

Snatchfields SamDev Proposal Site CST021

Community Conducted

Clive Avenue Conflict Area Traffic Analysis

&

Review of Related CST021 Site Documents

(Past and Present)

HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

WOULD YOU WANT TO BE THE PEDESTRIAN HERE?

HOW ABOUT BEING THE INFANT HERE?



Section 1. Introduction

Responding to the proposed 70 home CST021 Snatchfield development, local residents have channelled their deeply felt road safety concerns into positive action; that of recording all traffic and pedestrian movements and 'incidents of concern' over four separate 12 hours study periods.

This document summarises results of those Community Conducted Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Surveys undertaken in the winter/spring of 2019. It also incorporates other related road safety documents (current and historical) regarding Snatchfield (Site CST021) – up to 70 new homes proposed as part of Shropshire Council's Partial Review of the Local Plan.

Our primary aim is to assist all vested interest groups (Planners, Councillors and the Church Stretton Community) to reach credible, evidence based, conclusions for Site CST021. All previous residential development applications for this site have failed, largely due the negative road safety concerns impacting the Clive Avenue Conflict Area [CACA]. This is where the road steeply inclines, narrowing to single carriageway width without any pavements or dedicated pedestrian refuges. The CACA forms part of the sole access conduit to a network of rural cul-de-sacs serving 120 homes; there were c. 110 households in 2014, but infill creep has gradually increased road traffic volumes/pressures over time.

A similar proposal in 2012 for 100 new homes held 'preferred site' status in the process leading to the *currently active* Local Plan. That proposal was subsequently deleted by Shropshire Council (2014), largely because Shropshire Council's own assessment recognised many highways and pedestrian safety issues. An objection (also 2014) to that deletion, submitted on behalf of the Site Promoter, included a revised proposal for 60-70 homes on Snatchfield. This was rejected by both Shropshire Council and an Independent Planning Inspector as part of the Local Plan examination process.

