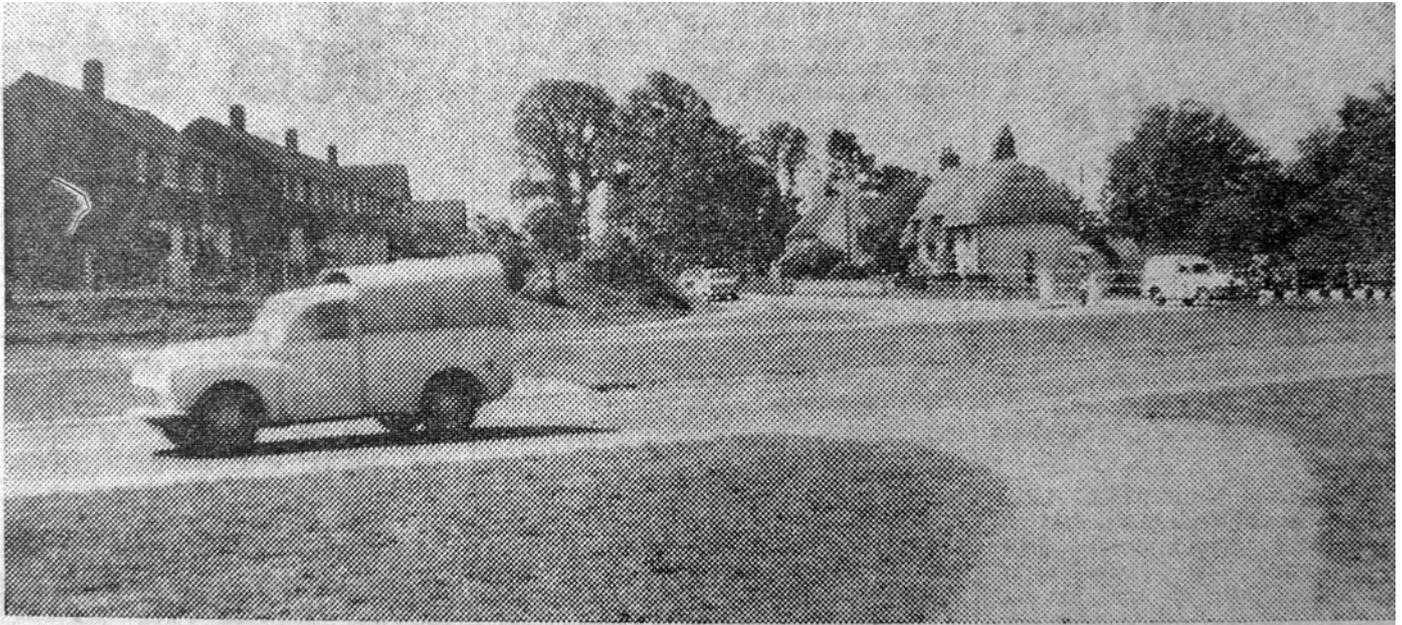


HERALD EXCLUSIVE: 'Keep death off bypass' plans stay secret

COUNCIL KEPT IN DARK

Traffic plans far-reaching

Christchurch Herald 28th June 1963



The Burton-road junction with the bypass, site of the proposed roundabout.

CHRISTCHURCH Herald can today reveal that the latest proposals for keeping death off Christchurch bypass are much more far-reaching than the Town Council was told on Tuesday.

TRUE the Hampshire County Council surveyor is proposing a roundabout for the Burton-road junction.

BUT—what about the other junction at Stony-lane? It can now be disclosed that the staggered intersection would be abolished.

This would mean considerable diversion of vehicles which would normally reach Christchurch bypass down Stony-lane.

An even heavier weight of traffic than at present would be thrown on to the Burton-road junction and possibly the Fountain Roundabout in the centre of Christchurch.

Buses—the Hants and Dorset Nos. 15 and 15a—would have to be rerouted, with possible increases in fares and re-arrangements of schedules.

INTERSECTION

The objections may be over-ruled by the advantages, but why wasn't the town council told about the Stony-lane proposal at Tuesday's meeting?

