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# ROGATE

## Village quality and traffic safety on a busy strategic route



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**This report was prepared by Hamilton-Baillie Associates Ltd**  
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**For Rogate Parish Council and Rogate Appeal for Traffic Action (RATA)**

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## Introduction

Many villages have developed around the cross roads of rural routes. Such intersections often explain the siting of a church, an inn and a village shop as a place where trade and interactions develop, close to passing traffic. However, the growth of traffic in the 20th century has eroded the benefits of proximity to busy roads. Speed of traffic, noise, fumes and the danger and discomfort caused by constant traffic prompted the building of bypasses or the rerouting of traffic away from settlements. For those villages still straddling major routes, traffic is usually the single most critical issue to the quality and viability of village life.

The village of Rogate is an extreme example of a crossroads village under constant and growing pressure from traffic. Located on the busy A272 between Petersfield and Midhurst on the main east-west route through the South Downs National park, there are no foreseeable prospects for a bypass. The church, the village pub and the village store are clustered around the crossroads. The main street is enclosed by the raised churchyard at one end, and a sharp bend at the entrance to the popular village primary school to the west.

The tight bends and ancient buildings and walls of the village of around 1,600 people has to cope with constant flows of cars, large trucks, motorcycles and agricultural vehicles on the A272.

Speeds can be uncomfortably high, especially on the immediate approaches to the village. Connections along, and across, the High Street are not comfortable, restricting pedestrian access to the school, shops, pub, church and cemetery. Traffic issues head-up local concerns, limiting options for future plans and threatening the viability of the small village's vulnerable facilities.



This report results from a local initiative by Rogate Appeal for Traffic Action (RATA) on behalf of Rogate Parish Council to explore ways to reduce the impact of traffic and to maintain and enhance the quality of the village. It is intended to inform and supplement a broader Neighbourhood Plan initiative for Rogate, and to identify a set of measures that could calm traffic, improve safety, support the school's Travel Plan and help establish a broad consensus for the future. It is intended to assist West Sussex County Council as highway authority, and to reflect the emerging aspirations

of the South Downs National Park Authority in its approach to rural traffic management.

Rogate will need to cope with high volumes of through traffic for the foreseeable future. Development pressures in and around Petersfield and north-east Hampshire will continue to add vehicles to the existing road network. This initiative is intended to engage local residents in exploring fresh approaches to managing the relationship between places and traffic, and to expand the palette of measures available.

Rogate is not alone in this endeavour. Across the UK, as well as in other parts of Europe, new ideas and principles are being explored and tested. These draw on a growing understanding of safety and driver psychology, as well as on practical experience gained in other rural areas. The publication of *Manual for Streets 1&2* has signalled a new direction in government policies and professional practice for streets and rural roads. Despite the limitations on major capital investment for conventional traffic calming and hard engineering by highway authorities, the timing is right for new ideas. The new South Downs National Park Authority is seeking new approaches to protect and enhance towns and villages. Localism and the growing confidence of local communities to steer their own future makes this the right time to try to reconcile traffic movements with village life.



## Rogate and Fyling

The village of Rogate, and its neighbouring hamlet of Fyling to the east, lie in the western end of the Rother Valley, close to the West Sussex border with Hampshire. The parish of Rogate extends north as far as Rake, and includes a number of smaller settlements such as Terwick Common, Habin and Hill Brow. Rogate lies in the western half of the new South Downs National Park.

Rogate is a crossroads village. It straddles the A272 that extends from Winchester to Haywards Heath and beyond. In the village the A272 intersects with the ancient north-south route between Rake in the north and Harting to the south. Apart from the larger market towns such as Petersfield, Petworth and Midhurst, there are relatively few examples within the South Downs National Park where ancient settlements are bisected by a major traffic route. For Rogate, traffic volumes and speeds are especially significant, with daily flows of 8,000 - 9,000 vehicles, including over 10% heavy goods vehicles. Noise, congestion, discomfort and danger, along with structural damage to walls and buildings are the result.