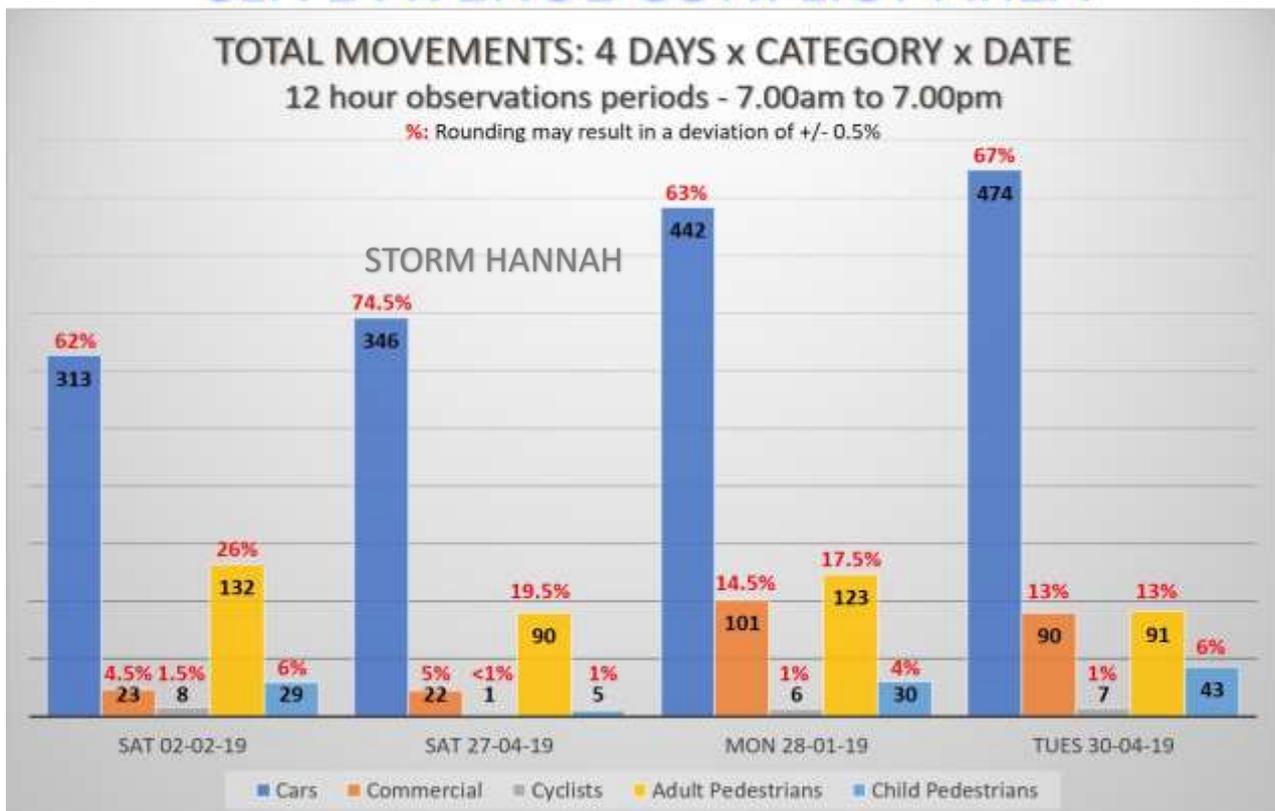


Section 2. Community Conducted Traffic Analysis 2019 – Current State Key Data

- **140** homes in the full rural cul-de-sac (one way in and one way out).
- **120** of these homes have no choice but to use the Clive Avenue Conflict Area (not wide enough for two vehicles to pass safely, twisting, rising steeply, poor sight lines, high hedges, no pavements, no pedestrian refuges) for vehicular access.
- **2,980** vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist movements recorded over the 4 survey (12 hour) days at the **junction of Clive Avenue with Watling St South**.
- **2,376** vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist movements recorded over the 4 survey (12 hour) days in the **Clive Avenue Conflict Area**.
- **4.6** weekday average (12 hour) vehicle movements per home
- **75/25** overall split of vehicles to pedestrians/cyclists in the Clive Avenue Conflict Area but significant pedestrian/cyclist 'spikes', for example 'school walk' times.
- **102** 'Incidents of Concern' including 'Near Misses' recorded, some photographed.
- **circa 375,000** annualised vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist movements (24 hour) at junction of Clive Avenue with Watling St South (projection)
- **circa 300,000** annualised vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist movements (24 hour) in Clive Avenue Conflict Area (projection)
- **At least 6** weekday average (24 hour) vehicle movements per home (conservative forecast)

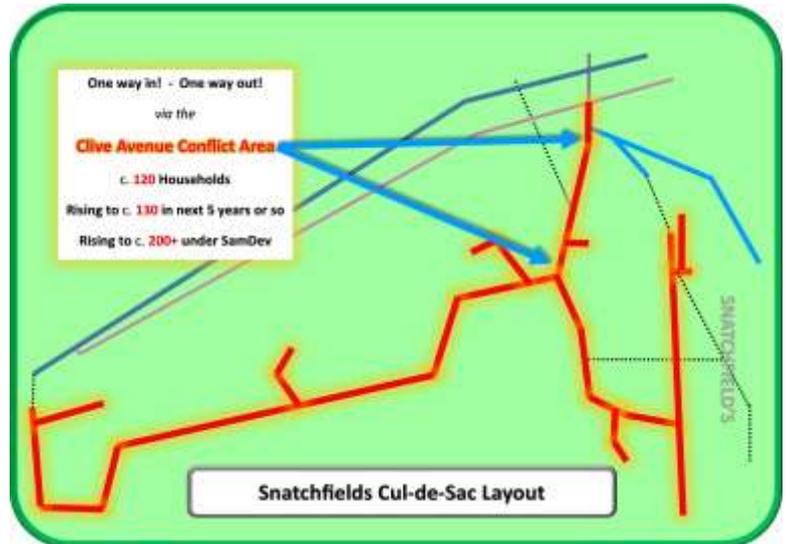
Note – Pedestrian numbers (and the pedestrian/vehicle split) from our survey counts likely to be significantly understated due to a spike in visitor numbers during fair weather months. Visiting walkers/cyclists use Clive Avenue to access the local footpath network, including the Shropshire Way. Our surveys were undertaken in February and April.

