

ROAD SAFETY, TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT, AND ASSOCIATED COMMUNITY SAFETY
WITHIN THE PARISH OF STINSFORD
Second Edition August 2014

This document was first published in September 2010. It has been revised to accommodate:

Changes in road numbers and road names.
Changes to the Stinsford Hill Roundabout in preparation for the 2012 Olympics.
Changes to Cuckoo and Bockhampton Lanes as part of the establishment of the Thorncombe Wood Visitor Centre.

The changes are distributed throughout the document, so it is recommended that the revised document is read as a whole, rather than in comparison with the first edition.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Road safety and traffic management and its implications for the community are long standing issues within the Parish. The roads within the parish are being required to sustain levels and types of traffic which are beyond their capabilities, to the detriment of road and community safety.

Health and safety legislation does not appear to apply to aspects of the highway. Whereas formal risk assessments are required for everyday tasks, risk assessments for road safety are empirical. Danger, which appears manifest to the general public, must be demonstrated by loss of life or serious injury.

Apart from the A35, B3143 and B3150, the roads through the parish are either Class C or D, mostly D. Notes of the issues relating to the C and D class roads and the A35 is set out below.

Cokers Farm Lane (D20661)

In effect Dorchester's northern bypass. It is the route from Charlton Down/Charminster to the A35. It is routinely used by lorries of all weights. Weight restriction signs are missing. Passing is difficult, with alcoves in places.

Cuckoo Lane (D21313)

Cuckoo Lane leads from A35 to Higher Bockhampton and beyond. It is a single track road: no vehicle can pass another without recourse to a passing place or alcove.

Bockhampton Lane (D21313)

Bockhampton Lane runs from Higher Bockhampton through Lower Bockhampton to its junction with the D21361. It is single track from Higher Bockhampton to junction with Tingleton Road. Passing alcoves have been worn into verges, and no vehicle can pass without recourse to these alcoves for most of its length south of Lower Bockhampton. From Lower Bockhampton there is a narrow hump backed bridge, near right angle bends and a further narrow bridge.

Tingleton Road (C80)

At various points along its length the road becomes single track with passing alcoves. Otherwise cars may pass normally but care has to be taken when passing larger vehicles.

A35

The Stinsford Hill roundabout has been a matter of concern since it was established as part of the Dorchester bypass, for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. It remains a contentious issue. The absence of a footway on the stretch to the east of the roundabout is also a matter of concern, as is its junction with Cuckoo Lane.

The C and D Class roads are the lowest priorities for routine maintenance and treatment in icy weather. For the same reason there is little routine supervision by the Police or the County Road Safety Partnership.

The Parish Council accepts that in principle the highways should be open to all without undue hindrance, but when traffic on stretches of the A35 is at a standstill, vehicles use these narrow lanes as ‘rat runs’ resulting in chaos, erosion of road side verges and the denial of access for emergency and other services to the communities served by these roads.

The main document lists matters of concern for each stretch of road in detail. They can be summarised as follows.

The danger of collisions and accidents between vehicles, horses, cyclists and pedestrians on these lanes (and they are lanes not roads) which are far too narrow for the traffic using them.

Traffic speed is a major issue on these narrow lanes and particularly so through Lower Bockhampton where the 30 mph speed restriction is frequently ignored.

Traffic ignoring weight restriction signs.

Lanes used as ‘rat runs’ for all classes of vehicle, particularly when there is slow moving traffic on the A35.

The lack of gritting in icy conditions on D and C Class roads.

The apparent lack of a coherent management strategy for traffic when there is a major incident on the A35.

The remedies suggested in the main document are relatively modest. They include the necessity for the positions of restricted access, weight and speed restriction, and direction signs to be restored, added-to, and re-sited, along with traffic calming measures. However, to be effective they need routine enforcement. Particularly, signs at the junctions of the A35 with Cuckoo Lane and Tincleton Road should make it abundantly clear that there are restrictions on the passage of HGVs over 7.5 tonnes and to coaches, and that these roads are not suitable for A35 traffic. Diversion routes for HGVs, coaches and all vehicles towing trailers should be established and signs for these routes displayed at all times.

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INTRODUCTION

Road safety and traffic management and its implications for community safety are longstanding and so far intractable problems in the parish. The parish council in consultation with the police, the county highway authority, and the Highways Agency, has sought to resolve the long established problems and difficulties associated with these issues.

