

PROPOSALS FOR GATES, ROUNDELS, AND ROAD PATCHING FOR CHARING VILLAGE

(as submitted to KCC Highways)

Charing Parish Council Highways Group has drawn up the following proposal for gates, roundels, and road patching in Charing village. The aim is to:

- make drivers more aware they are passing through a village
- improve compliance with posted speed limits

We propose these measures for three sections of roads:

- a) the A20 as it passes through the village
- b) The A252 as it approaches Charing from the Canterbury direction
- c) Pluckley Road

In total we propose 5 sets of gates; depending on circumstances and on funding these could either be on both sides of the road or on the left of approaching traffic only. Four of these should carry the Charing nameplate on the left side of approaching traffic, moving the names from where they are in three cases.

There are two cases where it would be sensible to move the speed limit out to coincide with the proposed gate. In both these cases additional building has, or will, effectively extend the village. These cases are noted below. Please advise.

The Parish Council is budgeting a significant proportion of its 2023/2024 funds for minor highways improvements including the provision of gateways and reminder roundels. In addition we hope to obtain a grant from our KCC member and will approach certain companies and residents for additional grants. However, the nature of the works means the plan can be carried out in stages as monies permit.

This document is for discussion with KCC Highways so may alter. Once agreed a definitive plan can be drawn up. Priorities can then be decided, taking account of available funding.

A) THE A20

The A20 is a fast road subject, outside villages, to the national speed limit. There is a 40mph limit through Charing village but this still means that traffic is travelling fairly fast. The A20 bisects the village. To the North is the village centre and shops, the primary school, the church, library and sports ground; on the South is the station, the GP surgery and pharmacy, the Methodist church and the parish hall. With different community elements on different sides there are always pedestrians crossing; there is one puffin crossing but this cannot serve the whole length of A20 as it passes through Charing. Between now and 2030 it is likely that over 300 dwellings will be constructed in sites along the A20 (in addition to further developments elsewhere in the parish) adding to the numbers of pedestrians

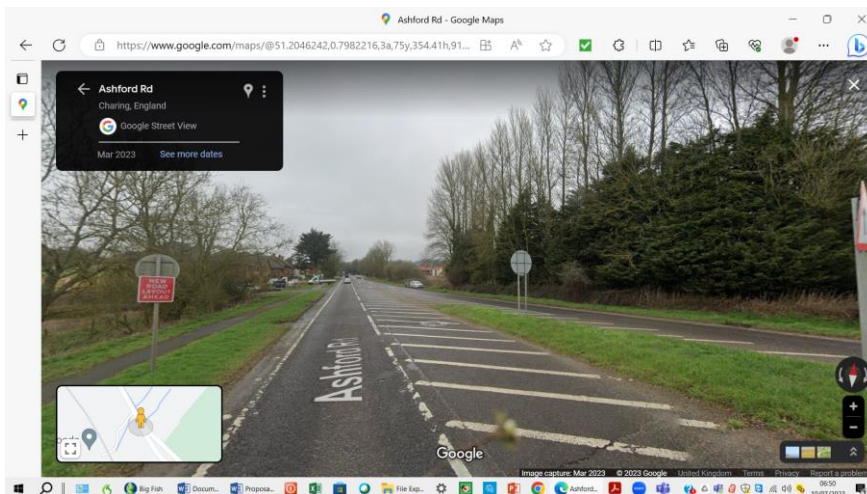
crossing. In addition, the green nature of areas of Charing village does not always give drivers the impression that they are passing through a village.

A20 Proposals for East of Village

(Left and right as seen by traffic approaching from Ashford.) Verge width refers to grassed verges excluding actual footpath.

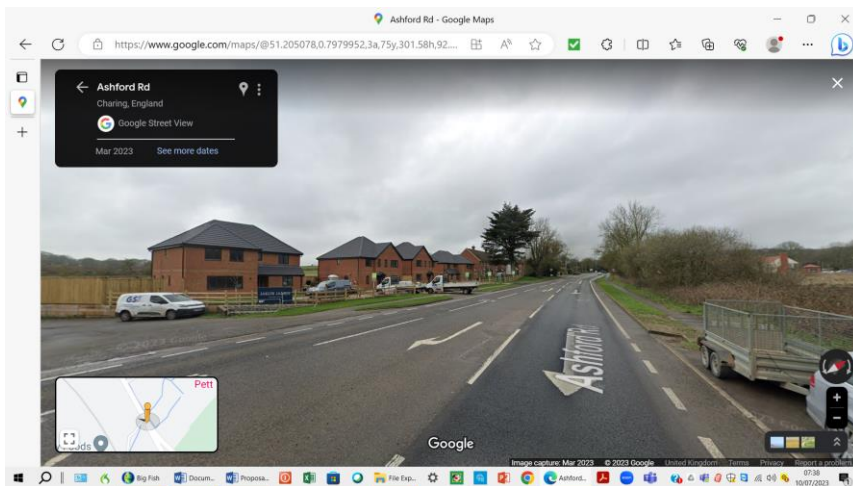
There are three options for placing gates. Starting from the Ashford end the first possibility (see picture below) is just where the “island” outside the Crematorium ends with a 1.5m gate on the left hand verge (width 2.4m) and one the same size on the on the island (just behind the no entry signs – those facing towards the village – island width here 3.5m).

