

Sharing Responsibility - Changing Behaviour

A Review of the Number of People Killed
or Seriously Injured on Wealden's Roads

A Report by a Working Party
of the Community Scrutiny Committee
Wealden District Council



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NOTE - Data Provided by the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership

Data regarding personal injury collisions is recorded by Sussex Police in accordance with the Department for Transport, Stats 19 requirements. The data is supplied to Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) by Sussex Police for use in monitoring and planning. While every effort is made to ensure that this data is accurate, it is subject to change should further information become available. This data may not be fully validated and while every effort is made to ensure it's accuracy any statistics provided may not match those published elsewhere. SSRP does not hold collision data where there are no recorded casualties or the incident has not been reported to Sussex Police.

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Monday 18th January, 2010

Dear Reader,

I have pleasure in enclosing the report on the review of road safety. It is a subject, which is quite rightly of great importance to many people. The Working Party have reviewed as many aspects of the topic as possible within the permitted time constraints.

It is in everyone's interest that we all, as local organisations, work together to minimise the number of people who are killed or seriously injured on Wealden's roads. However it has also become abundantly clear as the review progressed that all of us who use the roads, whether as a driver, motorcyclist, pedal-cyclist, pedestrian or horse-rider have a responsibility to ourselves and others to follow the highway code and act responsibly.

I would like to thank all the individuals and organisations that took time to provide evidence to members of the Working Party; members were extremely impressed not only by their professionalism but their passionate commitment to making the roads safer. I would also like to thank members of the Working Party and especially Jeremy Leach, who have given a considerable amount of their time, effort and input to this review.

I commend this report to you.

Yours faithfully,

Johanna Howell

Councillor Johanna Howell
Chairman of the Working Party

Working Party Members

- Councillor Nick Ellwood
- Councillor Johanna Howell (Chairman)
- Councillor Roy Martin
- Councillor Niki Oakes
- Councillor Susan Stedman

Officer Support

- Dr Jeremy Leach

Terms of Reference

The Working Party was given and agreed the following terms of reference:

1. investigating why the numbers of those killed or seriously injured on Wealden's roads are so high;
2. considering the plans in place to address the high numbers; and
3. making recommendations on how Wealden District Council can influence the issue.

Definitions

Killed

Human casualties who sustain injuries leading to death less than 30 days after the incident.

KSI

Killed and seriously injured.

Serious Injury

An injury for which a person is detained in hospital as an 'in-patient', or any of the following injuries whether or not they are detained in hospital: fractures; concussion; internal injuries; crushings; burns (excluding friction burns); severe cuts; severe general shock requiring medical treatment; and injuries causing death 30 days or more after the accident. An injury casualty is recorded as serious or slightly injured by the police on the basis of information available within a short time of the accident. This generally will not reflect the results of a medical examination, but may be influenced according to whether the casualty is hospitalised or not. Hospitalisation procedures will vary regionally.

Slight Injury

An injury of a minor character such as a sprain (including neck whiplash injury), bruise or cut which are not judged to be severe or slight shock requiring roadside assistance. This definition includes injuries not requiring medical treatment.

Introduction

It would be very easy to undertake a review on road safety and get totally absorbed by the statistics and the science of road safety and forget that behind every statistic is a personal tragedy, involving pain, suffering and all too frequently human loss. However the Working Party were all too aware of the human aspects of serious road crashes, let alone the costs involved and wanted to assure readers that these aspects of the issue were always kept in mind.

The review was undertaken because of the high numbers of people who are killed or seriously injured on Wealden's roads. Indeed, in recent years, the district has the worst record for the number of people being killed or seriously injured on the roads in East Sussex and the South East Region. The Council were keen to ensure that they were not only fully conversant with the facts, but also that Wealden District Council is doing all it can to assist with reducing the numbers.

This review has also generated a large amount of interest from agencies and individuals outside of Wealden District Council. In a questionnaire, distributed to parish and town councils across Wealden, as part of the review process, recipients were asked to rate the importance of road safety on a 10 point scale (with 1 being of little importance and 10 being very important). Firstly they were asked to rate the importance to the parish / town council and secondly to their local residents, Table 1 below summarises the response, it is clear that the topic is very important to both local councils and residents.

Table 1: Summary of responses from parish and town councils when asked to assess the importance of road safety to their councils and residents (n = 19).

	Mean Score
Importance to your Council	9.5
Importance to local residents	9.3

N.B. The nearer to 10 the mean score, the more important road safety is assessed to be.

In evidence given to the Working Party, Members were shown several pictures of vehicles that had been involved in serious road crashes and of the sites of many of these crashes. It is not something that the majority of road users see, as roads are normally closed following such incidents. The pictures left little to the imagination as to what may have happened to the occupants of those vehicles, which Members found particularly powerful. What it did was to convince the Working Party, if they needed any convincing, of the importance of the subject.

Indicators and Targets

There are a number of national and local indicators and targets relevant to the subject of road safety.

National Target - Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Britain's roads by 40% by 2010. From a baseline of the average numbers over the five year period between 1994 to 1998

National Indicator 47 - People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents. (The percentage change in the number of people killed or seriously injured during the calendar year compared to the previous year. Figures are based on a 3 year rolling average, up to the current year).

National Indicator 48 - Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents. (The percentage change in the number of Children (under 16 years of age) killed or seriously injured during the calendar year compared to the previous year. Figures are based on a 3 year rolling average, up to the current year).

East Sussex Local Area Agreement Target - People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents to be reduced by 6.7% (331) by 2010 from a baseline of 375, a 3 year rolling average of calendar years 05/06/07. (Figures are based on a 3 year rolling average, up to the current year).

The National Picture

The Government have set a target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Britain's roads by 40% by 2010. That is from a baseline of the average numbers over the five year period between 1994 to 1998. To date the figure has dropped by 36%, and therefore the Government is on target. They are currently consulting on plans to reduce the figure even further in the next ten years.

These challenging targets are set against a rise in the total number of vehicles on Britain's roads, with rapid increases in private car numbers since the 1970's. The number of motorcycles has not risen so sharply. Table 2 below provides an indication of this increase, both for private cars and motorcycles, also recorded in the total vehicle column are the numbers of heavy and light goods vehicles and public transport vehicles.

Another important factor is the large lengths of roads in Britain, Table 3 below summarises the lengths of roads in Britain by road type.

However despite the numbers of vehicles on the roads rising, an increase by a factor of two-and-a-half since the 1970's, the number of fatalities has fallen. The worst years for deaths on Britain's roads were 1940 and 1941 (the blackout) and 1966, the year before alcohol blood limits were introduced and

the fitting of seat belts in new cars were made compulsory. It is now a legal requirement (with certain specific exemptions), for the driver and all passengers to be appropriately restrained in a motor vehicle. It is the responsibility of the passengers to ensure they are restrained unless those passengers are under 14 years old, when that responsibility passes to the driver.

The world's first recorded motor vehicle fatality was Mary Ward who died on 31st August 1869 when she fell out of her cousin's steam car and was run over.

Table 2: Vehicle Numbers on Britain's Roads Since 1903 (Thousands)

Year	Private Cars	Motorcycles	Total Vehicles
1903	8	-	18
1909	53	36	144
1920	187	288	650
1930	1,056	712	2,272
1935	1,477	492	2,569
1939	2,034	418	3,149
1945	1,487	309	2,553
1950	1,979	643	3,970
1960	4,900	1,583	8,512
1970	9,971	923	13,548
1980	14,660	1,372	19,199
1990	19,742	833	24,673
1995	20,505	594	25,369
2000	23,196	825	28,898
2005	26,208	1,075	32,897
2006	26,508	1,094	33,369
2007	26,878	1,133	33,957

(Source: Department for Transport 2008)

Table 3: Public road length in Britain, by road type 2007

Road Type	Kilometres (Miles)
Motorways	3,559 (2,212)
Rural Trunk 'A' Roads	8,258 (5,131)
Rural 'A' Roads	27,346 (16,992)
Rural 'B' Roads	24,795 (15,407)
Rural 'C' Roads	73,480 (45,660)
Unclassified Rural Roads	115,365 (71,686)
Total Kilometres of Rural Roads	249,244 (154,876)
Urban Trunk 'A' Roads	425 (264)
Urban 'A' Roads	10,714 (6,658)
Urban 'B' Roads	5,470 (3,398)
Urban 'C' Roads	10,942 (6,799)
Unclassified Urban Roads	114,524 (71,164)
Total Kilometres of Urban Roads	142,075 (88,283)
Total Kilometres of All Roads	394,878 (245,371)

(Source: Department for Transport 2008)

Table 4 below summarises the number of deaths on Britain's roads since 1926. There has been an almost two thirds fall in deaths since the 1970's despite the rise in the amount of traffic.