The main east-west street through the older core of the village is defined by sharp bends at either end. To the west, the bend marks the junction with the narrow rural lane serving the village primary school. To the east, the street takes a sharp bend around the churchyard of St. Bartholemew's, passing close to the front of the

White Horse pub and to ancient garden walls.

The village has expanded both east and westwards during the 20th century. The new housing of Parsonage Estate has extended Rogate to the west of the school, creating a new wide junction onto the A272. To the east, an additional cemetery supplements the limited church grounds, and a motor garage with associated buildings marks the edge of the village. A 500 metre gap separates Fyling Lane from Rogate, interrupted only by the junction with Garbitts Lane.

A narrow lane with limited passing spaces runs south down Habin Hill from the village crossroads, leading to the fine medieval Habin Bridge that marks the southern approach. To the north, a similarly narrow lane also without footways connects to the Village Hall and Recreation Ground. Both lanes suffer from verge erosion where wide vehicles seek to pass one another.

A neighbourhood plan is in preparation for Rogate, to which this report is intended to contribute. Initial suggestions envisage new development arranged around the north and east sides of the Recreation Ground, maybe requiring a new access junction from the A272 just east of the cemetery entrance. This expansion reinforces the need to strengthen the limited east-west connections through Rogate, whilst providing opportunities for a clearer village edge and entry point to the east.



## Rogate and Fyning



## Initial observations

At one level, little can be done to ease the pressure from traffic on Rogate. There are no current strategic traffic proposals that would reduce the role played by the A272 serving east-west transport across the county. A by-pass is a very distant prospect. Housing needs, and the region's good transport links to other areas impose significant demands for new development and the traffic it generates.

Unsurprisingly, traffic has significantly eroded the public realm of Rogate. It has also diminished the informal cycling and walking connections within the village, and between Rogate and nearby Fyning. The loss of pedestrian and cycling activity on the A272 is clear, and is evident in the Travel Plan for the Primary School. Heavy traffic has had the effect of turning Rogate inwards on itself, leaving little evidence of human activity and interaction on the principal street.

This retreat has allowed the signs, markings and familiar characteristics of highway engineering to become a dominant characteristic of the village centre. Despite the plethora of yellow-backed road signs, speed limits, chevrons, bollards and white lines, it is possible to drive through the village almost unaware of its presence, or at the least to consider it a minor irritant and delay on the route to Petersfield or Midhurst and beyond. To a large extent the core of Rogate has been given over to the A272.

The resulting erosion of quality and comfort in the public realm brings some significant economic challenges. Difficulties and dangers for pedestrians clearly reduce the viability and trading position of the two key businesses on the High Street, the White Horse pub and the village store. Safety concerns and difficulties crossing the road also limit the aspirations and potential of the Primary School. The loss of any of these essential facilities would severely impact on Rogate's quality, and add further traffic demands from car trips to the county's highway network.

The excessive speed of traffic through the village is very evident from all our visits. This is particularly alarming on the western approach, on the corner by the school entrance. There appears to be a severe mismatch between driver expectations and the constraints imposed by the historic village. Frustrations generated by delays negotiating the narrow dimensions around the churchyard is also evident from damage to boundary walls and fabric.

In part this mismatch results from the lack of clear, consistent boundaries and entry points into the village, and from the gap between Rogate and Fyning. There is little consistency between the design and alignment of the highway, and the particular morphology of the village. As a result it is not clear to drivers where they are leaving the high-speed highway and entering a small village.



