

Ilston Community Council

Working Paper

Traffic Issues affecting Ilston Community, its residents and visitors

Extract

Traffic volume and behaviour are adversely impacting the residents and visitors to the Ilston Community and the wider Gower community. This working paper sets out the principal issues and makes recommendations for their resolution.

1 Introduction

Ilston Community Council (ICC) has several concerns in respect of the traffic passing through its communities, the nature of that traffic and its impact on both residents and visitors.

The objective of the ICC Traffic Committee is to improve safety for all road users within the community whether residents or visitors. The proposals outlined in this document aim to achieve this through the moderation of traffic speed and the encouragement of more considerate driving.

We expect the principal benefits of our solutions will be a reduction in **road traffic collision (RTC)** numbers and we hope that they will also reduce the number of incidents of congestion, which are most often seen during peak tourist periods when we experience the greatest number of visitors to Gower. Additional benefits are expected to include a reduction in pollution as we hope that the measures suggested may help encourage people to adopt means of transport that are more environmentally friendly.

We also endeavour to ensure that our proposed traffic solutions do not take away from the natural character of Gower, Britain's first *Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*, as we understand that this is what brings so many visitors to the Swansea region each year and for that reason our proposals are intended to make the Gower experience, for both visitors and residents, a happy one.

2 Data Sources

In preparing these proposals we have drawn on multiple data sources and have included the findings in separate addendums attached to this working document. The sources include (i) data collected by the traffic monitor located in Parkmill (as found in **Appendix 1**) and (ii) the Welsh Government website, Stats Wales, whereby specific data for RTCs resulting in personal injury are reported to the police in relation to specific roads and locations (as found in **Appendix 2**).

3 Major Issues & Proposed Solutions

Map of the Area

The map below shows a segment of the A4118 between the junction with Vennaway Lane and the village of Nicholaston. Lettered markers are shown A to F with the intent that proposals we make regarding changes can then be linked to specific areas of the road, for example, in segment B to C we are proposing a reduction in the speed limit from 40 mph to 30 mph.

For all ease of understanding, we will be traveling westward, starting at the junction of Vennaway Lane and the A4118 (A) and ending in Penmaen (F).



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1. Issue 1 - Kilvrough Manor (Point A to B)

- 1.1. **Problem:** The sharp bend of the A4118 around Kilvrough Manor is well known to have multiple traffic jams during the summer and even winter months due to the combination of the narrowing of the road and the large circular boundary wall of the Manor. (i) The designated National speed around Kilvrough Manor is 40 mph, which drivers, both new to the area and residents, do without any thought to what may be coming around the bend. (ii) As the road narrows with the bend and drivers continue at the same speed on entering the bend, they find that they either drift

into the center of the road or find other drivers from the opposite direction have drifted into their lane, leading to either collisions or congestion when the drivers must make an emergency stop. Evidence of RTCs around Kilvrough Manor can be found in Map 2 of **Appendix 2** (*Wales Government Traffic Statistics*).

1.2. **Solution:** The designated national speed around the wall is 40 mph, (i) we propose to reduce this speed to 20 mph and affix a national speed limit signs on the actual wall of Kilvrough Manor when approaching from both directions. (ii) We would like to add appropriate signage to the road to indicate the threat of potential vehicles driving in the center of the road.

2. Issue 2 - Stretch of A4118 from Kilvrough Manor to the Gower Inn, Parkmill (Points B to C)

2.1. **Problem:** This stretch of the A4118 may seem straighter, but it contains many sharp bends within a short distance. Due to the designated 40 mph and its location between Kilvrough Manor and the 20-mph zoned Parkmill, many drivers speed through and try to overtake on this stretch which has led to many close calls for both residents and visitors. As indicated in **Appendix 2**, many of the RTCs in our community have incurred on this stretch of the A4118.

2.2. **Solution:** We propose to drop the speed of this stretch of road from 40 mph to 30 mph and to add double white lines to encourage traffic to not overtake on the blind bends.