Table 4: Deaths on Britain's Roads since 1926

Year	Pedestrians	Cyclists	Motorcyclists	Car Occupants	All other road users	All road users
1926	-	-	-	-		4,886
1927	2,774	644	1,175	-	736	5,329
1930	3,722	887	1,832	-	864	7,305
1934	3,529	1,536	1,430	-	848	7,343
1940	4,724	1,363	1,270	-	1,252	8,609
1941	4,781	1,355	1,412	-	1,621	9,169
1950	2,251	805	1,129	-	827	5,012
1961	2,717	645	1,544	1,548	454	6,908
1966	3,153	514	1,134	2,588	596	7,985
1970	2,925	373	761	2,877	563	7,499
1975	2,344	278	838	2,444	462	6,366
1980	1,941	302	1,163	2,278	326	6,010
1985	1,789	286	796	2,061	233	5,165
1990	1,694	256	659	2,371	237	5,217
1995	1,038	213	445	1,749	176	3,621
2000	857	127	605	1,665	155	3,409
2005	671	148	569	1,675	138	3,201
2006	675	146	599	1,312	140	3,172
2007	646	136	588	1,432	144	2,946

(Source: Department for Transport 2008)

According to the Department for Transport the British road network is relatively safe by international standards, indeed Britain's roads are amongst the safest in the world. However the Department acknowledge that there are considerable variations of the levels of safety on different parts of the road network. Of particular concern to the Government are rural roads, where in 2007 for example 62% of all deaths occurred, but they account for 42% of all traffic.

In addition, evidence provided to the Working Party by many experts, pointed to improved car design as being a major factor in the reduction of road fatalities.

Some interesting statistics were produced in a report drawn-up for the Institute of Advanced Motorists Motoring Trust (IAM Rural Roads - The Biggest Killer: 2009). The figures from this report are drawn from a variety of reputable sources including the Department for Transport and the Office for National Statistics.

Two thirds of fatal or serious injury crashes on Britain's rural roads are during daylight hours, on dry roads and in good weather conditions. Eight out of ten casualties killed or seriously injured on England's rural roads are on single carriageway roads and a third of fatal and serious injuries in rural road

accidents are in single vehicle crashes; half involve two vehicles. A third of fatal or serious injuries to car occupants on rural roads occur when the car is being driven on a bend; around a half occur on straight roads.

The report also claimed that almost three quarters of car occupants killed or seriously injured on rural roads are in cars driven by male drivers and most motorcycle casualties are on bikes ridden by male riders. A third of fatal and serious injury casualties on rural roads are in cars driven by young drivers, twice as many as in cars with a driver over the age of 60.

Three quarters of rural motorcyclist fatalities and serious injuries are riders aged between 25 and 59. Riders / passengers on more powerful motorbikes are the biggest group of rural biker deaths and serious injuries, in England; 80% of these more serious crashes involve motorbikes over 125cc.

When the statistics are studied for the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic crashes across all the English Counties for the year 2007/08, East Sussex finds itself with about average figures compared with all the other Counties. However, when the percentage change in the number of people killed or seriously injured since the 1994 - 1998 baseline are examined (which are the years used for the national target for reducing the number of killed or seriously injured by 40% by the year 2010), then the picture is not so good. East Sussex are the second worst performing County in England, with a lower percentage fall than most other Counties, but still managing to reduce casualties by about 15%.

This point was discussed with East Sussex County Council as part of the review and part of the limited improvement can be put down to the way that Sussex Police record and categorise injuries. East and West Sussex, Brighton and Hove have used a particular recording system for a number of years and are seen as lead authorities nationally by the Department for Transport in this area of work and for the accuracy of its data. For example, a broken finger sustained in a road traffic crash in East Sussex would be classed as a serious injury, however over the border in Kent it would not. By 2011 all English Counties will have to use the same method of recording, and this should see a more level playing field, which will put East Sussex's performance in a better light. In addition there is also a correlation between the numbers of serious crashes in a county and the lengths of its roads, which is very applicable to East Sussex as it has a higher than average length of road network, when compared to other counties.

The Local Picture

The responsibility for the roads in the district fall to two agencies. The Highways Agency is responsible for the A27 and the A259, both of these trunk roads cross the southern end of the district. The Agency is also responsible for a short section of the A22 at Polegate. All the other roads in Wealden (with the exception of private and un-adopted roads) are the responsibility of East Sussex County Council.

The subject of road safety is listed as a key issue in 'Pride of Place - Working Towards a Better Future for Local People and Local Communities', the sustainable community strategy for East Sussex. This document sets out a vision for East Sussex until the year 2026 and is linked to three sets of action plans: the Local Area Agreement; a County wide action plan; and local action plans based upon local community strategies.

Wealden's Sustainable Community Strategy along with the other two sets of action plans, all contain road safety as an important issue which needs improving. In addition the Safer Wealden Partnership has also put improving the safety on Wealden's roads as one of its priorities.

This is good news as it means a lot of effort across both the County and district and by the many agencies and organisations involved will be focussed on reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on the district's roads. The position is monitored regularly as part of the monitoring for the National Indicators 47 (People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents) and 48 (Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents).

The series of Tables that follow paint a picture of road safety in the Wealden area against a number of criteria. Tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 below, provide the figures for the numbers of killed or seriously injured on East Sussex roads by district and borough for 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

Table 5: Killed or seriously injured casualties by road user and district / borough 2006.

District	Pedestrian	Pedal Cycle	Powered 2-wheeler	Car / Taxi	Other	Total (Number of the total killed)
Eastbourne	12	4	15	21	1	53 (1)
Hastings	13	3	11	9	1	37 (1)
Lewes	12	3	17	31	2	65 (3)
Rother	15	1	20	52	9	97 (12)
Wealden	12	7	33	84	4	140 (20)
East Sussex	64	18	96	197	17	392 (37)

Table 6: Killed or seriously injured casualties by road user and district / borough 2007.

District	Pedestrian	Pedal Cycle	Powered 2-wheeler	Car / Taxi	Other	Total (Number of the total killed)
Eastbourne	16	11	9	15	2	53 (3)
Hastings	16	5	15	17	1	54 (1)
Lewes	9	4	18	37	4	72 (6)
Rother	10	4	15	43	4	76 (4)
Wealden	13	4	35	68	3	122 (12)
East Sussex	64	28	92	180	14	378 (26)

(Source: Transport and Environment Department, East Sussex County Council)

Table 7: Killed or seriously injured casualties by road user and district / borough 2008.

District	Pedestrian	Pedal Cycle	Powered 2-wheeler	Car / Taxi	Other	Total (Number of the total killed)
Eastbourne	18	3	8	18	5	52 (4)
Hastings	13	5	17	12	1	48 (0)
Lewes	8	6	16	37	3	70 (5)
Rother	12	6	19	46	0	83 (13)
Wealden	17	8	40	75	5	145 (17)
East Sussex	68	28	100	188	14	398 (39)

(Source: Transport and Environment Department, East Sussex County Council)

Table 8: Killed or seriously injured casualties by road user and district / borough 2009

District	Pedestrian	Pedal Cycle	Powered 2-wheeler	Car / Taxi	Other	Total (Number of the total killed)
Eastbourne	14	6	11	9	2	42 (0)
Hastings	16	3	17	11	4	51 (1)
Lewes	11	4	17	27	4	63 (4)
Rother	10	3	23	37	4	77 (2)
Wealden	13	10	38	68	9	138 (15)
East Sussex	64	26	106	152	23	371 (22)

(Source: Sussex Safer Road Partnership)

Tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 create a depressing picture, with considerable numbers of people being either killed or seriously injured on the district's roads. Of course it tends to occur on a drip-feed basis throughout the year and rarely draws sustained public attention. However if those numbers of casualties occurred through any other cause, such as several coach crashes, a plane crash, an outbreak of illness, then there would be public outcry.

The Department of Transport estimate that each fatality on Britain's roads costs approximately £1.6m.

Table 9 records the number of killed or seriously injured casualties per 1000 population by district and borough for the years 2006 to 2008. Table 10 shows the number of children aged 15 years and under who are killed or seriously injured per 1000 population for the years 2006 to 2008, it should be noted that the figures quoted in Table 9 are totals from all ages and therefore include the numbers of children who are killed or seriously injured.

Table 9: Killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties per 1000 population by district / borough 2006 - 2008.

District	Population	KSI per 1000 population (Absolute Number)		
		2006	2007	2008
Eastbourne	95,598	0.55 (53)	0.55 (53)	0.54 (52)
Hastings	86,219	0.43 (37)	0.56 (54)	0.50 (48)
Lewes	94,480	0.69 (65)	0.75 (72)	0.73 (70)
Rother	88,216	1.10 (97)	0.79 (76)	0.87 (83)
Wealden	143,761	0.97 (140)	0.86 (123)	1.01 (145)
East Sussex	508,274	0.77 (392)	0.74 (378)	0.78 (398)

(Source: Transport and Environment Department, East Sussex County Council)

Table 10: Children (15 years and under) killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties per 1000 population by district / borough 2006 - 2008. (These figures are included in the totals in Table 7)

District	Population	KSI per 1000 population (Absolute Number)		
		2006	2007	2008
Eastbourne	16,473	0.30 (5)	0.06 (1)	0.55 (9)
Hastings	16,762	0.36 (6)	0.48 (8)	0.48 (8)
Lewes	16,675	0.24 (4)	0.24 (4)	0.24 (4)
Rother	14,575	0.14 (2)	0.27 (4)	0.27 (4)
Wealden	26,765	0.34 (9)	0.41 (11)	0.37 (10)
East Sussex	91,250	0.28 (26)	0.31 (28)	0.38 (35)

(Source: Transport and Environment Department, East Sussex County Council)

Table 11 below shows that Wealden has the longest length of road of any district or borough in East Sussex and when measured against this criteria the lowest number of killed or seriously injured casualties per kilometre of road.