*The eastern approach from Fyning*



*The western approach at Parsonage Estate*



*Inappropriate speeds at the entrance to the primary school*

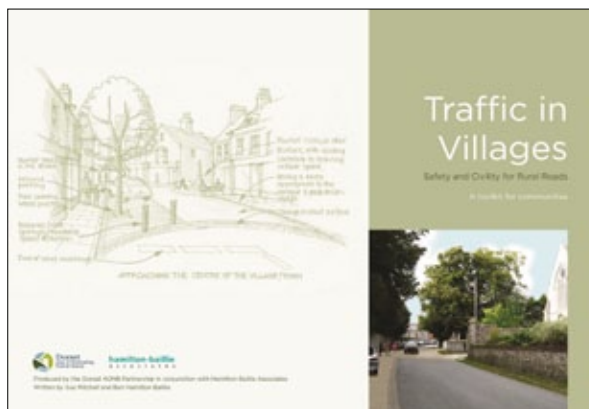
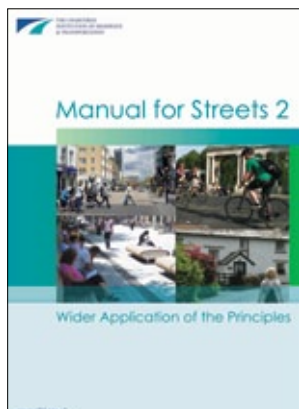
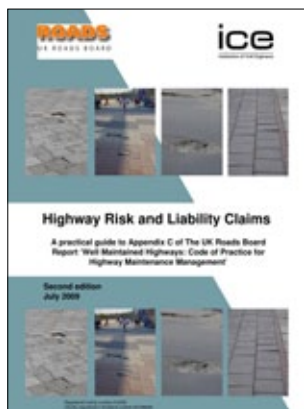


## Initial observations



## The policy context

Rogate Parish Council's initiative to address traffic issues is well timed. Policy and best practice for traffic in towns and villages are rapidly evolving as the significance and fragility of rural settlements becomes clearer. The publication of *Manual for Streets 2* in 2011 reflected a key shift towards place-making in street design, and the importance of reinforcing the relationship between the carriageway and its context. Guidance such as *Traffic in Villages*, launched by the CIHT\* in 2012, builds on the principles of shared space and low-speed design. *Highway Risk & Liability* by the ICE\* has clarified the wider options open to highway authorities in addressing safety and road design. Finally, the South Downs National Park Authority is updating its highway guidance for roads and village spaces in the national park. A growing body of precedents and knowledge is opening up fresh approaches for influencing driver speeds and behaviour in busy towns and villages.



The emerging Neighbourhood Plan for Rogate provides a framework for directing developer investment to address broader traffic and transport issues in the village. Combining the maintenance programme and future highways improvements of West Sussex County Council with locally initiated ideas offers a means to supplement private investment and reverse the erosion of quality in Rogate.

Reducing the **design speed** for traffic in Rogate and Fyling lies at the heart of the proposed strategy. The concept of design speed differs from policies on speed limits. The approach starts by defining the preferred speed for vehicles, and then explores the measures that are likely to elicit such speeds in the responses of drivers. Speed limits may be one factor, but they are unlikely to work on their own. The strategy requires communication of the right messages to drivers.



Visual narrowing, place-making, clear parking spaces and crossing points. Highbury, Bristol



Visual narrowing to emphasize a pinchpoint on a main road. South Perrott, Dorset



## Rogate and Fyning: challenges and opportunities

The village of Rogate possesses a number of notable assets and opportunities for strengthening its identity and creating a series of incidents and distinctive places

Clear definition of the historic core of Rogate's main street

Generous space around cross-roads with Habin Hill

Pub frontage of White Horse pub

"The Narrows" around the raised churchyard - tight medieval dimensions

Superb Cemetery and Lych gate opening onto A272

Development potential around recreation ground accessed from A272

Garbitts Lane junction offers an incident between Rogate and Fyning

Fyning serves as a landmark place on approach to Rogate



Fast sweeping approach on A272

Oversized junction to Parsonage Estate

Fast sweeping bend by school entrance

Pedestrian space and crossings uncomfortable

Space needed fronting shop

Limited passing spaces on Habin Hill

Aggressive driving around churchyard

Lych gate opens straight onto fast road

Long fast stretch of road without incident

Fast traffic through Fyning and Fyning Lane junction

The routing of the A 272 through Rogate and Fyning also presents a series of problems, most of them associated with speeds and driver expectations.