Apart from the A35, B3143 and B3150, the roads through the parish are either Class C or D, mostly D. They are shown in Map A. They are:

Bockhampton Lane (D21313) – B1 to B5.

Cuckoo Lane (D21313) – C1 to C2.

Cokers Farm Lane (D20661) – CF1 to CF3.

Tincleton Road (C80) – T1 to T2 and beyond.

In addition there is just over 500 metres of the old A35 now called Troy Town Farm Road (D21312) from the parish boundary with Puddletown parish, to its junction with the [new] A35 – C1 on Map A.

There is no one organization which has responsibility for all roads within the parish. The A35 is the responsibility of the Highways Agency, who have subcontracted the responsibility to an organization called Connect with its office in Exeter. As far as we can discover, neither Connect nor the Highways Agency has any concern for the implication of their management of the A35 on surrounding roads. The police are subordinate to this organization in respect of the A35. The county highway authority is responsible for the other roads.

The underlying reason for the difficulties which the parish faces is that the C and D class roads carry traffic which is far in excess of their capability to sustain. Being C and D class roads they are the lowest priorities for routine maintenance and treatment in icy weather. For the same reason there is little routine supervision by the police or the county road safety partnership.

Health and safety legislation does not appear to apply to aspects of the highway. Whereas formal risk assessments are required for everyday tasks, risk assessments for road safety are empirical. Danger, which appears manifest to the general public, must be demonstrated by loss of life or serious injury.

Later in this document is an assessment of the dangers posed by each of these roads, and a list of possible remedies. In proposing these remedies, the parish council has been mindful of the following influences.

While the parish council accepts that in principle the highways should be open to all without undue hindrance, it cannot reasonably be disputed that the highway authorities (and from time to time the

police) have a duty to impose restrictions on particular roads and at particular times of the day to facilitate the free flow of traffic and reduce danger to other road users. Such restrictions may include limiting the type of traffic permitted to use a particular road, by weight, length or width, establishing speed limits. Cuckoo Lane and Bockhampton Lane have some of these restrictions in place, although for the most part they are ignored.

Some campaigners take the view that all the C and D class roads could be candidates for the imposition of speed limits – 40 miles an hour or even 30 miles an hour. Such a measure is not included in the remedies listed below. A reason is the wish to reduce the disfigurement of the roadside with repeater signs, but a more pragmatic reason is that experience from other places, including Lower Bockhampton, demonstrates that without routine enforcement they will be ignored. It is reasonable to assume that those who would not ignore them, do not currently exceed them anyway, because they are adapting their speed to the road conditions. This does not mean that speed limits should not be considered if there is a compelling case for them, and they are enforced.

From time to time there have been thoughts about whether Cuckoo Lane and part or the whole length of Bockhampton Lane should be made one-way to overcome the problems of high levels of traffic from opposite directions. This would have considerable adverse effects on the communities served by these roads including farm traffic, those who use the roads to get to their places of work, deliveries to the industrial estates, and on other roads in the area. It is implicit that heavier vehicles would be required to travel on parts of the roads they currently do not travel. A 'return route' would have to be found, which did not compound the problems the measure was intended to solve.

Some of the remedies include better signing. As stated above, the parish council has no wish to encourage the proliferation of road signs, but is of the view that if it is important to impart crucial information through signage, then it should be done.

Some of the remedies may not involve additional costs, however the parish council realises that some will involve expenditure, and that budgets are tight and liable to become tighter. However, it believes that no remedies should be discounted on the basis of cost until the costs have been properly and realistically itemised, and the implications of not doing the work have been formally recognised and accepted by the appropriate authority. The parish council is not able to counter the view of many parishioners expressed on the lines that "It's time we saw some benefit from our council tax".

The title of this document includes associated community safety. When traffic on stretches of the A35 or, particularly Cuckoo Lane, Bockhampton Lane and Tincleton Road, is at a standstill the emergency services are denied access to the communities served by these roads.

ROAD SAFETY

This section of the document contains an assessment of the road safety issues for individual roads within the parish. A factor which applies to all the roads is the continued deterioration of the road edges which forms wheel traps, and the exclusion from the county's gritting plan of all C and D class roads in the parish.