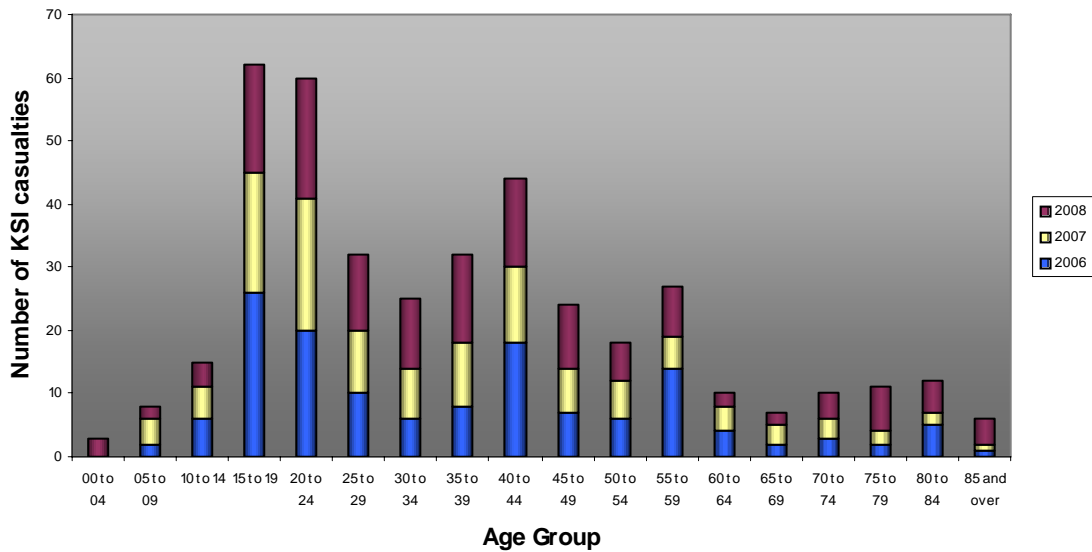
Table 11: Killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties per kilometre of road by district / borough and road class 2006 to 2008.

District	Road Class	Road Length (km)	KSI Casualties			KSI Casualties per km		
			2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Eastbourne	A	34	23	23	24	0.68	0.68	0.71
	B	14	2	3	2	0.15	0.22	0.15
	C	11	3	8	1	0.26	0.70	0.08
	Unclassified	234	25	19	25	0.11	0.08	0.11
	Total	293	53	53	52	0.18	0.18	0.18
Hastings	A	26	15	28	17	0.58	1.09	0.66
	B	14	1	9	9	0.07	0.64	0.64
	C	11	9	6	6	0.82	0.55	0.55
	Unclassified	185	12	11	16	0.06	0.06	0.09
	Total	236	37	54	48	0.16	0.23	0.20
Lewes	A	87	41	37	41	0.47	0.42	0.47
	B	35	10	16	10	0.28	0.45	0.28
	C	89	10	11	12	0.11	0.12	0.13
	Unclassified	318	4	8	7	0.01	0.03	0.02
	Total	530	65	72	70	0.12	0.14	0.13
Rother	A	124	69	35	47	0.56	0.28	0.38
	B	79	9	10	16	0.11	0.13	0.20
	C	208	11	22	9	0.05	0.11	0.04
	Unclassified	329	8	9	11	0.02	0.03	0.03
	Total	740	97	76	83	0.13	0.10	0.11
Wealden	A	206	90	66	80	0.44	0.32	0.39
	B	135	23	22	26	0.17	0.16	0.19
	C	410	15	24	26	0.04	0.06	0.06
	Unclassified	611	12	11	13	0.02	0.02	0.02
	Total	1,363	140	123	145	0.10	0.09	0.11
E Sussex	A	477	238	189	209	0.50	0.40	0.44
	B	277	45	60	63	0.16	0.22	0.23
	C	729	48	71	54	0.07	0.10	0.07
	Unclassified	1,677	61	58	72	0.04	0.03	0.04
	Total	3,161	392	378	398	0.12	0.12	0.13

Note: A roads include trunk roads. Road lengths are approximate.
 (Source: Transport and Environment Department, East Sussex County Council)

Figure 12 below shows the age of people who are killed or seriously injured on Wealden's roads during 2006, 2007 and 2008. The graph clearly shows that the 15 to 19 and the 20 to 24 age groups are the most at risk groups.

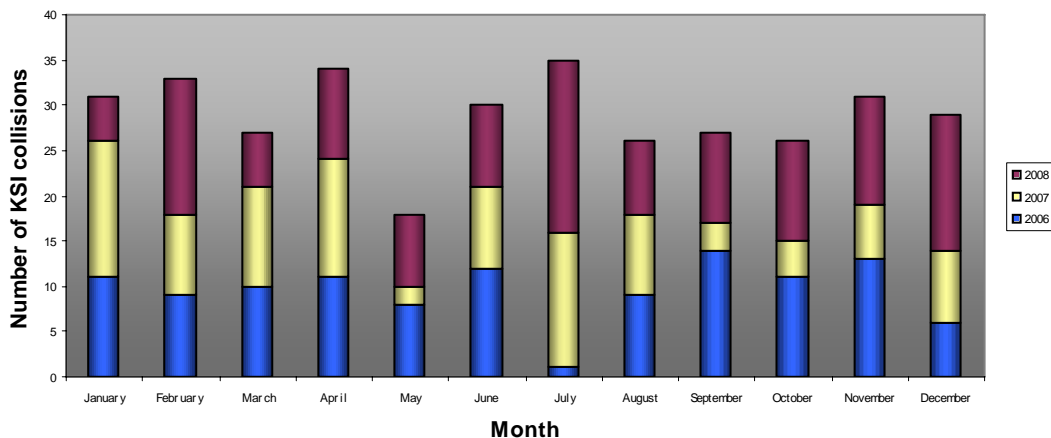
Figure 12: Age of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in Wealden for 2006, 2007 and 2008.



(Source: Sussex Safer Roads Partnership)

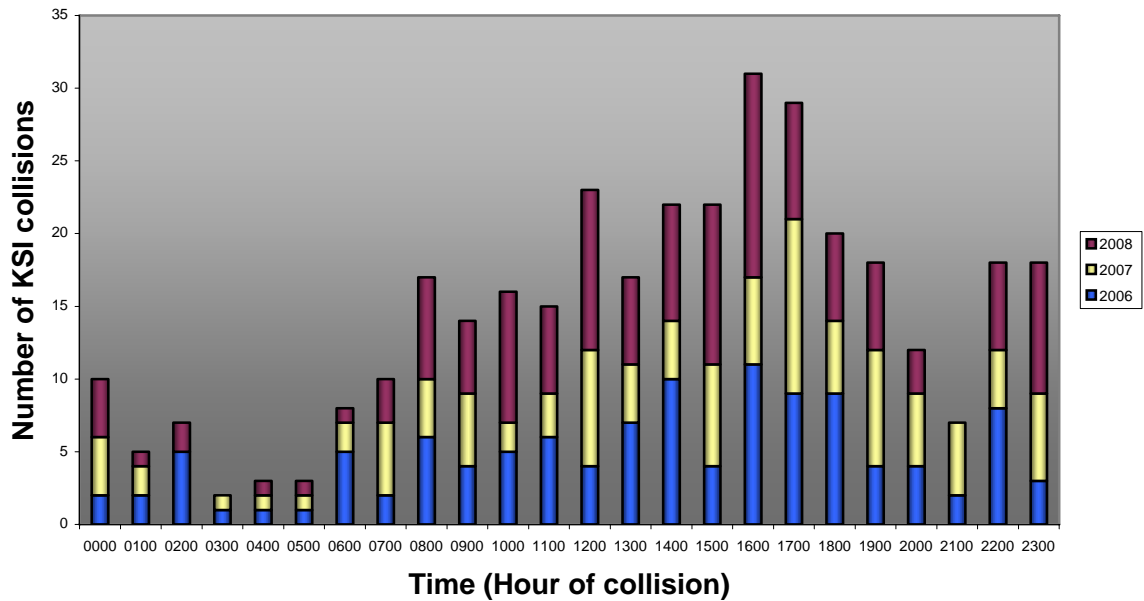
Figures 13 and 14 show the time of year and day that serious crashes occur on Wealden's roads during 2006, 2007 and 2008. The graphs show that crashes occur throughout the year, although July is just about the most common month. Between 4:00pm and 5:59pm is the most common time of day for serious crashes to occur.

Figure 13: Killed or seriously injured on Wealden's roads by month for 2006, 2007 and 2008.