3. Issue 3 - Entering Parkmill (Point C)

3.1. **Problem:** Entering Parkmill, the speed drops quickly from 40 mph to 20 mph. Many residents have complained that most of the traffic does not immediately slow down to the designated 20 mph and may continue to speed through despite appropriate notification with ample signage.

3.2. **Solution:** In addition to the ample signage, we propose the addition of rumble strips to encourage traffic to slow to the appropriate speed when entering Parkmill. Additionally, there already exists a speed monitoring device (*adjacent to the 'Entering Parkmill' signage*) which currently relies on solar power, but as there is limited sun in this stretch of the Parkmill Valley, we would propose connecting the device, as it already has the appropriate infrastructure, to a local electric outlet to ensure it is working.

4. Issue 4 - Parkmill (Points C to B)

4.1. **Problems:**

4.1.1. Once entering Parkmill, you immediately come to a regular, yet unmarked, pedestrian crossing point which is used by both children making use of the Girl Guides' Activity Centre, walkers using the footpath from Ilston village, and residents and visitors who may have parked at or are venturing to the Gower Inn, the only local pub between Kittle and Reynoldston.

4.1.2. Once pedestrians have crossed the A4118 from the Girl Guides' Activity Centre to the only footpath leading towards Three Cliffs Bay. Not only do visitors use this footpath to access further walks and the beaches, but residents are dependent on the footpath to access Shepherds Store which is a lifeline for many people in the area, providing groceries, a café for the village and a hub of local social life. At this time the footpath has been badly damaged due to erosion caused by the weather, whereby parts of the footpaths are completely inaccessible leading to residents and visitors having to use the A4118, at its most narrow, to walk from one side of Parkmill to the other putting pedestrians and drivers at risk for RTCs.

4.2. **Solutions:**

4.2.1. We propose to add the appropriate road markings and signage to indicate a Pedestrian Crossing at this point. Additionally, we would propose including appropriate signage to indicate children at play.

4.2.2. In regards to the damaged footpath, we propose that the footpath should be put right, and a plan put in place to ensure that further damage is limited. If visitors do feel it necessary to walk along the A4118, then our proposals put forth in Section 3.2 of this documents would help to slow traffic down and reduce any incidents of RTCs.

5. Issue 5 – Between Junction of Lunnon Hill and A4118 and the Gower Heritage Centre (Points C to D)

5.1. **Problems:**

5.1.1. Walkers intending to go to Three Cliffs Beach commonly park at the Shepherds shop throughout the year. Once parked the walkers need to cross the A4118 and this can be dangerous due primarily to traffic coming down Penmaen Hill. Traffic approaching Shepherds from the west will have in quick

succession dropped in speed from 40 mph to 30 mph and then to 20 mph. Additionally, drivers will then make a sharp bend approaching Shepherds with no visibility of pedestrians crossing the road. As indicated in **Appendix 1** (*Gower Heritage Traffic Monitor*), over 53% of the traffic arriving are in excess of the national speed limit for the village, thus leading to the higher probability of an incident.

- 5.1.2. In addition to the walkers crossing at this point, there is also the possibility of traffic approaching from Lunnon Hill Road and turning onto the A4118. Traveling eastward on the A4118, visibility of traffic coming from Lunnon Hill Road is impeded by a large store signage. Equally, traffic traveling down Lunnon Hill Road is unable to see traffic approaching from the West on the A4118.

5.2. **Solutions:**

- 5.2.1. We propose that appropriate signage indicating pedestrian and animal crossings are put up. The addition of rumble strips and 'Slow/Araf' written on the road upon the approach, from the west, towards the Gower Heritage Centre and where the speed limit drops from 40 mph to 30 mph would also aid in helping to slow traffic and prepare drivers for the quick succession of the speed reductions.

- 5.2.2. In regard to the junction of Lunnon Hill Road and the A4118, the addition of an appropriate sign indicating a junction ahead would ensure that traffic on the A4118 are aware of the possibility of vehicles pulling out from the Lunnon Hill Road.