Cokers Farm Lane. (Map A, CF1 to CF3)

Cokers Ffarm Lane, often, but wrongly called Slyers Lane, is in effect Dorchester's northern bypass. The road is a logical route for those travelling from Charminster/Charlton Down to join the A35 towards Puddletown, as well as serving the communities along its length. It is frequently used by lorries of all weights with no business with properties along the route, often as an alternative to the southern bypass or High East and High West Streets, from which they are formally banned anyway. DCC cannot find any documentation to support the reports by long-time residents that there used to be signs imposing weight restrictions, which have been damaged over time, and have not been replaced. There is no

formal passing place on this road other than a short stretch of wider road at its junction with the B3143 (Slyers Lane), but there are nearly 30 dirt passing alcoves including entrances to farm tracks and fields⁽¹⁾.

Safety Concerns. In many places cars need to drive onto the verge in order to pass, even more so if a car encounters a lorry. The road is not wide enough, nor its edges strong enough, to accommodate heavy or long vehicles. The stretch between CF2 and CF3 is even narrower.

Remedies.

Impose, or reimpose, and demonstrably enforce, a 7.5 tonne HGV except for loading limit, and a coach limit between CF1 and CF2.

Repair, and keep in good order, the edges of the road.

Provide proper passing places.

Recognise the status of the road as the de-facto northern Dorchester by-pass, and widen and strengthen it appropriately.

Cuckoo and Bockhampton Lanes. (Map A, C1 to B5)

Cuckoo and Bockhampton Lanes are logical routes from south of the River Frome for those joining (and returning from) the A35 towards Puddletown. They also serve the communities they pass through, including Kingston Maurward College.

Both roads have a coach and 7.5 tonne HGV except for loading restriction. The restriction sign for vehicles approaching from the south are incorporated in the direction signs on the West Stafford by-pass, but not repeated at B5. This restriction is routinely ignored, as is the 30 mph speed limit through Lower Bockhampton.

Cuckoo Lane.

Cuckoo Lane is a single track road throughout its length. Decades ago, four passing places were installed, but all the signs have gone, and one is overgrown. They are not long enough to accommodate a 7.5 tonne vehicle. In addition there are 3 dirt passing alcoves, and two new tarmacked alcoves installed as part of the Thorncombe Wood Visitor Centre initiative. These two alcoves are only two thirds the width of the original formal passing places, which remain in a dilapidated state. No vehicle can pass another without recourse to a passing place or alcove.

In addition to the community of Higher Bockhampton, Cuckoo Lane serves the two light industrial estates of Mellstock Farm and Hampton Farm, and The Thorncombe Wood car park, which serves the Thorncombe Wood Local Nature Reserve, and which is also the car park for visitors to Hardy's Cottage.

⁽¹⁾ Dirt passing alcoves have been created by vehicles wearing away the verges and banks.

Bockhampton Lane.

Bockhampton Lane stretches from Higher Bockhampton through Lower Bockhampton to its junction with the D21361 (Map A, B1 to B5). The stretches between the points B1 and B2, and between B4 and B5 are single track with no formal passing places, although there are 13 dirt passing alcoves and one tarmacked gateway alcove between B1 and B2, and 10 between B4 and B5. There is a narrow (2.9 metres wide) humpback bridge at B3, and near right-angle bends and narrow bridges between B4 and B5. The lane cannot properly accommodate any HGV or coach south of the village.

Safety Concerns. The principal safety concerns apply to both lanes so will be considered as one topic, although many of the concerns apply more to Cuckoo Lane and the stretch of Bockhampton Lane north of Bockhampton Cross. The primary concern is that the lanes (and they are lanes, not roads) are too narrow for the traffic using them, with the consequent danger of collisions between vehicles, to horses, cyclists and pedestrians.

An additional major issue with Cuckoo and Bockhampton Lanes is they are diversion routes (rat-runs) for the A35 – especially from the A35 to Bockhampton Cross – when traffic is slow or at a standstill, because the two lanes of the Puddletown bypass become one at the bottom of Yellowham Hill, or there is an obstruction anywhere on the Dorchester bypass, or the A35 is formally closed west of Yellowham Hill. The effect is two-way traffic at a standstill along the lanes, and along the Tincleton Road, damage to the verges and hedgerows, and the denial of access by the emergency services to the Bockhamptons, as well as Higher Kingston. This aspect is addressed under Traffic Management below.

Remedies.

Provide formal passing places where passing alcoves have been carved out, and restore the previous ones.