(Source: Sussex Safer Roads Partnership)

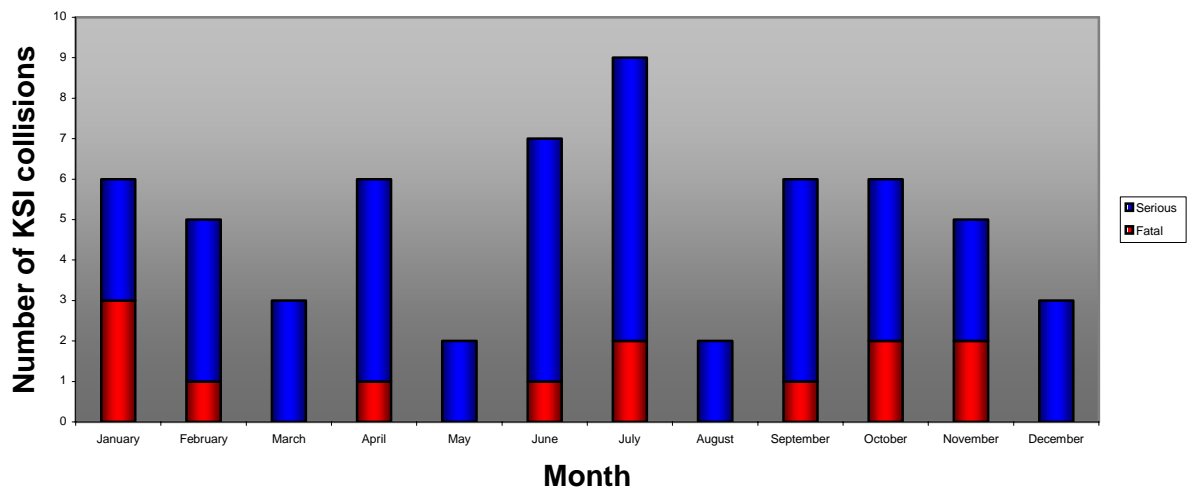
Figure 14: Killed or seriously injured on Wealden's Roads by time of day for 2006, 2007 and 2008.



(Source: Sussex Safer Roads Partnership)

The Working Party were also interested to know if there was a correlation between those peak times of day and month of the year. Do most of the accidents between those times occur during the winter months with the darker later afternoons and evenings? Figure 15 shows this not to be the case, indeed the most common time of year for accidents to occur between 4:00pm and 5:59pm is the summer months of June and July.

Figure 15: Killed or seriously injured on Wealden's Roads between the hours of 16:00 and 17:59 by month for 2006, 2007 and 2008.



(Source: Sussex Safer Roads Partnership)

Table 16 clearly shows that most drivers and riders that cause serious crashes in Wealden live relatively close to the site of the crash.

Table 16: Place of residence of driver / rider causing serious crashes in Wealden for 2006, 2007 and 2008

	2006	2007	2008	Total
0.0 to 9.9 miles	93	89	108	290
10 to 19.9 miles	24	16	20	60
20 to 29.9 miles	4	2	6	12
30 to 39.9 miles	2	3	3	8
40 to 49.9 miles	3	1	0	4
50 to 59.9 miles	0	0	2	2
60 to 69.9 miles	0	0	1	1
70 miles and over	6	3	0	9
Not known	8	8	4	20
Total	140	122	144	406

(Source: Sussex Safer Roads Partnership)

Table 17 shows that alcohol and drugs remain a serious contributory factor to crashes in Wealden.

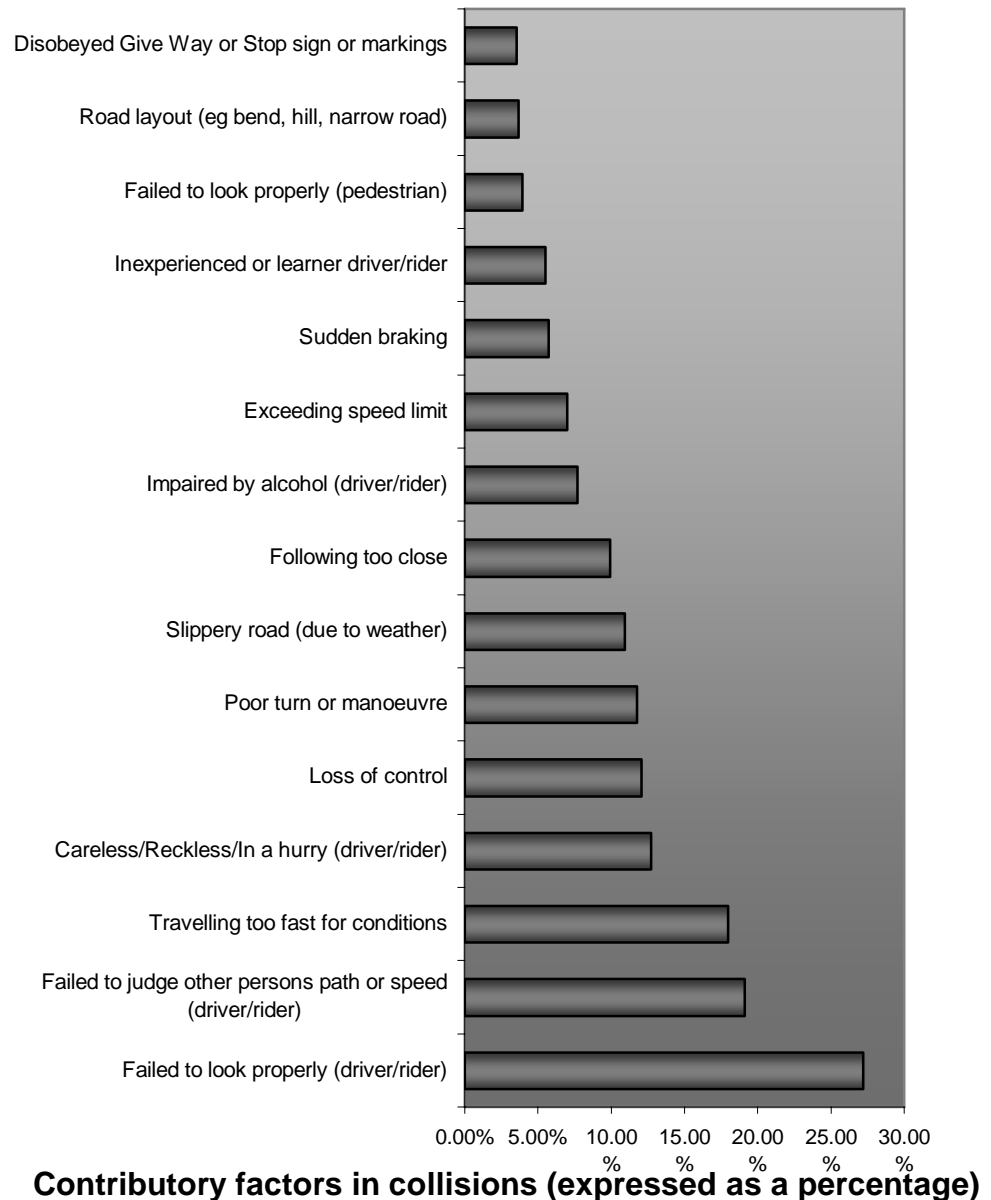
Table 17: Number of road traffic crashes in Wealden where alcohol or drugs (illicit or medicinal) was considered a major contributory factor or the driver took a positive breath test.

Year	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
2006	5	11	28	44
2007	5	9	29	43
2008	3	11	33	47
Total	13	31	90	134

(Source: Sussex Safer Roads Partnership)

Figure 18 shows that failing to look properly by drivers and riders is the most common contributory factor in crashes in Wealden, closely followed by failure to judge the other person's path or speed.

Figure 18: Top 15 contributory factors to crashes in Wealden 2006 - 2008.



N.B. As more than one contributory factor is usually assigned to each crash, the total may add up to more than 100%. In addition the contributory factor 'Impaired by alcohol (driver/rider)' (value = 7.70%) does not include other drugs. For 2006 - 2008 the contributory factor 'Impaired by drugs (illicit or medicinal) driver/rider' appeared as a factor in 0.59% of collisions in Wealden.

(Source: Sussex Safer Roads Partnership)

Why are the numbers of those killed or seriously injured on Wealden's roads so high?

Introduction

The national picture indicates that the majority of serious crashes (62% in 2007) resulting in people being killed occur on rural rather than urban roads. In that regard East Sussex and Wealden fit the national picture. During 2008, 75% of all the serious crashes in the County occurred in either the Lewes, Rother or Wealden districts, 36.5% of all of these crashes occurred in Wealden.

It must also be noted that Wealden has just over 43% of the total length of roads in the County, over two-and-a-half the length of roads in Lewes District and just under twice the length of roads in Rother. So although Wealden has the unenviable position of having the highest number of serious crashes in the County for the last three years, the District has the lowest record for the number of serious crashes per kilometre of road.

Road Traffic Crashes in Wealden

Standards of driving are a common factor to all areas, however the Working Party were struck by a statement from the Institute of Advanced Motorists, that: *'Rural roads are a particular challenge to younger drivers - a challenge for which their driving instruction and driving test may not adequately prepare them.'* In the view of the panel this view needs further investigation.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Having examined all the evidence and statistics we note the comment made by the Institute of Advanced Motorists: *'Rural roads are a particular challenge to younger drivers - a challenge which their driving instruction and driving test may not adequately prepare them.'* Members of the Working Party wholeheartedly agree with this statement and recommend that a number of measures are put in place to address this, including use of the Council's Websites and the use of a variety of media advising younger drivers and their parents / guardians of the risks of driving on rural roads.