Deputy county surveyor, Mr. Elton, assured the Christchurch Herald after the meeting that he did tell the council's Highways Committee on Monday that the Stony-lane intersection would be removed.

Said Mr. Elton: "We said that if we can go to the expense of the roundabout at Burton-road so we would close the opening in the central reservation of the bypass at Stony-lane. We feel that should be done.

"I suggested they had to be 'married' together."

The explanation of why the council was kept in the dark about the Stony-lane proposal was given by the Town Clerk, Mr. John Macfadyen, on Wednesday.

DIVERSION

"It will be the subject of separate resolutions and proceedings," he said. "They are separate things to be decided separately.

"The Highways Committee was asked on Monday to deal with the roundabout as quickly as possible. As to the Stony-lane, crossing, obviously nothing we can say about it now is going to make a scrap of difference until the roundabout is in operation.

"Then we shall take action on Stony-lane. There is no urgency about it."

Closing of the Stony-lane intersection would mean that vehicles approaching Christchurch from the north would be diverted at Winkton to Salisbury-road and the Burton-road roundabout.

North-bound traffic which continued to use Stony-lane South would turn left at the bypass and reach Stony-lane North via the Fountain roundabout.

Hants and Dorset 15 and 15a buses would probably cut out the Town Hall stop and turn left from Bargates into the bypass.

Approaching Christchurch from Winkton they would have to get from Stoney-lane North to the Burton-road roundabout by using either the bypass northern carriageway or Martins Hill-lane, Burton.

New limit trial on the bypass

HAMPSHIRE County Council could be ready to go ahead with the proposed Burton-road roundabout on Christchurch bypass in about six months.

This was stated by deputy county surveyor, Mr. Elton, after Tuesday's meeting of Christchurch Town Council, which called on the County Council to submit a scheme as soon as possible.

The council also agreed to ask for the Minister of Transport's consent to a 40 mph limit on the bypass as a 12 months' experiment.

Only a rough sketch of the roundabout scheme — which involves the demolition of six houses—was shown to a bypass conference at Christchurch Town Hall on Monday at which two of the organisers of the 2,551-name bypass petition were present.

But Mr. Elton, who was there, assured the Christchurch Herald that a scheme in sufficient detail could be produced in time for the County Roads and Bridges Committee meeting at Winchester in about a fortnight's time.

It could then go to the County Council meeting on July 29, and then to the Ministry and Christchurch council.

"I think the only delay will be in the acquisition of the houses and the rehousing of tenants," said Mr. Elton.

Four of the dwellings are occupied by council tenants on the Somerford Estate.

REHOUSING

Christchurch town clerk Mr. John Macfadyen said: "I don't think there is any difficulty in rehousing them. I am quite sure we shall have vacancies when the time comes.

"It means that someone else who might have had a house won't have one. We might possibly have to provide accommodation for the people from the other houses."

Monday's bypass conference consisted of the council's Highways Committee, four members of the Road Safety Committee, a county councillor, members of the county surveyor's staff Mr. R. R. C. Johnson representing the Ministry of Transport Divisional Road Engineer police, and Mr. B. W. Ryan and Mr. A. J. Hembling.

Mr. Ryan and Mr. Hembling helped organise the action-demanding petition to the Minister which followed the death of an eight-year-old Somerford boy who was killed last February while crossing Christchurch bypass at the Burton-road junction.

Mr. Elton told the conference the roundabout scheme would cost about £54,000 compared with not less than £163,000 for a flyover.

The roundabout would reduce the speed of vehicles to about 25 mph, so that pedestrians would find it safer to cross the main carriageways.

The likelihood of serious accidents between vehicles would be virtually eliminated.

Mr. Elton told the conference that statistics showed the Burton-road junction to be the principal danger point on the bypass. In the year before the bypass was built there were 98 accidents on Somerford-road which was then the only route for through traffic

In the first year of the bypass, 1958-59, there were 49 accidents on Somerford-road and 40 on the bypass, making 89 in all

Comparable figures in 1961-62 were 73 on Somerford-road, an increase, and 30 on the bypass, a decrease, making a total of 103.

ONE OVER 80

A traffic check on June 5 this year showed that the great mass of vehicles was travelling between 45 and 55 mph A few were doing 60, one did 72 and another did over 80.