Advise motorists of the limitations of the roads, and the likelihood of encountering horses, cyclists and pedestrians through better signage.

Enforce the current restrictions on HGVs and coaches.

When the A35 is congested or at a standstill, provide traffic control as described in the section on traffic management below.

Junction of Cuckoo Lane and the A 35 (Map B). The junction occurs at the western end of the Puddletown bypass.

Junction C1A. This is dangerous both for traffic leaving the A35 and for traffic joining it. For traffic leaving the A35 the precise position of the junction is not obvious, and sight of it is not helped by the high vegetation on the verge. There is no lead-off from the carriageway, so the vehicles need to slow almost to a halt to make the sharp left-hand turn. The turn is shortly after the A35 becomes a two lane dual carriageway with vehicles accelerating and overtaking being confronted by an almost stationary vehicle turning left.

Vehicles joining the A35, have to join a dual-lane carriageway with fast moving traffic in both lanes. Matters are made worse by the high vegetation on the verge which obscures traffic coming from the right.

Junction C1B. At junction C1B traffic leaving the A35 is protected by a lead-off lane. However traffic joining the A35 heading towards Dorchester has to join a single line of traffic which has no reason to be travelling at less than 60 mph. Matters are made worse if vehicles turning left wait at the giveaway line, because drivers have to look over their shoulder to see the approaching traffic. It is safer to hold back from the giveaway line to achieve a better view of approaching traffic.

Remedies.

Junction C1A

Reduce and maintain the height of the vegetation on the verge from the beginning of the dual carriageway to the junction at ground level.

Provide a lead-off lane, and a lead-on lane so that the northeastbound side of the dual carriageway does not become two lanes until well after this junction.

Junction C1B. Provide a lead-on lane – there is room.

Tincleton Road. (Map A, T1 to T2)

Tincleton Road starts at T1 and leaves the parish at T2. At various points along its length from just before T2 to the eastern edge of the village of Tincleton, the road becomes single track, with passing alcoves; otherwise cars may pass normally, but care has to be taken when passing wider vehicles.

Safety Concerns. The main safety concern is Bockhampton Cross (see below). In addition the safety issues noted for Cokers Farm Lane, Cuckoo Lane and Bockhampton Lane apply to stretches of this road too.

Remedies. Without unduly cluttering the road side, signs warning of the narrowing of the carriageway at critical points, and the likelihood of encountering horses, cyclists and pedestrians would alert drivers to hazards they might not otherwise expect.

Bockhampton Cross. (Map A, B2)

Bockhampton Cross is the junction between the Tincleton Road and Bockhampton Lane, with Tincleton Road having the “right of way”.

Safety Concerns. Over the years Bockhampton Cross has been the site of many collisions and some serious injuries. There are two main causes.

The first is that traffic moves speedily along this stretch of the Tincleton Road and vehicles heading towards Tincleton encounter a crossroads a short distance after a left-hand bend. If they encounter an obstacle, there is little time to react, or room to avoid a collision. Equally, any vehicle, but particularly a lorry or a tractor and trailer turning right from Bockhampton Lane towards Dorchester may be hit by a speeding vehicle coming from the direction of Dorchester which was not in view when the manoeuvre began.

The second is that cars travelling from Dorchester seeking Hardy's Cottage overshoot the crossroads, and reverse so that they can make the left turn. This puts them in the same position as the tractor and trailer.

Remedies. For the reasons set out above, a speed limit cannot be relied upon to eliminate this danger. Therefore, the following remedies are proposed.

Erect a moderately large sign on the left-hand side of the carriageway approaching the crossroads from the direction of Dorchester – the current signs are on the right hand side of the road and can be obscured by vehicles coming the other way – warning motorists that there is a dangerous cross roads immediately round the bend, and that they should slow down.

Perhaps incorporated in the sign above, on the left-hand side of the carriageway before the bend, erect a sign clearly showing the route to Hardy's Cottage.

The A35. There are two dangerous aspects of the A35. They are the Stinsford Hill roundabout and the absence of a footway on the two stretches A1 and A2.

Stinsford Hill Roundabout. (Map A, SH)

Concerns about the safety of Stinsford Hill roundabout have been expressed from the time it was constructed. The concerns have not diminished; rather they have increased since the remodelling in preparation for the 2012 Olympics.

