

Cllr. Bill Douglas – Highways Safety

The concentration this year has been on Schools Safety.

The Senior School Travel Plans have all been completed and submitted and they are well aware of all safety funding sources should they feel the need for further safety measures.

However, the road safety situation around some of our Junior and Special Schools was found to need a lot of improvements.

To qualify for funding for these improvements, Travel Plans and Assessments have to be submitted. This has now been completed and they have started submitting applications, four are now in the pipeline.

Schools Safety is funded directly by a special Schools Budget direct from Wiltshire Council. You will be pleased to hear that, in the Local Transport Plan passed last Tuesday, Schools Road Safety has been placed in the High Priority category. We hope this will speed up the processing and implementation of these applications.

At Hardenhuish and Sheldon Schools, a complete Road Safety re-assessment was made by the Highways Department and improvements have been carried out to the road surfaces, crossings, signage and parking.

The work was carried out in two stages during the year and the final item, the crossing at Cepen Park, North, was switched on two weeks ago. An excellent job.

The Webbington Road Traffic Calming Measures have at last been passed and are being installed this week. This will make it much safer for the residents and, perhaps more important, safer for the children and their parents who travel to and from Charter and Kings Lodge schools.

We all thank both Heads of School, and their pupils - and also Judy Edwards (Extended Services Director) and the Members of the Youth Parliament, for bombarding Cabinet Minister Dick Tonge, with letters supporting this application.

It would have taken a very brave man to say no to that lot.

Safety Measures on the A350 dual-carriageway was a major goal, which, unfortunately, has not yet been achieved. This is due to the Highways Department budget restraints. However I am hopeful that, after the case has been to trial, a Coroners Inquiry will provide recommendations that Highways will feel they must act on.

Finally, it is important that we bring it to the notice of the public that our Senior Schools all have excellent Road Safety Training programmes in place, which have been running for years. In the junior schools the schools and parents combine to teach the younger ones the basics. The priority for all our schools has always been the safety of our children.

The full accident statistics for the Area are still being gathered by the Police and will be made available when completed. I would like to thank the Police and the Highways Engineering Department for their help and support this year.