The advantages of this position are: 1) that it would be before any houses but where the new houses just built by Dog Kennel lane (and in due course the 59 houses likely to be built on the opposite side of the A20) are clearly in sight. 2) The gates would have more impact since the one on the island would be closer to the driver than a gate on the opposite carriageway. It is therefore our preferred position. See picture below



Source: Google Streetview

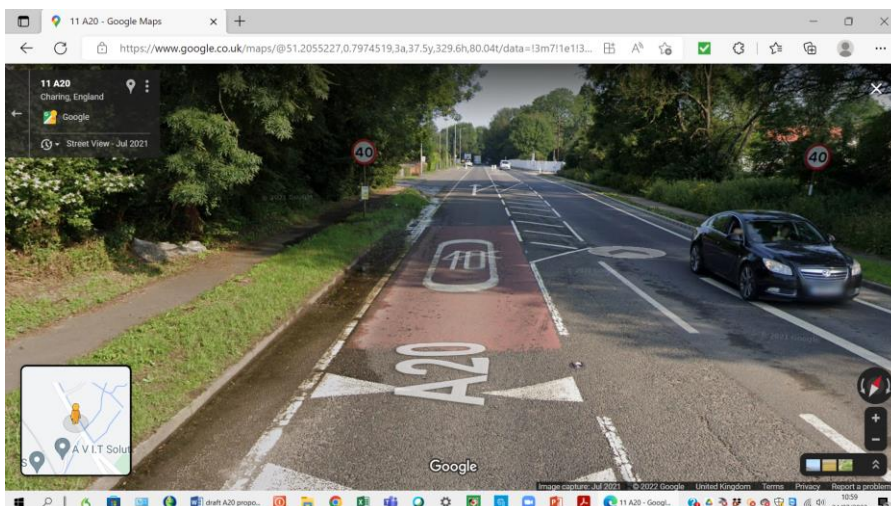
The second option is outside (between the two entranceways) and opposite the new houses being built by Dog Kennel Lane. Verge widths 1.95m on left and 2.0m on right enabling gates of 1.5m width. This is at the start of houses with access to the A20 but the signs would be less prominent than in the first case.



Source: Google Streetview

In either of these two cases it would be logical to move the start of the 40mph limit to the gate so that it covers the new houses. Note that 59 dwellings will in due course be built on the right hand side of the picture.

The final option is at the 40 mph limit which is outside Wilkinson Close.



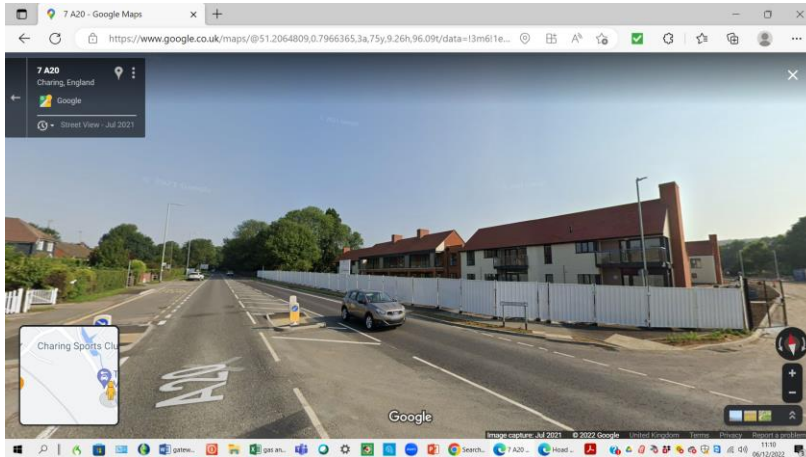
Source: Google Streetview

Verge widths are 1.8 (Left) and 2.25 (right) able to take a 1m and 1.5m gate respectively. Given that there is a roundel in the road with coloured surface plus “teeth” markings (see pic) we feel this is sufficient at this point and it would be better to have the gates earlier.