The Working Party were keen to explore the adequacy of the driving test in more detail and whether it remains fit for purpose. Evidence was taken from the Driving Standards Agency on this subject. The Agency informed the Working Party that a public consultation on this subject had recently taken place. They are already taking forward a programme of measures to strengthen the way that people learn to drive and are tested, but are not aiming to make the driving test harder. This is a long-term programme, which supports progressive improvements.

The first phase aims to deliver, over the next two years, real changes focussing on an improved learning process; improved and broader theory and practical driving tests; and further options for learning and qualifications. The first changes to the theory test will be made from October 2009 and the first changes to the practical driving test will be made from October 2010.

The Working Party explicitly asked about whether the current test require drivers to demonstrate their skills on rural roads and also whether there were any plans to include a skid pan test. According to the Agency wherever possible the practical test is designed to take in roads of higher speed, both single and dual carriageways. However there are, the Agency admits, constraints on the type of roads available, dependent on the location of the driving test centre. There are no plans to introduce a skid-pan test.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Working Party are extremely concerned about the inadequacy of the driving test in relation to rural roads, motorways, night-driving and car control, given the comments made by the Institute of Advanced Motorists and the experience locally. It is recommended that the Council write to the Driving Standards Agency, local MPs and the Secretary of State for Transport about this matter.

The Working Party asked many of the witnesses for their views on the reasons for the high numbers of car crashes in Wealden. There was a commonality in the responses given, these were in no particular order:

- As has already been stated Wealden has the longest length of roads of any other district in the county and most of them are rural;
- There are only seven miles of dual-carriageway in the district and dual carriageways are far safer than single carriageway roads;
- The principal roads in Wealden were designed for traffic levels of 20 to 30 years ago, Table 1 shows that in Britain the number of vehicles on the country's roads has risen by 77% since the 1980 level, therefore some of the roads in the district are not suitable for the volumes of traffic they have to carry;
- Many of the key roads in Wealden are very unforgiving in that they are narrow and there are mature trees and other solid objects right on the edge of the carriageway, with little room for any driver / rider error, any vehicle hitting these objects will result in a poor outcome;
- There was a perception that there is less chance of being caught for driving offences, such as speeding, etc. in the country, than in towns.

Unlike many areas there are few accident 'black-spots' in Wealden, in this area it tends to be particular lengths of road where most of the accidents occur. The Working Party heard from East Sussex County Council and Sussex Police about the important part that road engineering solutions can play in reducing road crashes.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Working Party are convinced that road engineering solutions can play an important part in reducing the number of road traffic crashes. It is recommended that the Council write to East Sussex County Council supporting their review of 'key routes' where crashes occur, to establish where road engineering solutions may reduce the chances of crashes.

The Working Party were also persuaded by evidence from the Institute of Advanced Motorists that on rural roads, fewer pedestrians who follow the Highway Code advice and walk facing the traffic are killed or seriously injured than those who walk with their back to the traffic. In addition Working Party were also concerned, often through their own experiences, about pedestrians who do not follow the advice to wear something bright or reflective when out walking at night. This is all the more important on rural roads where street lighting may be poor or non-existent.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The Council should work with other local agencies, including schools to promote and remind pedestrians that, when out walking they should walk to face oncoming traffic and should wear something light in colour or reflective at night. Such common-sense, simple and practical advice could save a pedestrian from being killed or seriously injured.

In hearing evidence from one agency, the Working Party were struck by the fact that in many European Countries it is a legal requirement for motor vehicles to carry a number of pieces of safety equipment including a warning triangle, a high-visibility Jacket, a first-aid kit and a fire extinguisher. Such equipment would be very useful if and when drivers come across accidents.

RECOMMENDATION 5: The Council write to the Secretary of State at the Department for Transport to enquire if there are any plans to require vehicles in the UK to carry emergency equipment such as a warning triangle, a high-visibility, first-aid kit and a fire extinguisher as they do in many European Countries. If there are no plans then the Secretary of State be asked to consider such proposals.

Standards of Driving and Driver Behaviour

It has been made clear to the Working Party, by many witnesses who gave evidence, that most crashes are due to driver error. It is also clear from the evidence that we heard, that most crashes are due to a number of contributory factors, very few crashes have a single cause.

Speed is an interesting issue and there is no doubt that it is still a key contributory factor to many crashes, however the evidence suggests rather than speeding per se, it is the use of inappropriate speed for the prevailing conditions that is the problem. What is clear though, is that speed does increase the severity of the crash and the resultant injuries.

In a questionnaire to parish and town councils in the Wealden area, recipients were asked for their opinions and perceptions on the possible contributory factors to serious road crashes. Table 19 below lists the top five reasons given by respondents to the survey. The evidence suggests that speeding is assessed by local councils to be the key contributing factor to road traffic crashes.

Table 19: Responses from parish and town councils when asked for their opinions on contributory factors to serious road traffic crashes (n = 18)

Contributory Factors	Mean Score
Driver / Rider - Driving / riding too fast for the conditions	2.27
Driver / Rider - Driving / riding without due care and attention	3.23
Driver / Rider - Poor judgment	3.58
Driver / Rider - Aggressive / reckless driving / riding	3.83
Roads - poor condition of the road surface	6.29

N.B. The lower the mean score, the more important the contributory factor is assessed to be.

When the evidence is examined it is clear that a large proportion of the road traffic crashes in Wealden involve three groups of people:

1. The young driver / rider aged from 16 to 24;
2. riders of the more powerful motorcycles, mostly aged between 35 to 45 years old; and
3. those under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

The Working Party heard from East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service that many of the crashes they are called to attend often have alcohol and drugs as key contributory factors and in the opinion of the service this is likely to become more prevalent and important in the future.

Some officers from the various agencies interviewed, pointed to aggressive driving or driving whilst angry as an important road safety issue. These states of mind can deleteriously affect people's ability behind the wheel. It seems common-sense to state that we behave differently depending on our moods and emotions, but it is of course the implications for us as drivers and riders that need further attention and research. If people are frustrated or angry the decisions made will be different from when we feel happy or relaxed. It is clear that as drivers, riders or pedestrians we should be aware of the effects of our emotions on decision making and driving ability, so we do not surrender safety and performance to a bad mood.

A scheme that exists and which Panel Members were interested in, is a scheme called 'Pass Plus'. 'Pass Plus' is a training course aimed at new drivers and involves additional driving lessons and lectures on issues such as: motorway driving; dual carriageways; country road driving; all weather driving; night time driving; and town driving. The cost of the course is offset by a cash back incentive to those who complete the course and also the possibility of cheaper car insurance. The scheme is promoted widely, including on the Council's youth website (www.w4y.co.uk)

In addition there are a number of other training courses organised by the various agencies and aimed at different target groups. For example the Working Party learned about a speed awareness course aimed at offenders convicted of speeding offences. Also a hard-hitting awareness raising event aimed at year 12 and 13 students and organised by Sussex Fire and Rescue Service called 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive'.

Policing the Roads

The roads in East Sussex are policed by the Road Policing Unit of Sussex Police. The Working Party were surprised to learn that all Wealden's roads are policed on a day-to-day basis from the Road Policing Unit's Station at Polegate. This Unit has 1 Inspector, 4 Sergeants and 34 Constables and organises itself over a three shift pattern. The Polegate Unit also has the ability to request extra resources from Headquarters for special planned operations.

Although there has been no reduction in funds at present or planned, the Working Party were interested to note that current levels of staffing are approximately a third of what they were 15 years ago. However technology is used that was not available 15 years ago and activity is much more intelligence led.

The police are currently focussing their enforcement activity on five groups of road users:

1. Younger drivers;
2. Drink drivers;
3. Motorcyclists;
4. People who drive for a living; and
5. Older drivers (due to poor eye sight and slow reaction times).

Greater use of ANPR (Automatic Number plate Recognition) has for example enabled officers to target those drivers who fail to insure their cars. Evidence from research carried out by the RAC (Royal Automobile Association) suggests uninsured drivers now account for five per cent of motorists and these drivers cause more crashes and are more likely to be involved in other serious crimes than insured drivers.

Other relevant findings from the RAC research claim that uninsured drivers are:

- six times more likely to drive a non road-worthy vehicle;
- up to nine times more likely to be involved in an accident;
- more likely to be involved in a hit and run collision;
- three times more likely to have been convicted of driving without due care and attention; and
- ten times more likely to have been convicted of drink driving.

Working Party Members were given a demonstration of how ANPR technology works as they were shown a Police Traffic Patrol Car equipped with it. Cameras on the car read passing vehicles' number plates and these details are then transmitted to the DVLA; within 20 seconds, those plates belonging to a vehicle which is uninsured will be highlighted to the officer in the car.

There is a scheme currently in Wealden of re-skilling neighbourhood police officers on traffic issues, including joint patrols with officers from the Road Policing Unit of Sussex Police. Authorisation of Police Drivers has three levels or grades: level one or red drivers are permitted to drive police cars; level two or amber drivers are permitted to stop vehicles; and the highest level, level three or Green drivers are also permitted to pursue vehicles. This re-skilling of neighbourhood police officers should increase the number of drivers pulled over for offences such as driving whilst using a mobile phone and the targeting of anti-social driving.