The conference was told that the "slow" signs near the junctions had been effective for a period after their erection, but were not now noticeably observed by motorists

On the suggestion for traffic lights at the junctions, the police said difficulties arose from the build-up of traffic when the main stream was halted

After the conference the Highway Committee discussed the points raised, and its recommendations on the roundabout and speed limit were adopted at the town council meeting next day

Highways chairman, Ald. William Morgan, told the council the ministry and county council representatives were prepared to recommend the roundabout at Burton-road and to give it high priority. It was recognised that no one solution would entirely eliminate accidents.

On police objections to a speed limit Ald. Morgan said the police did not say what would happen if there were no speed limit in Barrack-road. The council was justified in asking the minister to think again.

The petitioner's representatives did not produce any suggestions and did not help, apart from emphasising the dangers which they all knew about, said Ald. Morgan. Only one member voted against the recommendations.

Surveyor to probe roundabout scheme

Christchurch Herald July 19, 1963

A THIRD alternative scheme to reduce the number of accidents on Christchurch by-pass road is to be investigated by Hampshire County Surveyor, Mr. H. N. Jenner.

The alternative has been suggested by Christchurch Borough Council and it involves the construction of a roundabout between the Burton road and Stony-lane crossings

The other alternatives, the Hampshire Roads Committee were informed at their meeting at Winchester on Monday, were a fly-over—cost about £185,000 — or a roundabout — cost £56,000 — both at Burton-road crossing

NEW SUGGESTION

Mr. Jenner explained that the roundabout between the crossings would involve a "U" turn for traffic coming out of Stony-lane.

"It is a new suggestion and I think it should be discussed with the Ministry of Transport," he said. "It would cost about half the money needed for the Burton-road roundabout since no houses would have to be demolished."

Sir Richard Anstruther-Gough-Calthorpe said he thought it would be cheaper in the long term to have a fly-over.

Mr. C. A. Leavens suggested making the road corrugated as one method of slowing down the speed of traffic.

TWYNHAM TALKING

DURING last month's council debate on Christchurch by-pass. I felt the members were being too impetuous in deciding that a roundabout was the best way of dealing with the accident problem at Burton-road junction and I kept wondering when somebody would ask, "What about the other junction at Stony-lane?"

Afterwards this newspaper disclosed that the council had been kept in the dark, albeit innocently. It was not told that the county proposed to close the Stony-lane intersection at the same time as it opened the Burton-road roundabout.

This put an entirely different complexion on the matter. I am puzzled at the fact that the highways committee, which now advocates the Stony-lane roundabout, did not do so in the first place. Unlike the council, the committee heard the county's proposal in full.

Did the committee naively imagine that once the Burton-road roundabout had been built—at a cost of £54,000 and six dwellings—the county would willingly cough up thousands of pounds more for a roundabout at Stony-lane? Surely not?

NOT CONVINCING

Turning to the accident problem, I am not convinced that the council has gone deeply enough into the practicability of traffic lights. We were treated to vague hints about the horrors that attended their installation on some other by-pass. But what facts were stated to show that the cases were parallel? The fact that both roads are by-passes is not enough to dismiss the idea of traffic lights at Christchurch.

Let's have more facts. Let's go into the fears expressed by the experts that accidents would be caused at the lights by vehicles "jumping the gun." Because of these fears, the suggestion of lights was dismissed almost derisively, yet in the next breath we were told there would still be accidents with a roundabout. The experts cannot have it both ways.

We were told that because the intersections at Stony-lane and Burton-road are "staggered" traffic lights here would be even less practicable than elsewhere. Why?

Could it not be that the staggering gives us what is required to prevent accidents through drivers trying to beat the green light, that is, a breathing space between the lights and vehicles crossing the main traffic stream?

NORMAL PROCEDURE

Admittedly, the lights would have to be so phased that north-bound and south-bound vehicles did not cross at the same time, but this is quite normal procedure.

There is no physical reason why the breathing space should not be increased even more by siting the lights well back from the junction.

Another advantage of lights is that they could be so timed at the two junctions as to regulate the speed of vehicles travelling towards and between them, producing a kind of enforced speed limit.

