminster Newton and on to Blandford. The B3092 has high HGV/agricultural vehicle usage, serving a wider agricultural area and local quarries. The junction is particularly busy at school drop off and collection times.

3.29 The junction has a blind bend, and was consistently mentioned in the parish survey as a concern to residents. Traffic coming from Sturminster Newton has no visibility until they have turned, and the corner is very sharp, meaning most end up on the wrong side of the road. The fact that the wall on this corner has been damaged / partially demolished on a number of occasions is testament to this fact.

3.30 There is a small raised area (with brick surfacing) that, together with painted lines in the highway, demarcates the pedestrian walking route from Church Hill to New Street, albeit that the white line markings become worn out over time.





## Church Hill

3.31 There is a pavement on the eastern side of Church Hill from the junction with the B3092 to just south of the junction with Phillips Road. Just beyond this there is pinch point where there is no footway and only space for a single vehicle. The lack of footway stretches for approximately 150m as far as the Pilwell junction.

3.32 This particular stretch of road (between Pilwell and Phillips Road) is narrow and has a curved horizontal alignment that has the effect of obscuring forward visibility, particularly for southbound traffic. The layby on the eastern side of Church Hill is partly in private ownership, and therefore cannot be relied upon to remain clear of parked cars (which means it is not always available to allow two vehicles to pass, or for a vehicle to pass a pedestrian or cyclist).

3.33 Church Hill is used by a range of heavy goods vehicles, including agricultural vehicles, buses and coaches. The images here illustrate that these vehicles use the full width of the carriageway and require opposing drivers to pull onto private land, or into side accesses. This has caused verge erosion with vehicles repeatedly having to drive onto the verge to allow another vehicle to pass.

3.34 Cars are often parked close to or on the junction with Pilwell. Drivers emerging from Pilwell onto Church Hill have very limited visibility to the left. The safety issues here are further compounded by the narrow width of Church Hill (meaning that large vehicles are using the full width of the carriageway) and the absence of footways (requiring pedestrians to walk in the carriageway in the vicinity of the junction).





### *Crown Road / Salisbury Street*

3.35 Crown Road and Salisbury Street are part of the B3092, with Crown Road partly zones as 30mph and partly 40mph, becoming Salisbury Street (also 40mph) after the junction with Tanzey Lane / Stoney Lawn. Heading east to west the 40mph sign is partially hidden, and the 30mph signage is faded. The pavements are intermittent, with narrow width (particularly outside the Crown Inn) and petering out further to the east.

3.36 Vehicle speeds and limited visibility mean that people who live here face a hazardous task pulling out of their driveway, and it is not a pleasant walk. The car in this picture had to brake suddenly to avoid the car pulling out of the driveway. There are no warning signs for drivers to be aware of cars pulling out.

3.37 The junction / crossroads with Tanzey Lane and Stoney Lawn is within the 40mph and is identified as requiring improvement to serve the permitted development to the north.



### *Sodom Lane and Tanzey Lane*



3.38 Sodom Lane runs east to west from the B3092 and joins up at the junctions of Pilwell, Church Hill and Burton Street. The Royal British Legion is also based along Sodom Lane and is a hub for community events.

3.39 The road is narrow in places with no white lines. There are no streetlights or pavements adjacent to the Royal British Legion. The junction off Nash Lane onto Pilwell / Sodom Lane is a blind junction which means cars need to be at least half a length onto the roadway. There are no warning signs to alert drivers transversing east to west of the blind junction. The road is also impacted by flooding. This route is used by the local bus service but in many places along its length it has insufficient width for a car to pass a bus.



3.40 Tanzey Lane is a sunken narrow lane linking from Sodom Lane to the B3092. It is within the 40mph speed limit and has no footways or lighting.

#### *Hains Lane / Love Lane / Great Down Lane*

3.41 Used to skirt the northern side of the settlement, and to access St Mary's School, these narrow lanes are used by walkers, cyclists, equestrians and a range of motor vehicles mainly related to the farms. These contain blind bends and few passing places.