CLIVE AVENUE CONFLICT AREA



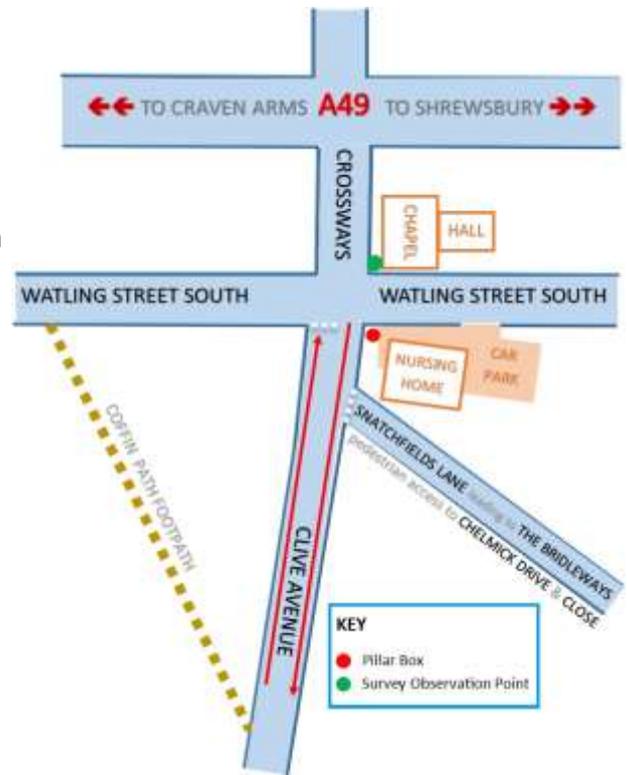
Section 3. Community Conducted Traffic Analysis 2019 – Future State Key Data

- Should CST201 be approved, the additional 70 households plus at least 10 new infill builds already approved (some in progress/recently completed) will see the total number of households on the CACA rural cul-de-sac network rise from 120 to 200 homes.



- Using a simple projection methodology, we might expect the near 70% increase in households being directly reflected in traffic volume uplift. However, given the proposed Snatchfield development sits at the top of a steep hill; is more distant from shops, services, schools, bus stops etc it is more likely that above average car dependency will result. Again, we would expect greater volumes of traffic and pedestrian movements in the summer months due to increased walker/cyclist visitor numbers and the proven greater car usage in poor weather conditions. The Storm Hannah raged throughout one of our four study periods, but did not deter some pedestrians.

- The conventional way to establish projected future vehicle movements is to use relevant comparators from the **TRICS** (Trip Rate Information Computer System) Database. As a community led initiative, we did not have direct access to TRICS Data. However, in 2012 TRICS Data (see Section 5) was employed by the *BWB Consultants Ltd*, engaged by the Site Promoter, when Snatchfield was considered (and rejected) for the *currently active* Local Plan. Shropshire Council Highways, in reviewing this TRICS data (see Section 6), stated that the comparator group used was not the most appropriate. It even cautioned that a more rural comparator would be unlikely to reduce the stated vehicle movements resulting from the Snatchfield development. As such, the stated vehicle movements of 6.77 per new household per 12 hour period is a useful ballpark minimum.



- Factoring these figures into annualised (24 hour) vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist movements would produce figures of circa 600,000 movements per annum in the Clive Avenue Conflict Area (again, not including significant construction worker/HGV traffic) i.e. a 100% increase on current movements. Clive Avenue could not safely cope with these numbers; it is arguably already an unsafe pedestrian thoroughfare serving 120 households. If a more appropriate rural comparator was applied, we believe these numbers could most likely rise well above 600,000 movements p.a.