This system is used extensively and effectively on, to take only one example, the Great West Road between Kensington and London Airport.

USELESS LIMIT

Christchurch council is proposing to put a 40 mph limit on the by-pass, but this would be useless unless the police could spare the men to enforce it, which I doubt. I doubt whether the Minister will confirm the proposal anyhow.

Traffic lights would also make crossing safer and easier for pedestrians. An expensive subway, which is the latest suggestion for the Burton-road junction, would be unnecessary.

To sum up, traffic lights would be far cheaper to install than roundabouts, they would solve the pedestrian problem which roundabouts would not, they would obviate the need for subways or some other measure for pedestrians, they would limit the speeds of vehicles, and they would not require vehicles to cross or filter into moving traffic streams which all previous suggestions have demanded.

They might have their disadvantages, but at any rate, let's try traffic lights as an experiment.

Bypass subway move

Christchurch Herald August 30th, 1963

FRIARS Cliff Residents' Association has written to the Minister of Transport stating that it does not feel the proposed 40 mph speed limit would improve safety on Christchurch bypass.

Instead, it will try to get a subway beneath the road at the Burton-road junction.

Secretary Mr. J. T. Beattie told the quarterly meeting on Monday that while the association sympathised absolutely and completely with people who had suffered accidents, or with their relatives, it felt a speed limit would aggravate the position.

The Minister had replied through the local MP, Mr. John Cordle, said Mr. Beattie, saying that something was being done about the bypass, but it did not appear that a speed limit would help.

The chairman, Mr. E. T. Grace, said he thought a 40 mph speed limit called drivers to disregard speed limits generally. A car travelling at 40 was just as dangerous to children crossing the bypass at the Burton-road junction as vehicles going faster.

Roundabout

Mr. Beattie said the Minister had stated that when he came to his decision he would do his best to make a grant available towards the cost as soon as possible.

Coun. Eric Spreadbury said he did not think a roundabout, which was being considered by the county highways committee, would help people to cross the bypass.

He had heard a figure of £150,000, in connection with the roundabout. "Have we gone stark raving mad when we can put a subway there?" he asked.

His suggestion for a pedestrian subway at the Burton-road junction was supported by the meeting on a vote.

Christchurch town clerk Mr. John Macfadyen said this week no objections had been received to the council's proposal for a 40mph limit. The period of objection expired last Friday.

Mr. Macfadyen said objections should have been sent to the council, but if any had gone to the Minister he had no doubt they would be considered by him when he considered whether to confirm the Council's proposal or not.

BLACK SPOT PLEA FOR JUNCTIONS

Christchurch Herald December 13th, 1963

CHRISTCHURCH highways committee is asking the town council to erect "Accident Black Spot" notices at the two road junctions on Christchurch by-pass.

The town council is also being recommended to ask Hampshire County Council if it would be prepared to meet the cost of street lighting.

The committee wants the council to urge early and favourable consideration for the proposed 40 mph speed limit and on hearing the Minister of Transport's decision, to consider further the question of traffic lights.

23 ACCIDENTS

The committee had before it a letter from the divisional road engineer pointing out that from January 1. 1960, to April 30, 1963, there were 23 accidents at the Burton-road junction and 15 at Stony-lane.

"It is indeed most regrettable that the two Burton-road casualties were both fatalities, but I do not think this detracts from the fact, that the main problems on the Christchurch by-pass generally, and at these junctions in particular is one of vehicles rather than pedestrians.

"I consider that any solution to the difficulties should be aimed principally at making traffic movements safer, while at the same time improving conditions for the comparatively few pedestrians who have to cross the bypass."

The installation of traffic-light signals would not make traffic movements safer for traffic with an overall average speed of 53 mph. Traffic lights would not necessarily provide conditions of perfect safety for pedestrians.

BEST SOLUTION

He was convinced that the best practicable solution was a roundabout at the Burton-road junctions to slow down traffic. This would make it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross.

"Regarding the financial side of the matter, we consider it a better policy to spend a larger sum of money, when available to achieve the correct solution, rather than spend a smaller sum to achieve nothing or, even, cause a deterioration in the situation.

"Bearing all this in mind I regret that I am unable to accede to your council's request for the installation of traffic lights at these two junctions."