Many witnesses giving evidence to the Working Party talked of the 'fear factor', which the police provide. Compliance with the law, for many drivers and riders does not just happen unless there is a perceived threat that they will be caught and punished. This was also raised by many of the parish and town councils, claiming unless speed limits and other driving laws are enforced and seen to be enforced they will be ignored by many. The Working Party accepted these arguments and make the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 6: The Working Party agree with the notion that compliance with the Highway Code and other associated regulations is often dependent on the level of perceived threat posed to drivers and riders of being caught and punished. The Council should write to the Chief Constable, following this review and stress the importance of the work undertaken by the Road Policing Unit and request that resources in this area of Police work should be at least maintained and preferably increased. The knock-on effects of any cuts to this service could negatively impact on the safety of the roads in Wealden and crime generally.

As part of the review, Parish and Town Councils were asked for their opinions on the efficacy of the various measures employed to control driver behaviour, with a particular focus on speed. The various control measures were listed and those parishes and towns, where examples of the measures exist in their

area, were asked to rate the measure against a 5 point scale, where 1 is very effective and 5 is very ineffective. Therefore the nearer to 1 the mean figure given, the more effective the measure. Table 20 below summarises the opinions.

Table 20: Views of Parish and Town Councils on the efficacy of measures to control driver behaviour with an emphasis on controlling speed.

Control Measure	Mean Score
Fixed Site Speed Cameras	1.0
Mobile enforcement with speed cameras by Sussex Police or Sussex Safer Roads Partnership	1.6
Road engineering solutions	2.4
Vehicle activated signs	2.5
Community 'Speedwatch' schemes	2.6
Speed indication devices	3.2
Speed limits	3.2
Road safety posters and signage	3.4

It should be noted that many respondents stated that the efficacy of speed limits is related to enforcement of those limits; if there is no visible, regular enforcement then they are often ignored.

Accidents Involving Deer

Another factor peculiar to Wealden is the Ashdown Forest - the Conservators of the Forest informed the Working Party that they deal with up to 330 dead or seriously injured deer a year as a result traffic incidents, although they admit the figure may be higher, due to unreported incidents.

National data from the 'Deer Initiative' suggest, as a rule of thumb, that for every 1000 deer related road traffic accidents, there will be a human fatality. As the Clerk to the Conservators states in a letter of evidence dated 15th September 2009, to the Working Party: *'An indication of how 'lucky' we have been locally is that since the 1st January 2004, rangers have attended 1,503 accidents.'* He also states in the same letter that: *'the deer problem is by no means restricted to the Forest (although it once might have been); it is both deepening and expanding throughout Wealden, East and West Sussex and the UK as a whole'*. (NB this information was provided before the tragic accident involving a deer in Easons Green).

A multi-agency group has been formed to control the numbers of deer in the 350 square kilometre area between Turners Hill and Tunbridge Wells, south to Haywards Heath and Hadlow Down. The group make experienced stalkers available to the Police to deal with deer casualties throughout Sussex.

The group have also worked with East Sussex County Council to have erected additional and larger deer warning signs on the A22 between Forest Row and Nutley (the worst road in the UK for deer casualties).

It is unfortunate, according to the Clerk to the Conservators, that the new signs appear to have not had any effect in reducing deer casualties. Indeed the issue of traffic speed and the high volume of traffic in and around the Ashdown Forest have motivated local people to form the Ashdown Forest Villages Road Safety Partnership. This partnership includes representatives from the Conservators, East Sussex County Council, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Sussex Police, five parish councils and the Safer Wealden Partnership. They have organised the gathering of data on traffic speed from a number of sources including the use of Speed Indication Devices; linked to this Sussex Police and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service have carried out high visibility enforcement activity.

What plans are in place to address the high numbers of those people killed or seriously injured on Wealden's roads?

The Working Party heard evidence from many organisations involved in road safety. Listed below are the key players in this area, who are all involved in working in partnership to improve road safety.

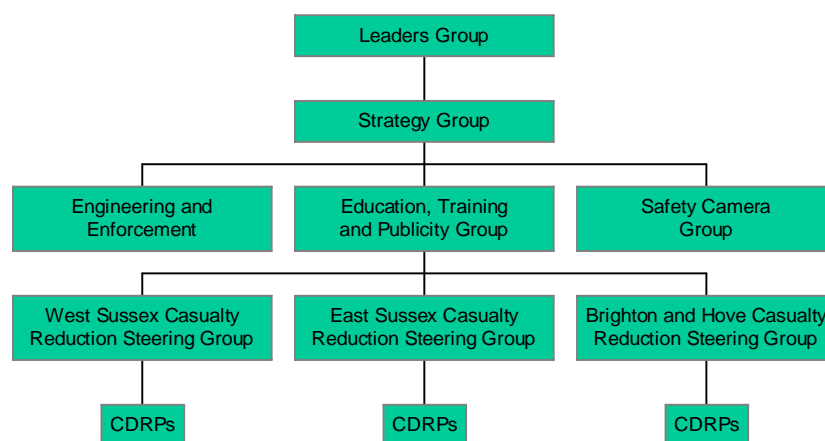
Sussex Safer Roads Partnership

The Sussex Safer Roads Partnership works to reduce the number of road casualties across Sussex, through education, engineering and enforcement. Each year the Partnership develop strategies in these three key disciplines to create safer roads. The Sussex Safer Roads Partnership is grant funded by the Government, and supports the work of three local authorities, East and West Sussex and Brighton and Hove City Council. In addition to the three Councils other partners are Sussex Police, the Fire and Rescue Services, the Highways Agency and HM Courts' Service.

The Partnership evolved from the Sussex Safety Camera Partnership, and still has camera enforcement as its core activity, but in 2007 took on a wider remit to include education and engineering. Money from speeding fines no longer directly fund the Partnership's activity, its funding comes from Central Government and its level is based upon the casualty data for the area. Funding levels after March 2011 is unknown, any reduction in funds could put much of the partnership work in jeopardy.

Figure 21 below shows the organisational chart for Road Safety and how the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership's Leaders, Strategy and Subject Specific Groups relate to geographical areas.

Figure 21: The organisation of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and its sub-groups and how they relate to county, district and borough areas.



The Working Party were impressed by the amount of data held by the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and the level of analysis possible, members were not convinced that all the relevant agencies are aware of this fact. The data could assist many organisations with campaigns and the like and help them to target resources more effectively.

East Sussex County Council including Education

Road Safety is included in primary and secondary schools and colleges in the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship parts of the curriculum under the aspect of risk. This aspect also covers a range of other risks to health, such as poor eating, not enough exercise, drug-taking etc. So although this part of the curriculum is broad, the skills involved in protecting oneself are common to many risk areas. Schools construct their own schemes of work to include these elements of the curriculum.

As has already been stated in this report (see page 12) the subject of road safety is listed as a key issue in 'Pride of Place - Working Towards a Better Future for Local People and Local Communities', the sustainable community strategy for East Sussex.

The Working Party were also informed that the County, through the newly formed Casualty Reduction Steering Group, will be producing a 'Casualty Reduction Strategy', which will be due out in April 2010, this will include plans for each district and borough. The Working Party welcome the formation of a Casualty Reduction Steering Group which has recently been formed in East Sussex, this group should assist the County in accessing more funds for road safety activities.

Safer Wealden Partnership

The Safer Wealden Partnership brings together a number of agencies, all working to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour across Wealden. The Safer Wealden Partnership has six key partners:

- Sussex Police
- Wealden District Council
- East Sussex County Council
- Sussex Police Authority
- East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
- NHS East Sussex downs and Weald

The partners are also joined at its meetings by a local magistrate and a Member of the East Sussex Youth Cabinet representing the Wealden area to provide a voice for young people.

The Partnership pays for a Co-ordinator and an administrator and an anti-social behaviour officer out of the funds it receives from Government by way of Area Based Grant and a Basic Command Unit from Sussex Police.

The Safer Wealden Partnership produce a rolling three year community safety plan. This plan sets out the local priorities for the partners to tackle. These priorities are identified in two ways: firstly crime figures and other statistics for the area are examined closely so an accurate picture is created of what is going on; secondly the views of local residents are collected through a variety of methods. These two sources of intelligence are then combined to inform the priorities that the partnership take forward as its targets and objectives. One of those priorities is to improve the safety on Wealden's roads.

A Road Safety Action Group was formed in 2007, which takes a multi-agency approach to road safety issues in Wealden. Since its inception the Group has organised many road safety initiatives throughout Wealden. During 2009 the Group has been extended to cover Lewes and Rother too, so that all rural areas of the County are covered. The group is supported by the Safer Wealden, Rother and Lewes Partnerships.

New on the scene is an East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group which examines all the crash data and will provide the local Road safety Action Group with direction. The Community Safety Co-ordinator for Wealden has been invited to join the East Sussex Casualty Reduction Steering Group as a representative of all the Crime Reduction Partnerships in the County.