6. **Issue 6 - Penmaen Hill (Points D to E)**

6.1. **Problems:**

- 6.1.1. The A4118 along Penmaen Hill has very few straight stretches and is instead inundated with multiple bends. This is the most dangerous stretch of the A4118 within the ICC as indicated in **Appendix 2** (*Wales Government Traffic Statistics*).

6.2. **Solutions:**

- 6.2.1. We first propose dropping the speed limit of this stretch of the A4118, from 40 to 30 mph. This would mean that the stretch of the A4118 from the Gower Heritage Centre to the western edge of Penmaen village, directly after

Nicholaston Caravan Site (*Point F*), would be 30 mph. The signage would need to be updated and to encourage people to take notice of the speed limit, we believe that making the mandatory speed limit more visible is of the upmost importance and thus propose painting the speed limit on the road when leaving Parkmill (heading west) and when approaching Penmaen.

6.2.2. Additionally, it would be prudent to add double white lines along this entire stretch of the A4118 as there is no reasonably safe place for drivers to pass.

6.2.3 We would like to add appropriate signage to the road, in both directions, before the sharp bend halfway up this stretch of road to indicate the threat of potential vehicles driving in the center of the road.

7. Issue 7 – Penmaen (Point E)

7.1. Problems:

****This junction of the A4118 is one of the main concerns of the ICC due to the meeting of 3 heavily used roads at a bend on the brow of the hill with poor visibility.**

7.1.1. Approaching North Hills Lane from Parkmill, the speed drops from 40 mph to 30 mph and the road makes a sudden sharp bend just before the entrances to the Penmaen Loop Road and North Hills Lane. There is a bus stop, used regularly by both visitors and children waiting for the school bus, located on the sharp bend and opposite North Hills Lane. Additionally, the Penmaen Loop Road is heavily used throughout the year by visitors due to there being a free use National Trust carpark located on the Loop Road. Most visitors parking at the National Trust car park walk across the A4118 to North Hills Lane to go to Three Cliffs Bay.

7.1.2. Due to the sharp bend, most drivers, not taking heed of the speed change or lower their speed to late, end up driving in the middle of the road and into oncoming traffic.

7.2. Solutions:

7.2.1. We propose to replace the ‘suggested’ speed limit sign with a proper National Speed Limit sign which sits high above a hedge and to paint the designated speed on the road. We further propose to add appropriate signage

to indicate a pedestrian and animal crossing to ensure drivers take notice of such a possibility when approaching the sharp bend.

7.2.2. We would like to add appropriate signage to the road, in both directions, before the junction to indicate the threat of potential vehicles driving in the center of the road.

8. Issue 8 - Approaching Tor View Carpark (Point F)

8.1. **Problems:** Upon approaching Tor View car park, there is a well-known footpath which crosses from the Penmaen Loop Road to the Tor Bay carpark. This footpath (*also used as a bridle path*) is not marked, however, there is a small sidewalk on the north side of the A4118 which indicates public use and due to the curvature of the road, the end of the sidewalk where people cross from the Loop Road to the carpark is not visible to oncoming traffic.

8.2. **Solutions:** We propose to add appropriate signage to indicate this is a point where pedestrians and animals may cross.

9. Issue 9 – General Issues

9.1. Problems: General problems for this stretch of the A4118 include, but are not limited to, (i) overgrown hedging and trees which impede the view of various yet important signs, (ii) poor drainage/flooding, especially around Kilvrough Manor on and in Parkmill which may cause vehicles to drive on the wrong side of the road into oncoming traffic and (iii) rockfall from the cliff face along Penmaen Hill.

9.2. Solutions: To mitigate issues which could cause or lead to road collisions, we propose (i) carrying out regular cutting back of hedgerows and trees along the A4118, (ii) assessing any drainage concerns and (iii) possible introduction of rockfall netting or mesh along the cliff face on Penmaen Hill.