## Design principles

Our recommendations for Rogate and Fyning draw on a combination of basic principles that have been employed elsewhere in the UK and in mainland Europe to closely align highway engineering with good urban and landscape design. Such principles combine to help to foster lower speeds and to promote safety, efficient traffic movement and civility through maximising driver awareness of his or her surroundings.

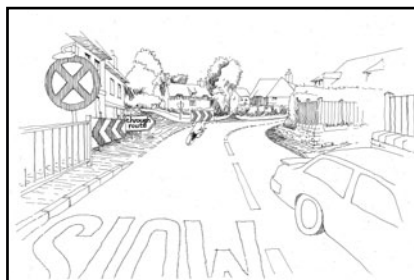
Central to this approach is the principle of **place-making**. Re-establishing Rogate as a place at a crossroads, and Fyning as a hamlet on a junction, requires reductions in the sweeping linearity of the main road. Emphasising the village centre, and strengthening the connections between streets,

buildings and the activities they generate lie at the core of integrated streetscape design. This can mean paying careful attention to special buildings or structures, or simply placing vertical objects such as a tree, lamp column, statue or signpost to anchor a space and interrupt the linear highway.



Place-making at junction- Joost Vahl

Drivers adjust their speed in response to a wide range of **visual cues**. The potential presence (or likely absence) of activity is one such variable. Streets and roads can be configured to emphasize continuity and speed, or to emphasize place, merely by minor changes in paving, kerb positions, and the relationship of carriageway to its context.



The village as highway



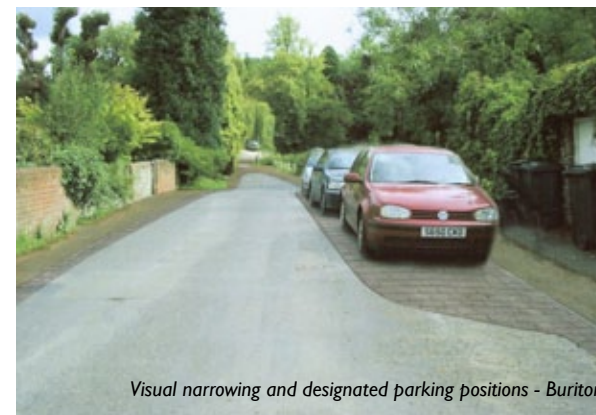
The village as place

Driver speeds are also strongly influenced by the apparent width of the carriageway. Reducing the **visual width** can be an important tool for reducing speeds and increasing driver awareness, without physically constraining traffic flows.



Visual narrowing - Petersfield

The detailing of the verge or kerb at the edge of the carriageway is a critical element in defining the apparent width, and in reducing the perceived dominance of traffic. **On-street parking spaces** that are clearly defined can similarly reduce visual widths, whilst promoting passing trade.