3.42 Hains Lane is suffers from recurring potholes. The reason seems to be twofold: firstly, the increasing weight of the farm / industry related vehicles<sup>7</sup>, and secondly, the propensity for natural springs underneath the road.



## 4 Mitigation measures

4.1 Potential mitigation measures are summarised below and indicated on the following map. These include:

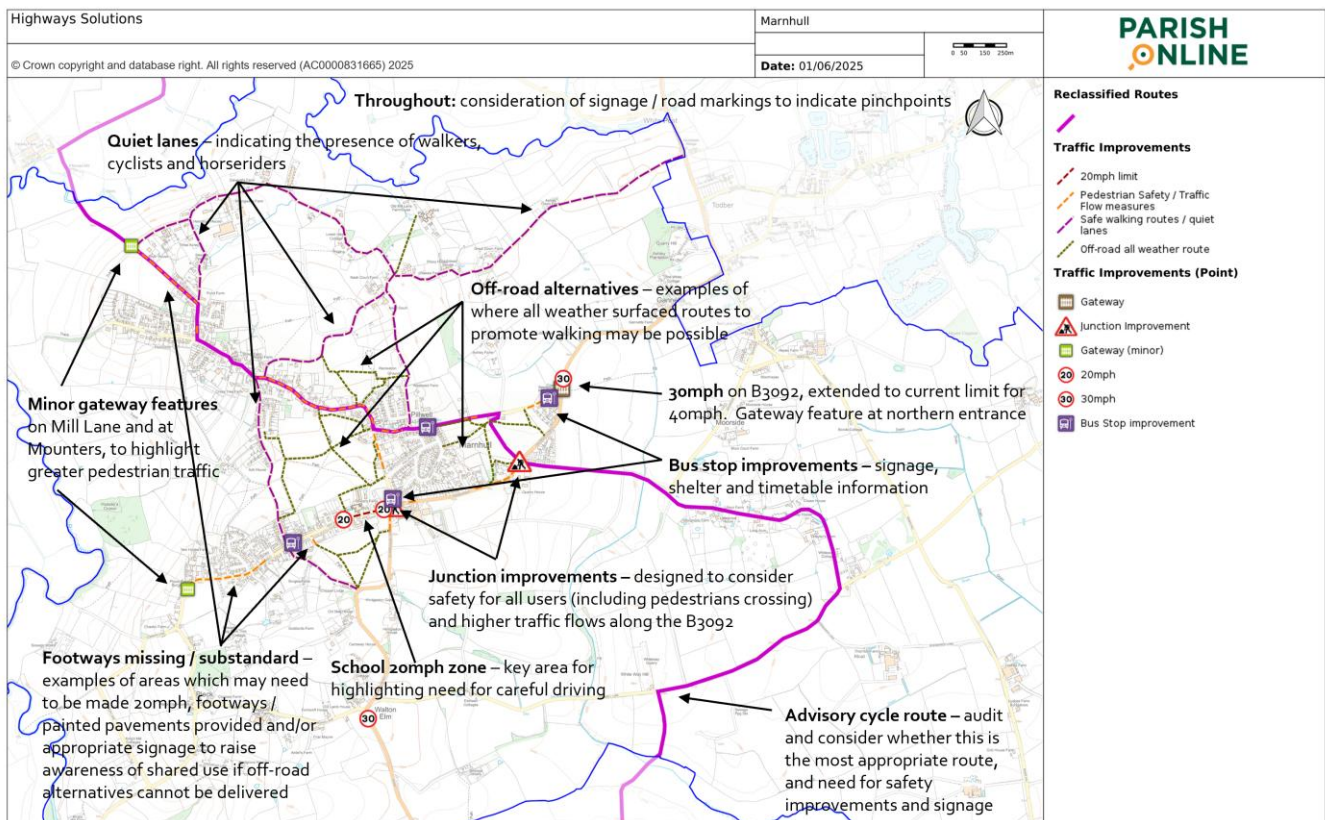
- More defined signage and colour road markings at the B3092 entry points into the village (either as distinct village gateways or otherwise adapted to the space available) where pedestrians are likely to be walking.
- The extension of the 30mph limit to the Sodom Lane junction to the east, and Walton Elm / Mowes Lane junction to the south (replacing the 40mph limit).
- Flashing lights and 20 mph speed limit outside St Gregory's School at drop off/pick up times.
- Junction alterations to improve the safe use of the 4-way junction on the B3092 with Church Hill and New Street, and the 4-way junction on the B3092 with Tanzey Lane and Stoneylawn.
- Signage, road markings or changes in surface treatment to warn vehicles of hazards and pinch points, where appropriate.
- Creation of safe walking routes to safeguard pedestrians where they would otherwise be using the narrow roads with no footways in and around Marnhull. In particular focusing on routes to the two schools, Burton Street and Sackmore Lane. This could include new off-road all-weather pedestrian routes (where these can feasibly be delivered – potential routes for consideration indicated), the designation of 'quiet lanes' or traffic management / priority flows where motor vehicle traffic is discouraged or must give way to pedestrians, or the use of "painted pavements" where actual pavements are impossible.