Section 4. Shropshire Council Highways Snatchfield Site Assessment 2018

- Assessment was solely concerned with access from Chelmick Drive to the proposed site and distances to school, shops, bus stop etc.
- No assessment of the critical issues which led which led to the previous rejection of Snatchfield as a suitable site:
 - ◇ No developer Traffic Assessment or Transport Plan submitted as part of the Partial Review of Local Plan Process (confirmed to us by Shropshire Council through FOI request).
 - ◇ No vehicle numbers (current or projected) considered.
 - ◇ No consideration of the impact of vehicle numbers on Clive Avenue, CACA in particular.
 - ◇ No mitigations suggested.
 - ◇ “Poor quality route” close to site noted but not explored.
- The Shropshire Council Highways suitability assessment of CST021, apparently failed to consider all of the above critical issues. Consequently, it is pertinent for us to evaluate any data relating to the last time Snatchfield was proposed (and rejected) as a preferred Local Plan site. By way of Freedom of Information initiatives, we have secured a number of relevant documents described overleaf.



Section 5. Transport & Infrastructure Planning Report (2012) –

Prepared by BWB Consulting Ltd, on behalf of Snatchfield Site Promotor

- The Introduction, Page 1, Section 1.2, of the 2012 BWB Consulting Ltd Report commissioned by the Site Promoter stated:

“Discussions with the local highway authority revealed concerns at the ability to satisfactorily access the development (Snatchfield) and the impact of development traffic on pedestrian safety on a section of nearby road where footways are not provided.” (CACA)
- Section 1.3 goes on to say:

“This Highways Report has been prepared to address these concerns and provide sufficient transport information to support the promotion of the site through the planning process”.
- As part of their Report BWB commissioned a Manual Traffic Survey. This was undertaken on Tuesday 17 July 2012 (12 hour) at Clive Avenue (precise point at Clive Avenue not stated):
 - ◇ **222 vehicle and pedestrian/cyclist movements** recorded over the 12 hour survey period.
 - ◇ **21 pedestrians/cyclists movements** recorded over the 12 hour survey period.
- The BWB volumes vary considerably with the corresponding data from any of the 4 Community Conducted Survey Days. For example, when compared to the Community Conducted Survey on Tuesday 30 April 2019 (Clive Avenue Conflict Area Data):
 - ◇ Overall movements in the BWB Report produced a lower volume of circa **-220%**
 - ◇ Vehicular movements in the BWB Report produces a lower volume of circa **-180%**
 - ◇ Pedestrian/Cyclist movements in the BWB Report produced a lower volume of circa **-550%**
- When compared to the Community Conducted Survey on Tuesday 30 April 2019 (Junction of Clive Avenue with Watling Street South Data) the negative data variations are more extreme. Overall movements vary negatively by circa **-300%**, similarly, vehicular movements by circa **-230%** and pedestrians/cyclist movements by circa **-1,000%**.
- BWB Consulting Ltd used the TRICS (Trip Rate Information Computer System) Database to model new vehicle movements per household (12 hour period) resulting from the previously proposed Snatchfield development. Their suggested vehicle movements per new household were 6.77. Over a 24 hour period, that could easily equate to around 9 vehicle movements per household. Increased vehicle movements of these volumes are VERY significant in the context of CACA safety impacts.

Section 6. Shropshire Highways Department View (2014) on the BWB Report Findings

In February 2014, **Joy Tetsill** from Shropshire Council Planning (involved in developing both the *currently active* Local Plan AND the ongoing Partial Review) formally consulted **Andy Savage** (Shropshire Council Strategic Developing Highways Manager) on the content of the BWB Report and the suitability of Snatchfield as a preferred site for the *currently active* Local Plan.

Andy Savage concluded:

“In essence, the technical exercise (BWB Report) has demonstrated there will be significant impact on the local highway network without any consideration for mitigation or improvement, therefore I cannot support this site for future allocation”.

In reaching that conclusion, Mr Savage writes:

“Clive Avenue has always been the subject of road safety concern. Particularly, in respect to vehicular and pedestrian conflict”, noting that the increase in traffic volumes resulting from the Snatchfield development would be *“very significant”* and that the only improvement suggested in the BWB Report (upgrade of existing Bridleway) would have limited beneficial impact for the existing community.