In all cases we propose that the gate should contain the sign for Charing to have more impact. The current sign is further out, before the crematorium so has no relation to the start of continuous housing. (An advantage of the change, for this and other signs, would be the possibility of removing the very out of date reference to Charing being the South East in Bloom winner.)

The next place for action is the new crossing point which has been established by the entrance to the Older People’s housing (see picture below). We would propose a roundel in or by the crossing with a coloured patch. This should be in both directions since there is a

need to remind people exiting the village that they are still in a 40mph zone. At the moment there is a 40 reminder sign just beyond which the roundels would reinforce. Given that this crossing will be used by residents of the older people's housing, as well as by others the crossing point should be made as obvious to drivers as possible.



Source: Google Streetview

Travelling towards Charing one then comes to the area affected by the recent roadworks at the A20/Station Road/High Street crossing which, hopefully, is leading to speeds being slowed.

Area between crossroads and roundabout

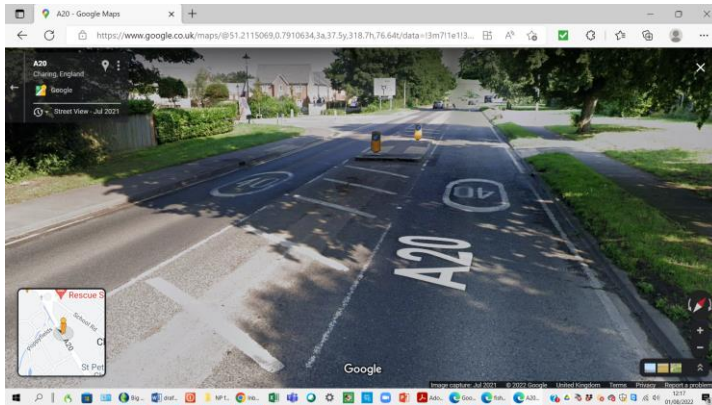
There are a number of crossing points with refuges here. We would like to see a roundel and patching at the first crossing point after the roundabout and at the one by Charing Green.

(We considered whether there might be a case for gates at the roundabout end of this stretch, in addition to others further out, but in any event the verge on the school/picnic area side is not wide enough for one.)

Long term plan for Puffin crossing. We would like to see a definite plan, funded by S106 money, to place another puffin crossing at or close to where the second crossing point from the roundabout is (the first is too close to the roundabout). This is just on the village side of the entrance to Poppyfields. It would provide a safe pedestrian route to the village centre and to the school for the c.200 dwellings that will be built behind the Swan and Charing Motors (the developers have to provide a pavement from the development to the existing pavement) and also for Poppyfields residents. (Its use would be enhanced if the school put an entrance to school grounds on the A20 side – we understand this has at times been considered in the past – but otherwise pupils could walk via the footpath by the playground.) In addition a crossing here would help to slow traffic and add to the sense that vehicles were passing through a village.

Funding. There is one site in ABC's Local Plan for which outline planning permission has not yet been sought and thus there is potential to negotiate S106 money. This is the second part of site S55 (the first part being Land South of the Swan). Charing Neighbourhood Plan

(approved by referendum in March and about to be adopted formally by Ashford Borough Council) provides as Policy H7d that the site “provides appropriate contributions to community and transportation infrastructure improvements”.



Suggested place for future Puffin crossing Source: Google Streetview

West of the Roundabout

The 40 mph sign approaching from Maidstone already has a roundel, patching and teeth.