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<sup>7</sup> The lane would have been built to a standard to carry 3 tonnes (a horse and cart), compared to the combined weight of a tractor and single trailer today being up to 31 tonnes (unladen).



- Identification and signage of safe cycle routes and improvements to these routes where possible – commencing with an audit of the former national cycle network route and whether this route's safety could be improved through appropriate measures.
- Improvements to the public bus service, including more frequent services and coverage, late evening and weekend services, and upgraded bus stops with shelters for passengers to wait and real-time information about the service



4.2 The nature of these improvements should be carefully considered as overly engineered / urban solutions would damage the rural character of our area. This means that road signs, lines / road markings, lighting and other measures should be kept to the minimum to address the road safety issues, and local materials with designs sympathetic to the character of our area should be used.

4.3 Elements of these are discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

### *Extending the 30mph speed limit along the B3092*

4.4 The extension of the 30mph limit to the Sodom Lane junction to the east, and Walton Elm / Mowes Lane junction to the south (replacing the 40mph limit), would have the benefit of reducing the speed at critical junctions and ensuring that pedestrian and cycle journeys along this stretch of road feel less hazardous to these vulnerable road users.

4.5 This should be combined with traffic calming measures / new footways and better signage and road markings at the key points of entry into Marnhull.

### *20mph restrictions*

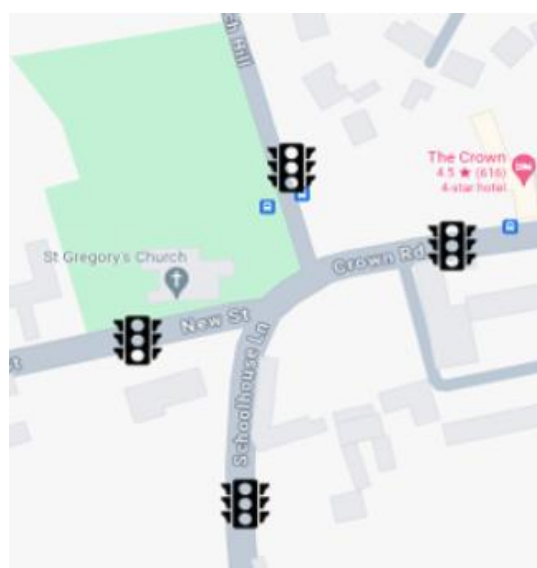
4.6 A 20mph zone is suggested for the area outside of the school on New Street. Other areas where this could be considered include Mill Lane, Burton Street, Sackmore Lane. Whilst recognising that mandatory round speed signs are on display, surveys have suggested that visible and, in some instances, colourful road markings may be more effective.





### *Junction alterations*

4.7 Given the concerns raised in the village survey around traffic, the sub-group felt that a complete rethink of Crown Road, Church Hill, New Street, Schoolhouse Lane Junction was needed. The favoured option was the potential for traffic lights – which would resolve the problems associated with large vehicles turning / limited visibility, and further slow the speed of traffic in the village and could include phases for pedestrian crossing. However the funding of this may be prohibitively costly and careful consideration would need to be given to the impact on the setting of the church and historic character of the Conservation Area. As such, all options including small-scale improvements should be explored, including improved road markings and signage at this busy junction.