While Mr Savage doubts that the TRICS comparator in the BWB Report is the most appropriate, he notes that a more rural comparator would be unlikely to reduce the stated vehicle movements resulting from the previously proposed Snatchfield development i.e. 6.77 per new household per 12 hour period.

Mr Savage’s assessment in 2014 was the material reason why Snatchfield was subsequently deleted as a preferred site at the Revised Preferred Options Stage that year. Document ev81-s5 concludes:

*“Realistic Site? **No.** The impact on the local highway network is significant and the allocation of the site for housing does not have community support.”*

Described within document ev81_s5 (Pages 107-110) at <https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/8398/ev81-s5-church-stretton-site-assessments-submission-final.pdf>.

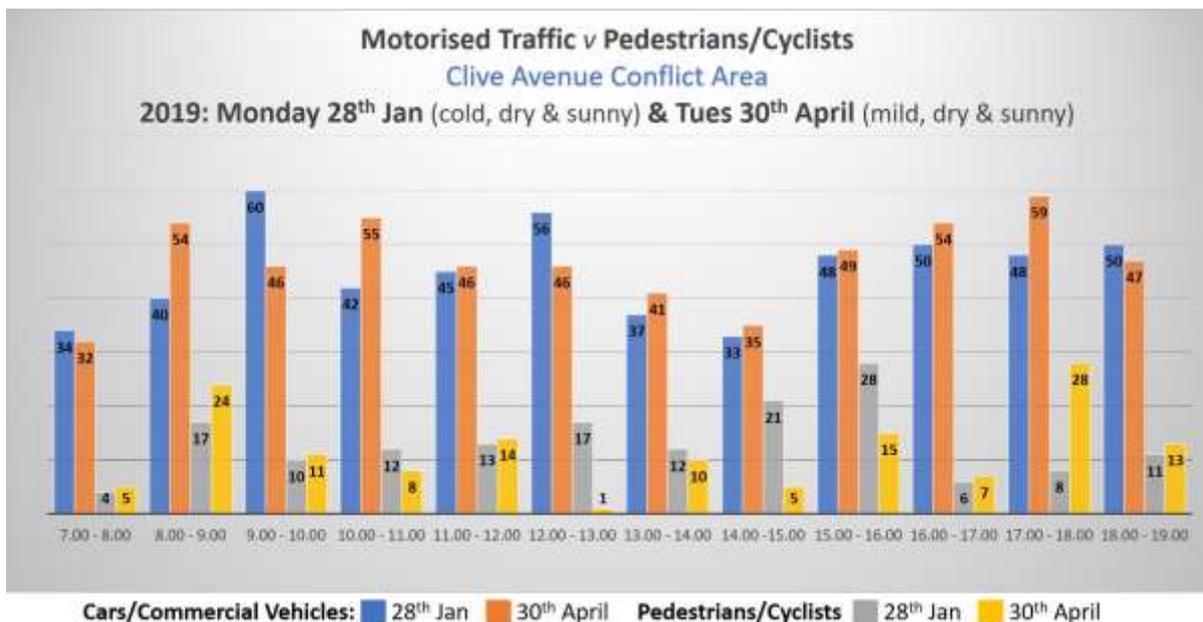
So, we ask, **‘What has changed?’** given that all traffic and pedestrian movements are now at considerably higher levels than those recorded in the 2012 BWB Report. The Clive Avenue Conflict Area has arguably reached a tipping point as a high risk pedestrian environment — any increase in traffic load portends to a calamitous outcome which the continuing creep of infill development is destined to exacerbate.



Bike, Run, Walk!

Section 7. Reduction in Number of Homes in CST021 Proposal. Is it relevant ?