Road Policing Unit, Sussex Police

Road safety is a key priority for Sussex Police and forms part of the Local Policing Plan 2009 - 2012 under the heading of 'Keeping People Safe'. As has already been stated on page 24, the Road Policing Unit of Sussex Police specifically target enforcement activities on the following groups of road users:

1. Younger drivers;
2. Drink drivers;
3. Motorcyclists;
4. People who drive for a living; and
5. Older drivers (due to increased chances of poor eye sight and slow reaction times).

In addition the Road Policing Unit is responding to the concern about anti-social driving expressed by many communities with a number of partnership activities, including Operation Crackdown, which is a community-led system to identify anti-social driving. Residents and drivers can inform Sussex Police about any abandoned vehicle or any examples of anti-social driving by the use of a dedicated Sussex-wide Operation Crackdown Website: (www.operationcrackdown.org). Anti-social driving may include: speeding; thoughtless driving or riding; under-age drivers or riders; tailgating; mobile

phone use at the wheel; vehicles in unsafe conditions; untaxed cars and motorbikes; and non wearing of seat-belts.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Given the problems associated with anti-social driving, the Working Party support 'Operation Crackdown' and recommend that the Council advertise the scheme in a number of ways, such as through the Council's website, leaflets in the Council Reception points, via the parish conferences, by providing information for parish and town newsletters and other avenues.

Recommendations on how Wealden District Council can influence the issue of road safety

The Working Party were extremely grateful to those District Councillors, County Councillors and Parish and Town Councillors who responded to the request for comments.

As many contributors to this review have made clear, Wealden District Council has neither the mandate, the necessary expertise or resources to create any new initiative relating to road safety. However that does not mean that the Council should do nothing. Wealden may be able to influence the issue in a number of ways: through partnership working, in particular through the Safer Wealden Partnership; using its networks to cascade messages from other agencies; and through the planning process.

Partnership Working

Wealden District Council are key members of the Safer Wealden Partnership and it is through these arrangements that the Council can have most influence and play its part. The Portfolio Holder for Community at Wealden District Council sits on the Partnership and is currently its Chairman. A number of Officers also support the work of the Partnership at various levels. The Council also act as the host employer for both the Partnership's Co-ordinator and Administrative Support Officer, however the cost of these two posts are recovered from Partnership funds.

The Working Party were informed as part of this review and were extremely concerned to learn that funding for the Safer Wealden Partnership is at risk. If the current levels of funding were reduced, this may well threaten the current levels of work undertaken by the Partnership. Many of the witnesses who gave evidence to this review were keen to praise the work of the Partnership and its Co-ordinator who, as one witness stated: 'Acts as the glue that binds the partners together and gives it direction'.

Given the importance of road safety and community safety generally to local residents and the Parish and Town Councils the Working Party wished to make a recommendation relating to future funding of the Partnership arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION 8: The Working Party recognise the good work undertaken by the Safer Wealden Partnership in relation to road safety and crime and disorder generally. The Working Party noted that Wealden District Council does not give any direct funding to the Partnership, although the Council does provide considerable resources in-kind in the form of management and officer time. Members understand that there is a review of community safety arrangements currently being undertaken, across the

County, this review is looking at current working practices and best practice. The Working Party are anxious to ensure that Wealden District Council retain community safety as an important and properly funded aspect of the Council's activities as underpinned by the Corporate Plan.

The Working Party were also struck by comments from several of the witnesses who gave evidence about the lack of public transport, which may encourage some young people to drive, particularly at night and with the associated peer pressure on the driver of the car from the passengers.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Wealden District Council be asked to continue to work with partners to find a fresh approach to rural public transport, including the possibility of incentivising local taxi firms to provide late night services to rural areas.

Spreading the Message

It is clear to the Working Party that the Council could do more to assist its partners in spreading the relevant road safety messages through a range of channels, including such options as leaflets in reception areas, greater use of the Council's websites, carrying road safety messages on some key documents produced for the wider public and through the parish and town council networks that exist.

RECOMMENDATION 10: The Working Party recommend that the Council work with its partners to assist in spreading key messages and literature about road safety through the range of channels that it has open to it.

During this review it became clear to the Working Party that a lot of information in the form of leaflets, posters, DVDs and other media are produced by partners to improve road safety. However caution needs to be adopted to ensure scarce resources are used to full effect. It would be easy to provide the public with information that road safety professionals consider important and hope that they change their behaviour, but that doesn't always work very satisfactorily, otherwise no-one would, for example speed or use their mobile phones whilst driving.

The Working Party are convinced of the usefulness of using social marketing techniques and are interested in how the principles could be used to support any future road safety campaigns. Social marketing uses traditional marketing techniques, but instead of persuading people to buy a particular product or use a service, it is aimed at motivating behaviour change. It is about moving away from communicating a message that the agencies

involved have crafted, to using the audience to craft a product and message that will be effectively received.

The Working Party discussed an example, which used a social marketing approach involved young drivers in another part of the Country. Consumer insight was developed and it became clear that for this group of motorists, the fear of having a crash or getting injured was of little significance. What mattered to this group was the thought of losing their licence which they had waited so long to obtain. A poster campaign and screen savers were developed for use in schools and colleges, which were designed to target the key issues for young drivers. The campaign has been evaluated and shown to have a significant positive effect.

RECOMMENDATION 11: The Working Party consider there is merit in exploring the potential of social marketing to target and influence certain key high risk groups in relation to road safety. It is recommended that East Sussex County Council, the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, Sussex Police and other agencies work with academics from the University of Brighton Business School, which has a developing social marketing expertise, to explore using the techniques in relation to road safety.

The Working Party learned about a promotional scheme entitled: 'Safe Driving at Work'. This is promoted by the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership. Its aim is to raise awareness amongst businesses about the importance of road safety for those who have to drive as part of their work, it also reminds employers about the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act and related regulations, which require businesses to manage risk effectively.

RECOMMENDATION 12: The Working Party ask the Head of Public Health and Community Development to promote information about the 'Safe Driving at Work' initiative to local businesses.

Using the Planning Process

The Working Party want to ensure that the planning process is used as effectively as possible to further road safety in the area.

Firstly when the Transport and Environment Department at East Sussex County Council comment on the larger planning applications, the Working Party wants to be sure that they consider the wider implications on roads in the area, not just aspects such as access on and off the site. For example what routes are future residents likely to take and could this add to existing or create additional road safety problems in an area.

RECOMMENDATION 13: The Council should ask the Transport and Environment Department at East Sussex County Council for the methodology used to assess larger planning applications from a road safety perspective including the wider traffic implications, to ensure that road safety in an area is not compromised.

Secondly the Working Party were keen to know that Planning Gain / Section 106 Developer Contributions could be used to include engineering solutions to any area of road, within the vicinity of the proposed development, if traffic levels emanating from that development could exacerbate problems at an already highlighted crash site or hazardous stretch of road.

RECOMMENDATION 14: The Head of Planning and Building Control should be asked that due consideration be given to the use of 'Planning Gain / Section 106 Cash Contributions' for improvements to roads for road safety reasons.

Thirdly there was concern expressed by several witnesses and Working Party Members about the proliferation of temporary signs which appear on the side of roads, principally to advertise events. The signs vary in size and often act as a distraction to drivers. Some of the signs also remain in situ long after the event they are advertising has taken place. The Working Party has no evidence to suggest that any of these temporary signs have caused any crashes, but there is the potential for them to do so.

RECOMMENDATION 15: The Council ask the Transport and Environment Department at East Sussex County Council for clarity on the rules and status of temporary signs and the removal of them.

Conclusions

When the Working Party started out on this process there was an uncertainty as to where it would take us. It is by no means a simple topic - there are many complex issues at work and all of these interacting with each other. These include: environmental factors; human factors; mechanical factors; and legal factors.

This complexity makes it a difficult problem to understand and an equally complex issue to resolve. Indeed if there were any quick fix answers they would have been deployed already.

This review has been thorough, but limited by time constraints imposed on it. However the Working Party are convinced that they have covered the principal factors involved.

In learning about the subject, it became clear to members of the Working Party that there is a lack of hard evidence about road safety issues and what measures work and what does not work from around the Country. This in the Working Party's views is a shame and the agencies concerned with road safety may be assisted by a database of good practice, which has been properly evaluated.

RECOMMENDATION 16: The Council should write to the Secretary of State at the Department for Transport and suggest that a database of good practice, with appropriate evaluation, in relation to road safety initiatives should be formed. This would allow authorities to search the list of activity before embarking on a particular course of action to ensure it is approached in the most effective way.

The Working Party could also not pass up this opportunity to praise the amount of good work, professionalism and dedication to the topic of road safety, which many undertake. This was highlighted to the Working Party on numerous occasions and the work of SIMCAS is a good example of it.

SIMCAS stands for 'Southern Immediate Medical Care Scheme', which is part of the British Association for Immediate Care. It is staffed by volunteer doctors and run on a charitable basis, with most of its money coming from the community.

The SIMCAS doctors are always called by the Ambulance Service if needed, this may be due to an officer on the scene of a crash or it may be a decision taken by Ambulance Control based upon information from a 999 call. Of the 147 calls received for incidents in the Wealden area during 2007/08, 60% were for road traffic crashes.