Probably by statistical road safety standards, the roundabout is considered safe, but that is not a view held by those who regularly have to negotiate it from the Tincleton Road and the B3150. The layout allows traffic, including HGVs of all classes, approaching from the northeast to passthrough the junction at speeds of 40 mph or more, by ignoring the lane markings and by straddling the lanes.

Safety Concerns.

This excessive speeding, and traffic travelling in the two 'ahead' lanes from the northeast, unexpectedly are having to revert to one lane immediately after clearing the roundabout present a severe hazard to cyclists, pedestrians, and dismounted cyclist crossing the road to the south of the roundabout. This danger is made worse because the view of both pedestrians and drivers is blocked by the shrubbery in the centre of the roundabout. This is the means by which many students travel to and from Kingston Maurward College.

Another major concern is the limited view to the right from the Tincleton Road, even after the remodelling. By any reasonable standard the view is restricted, with traffic on the A35 approaching from the right only becoming visible two car lengths from the point of entry to the roundabout. Despite previous assurances that the layout conforms to the required standard, the Parish Council has recently been informed that it does not, and never did. The danger from the restricted view is compounded in that the layout is such that vehicles on the A35 travelling southwestwards have no need to reduce speed below about 40 mph on entering the roundabout - it is but a kink in the road. Past attempts to reduce the speed of approaching vehicles through signing have not been successful.

The Tincleton Road approach to the roundabout slopes markedly downward. In icy conditions, even vehicles driven with the utmost care may not be able to come to a halt

before entering the roundabout. During the winter of 2009/10, it was discovered that while the A35 and B3150 were gritted, this stretch was, although it now is, but only sporadically.

Remedies.

Improve the sightline from the Tincleton road, by removing even more of the embankment currently obstructing the view.

Institute road calming measures to reduce the speed of traffic on the approach to and through the roundabout.

Provide a safe pedestrian and cycle crossing of the A35, such as a foot/cycle bridge.

Grit the Tincleton Road approach to the roundabout at the same time as the A35 and B3150. This section has appeared on the gritting schedule in past years, but implementation has been sporadic.

Lack of Footway. The A35 between its junction with Cuckoo Lane (C1) and the Stinsford Hill Roundabout (SH) is narrow with no footway. The two stretches A1 and A2 are the only way pedestrians can reach the bus stops at Higher Kingston and Stinsford.

Safety Concerns. Traffic moves quickly and unforgivingly along this part of the road, both deterring and presenting a realisable danger to pedestrians.

Remedies.

Erect warning signs.

Provide footways along these stretches of road.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

So far this document has considered road safety without traffic management in other than general terms. This section deals with the need for active management of traffic in Cuckoo Lane, Bockhampton Lane and Tincleton Road when traffic flow on the A35 from the western end of the Puddletown bypass has slowed to such an extent that vehicles heading west choose to divert or are directed by the police to divert via Cuckoo Lane, irrespective of the size of vehicle, and the capacity of the lane. Traffic heading northeast is similarly diverted at the Stinsford Hill roundabout along the Tincleton Road. These diversions result in levels of congestion which, even if they do not bring the roads to a standstill, do not gain travellers any time, and give the police even more snarl-ups to resolve than they already have. In addition, there have been times when traffic diverted off the A35 at its junction with the A352, have, reportedly, been directed to use Bockhampton lane from the south, compounding the problem severely.

The occasions when this happens are predictable. Traffic buildup at the end of the bypass occurs during the morning rush hour, at weekends during the summer months and the principal public holidays, when there is a collision or roadworks anywhere west of the junction of the A35 with Cuckoo Lane to the Weymouth Road roundabout.

Remedies.

Signs at the junctions of the A35 with Cuckoo Lane and Tincleton Road should make it abundantly clear that there are restrictions on the passage of HGVs over 7.5 tonnes and coaches ahead, and that the road off the A35 is unsuitable for A35 traffic, as is successfully done on the A30 in the Bodmin area. At the time of writing, the Highways Agency has replaced the sign off the A35 at Cuckoo Lane, but introduced the error of declaring that the exemption to the restrictions for HGVs and coaches is for access, rather than loading. The restriction is not displayed at the actual junction, nor for traffic travelling from Dorchester.