- It is possible that one of the arguments being relied upon by the Site Promoter and Shropshire Council is that the current proposal (70 homes, not the 100 envisaged in 2012) is a ‘game changer’ in terms of vehicle and pedestrian volumes/safety. **Would such a claim stand up to scrutiny?**
- The reason the 30% reduction is not a ‘game changer’ at all is because the BWB data for observed movement volumes at Clive Avenue in 2012 hopelessly fails to reflect the more credible volumes established through the 4 x 12 hour Community Conducted Traffic Surveys of 2019.
- To recap. Depending on which set of 2019 data is used (Clive Avenue Conflict Area or Clive Avenue with Junction of Watling St South) the movement volumes established by the Church Stretton Community (Tues 30 April 2019) exceed the BWB 2012 volumes as follows:
 - ◊ Clive Avenue Conflict Area (Pedestrians/Cyclists + 550%, Cars/Commercial Vehicles +180%, Overall +220%).
 - ◊ Clive Avenue with Junction of Watling St South (Pedestrians/Cyclists +1,000%, Cars/Commercial Vehicles +230%, Overall +300%).
- When Shropshire Council decided in 2014 to remove Snatchfield as a ‘preferred site’ it did so by taking into account traffic study results that were considerably lower than those reported by our 2019 community led study . We have provided hard, irrefutable and unmatched evidence that, even with 30 fewer homes in the current proposal (100 homes 2012/70 now) projected traffic and pedestrian volumes considerably exceed those considered unacceptable in 2014.
- As such, a 30% reduction of new home numbers in the current Snatchfield proposal is not a ‘game changer’ at all — a reduction of 100% and a moratorium on all new residential housing development is the only safe ‘game changing outcome’! *Even a limited CST021 development of say, a handful of homes simply sets up an ‘infill creep’ as a series of future applications for ‘just another handful’ of new Snatchfield homes will undoubtedly ensue, ultimately producing a highly dangerous outcome local residents are desperately trying to avoid right now.*



Section 9. Conclusion

- Local residents fully supported Shropshire Council's removal of Snatchfield as a 'preferred site' in 2014; a decision based largely on the grounds of highway and pedestrian safety, particularly in regard of CACA . That decision even withstood the rigours of an objection by the site's Promoter and review by an Independent Planning Inspector.
- Church Stretton residents were understandably puzzled when Snatchfield re-emerged as a 'preferred site' 4 years later, as part of Shropshire Council's Partial Review of the current Local Plan.
- Even from the limited documents available at that time, it was clear that there were no new compelling reasons (no new evidence, no proposed mitigations to address previous issues) to explain Shropshire Council's about-face.
- In the subsequent Shropshire Council 2018/19 public consultation exercise, 87% of respondents who expressed an opinion about Snatchfield were opposed to site CST021, many citing highways and pedestrian safety issues.
- Residents were so taken aback by the inclusion of CTS021 that it inspired a group of volunteers to conduct a community led, scientifically founded CACA Traffic Survey. Thye study's primary aim was to establish the then current status of Vehicular, Pedestrian/Child Pedestrian and Cyclist volumes. To provide a qualitative input, 'Incidents of Concern' were also noted and some photographed. Several 'close call' events were observed. The findings describe a much busier road environment than may have been envisaged by local Planners.
- More recently, we have obtained information and documentation not previously in the public domain. Through a series of Freedom of Information Requests to Shropshire Council, we obtained copies of BWB Transport & Infrastructure Planning Report, Shropshire Highways 2014 analysis, Shropshire Highways 2018 analysis.
- Taken in the round, it is very clear that there exists a considerable difference in the data sets of the 2012 BWB traffic survey and that of the four period, community led survey of 2109. During the intervening five years, there has been a meaningful increase in in residential households due to infill new builds and conversion of at least one large older property.
- **Shropshire Council now has a significant body of new evidence that clearly underpins the basis and integrity of rejecting all previous applications relating to the CST021 site. In fact, the previously recognised risks have now evidentially ramped up to such a point that a temporary moratorium on all future residential development must be put in place. It should remain in place until all the CACA road safety risks are comprehensively and permanently mitigated.**
- We are publishing our reports, summaries and data finding and are happy for these to be employed evidentially by any third party, for any reason.
- We recommend that this summary is read in conjunction with our full report of findings.