

The Footpath Bypass.

The Problem

The A37 is a very busy road with over 18 thousand traffic movements a day, many of them heavy goods vehicles. It is also dangerous with almost every fatality on its length in the last ten years having occurred between Hursley hill and Chelwood roundabout.

Vehicles have crashed into the school wall, the bus stop, the railings outside the school and the miners well fare as well as each other and the verges and hedges. Many drivers and passenger's lives have been lost.

None of these victims have been pedestrians or school children so far but crashes from the last few years alone have involved cars and vans mounting pavements in areas often filled with people. Fortunately no one was there at the time.

Aside from safety concerns the road is a noisy and miserable place to spend time and is one of the two main problems that come up at the council meetings (along with parking). Footpath alternatives offer a deliverable approach to limiting its impact on people's lives.

What Can we Do?

People occasionally talk about bypasses and HGV bans but that is probably not going to happen. There is however a cheap and easy way to get Pensford off the road and that is through the creation of a new footpath network that keeps people and children away from the traffic. The road can't bypass the village, but the villagers could theoretically start to bypass the road.

How???

At the end of the miners welfare carpark off church street is a patch of small trees and scrub, on the other side of which is a low gabion wall falling down to the river chew, right next to the main road bridge. If you hop down the drop you find that there is a wide mud bank on the western side of the stream that passes right under the road and comes up on the bank next to the school. The head room below the underside of the bridge is over three meters and at standard river height the bank is nearly ten feet wide.

The proposal.

The first step toward reconnecting the village is to get across the road. The initial proposal is for access to be cleared to the river at the end of the miners welfare carpark and a footpath, (raised up to beyond water height in all but flood conditions) to be made under the bridge connecting the west of the village to the school and the northern side of the road. This would allow children to get to school without crossing the main road and will provide access to the river for classes.

This would require permissions from both the environment agency and the council, whose land it is on as well as planning permission. All of this costs money as well as the work itself. We feel that this first step down the path to a better village, connected by green paths and finally able to turn its back on the main trunk road hopefully benefitting everyone.

Obstacles?

There are obstacles to other parts of a footpath network that are currently outside of our control. This is the only section of it that can be pursued at present and if you feel it's worthwhile making a start then please vote for this proposal.

Thank you.