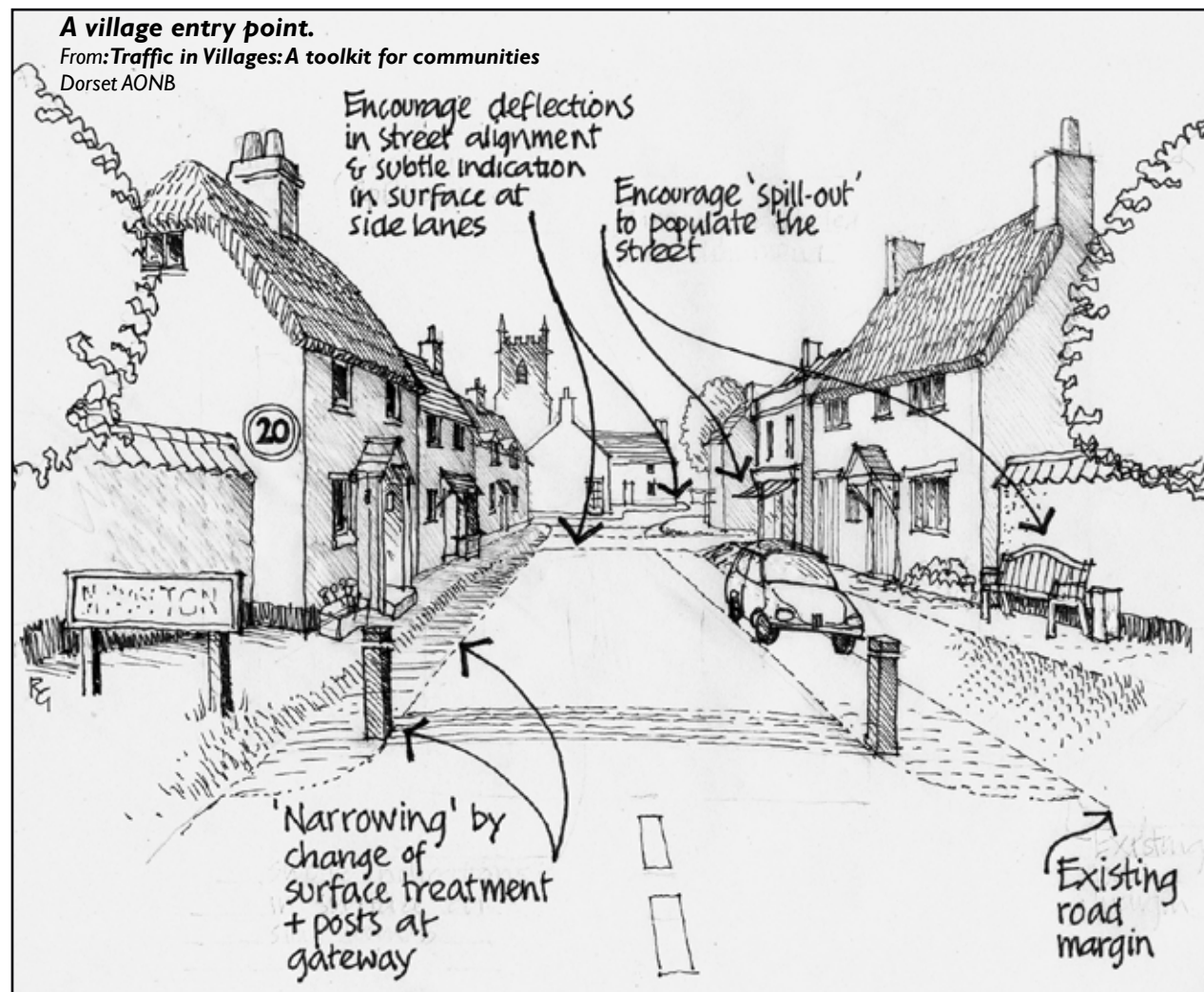


Visual narrowing and designated parking positions - Buriton

## Design principles

A key design principle for fostering low speeds and reducing aggressive driving requires very clear and consistent **entry points** or gateways to be established at the point of transition between the higher speed highway, and the low-speed context of the village. Often these consist of outer, and inner, transition points marking the start of the wider village, and the entry into the historic core.