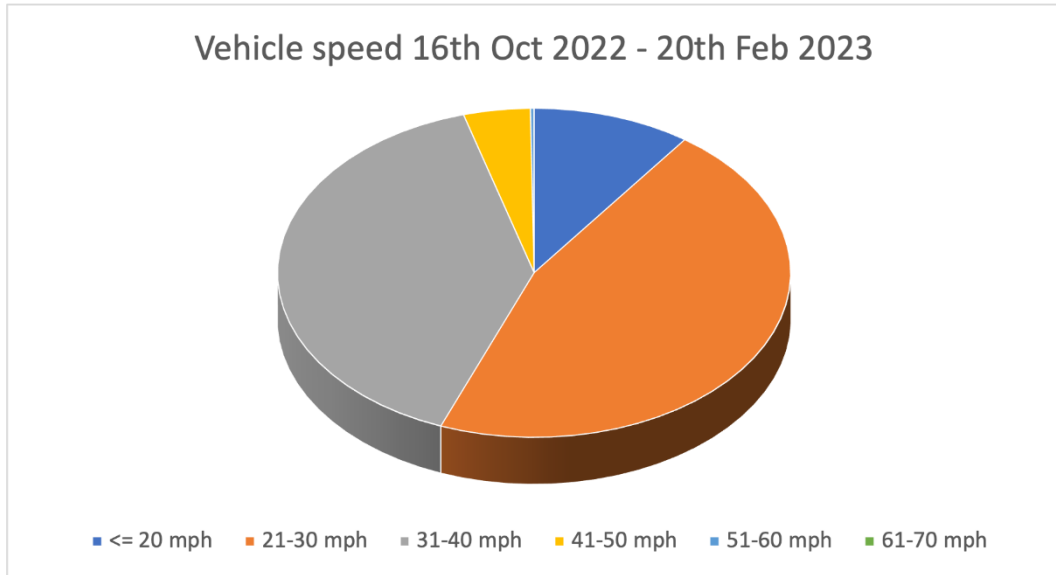
4 Summary

We, the ICC, have several legitimate concerns in respect to the traffic passing through our communities. Traffic volume and the behaviour of drivers are adversely impacting our residents and visitors to the wider Gower area. Our proposals which include the lowering of the speed limits, adding double white lines where needed and integrating additional signage to protect pedestrians, bikers and horse riders will not only protect the residents and

visitors to the Ilston Community area, but will also have effects felt on a much wider scale, including the Police and Fire departments, who must provide their time and energy after RTCs, the Welsh Government, who must carry the cost of RTCs, possibly costing the state up to £2 million for a single fatal accident, visitors to the wider Gower area, who can be adversely affected due to traffic incidents and which may put them off on returning to Gower in the future and finally to local businesses who rely primarily on seasonal visitors.

Due to the increase in national attention on the Gower area, we understand the complexities of both protecting the rural character of the area and ensuring the safety of our residents and visitors alike and we believe that our proposals do just that, make Gower safer for everyone and at the same time keep it a natural oasis for everyone to enjoy.