April 2010



August 2014



Sign on A30 just East of Bodmin

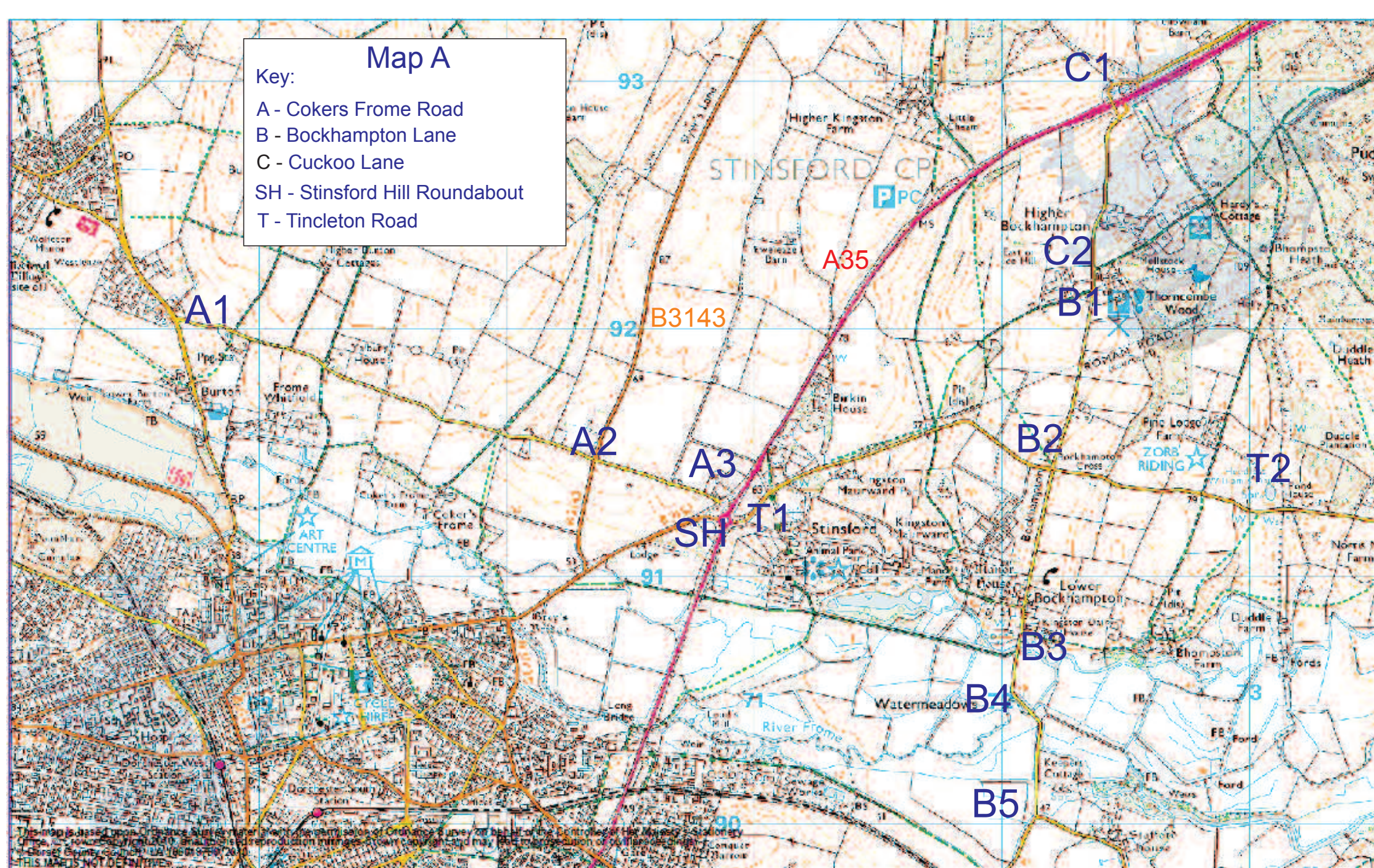
Diversion routes for HGVs, coaches, and all vehicles towing trailers should be established, and signs for the routes explained and displayed at all times.

Police or other persons who have the authority to control traffic should be deployed at the junction of the A35 with Cuckoo Lane, Stinsford Hill roundabout, and Bockhampton Cross as part of an established contingency plan.

CONCLUSIONS

The issues listed above have existed for many years, and they have developed and expanded to such an extent that it is no longer reasonable for a remedial action to be delayed any further. It is recognised by the parish council that to do so will require planning effort, money for works, and police manpower. To do nothing is not a reasonable nor justifiable option.

