

Pedestrian safety improvements on Whitchurch-on-Thames High Street

Jim Donahue, Chairman of Whitchurch-on-Thames Parish Council

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Virtual footpath pedestrian crossing points and other pedestrian safety improvements have been made on Whitchurch High Street and Eastfield Lane near the Greyhound Pub. This initiative is one of the final steps in implementing the villages vision for traffic improvements outlined in the 2019 Whitchurch-on-Thames Village Plan. The objectives were to improve pedestrian safety, reduce congestion on the High Street, and ensure parking in the village is prioritised for residents. Progress to date has included:

- Reducing the speed limit to 20mph – May 2022
- Establishing a village Speedwatch team – 2023
- Implementing residents parking scheme on the High Street – September 2024
- Installing a traffic calming sign on High Street – 2025
- Making clear pedestrian crossing points with virtual footpaths – 2026

Whitchurch has a number of narrow “pinch points” on village roads and other challenges to drivers, cyclists and pedestrians from the toll bridge and other historic buildings. The new virtual paths are intended to guide pedestrians to the safest possible routes, especially for parents and children travelling to the school on Eastfield Lane.

The pedestrian crossings near the Greyhound includes grey virtual footpaths on both the High Street and Eastfield Lane near the Greyhound.

- The grey crossing point on the High Street in front of the Greyhound aligns with the Residents Parking scheme implemented almost two years ago. The designated crossing point is at an existing dropped kerb opposite the Greyhound pub. Since September 2024, the residents parking restrictions provide pedestrians crossing at this point with the statutory 20m of clear visibility in either direction. Whilst cars are not required to stop for pedestrians at this virtual crossing point, it signals to pedestrians that this is the safest place to cross and to drivers to take caution as it is a likely place for pedestrians. The footpath also guides pedestrians through the difficult area in front of the pub where cars are often parked.
- There is another virtual footpath crossing Eastfield Lane near the intersection with the High Street. As this is not a “primary road”, the Highway Code gives pedestrians a right of way on the grey path.

Eastfield Lane is very narrow and effectively a single lane road for the first 100-200 meters. This means there is not enough space to segregate pedestrians and vehicles so it will continue to act as a “shared space” for pedestrians, cyclists and cars. OCC have implemented a recognised blue road marking symbol to emphasise this and encourage to be respectful of this and give way to each other where needed. The hope is that road marking will add extra clarity for all users of the road – especially those unfamiliar with the area.







