

## What improvements does Ongar need to its major roads?

There is already unacceptable congestion at peak times on Ongar's major roads, especially in the High Street and at the Four Wantz Roundabout, partly due to through traffic. Our school children also find it hazardous crossing the A414 and High Street in particular.

Congestion will increase when approximately 590 new homes are shortly to be built in Ongar. In addition, 1000 more homes and commercial units at North Weald, 1000 new homes at Latton Priory, and new commercial units this side of Harlow are likely to add to the amount of traffic using the A414, with many cutting through our historic High Street.

Ongar Neighbourhood Plan Community Group (ONPCG) now has a subcommittee on road infrastructure. It will make the case to Essex Highways and other decision makers for improvement schemes. We have representatives from residents groups relating to development sites and from Ongar Academy PTA. A public meeting is scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> November. We want to hear from you.

ONPCG is concerned that insufficient upgrading of our road infrastructure is likely, unless Essex Highways considers the bigger picture of the additional traffic from developments to our west, and has sufficient evidence and / or pressure from our community..

Even just considering additional traffic from Ongar's new developments, we need an improved Four Wantz junction as paramount. Our larger development sites total nearly 400 new homes (with an estimated 800 more vehicles) will feed onto the A414 or High Street close to that roundabout. Much of that traffic will need to be able to turn right safely onto the main road towards Ongar, and pedestrians must be able to cross safely.

The Greensted Road, junction with the High Street and nearby bus stops will have to cater for about 160 more vehicles, many also turning right up Coopers Hill. There has already been at least one reported accident involving a school child who was hospitalised. A roundabout was suggested in Ongar Neighbourhood Plan.

ONPCG has raised these concerns to Essex Councillor Cabinet Member for Highways, as well as the issues of

- HGVs over 7.5 tonnes still using Ongar High Street as a short cut,
- the lack of safe pedestrian crossing places on major roads and
- the wider picture of traffic from developments to the west, causing the busy A414 to cut the town off from the Health Centre, Secondary School and Leisure Centre.

His reply at the beginning of November was disappointing including stating: *"It is neither practical nor desirable to continue to keep increasing capacity to deal with the impacts in full as this soon becomes congested again. We need to look at how we can have a more balanced approach through encouraging and giving people more choice to use sustainable modes and to be able to work and access services locally. That applies equally in towns such as Ongar as in our larger towns as they grow."*

Needless to say, ONPCG and its sub-committee does not agree. To take this further we need to make a good case and indicate the strong feeling of Ongar Residents. Please Have Your Say and join our campaign to :-improve major roads through Ongar, ban HGVs from Budworth Hall to Castle Street, instal more traffic calming in the historic High Street and provide more pedestrian crossings. For more information see our website or Facebook [www.ongarneighbourhoodplan](http://www.ongarneighbourhoodplan) <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Ongarhaveyoursay/>

Mary Dadd, Chairman ONPCG email: [maryedadd@gmail.com](mailto:maryedadd@gmail.com)