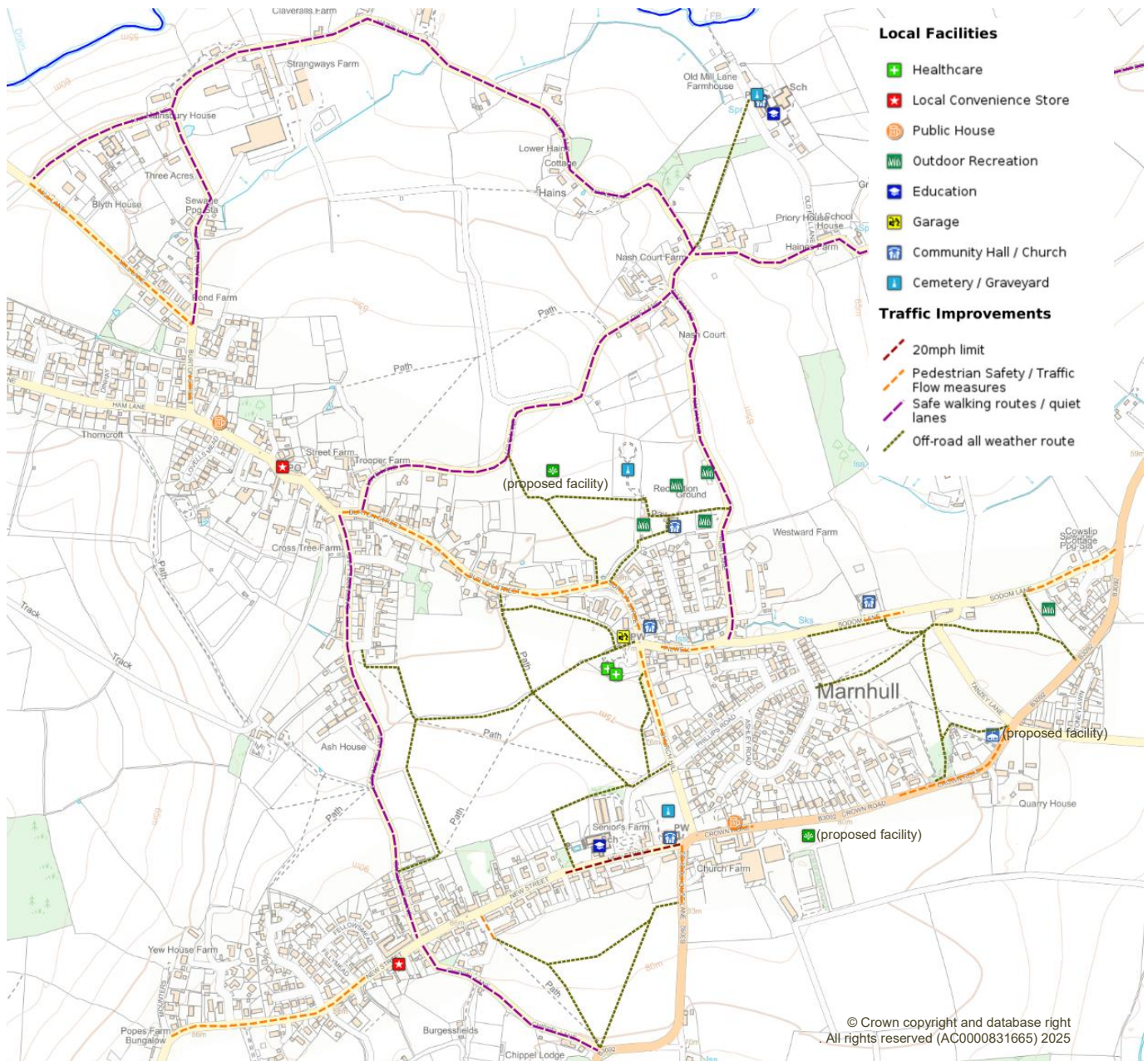
4.8 Junction improvements are also planned at the junction of Tanzey Lane and the B3092 as part of the proposed development in that area.