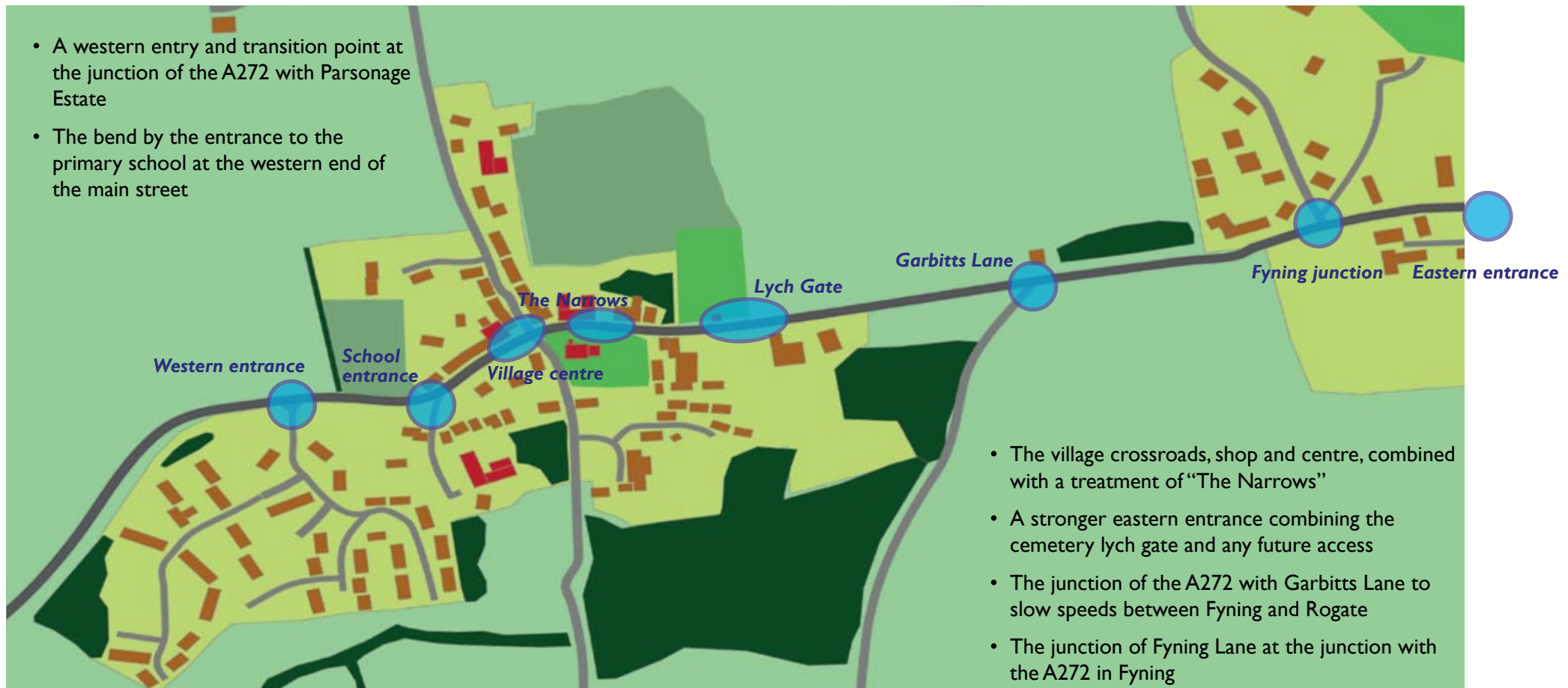
Clear entry points require the combination of signing with road detailing to coincide with the architecture of a village and the visible presence of buildings. Road markings should cease at this boundary, and measures should be introduced to change the apparent scale of the village street. Arbitrarily placed gates or signs rarely succeed - there needs to be a clear, understandable logic for any elements installed. Entry signs and speed limits positioned in the middle of the countryside have little effect.





## Proposed specific interventions

Our recommendations focus on a sequence of specific sites where opportunities exist for strong place-making to adapt the character of the A272 and to respond to specific priorities and problems. These might be extended in the future, but include the following individual sites:-



## Western entrance - Parsonage Estate

The village nameplate and speed limit sign is 200 metres west of the entry to Parsonage Estate, a junction which signals the first manifestation of Rogate. However there is little to encourage drivers to slow until the bend by primary school.

We would recommend creating a definite entry point at the Parsonage Estate junction, perhaps by the creation of a simple roundel of surface treatment. There should be an apparent narrowing of the carriageway at this point, with edge strips parallel to the pavement or verge. A new tree would help mark this important junction. We recommend some tightening of the turning geometry to reduce speeds, and a new village nameplate at this point.