The committee decided to recommend the council to inform the divisional road engineer that the council reserved comment on the position which would arise if a speed limit were not approved.

In the meantime the council should point out that it did not accept the arguments put forward on the assumption that a speed limit might be imposed, as such arguments appeared to be based on the likelihood of contraventions of the law.

The highways committee decided to take no action on the suggestion of Christchurch Ratepayers' Association that the by-pass should be renamed "London-road."

'Black spot' by-pass challenge

Christchurch Herald December 20th, 1963

Christchurch town council decided on Tuesday to erect "Black Spot" warning notices on the by-pass whether the Ministry of Transport likes it or not.

Coun. Walter Tucker issued a challenge to the Minister. "If you want the signs down then come and take them down yourself—and we will re-erect them five minutes afterwards"

As previously reported in this newspaper, the Ministry has turned down the council's appeal for traffic lights at the two junctions,

Highways chairman Ald. William Morgan told the council no decision had yet been reached on their proposal for a 40 mph. speed limit.

Danger signs could only be placed on the by-pass with the consent of the Minister, and this they had not got. Four signs would be necessary, costing about £50.

"You might be asked to remove them as soon as they come to the notice of the Ministry," said Ald. Morgan. His "Scotch blood" rather rebelled at spending money on something that had got to come down again.

Coun. Barrington Myers said they were the people on the spot, they were the people who were suffering. "I am prepared to stand my proportion of that £50," he declared.

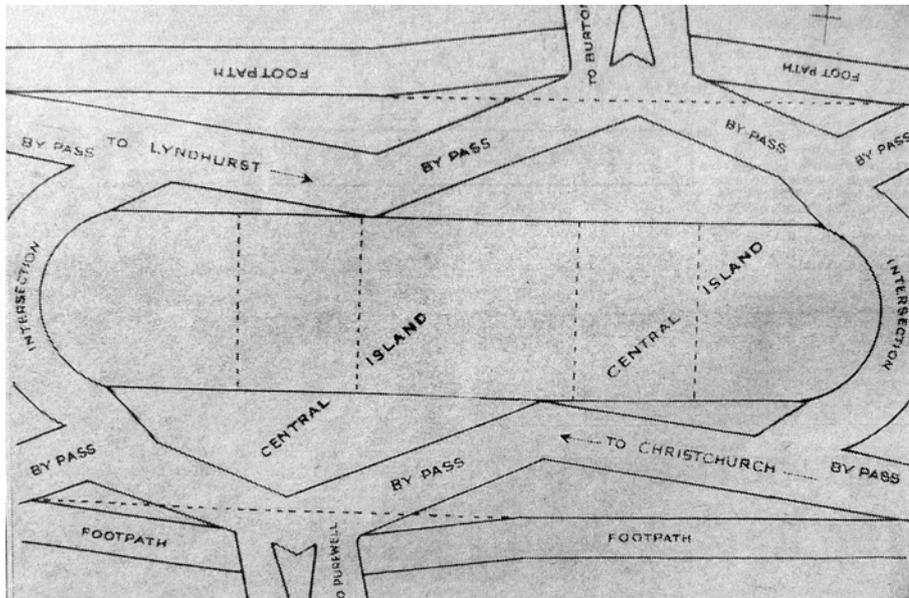
TRAFFIC LIGHTS

"If we save one accident the cost will be well spent. If it saves injury it will be more than well spent. If it saves a fatality there is nothing for me to add."

Coun. Mrs. Irene Stevenson hoped they would make another effort to get the traffic lights.

Coun. Robert Affleck felt the council was going "too fast" and suggested they get the Minister's approval before erecting signs. His suggestion was defeated by 11 votes to 8.

The council urged the Ministry to give early and favourable consideration to the 40 mph. speed limit. The county council is to be asked if it would meet the cost of street lighting on the by-pass.



Here published for the first time, is the “diamond junction” designed by Mr. A. J. Hembling, of Footners-lane, Burton, which he has asked the Minister of Transport to put on Christchurch by-pass to stop the accident toll. This one shows the Burton-road junction. The object is to slow by-pass traffic by squeezing it into one lane and making it zig-zag.