### *Improved walking routes (general)*

4.9 Consideration has been given to the main routes local residents use on a daily basis, to access the various facilities in the village. The following map denotes the potential for new off-road all-weather footpaths (taking into account opportunities highlighted through the proposed developments), and opportunities to improve the safety of existing highways, to ensure that local residents feel able and safe to access these facilities on foot regardless of ability.

4.10 The map also denotes the potential 20mph area on New Street to reduce traffic speeds and bad driving / parking habits around the school entrance. The recent addition of an indicative pavement on the road has been broadly welcomed as a means of ensuring that parked cars leave room for pedestrians to walk along the edge of the road (where is currently lacks a physical pavement).





4.11 Mill Lane may benefit from a 20 mph speed limit and priority traffic flow arrangement, although the length of the single carriageway and encroaching hedgerows do not provide an easy solution for this. A 'gateway' solution could be considered on the approach from the west, but may need to be of a reduced scale due to the width and hedgerows here. The existing 30mph signs become overgrown and road markings fade – and speeds should be lower still given the conditions. Where the road is narrow, white lines could be painted at the edges of the road with dotted white lines to indicate all junctions, including those with bridleways and footpaths. Whilst painted pavements can impose a false sense of security to pedestrians, they should also be considered here where the width allows. Kissing gates or staggered gates could be added to the places on Mill Lane where pedestrians and other vulnerable road users are exiting onto the lane, to prevent people walking into the road without due care.







1: Baseline



2: Curved edging to mark driveways



3: Red brick narrowing



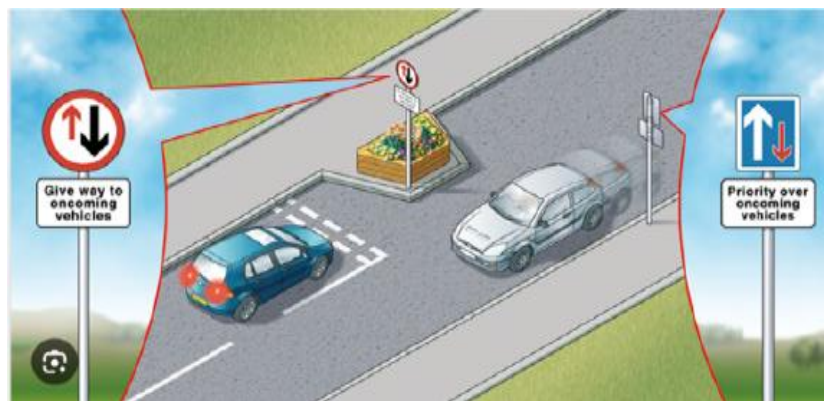
4: Coloured patch

*Examples of use of colour / brick narrowing techniques to create psychological traffic calming measures are detailed in the 2005 report by TRL consultancy for the Department of Transport*



5: Curved patch

4.12 With reference to Burton Street, the use of a painted pavement may be a solution in places as long as there are clear warnings to drivers, and the possibility of a 20 mph speed limit could also be explored here. Traffic calming measures on Burton Street may be possible near the village hall and could be particularly beneficial where the road narrows. The option of alternative off-road routes should be explored (via short sections of either Love Lane or Sackmore Lane).



4.13 Pilwell and the western end of New Street should also be considered for similar treatment in those sections where they lack footways.



4.14 A 20mph limit may be advisable along Sackmore Lane. The lane may benefit from priority traffic flow signs to slow vehicles and make it safer for pedestrians at critical points. Kissing gates or staggered gates should be considered to prevent pedestrians from walking onto the road from the adjoining public footpaths. The photograph to the right from the Dorset AONB study 'Reclaiming Our Rural Highways' provides an example of a more restrictive option to reduce traffic flows.

4.15 The 'back lanes' such as Hains Lane / Love Lane / Chippel Lane should be considered for 'Quiet Lane' status, where signage / other measures are used to warn drivers of the likely presence of pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians<sup>8</sup>.