The key to the resolution of the situation is the recognition by all the authorities involved that the C and D class roads within the parish are being required to sustain levels and types of traffic which are beyond their capability. In the words of one parishioner 'Either "they" make the roads wide enough and strong enough to carry the traffic, or "they" keep the traffic away'.



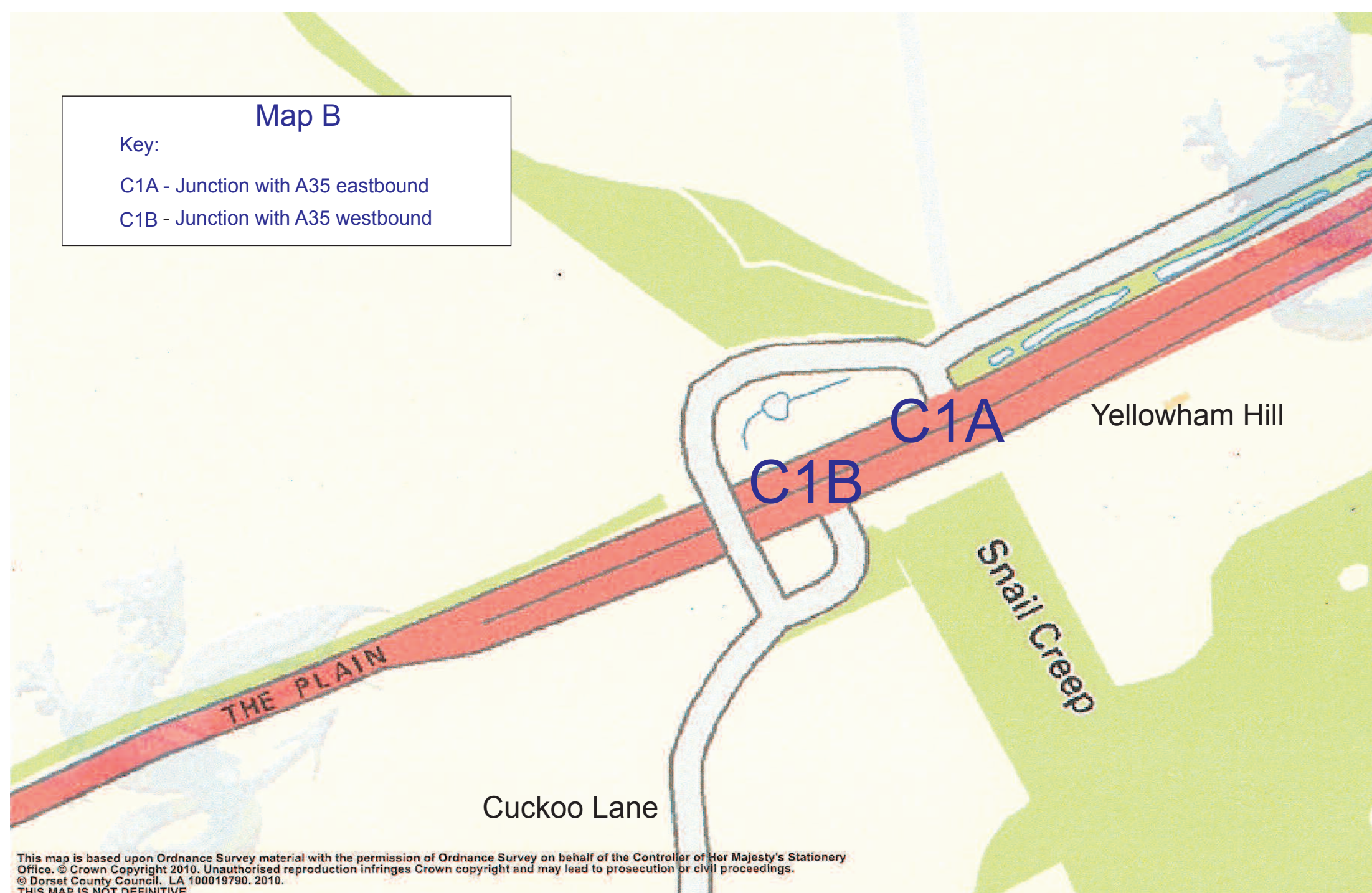
C and D Class Roads within the Parish of Stinsford

Map B

Key:

C1A - Junction with A35 eastbound

C1B - Junction with A35 westbound



Junction of A35 and Cuckoo Lane