## The school entrance

A high priority should be given to creating a low-speed environment at the junction to the school, the point that marks the western end of the village centre. It is vital that the sweeping road markings be removed, and that the significance of the junction's role position and role as a lobby to the school be conveyed to drivers.

The suggested arrangements emphasize the sharp change in direction, and the narrowing strips along both verges reduce approach speeds. A tree or vertical column could again emphasize the “place” function of this corner, and could be combined with a more prominent school sign. All road markings and railings should be removed. A pool of light, perhaps from an illuminated school sign, would help highlight this key location.





## The village centre

The crossroads at the heart of Rogate has been gradually eroded as a place by the linear emphasis of the A272. As a result the space no longer conveys the characteristics of a village. The shop and its front space are no longer dominant. Parking arrangements and the bus stop are awkward, especially on the south side. Crossing the wide carriageway is uncomfortable and dangerous.

We recommend deleting the recently renewed road markings, and introducing an overlaid surface to redefine the space around the crossroads, and the church. The introduction of a vertical element such as a finger post on a stout base could reinforce this change to a low-speed village context. Extending the space fronting the shop, with clearly defined parking bays will re-establish its role as a focal point and promote passing trade.



## The Narrows

Drivers passing through Rogate have to come to terms with the short section of narrow carriageway as the road bends around the raised churchyard. Experience from similar bottlenecks suggest that driver expectations can be best moderated by visually emphasizing the narrow width. This contrasts with the use of centre lines and chevron signs, which should be removed.

Every aspect of the fragile and historic quality of this part of the village should be evident. The use of a wooden finger post to highlight the path through the church yard is one example. Measures in front of the pub to re-introduce signs of human presence could also help make walking in front of the pub safer. Local artists might create a sculpture on the adjoining garden walls to further accentuate the care required to pass through this pinchpoint. (see page 19)





## The eastern entrance : Cemetery gate and new access

Given the need for very low speeds required to negotiate vehicles through The Narrows and the village centre, it is essential that drivers are made fully aware of the village context. The existing eastern approach lacks such clues, with buildings set well back from the road, and the exquisite lych gate to the cemetery concealed in a beech hedge.

Although only in draft, the Neighbourhood Plan puts forward options for development north of the A272 that would require an entrance adjoining the cemetery. We would recommend using this opportunity to alter the character of the eastern village entrance by simple place making at both this access point and the cemetery entrance. A low kerb footway is required along the north side. Diagonal geometry gives emphasis to the pedestrian “desire lines” between village, cemetery and church and highlights the connections of this area with the village.





## Garbitts Lane

The short stretch of open country between Rogate and Fyning, 500 metres to the east, poses a problem for both communities. Traffic speeds are high, creating an uncomfortable link for walkers and cyclists. Small-scale interventions to this interim space could bring about minor, but significant, responses from drivers.

Again, we would recommend removing road markings, giving significantly greater emphasis to the junction with Garbitts Lane. Visual narrowings between this location and the entrance to Rogate would help maintain lower speeds without hindering traffic flows. The location of a low-level village name-plate at this point could help strengthen the connection between Rogate and Fyning.



## Fyning Lane junction

Housing developments around Terwick Common have increased the need for connections between Fyning and Rogate. At present, there is little street front activity on the A272 in Fyning to slow drivers, and high speeds render the junction with the A272 fast and unsafe. Crossing the main road in Fyning is particularly daunting, and most cyclists are discouraged from braving this link to Rogate.

Simple speed reduction measures such as visual narrowing are required along a 100 metre stretch through the hamlet. Lower speeds would make possible a simple place-making measure to mark the junction to Terwick, and mark the fine entrance to Fyning House. There is adequate space to introduce a vertical element in the form of a finger post to anchor this space and form a place.