Hobb's Lane, Barrow Gurney, Somerset: Physical closure to motor vehicles of a rat run

## What is a Quiet Lane?

**A Quiet Lane is a nationally recognised designation of single-track road with no line markings or footpaths and with low traffic flows that is shared by motorised and non-motorised traffic**

They are routes where visitors and locals can enjoy the natural surroundings and use them for activities such as cycling, horse-riding, jogging and walking. However, the idea is not to restrict motor vehicles on these rural routes, but to encourage considerate use of the road, so they can be shared and enjoyed by all.

An official Quiet Lane will have advisory signs at either end to show motorised users clearly that the road is a shared space. The sign is included in the Highway Code (Rule 218) and indicates to drivers that other more vulnerable users may be using the road. The guidance in the Highway Code to drivers - '...You should drive slowly and carefully and be prepared to stop to allow people extra time to make space for you to pass them in safety'.

4.16 In places it may be possible to provide off-road all-weather footpaths, but this will depend on the local landowners' agreement. In some cases this has been discussed as part of the planned developments. This includes:

- Development to the south could provide an off-road link through the development from Butts Close to Schoolhouse Lane (if there is sufficient room within the verge for a footway up to the Church Hill / New Street junction), as well as including an all-weather path as an alternative to Chippel Lane.
- Development to the east needs to be considered comprehensively so that routes through provide an attractive alternative to Sodom Lane.
- Options for the central field (Dunfords) are also indicated. Whilst solutions were proposed during the Inquiry, these could be improved upon by (a) providing an alternative option to walking along Sackmore Lane (b) providing an alternative and more direct option to walking along the section of Church Hill that lacks pavements, taking into account pedestrian traffic to / from the bus stop and Phillips Road, and (c) further consideration as to how the school is accessed and whether there is an opportunity to link through to New Street in a manner that does not present safeguarding issues for the school.



<sup>8</sup> The Highway Authority can designate part of its highway network as a 'Quiet Lane' under the Transport Act and related regulations. Should Dorset Council choose to formally designate the roads as Quiet Lanes, this does not require any physical changes other than appropriate signage to raise awareness of the status of those roads, but measures to encourage motorists to slow down and look out for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and other vulnerable road users can be introduced. Images / explanation courtesy of <https://www.quietlanessuffolk.co.uk/what-is-a-quiet-lane>

4.17 It may be possible to extend these types of solutions to other locations. For example, if the field to the north of the development off Burton Street is made available for recreation, it should be possible to link through it to Love Lane (or alternatively through the Recreation Ground and onto Nash Lane). Should development take place to the south side of Crown Road, this may provide an opportunity for an alternative off-road connection to Stoneylawn

### *Improvements to the public bus service*

4.18 The bus service is infrequent and does not serve the northwest end of the village along Burton Street, as the bus company have previously advised that there are no safe turning points. At the time of drafting the plan the village was served by two regular (week-day only) bus routes through the village - the CR3 (South West Coaches) between Gillingham and Sturminster Newton, and the CR4 (Buses of Somerset) between Yeovil and Blandford. Both these routes require public subsidy, and Dorset Council took the decision to re-route the CR4 service away from Marnhull in April 2025, meaning that journeys to Blandford and Yeovil now require a change of bus at Sturminster Newton. The remaining service (CR3) has been altered to include a Saturday service, but the limited coverage and frequency (one bus typically every 2 or 3 hours) and lack of services beyond 7pm or on Sundays mean that the bus is not an attractive or suitable alternative to the car for many journeys, particularly journeys to work and social / leisure activities outside of the village.

4.19 There are many bus stops in the parish<sup>9</sup>, but only ten are on the current CR3 bus service route: Walton Elm, Pleck Corner, Husseys, Finger Corner, St Gregory's School, St Gregory's Church, Pilwell, Ashley Road, Corner Close and The Old School in Todber (on the parish boundary). Most of these would not be able to safely accommodate a shelter or cover within the current highway land, taking into account their location and pavements. However, the stop on Church Hill (by St Gregory's church), the stop on New Street near Finger Corner, and the two stops on Sodom Lane, may be able to accommodate a shelter/cover. Improvements to other stops would most likely require third party land.