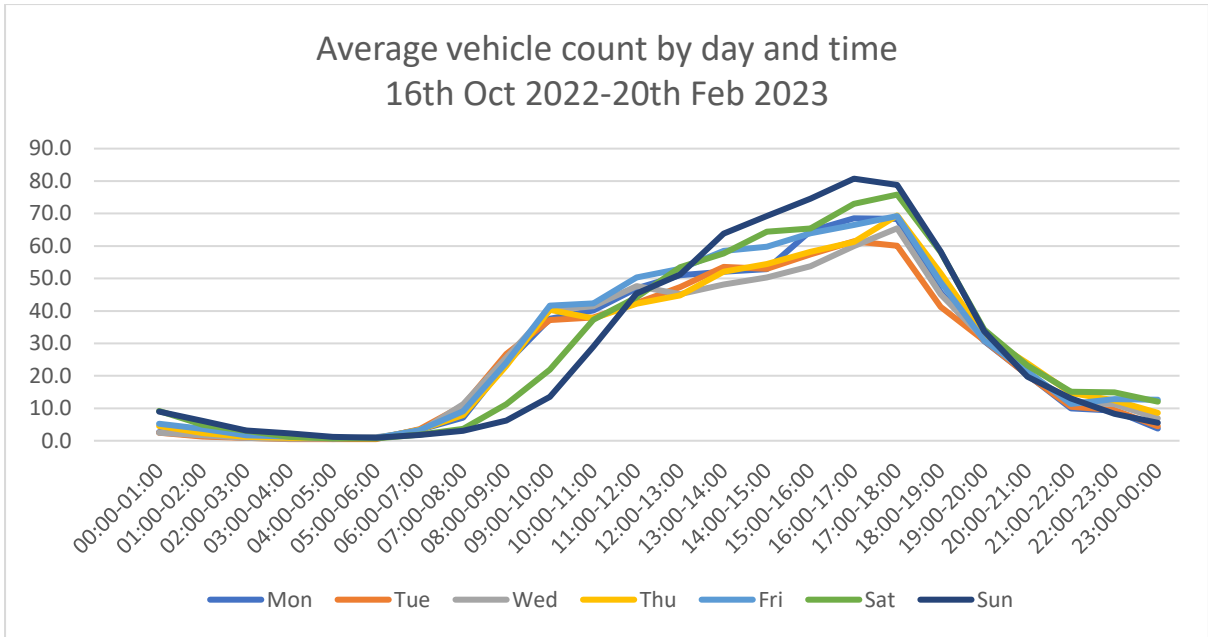
Appendix 1 – Gower Heritage Traffic Monitor



84,000 vehicles were recorded during the period from 16th Oct 2022 to 20th Feb 2023.

45% of these vehicles, travelling towards Parkmill from Penmaen, recorded a speed greater than 30mph.

A large percentage of the vehicles were recorded at speeds in excess of 60mph



The chart shows the average number of vehicles recorded by both day and by hour from 16th Oct 2022 to 20th Feb 2023.

Vehicle counts have peaked at over 120 vehicles per hour.

Note that vehicle counts during summer months are expected to be significantly higher.

Appendix 2 – Wales Government Traffic Statistics

Context

Many of the Ilston Community Council residents are aware of traffic incidents, many have witnessed the results and some, unfortunately, have been involved.

The data shown in this appendix is a subset of all incidents. However, in the analysis here we have only used data from the Welsh Government website 'Stats Wales', url:

<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Transport/Roads/Road-Accidents/Accident-Level-Data>

Analysis

Data has been consolidated for Years 2012 to 2021 (latest year reported). The data identifies the road on which the casualty occurred and the latitude and longitude of the incident. Data has been filtered for the 2 principal roads in Ilston Community, the A4118 and B4271.

The locations of each incident have then been mapped by using the bulk upload facility for the mapping tool <https://gridreferencefinder.com/>.

The Bulk upload link is as follows:

<https://gridreferencefinder.com/batchConvert/batchConvert.php#:~:text=You%20can%20paste%20data%20directly,grid%20reference%20or%20X%20Y%20values.>

The locations are shown as points on slides 2-4 where slide 4 drills into greater detail for part of slide 3.

Data updated: 2023 02 03

Key findings

The key findings:

- First, we are fortunate that no fatalities were reported in the years analysed, but there have been some severe casualties including:
 - 4 serious; and
 - 50 minor.
- The A4118 would appear to have three accident 'hot spots':
 - at the junction with Vennaway Lane;
 - on the stretch of road between Kilvrough and the Gower Inn; and
 - on the stretch of road from Penmaen church down to Parkmill

Mapping of the incidents is shown on the two images below. Each incident is marked with a blue icon. The reference to 'Point nn' is a characteristic of the mapping tool. **Map 1** provides a view of the A4118 from Perriswood to Penmaen.



Map 2 focuses on the stretch of the A4118 between Penmaen and Vennaway Lane.



Map 3 focuses on Penmaen Hill, where there are the highest number of incidents within the ICC area of the A4118.