## Precedents

Every place is unique. There are no examples of successful village schemes that can be simply copied or transferred to Rogate. In addressing the severe impact of heavy through traffic on a historic village, it will be necessary for the Parish and West Sussex CC to draw on experience and precedents from a variety of sources. Visits, observations and reviews of a number of other places where similar measures have been introduced are strongly recommended.

**Bramber** in West Sussex is one example where a series of sensitive measures have been introduced on the High Street based around the village pub. Although modest in scale, the principles applied are similar to those suggested for Rogate. The low speeds and driver responses fostered by the relationship between the street and pub frontage work well.



Bramber High Street. Road integrated with pub frontage

**West Meon**, south of Petersfield in Hampshire straddles the A 32, and has to cope with high traffic volumes. In 2009, following a similar feasibility study, a range of simple measures were introduced to slow speeds and improve safety. These included removal of road markings, stronger entry gateways, and the use of applied surfacing to create clear places at key locations. Traffic speeds reduced by 2-4 mph, significantly increasing pedestrian confidence and accessibility.



West Meon entrance and village centre - before & after

**Poynton** in Cheshire is a crossroads town, with traffic volumes of over 26,000 per day. Although a much larger settlement, the measures introduced to re-establish the centre of town, slow traffic and revitalise trade and activity include many of the principles outlined in this report. Strong entry lobbies, visual narrowing, the removal of highway signs and markings, and a strong sense of place at its focal crossroads have succeeded in reconciling high traffic volumes with civility and safety.



Poynton, Cheshire



## Reclaiming Rogate's public realm

Raising awareness amongst drivers of Rogate and the village context is not merely a matter of engineering interventions and permanent physical changes. There are infinite opportunities for groups and individuals to apply creativity to re-establish human presence in the village, and thus to alter the perception of drivers and their response to the surroundings. Carnivals, events, and the day-to-day use of spaces around the church, school, pub, village hall and shop all provide chances to re-humanize Rogate and Fyling.

An historic garden wall on the south of “The Narrows” is particularly vulnerable to passing traffic and trucks, suffering frequent impact damage. If someone could animate the wall with intriguing incidents, replaced and renewed as necessary, this could be more effective than any hard engineering such as bollards or signs.



## Conclusions and next steps



Rogate is not unusual. There are scores of fine historic villages losing their identity to the gradual, and seemingly irreversible erosion caused by heavy traffic. But Rogate represents a unique opportunity to exploit the formidable energy of its Parish Council and Traffic Group to foster a fresh approach towards its main road and its position as an important place on the A272. In place of clumsy signs, cameras and barriers such as speed humps and chicanes, this report summarizes an approach that makes maximum use of Rogate's existing assets and future development. It is an approach which can bring small, but significant, changes in expectations and responses from drivers, and re-establish Rogate as a village, a place of interest, rather than an inconvenience on a main road. It requires Rogate to re-establish a relationship with its main road.

The report is intended to help establish a clear consensus amongst its residents and businesses to a long-term strategy for dealing with traffic. Such a consensus will be essential in building a working relationship with its key partners, especially with West Sussex County Council as highway authority, and with the South Downs National Park as planning authority. Should the proposals meet with broad approval with the public and the Parish Council, copies of this report should be discussed further with both organisations and the proposals further refined.

Much work and testing is required to develop specific engineering proposals from the principles and sketch designs set out here. Context-specific road design for villages and rural areas is still relatively new to most highway authorities.

However nothing in these proposals requires any changes in policy or legislation, and the approach is entirely achievable within the current regulatory framework. We believe that safety and connectivity within Rogate and Fyning can be maintained and enhanced, and that the role of the A272 as a strategic route need not be compromised. The approach offers a basis for taking advantage of future developments. There is a great opportunity for residents' creativity in applying the principles in practice and individualising Rogate's historic places.

*"A safe street is one that tells a rich story about its past, its current circumstances, and the future aspirations of its residents."*

Hans Monderman (1946-2008)  
Head of Road Safety, Friesland, NL