Source: Google Streetmaps

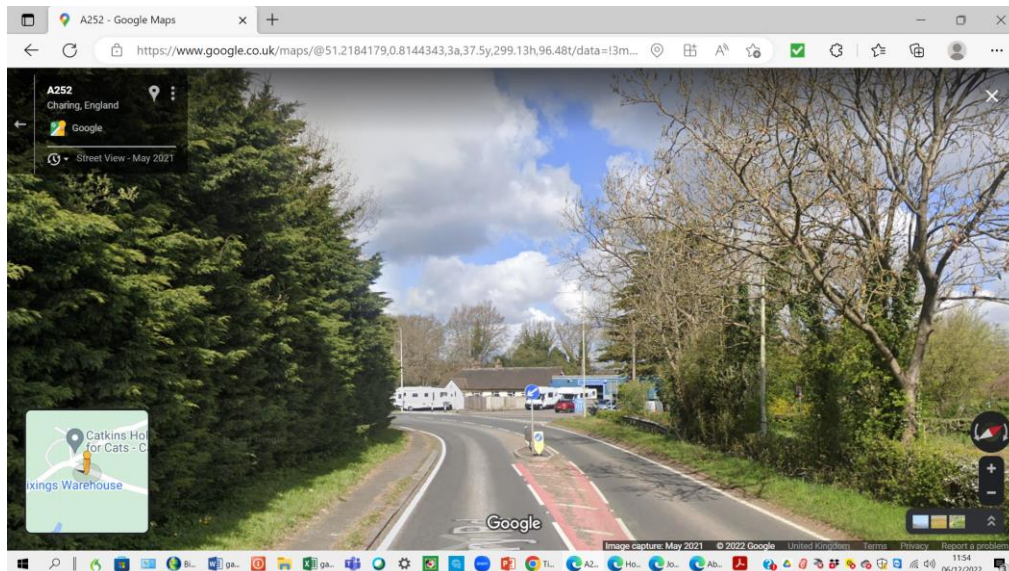
We propose that gates are added on both sides. Given the amount of housing scheduled to be built it is important that this village entrance is as dominant as possible. The verge on the left (when traveling from Maidstone) is 2.15m and that on the right 3.20 enabling gates of 1.5m and up to 2.5m respectively.

The village nameplate is here already so can be incorporated into the gate.

B THE A252

Coming from Canterbury there are no sufficiently wide verges at the 30mph speed limit. We suggest gates a little further on close to the assisted crossing, see below, where there are verges sufficiently wide. This would be just after the sign warning of a dangerous junction.

The gates should incorporate the village nameplate since this is just as the built up area starts. Currently the name plate is part way down the Hill which does not make sense.



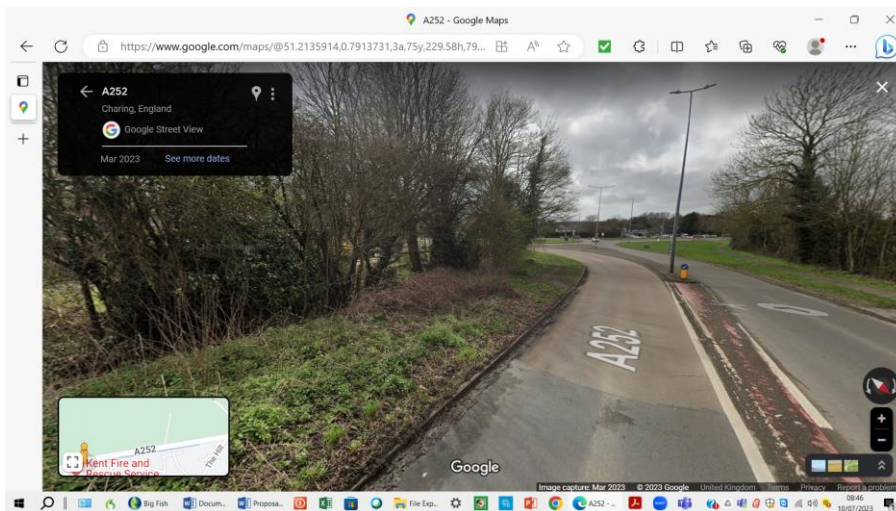
Source: Google Streetview

An alternative option would be to place the gate (left hand side only), again with village nameplate, just after the junction with Faversham Road where there is a wide grass verge.



Source: Google Streetview

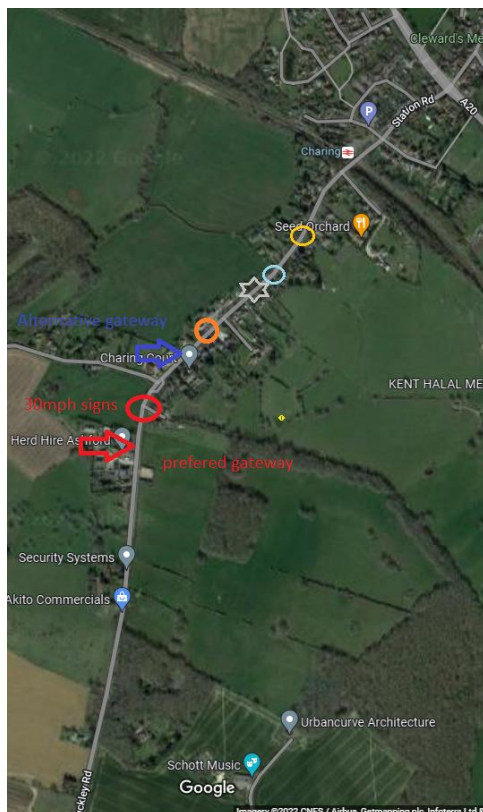
After travelling through the built up area at the top of Charing Hill, traffic approaching the village then passes through a less built up area. The final stretch has a 50 mph limit before the roundabout. We suggest gates at the bottom of the hill just before traffic approaches the roundabout. Obviously in this case there would be no nameplate.