SIMCAS doctors bring A+E to the roadside. They can take the treatment and procedures offered by the Ambulance Service that one stage further. The Working Party were informed that it takes about £17,000 to get a doctor on the road and there is a need for more of them.

RECOMMENDATION 17: The Council should investigate ways to promote the SIMCAS charitable scheme with a view to increasing the amount of funds it receives.

National and local campaigns to change driver / rider behaviour will not happen overnight and they must be grounded in the behavioural sciences to ensure they have most effect.

The Working Party are convinced, as has been stated many times in this report, that most crashes occur due to a multitude of factors such as human error of judgment, road conditions, speed, the weather, the emotional state of drivers / riders etc. etc. It was also put to the Working Party that the difference between a near miss or minor crash and a serious one is so often luck or as one witness put it: 'a millimetre or two!'

Members of the Working Party were particularly mindful of the impact that such serious road traffic crashes, often involving fatalities, have on members of the emergency services attending those incidents. The Working Party Members want to pay tribute to all those men and women who have to attend such crashes and thank them on behalf of the community for what they do for us all.

Supplementary Note

An additional issue to road safety, which arose when taking evidence from South East Coast Ambulance Service, is the challenge they sometimes face of finding properties, especially in rural locations at night. It became clear to the Working Party that if an ambulance is required in an emergency, by someone in an area where property numbers may not be common and property names are relied upon, finding them quickly in such conditions can be difficult and can add vital minutes to an emergency situation. There are many properties where property names and numbers are obscured for a number of reasons: perhaps gates are open and the name is therefore not visible; or property signs have been left to deteriorate over the years and become illegible; or maybe there is no name or number. Although satellite navigation systems are used by the emergency services, some postcodes are shared by many properties in an area. The simple measure of asking all residents to check their property to make sure it can be identified easily in an emergency could literally save a life.

RECOMMENDATION 18: The Council advise residents in the district to take the simple measure of making sure their property's names or numbers are clearly visible at all times in case of an emergency.

18th January 2010

If you require any further details about this review then please contact:
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Tel: 01323 443305 or Email: jeremy.leach@wealden.gov.uk

Appendix A - List of Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1: Having examined all the evidence and statistics we note the comment made by the Institute of Advanced Motorists: *'Rural roads are a particular challenge to younger drivers - a challenge which their driving instruction and driving test may not adequately prepare them.'* Members of the Working Party wholeheartedly agree with this statement and recommend that a number of measures are put in place to address this, including use of the Council's Website and the use of a variety of media advising younger drivers and their parents / guardians of the risks of driving on rural roads.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The Working Party remain concerned about the adequacy of the driving test in relation to rural roads, given the comments made by the Institute of Advanced Motorists and the experience locally. It is recommended that the Council write to the Driving Standards Agency, local MPs and the Secretary of State for Transport about this matter.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Working Party are convinced that road engineering solutions can play an important part in reducing the number of road traffic crashes. It is recommended that the Council write to East Sussex County Council supporting their review of 'key routes' where crashes occur, to establish where road engineering solutions may reduce the chances of crashes.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The Council should work with other local agencies, including schools to promote and remind pedestrians that, when out walking they should walk to face oncoming traffic and should wear something light in colour or reflective at night. Such common-sense, simple and practical advice could save a pedestrian from being killed or seriously injured.

RECOMMENDATION 5: The Council write to the Secretary of State at the Department for Transport to enquire if there are any plans to require vehicles in the UK to carry emergency equipment such as a warning triangle, a high-visibility jacket, first-aid kit and a fire extinguisher. If there are no plans then the Secretary of State be asked to consider such proposals.

RECOMMENDATION 6: The Working Party agree with the notion that compliance with the Highway Code and other associated regulations is often dependent on the level of perceived threat posed to drivers and riders of being caught and punished. The Council should write to the Chief Constable, following this review and stress the importance of the work undertaken by the Road Policing Unit and request that resources in this area of Police work should be at least maintained and preferably increased. The knock-on effects of any cuts to this service could negatively impact on the safety of the roads in Wealden and crime generally.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Given the problems associated with anti-social driving, the Panel support 'Operation Crackdown' and recommend that the Council advertise the scheme in a number of ways such as through the Council's website, leaflets in the Council Reception points, via the parish

conferences, by providing information for parish and town newsletters and other avenues.

RECOMMENDATION 8: The Working Party recognise the good work undertaken by the Safer Wealden Partnership in relation to road safety and crime and disorder generally. The Working Party noted that Wealden District Council does not give any direct funding to the Partnership, although the Council does provide considerable resources in-kind in the form of management and officer time. Members understand that there is a review of community safety arrangements currently being undertaken, across the County, this review is looking at current working practices and best practice. The Working Party are anxious to ensure that Wealden District Council retain community safety as an important and properly funded aspect of the Council's activities as underpinned by the Corporate Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 9: Wealden District Council be asked to continue to work with partners to find a fresh approach to rural public transport, including the possibility of incentivising local taxi firms to provide late night services to rural areas.

RECOMMENDATION 10: The Working Party recommend that the Council work with its partners to assist in spreading key messages and literature about road safety through the range of channels that it has open to it.

RECOMMENDATION 11: The Working Party consider there is merit in exploring the potential of social marketing to target and influence certain key high risk groups in relation to road safety. It is recommended that East Sussex County Council, the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, Sussex Police and other agencies work with academics from the University of Brighton Business School, which has a developing social marketing expertise, to explore using the techniques in relation to road safety.

RECOMMENDATION 12: The Working Party ask the Head of Public Health and Community Development to promote information about the 'Safe Driving at Work' initiative to local businesses.

RECOMMENDATION 13: The Council should ask the Transport and Environment Department at East Sussex County Council for the methodology used to assess larger planning applications from a road safety perspective including the wider traffic implications, to ensure that road safety in an area is not compromised.

RECOMMENDATION 14: The Head of Planning and Building Control should be asked that due consideration be given to the use of 'Planning Gain / Section 106 Cash Contributions' for improvements to roads for road safety reasons.

RECOMMENDATION 15: The Council ask the Transport and Environment Department at East Sussex County Council for clarity on the rules and status of temporary signs and the removal of them.

RECOMMENDATION 16: The Council should write to the Secretary of State at the Department for Transport and suggest that a database of good practice, with appropriate evaluation, in relation to road safety initiatives should be formed. This would allow authorities to search the list of activity before embarking on a particular course of action to ensure it is approached in the most effective way.

RECOMMENDATION 17: The Council should investigate ways to promote the 'Southern Immediate Medical Care Scheme' (SIMCAS) charitable scheme with a view to increasing the amount of funds it receives.

RECOMMENDATION 18: The Council advise residents in the district to take the simple measure of making sure their property's names or numbers are clearly visible at all times in case of an emergency.

Appendix B - Organisations and individuals providing evidence to the review

The Working Party are extremely grateful to the following organisations and individuals who have given their time and expertise to providing evidence for this review .

- Mark Amis, Team Leader - Road safety Education, East Sussex County Council.
- Councillor Dick Angel, Wealden District Council.
- Arlington Parish Council.
- Neil Banks, Safer Wealden Partnership
- Buxted Parish Council.
- Chiddingly Parish Council.
- Colin Clarke, Road Casualty Reduction Specialist, East Sussex County Council.
- Conservators of Ashdown Forest.
- Nigel Cusack, Uckfield Fire Station Manager, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.
- Councillor Ron Cussons, Portfolio Holder for Community, Wealden District Council.
- Councillor Barby Dashwood-Hall, Wealden District Council.
- Danehill Parish Council.
- Sandra Dodson, Deputy Chief Driving Examiner, Driving Standards Agency.
- Felicity Drewett, The Highways Agency.
- Driving Standards Agency.
- East Dean and Friston Parish Council.
- East Hoathly with Halland Parish Council.
- East Sussex County Council.
- East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.
- Tim Fellows, South East Coast Ambulance Service.
- Fletching Parish Council.
- Forest Row Parish Council.
- Framfield Parish Council.
- Frant Parish Council.
- Inspector Steve Grace, Road Policing Unit, Sussex Police.
- Hartfield Parish Council.
- Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council.
- Institute of Advanced Motorists.
- Maresfield Parish Council.
- Lynsey McCoubrey, Sussex Safer Roads Partnership.
- Councillor Lin McKeever, Wealden District Council.
- Ninfield Parish Council.
- Dr Alan Pearce, SIMCAS.
- Councillor Charles Peck, Wealden District Council.
- Pevensey Parish Council.

- Polegate Town Council.
- Chief Inspector Julia Pope, Sussex Police.
- Councillor Martin Prestage, Wealden District Council.
- Councillor Major Antony Quinn, Wealden District Council.
- Mark Rist, Wealden Commander, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.
- Neal Robinson, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.
- Rotherfield Parish Council.
- Royal Automobile Club.
- Ken Seymour, Sussex Safer Roads Partnership.
- Councillor Paul Sparks, Wealden District Council.
- Sussex Police.
- Sussex Safer Roads Partnership
- Councillor Bob Tidy, East Sussex County Council.
- Wadhurst Parish Council.
- Inspector Tony Wakefield, Sussex Police.
- Warbleton Parish Council.
- Councillor Andy Watkins, Wealden District Council.
- Councillor Chantal Wilson, Wealden District Council.