4.20 Whilst not in the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan, the local bus companies should be encouraged to consider smaller, more agile buses/minibuses and offer a more consumer-friendly timetable to provide a more realistic alternative to the motor car for trips. Consideration should be given to setting up a community car share scheme as a way of getting to work.

## 5 Reducing our carbon footprint

5.1 The need for taking a long-term view and sustainable traffic measures for Marnhull goes beyond the current highway safety issues.

5.2 At present, Marnhull has no public electric vehicle charge points. Options to install electric vehicle fast charging points at key village locations such as the public houses and the village hall could usefully be explored.

## 6 Acknowledgements

- Dorset County Highways department traffic survey, conducted May 2021
- Google Maps for maps of Marnhull and road routes.
- Manchester University report on reducing carbon footprints
- Marnhull Green Teams

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<sup>9</sup> Dorset Explorer identified over 20 bus stop locations in the parish, and over 40 bus stops (as there are stops on both sides of the road) <https://gi.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorsetexplorer/u/FgPCAnES>



- Marnhull Neighbourhood Plan parish survey results, August 2023
- Marnhull Parish Council / Dorset Council for traffic survey data, May 2017
- Psychological Traffic Calming – prepared for Traffic Management Division of the Department of Transport<sup>10</sup>
- Reclaiming Our Rural Highways - A scoping report on issues affecting the character of roads and streets in rural Dorset, published by the Dorset AONB Partnership, 2005
- Traffic in Villages - Safety and Civility for Rural Roads - A toolkit for communities - produced in 2011/12 by the Dorset AONB Partnership in conjunction with Hamilton-Baillie Associates<sup>11</sup>
- Traffic Management Study for Milborne St Andrew – Prepared by AECOM / Locality, 2018<sup>12</sup>
- [www.crashmap.co.uk](http://www.crashmap.co.uk) data on reported road traffic incidents

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.trl.co.uk/publications/trl641>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/295791/Dorset+AONB+traffic+in+villages+toolkit.pdf/4522c689-16a6-8625-2c73-54d36c246103>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282960/12+Traffic+Management+Study\\_Redacted.pdf/26bcfc3d-36bd-0fc7-6515-8b85a77bbb17](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282960/12+Traffic+Management+Study_Redacted.pdf/26bcfc3d-36bd-0fc7-6515-8b85a77bbb17)

## Appendix 1 - Transport Planning Comments from Dorset Council

Feedback from Dorset Council on an earlier draft was received in December 2024 and has been taken into account in finalizing this report:

### *Traffic lights off Church Hill/New Street/Crown Road/Schoolhouse Lane*

Due to physical constraints, this proposed solution could be difficult to implement. However, we would be supportive of a practical and feasible solution to improve the safety of the junction.

### *20mph speed limit outside St Gregory's Primary School*

Dorset Council are supportive of 20mph zones in certain locations which meet set criteria outlined in Dorset Councils 20 Mile Per Hour (mph) Policy. Marnhull Parish Council could also explore 20mph along other roads in Marnhull as a traffic calming measure.

### *Defined signage and colour road markings at the B3092 entry points*

The Local Highway Authority would be supportive of this recommendation.

### *Priority traffic flow for Sackmore Lane and Mill Lane*

The Local Highway Authority are open to exploring traffic management solutions for Sackmore Lane and Mill Lane. Additionally, identifying PRoW route enhancements could be an alternative to enabling safer pedestrian trips within the village.

### *'Painted Pavements'/virtual footways*

The Local Highway Authority does not support the solution of painted pavements, also known as virtual footways. This is due to safety concerns. Instead, we would encourage that the neighbourhood plan considers upgrades to the local PRoW network to facilitate pedestrian movement across the village. Upgrades could include surfacing improvements, widening, upgrading footpaths to bridleways and diversions to provide more direct connections to village amenities.

### *Provision of electric vehicle chargers*

We encourage the provision of electric vehicle chargers at key locations in the village. Additionally, the neighbourhood plan could encourage the installation of charge points and set standards to ensure that they are in character with the village setting.