Source: Google Streetmap

If placed by the end of the island, verges are 1.8m on either side. We suggest here rather than where the 40 mph sign is since the road widens as the roundabout and the speed limit sign is approached so the impact of any gates will be less. Gates before the roundabout are particularly needed since there is not space along the A20 after the roundabout (see above).

C PLUCKLEY ROAD GATEWAY AND ROUNDELS



Pluckley Road has a 30mph speed limit but this is frequently exceeded. The survey in November 2021 showed an 85th percentile speed of 41.2mph and that 49% of vehicles exceeded the limit above which the Association of Chief Police Officers recommends a fixed penalty or a speed awareness course. This was the highest percentage of the Charing roads surveyed. Much of the road appears to drivers to be relatively wide and straight, particularly compared to Station Road, so drivers automatically tend to speed up when exiting the village and fail to slow down when entering. Reminders are therefore needed since the road is residential. There is no pavement on the East side so residents from these houses have to cross the road whether or not they are at a point with good visibility. In addition the road carries heavy traffic – which has grown by 26% in the last 10 years – around 5% of which are HGVs or other large vehicles.

Gates are not practical at the 30mph speed sign

A gate may obscure the driveway

Verge is only 90cm wide on nearside and there are plans for a pavement that may be added to the off-side

A super narrow gateway, as shown in picture, might be possible?

However, we would prefer the options below.



Preferred option

Gateway between Harrison Court and WOW factory

This is slightly outside the 30 mph limit but just after the start of the built up area. Wide verges (2.2m nearside and 1.7m off-side)

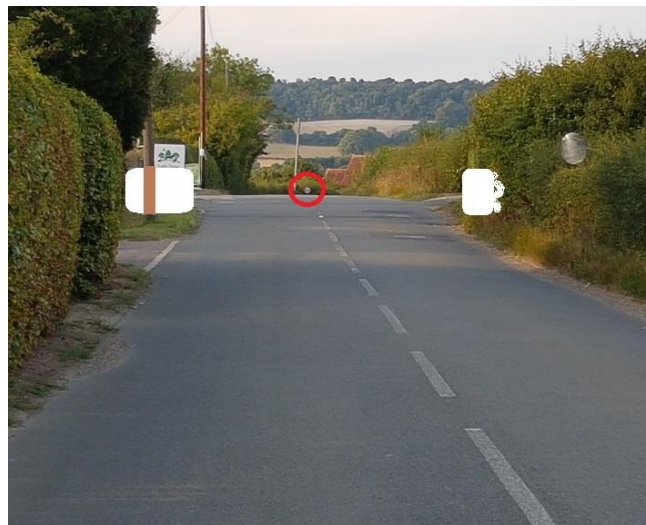
Clear visibility forward to the 30mph sign (140 meters, see red circle)

An off-side pavement is planned which will finish just before this point.

The gate should incorporate the village nameplate. Currently this is further out (just after the road goes over the Motorway and High Speed Rail) well before the built up area.

Ideally the 30mph limit should be moved further out to coincide with the gate given the additional housing which has been built. Please advise.

If not moved the 30mph limit needs to be reinforced with teeth and possible 3-2-1 red strips.



Roundel towards Charing plus patching if possible



Opposite Meadow View and Halbrook House
On an incline so emphasizes its visibility coming towards Charing
First good location after Charing Road junction
145 meters after the 30mph sign
Single roundel (just north)

Roundels towards and from Pluckley

Between Laurus, Fort Garry and Craythorne

First sensible place after railway bridge; this is where traffic starts to speed up after leaving the more bendy section.

Double roundel both north and south



Extra roundel if we can afford it

Kelmscott or Coppins

On an incline with greatly enhanced visibility

Single roundel, just south to counter the automatic “speeding up” drivers tend to do

Alternative option for Pluckley Road

Gateway at post box and Honeywood

After the junction with
Charing Heath Road

Inside the 30mph section
by 80 meters

Would act as a reminder

Can combine with a
30mph roundel and
patching

Large verge on both sides
(1.5m verge and 1.5m
pavement on near side and
2.5m offside)



Roundel towards Charing

If we have the gateway at the post box then the Meadow
View roundel is too close so...

...move it to opposite Bethany

Double roundel both north and south