



M40 Chilterns Environmental Group

Summer Issue
May 2008

Progress Report

You might like to hear about progress of the group. As you know, we are working to reduce noise levels imposed on local residents along the oldest unimproved parts of the M40 – between Loudwater and Milton Common. While the causes are common to all our communities, each location needs its own solution, typically a combination of a quiet surface and a noise barrier.

Our approach has two prongs. First, over a long period we have been arguing that current noise procedures used by the Highways Agency (HA) are biased against rural communities, and that the 'old' M40 is a special case, since it was designed before anyone could spell 'environmental', let alone consider environmental issues. Second, we look for opportunities where necessary maintenance activities can be usefully expanded to include environmental protection.

Visit to See the Minister of Transport – Tom Harris

At the end of March this year, Boris Johnson arranged for us to meet Tom Harris, the Minister for Transport responsible for the road network, to discuss the opportunities at Milton Common and Stokenchurch. Armed with two reports on the problems at these locations, we made the case for both. John Thompson (Tetsworth) reported on the meeting as follows:

'On Wednesday 26th March 2008 Boris Johnson, MP for South Oxfordshire, and David Lidington, MP for Aylesbury, led a delegation from the M40 Chilterns Environment Group to meet the Minister for Transport responsible for Roads, Mr Tom Harris. The delegation consisted of Dr Ken Edwards, Chairman of M40CEG, Tony Giddy of Milton Common and John Thompson of Tetsworth, together with Mr Giles Parker, Chairman of the British Standards Institute sub-committee for Noise Barrier Standards.

The delegation put the case that an opportunity exists, whilst work is carried out on rebuilding the bridges over the M40 at Junction 7 (Milton Common) and Junction 5 (Stokenchurch) during the next two years, to install effective noise barriers at these locations at a fraction of the normal cost, since road traffic management schemes - normally around 60% of project cost - would already be in place.

This would go some way to alleviating the noise pollution for residents at these locations beside the ill-designed old M40'.

The Minister gave a very fair hearing to the proposition, pointed out the considerable discrepancy between the cost estimates provided by the M40CEG and those supplied by his officials from the Highways Agency, and asked that the two groups get together to provide a practical best estimate of costs to allow him to consider the matter further'.

With agreement of the HA, Giles Parker will now review inputs from M40 CEG and the HA, initially regarding cost and effectiveness of barriers for Milton Common, and present his findings to the Minister. In preparation Mr Parker, an independent consultant, will survey Milton Common, to understand the situation and the scope for improvement.



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Accidents on the M40 and their Impact on the Local Communities.

During the last few months there have been a number of accidents that have closed the motorway and diverted the traffic on to the roads through the local communities. This has a significant impact on the lives of the people who live in them. The weight of traffic means that you have difficulty accessing the main road to High Wycombe and other local places. People have reported journeys from Cressex taking up to three hours. These incidents put increased traffic on to roads that are not designed to take it. When the M40 closes it grid locks the whole area with the impact being felt as far away as the M4 and M 25. It may be of interest to you to see our 'Log Jam' report. This only details traffic jams on the M40 as seen from the Stokenchurch footbridge. If you can add to this list we would be pleased to hear from you. Contact us through the web site or e-mail us at m40cc@btinternet.com

M40 Traffic Jams							
Date	Time	Direction	Cause				
30/11/2007	7pm	South	Accident				
01/12/2007	5pm to 7pm	South	?				
05/12/2007	8.15 to 10am	South	?				
06/12/2007	9am to 10am	South	?				
12/12/2007	8.10 to 8.40am	South	?				
18/12/2007	7.35-9.30am	South	2 vans and 1 car, collision		J5-J4		
18/12/2007	12.45-13.30	South	very slow				
19/12/2007	17.00-21.30	South	accident at 15.30 between J4-J3 M40 closed at J4 reopened 21.30				
07/01/2008	07.50-10.40	South	accident between J4 & J3 M40 stopped A40 crawl/Marlow road crawl				
09/01/2008	10.30-11.45	North	very, very slow				
14/01/2008	7.30-9.45	South	Accident J3-J2				
15/01/2008	9.30-10.30	North	very, very slow, start/stop heavy rain				
16/01/2008	8.15-8.45	South	Slow				
08/02/2008	10.15-11.30	North	Accident between J6 & J7				
10/03/2008	07.40-10.00	South	On/Off Jam				
21/04/2008	9-00	South	News report				

How Can You Help?

Email us at: m40cc@btinternet.com

We are trying to establish an email list for contacting people with news of progress and events. If you would like to be on the list you can contact us through the web site.

We want people to spread the word about us so that more people are aware of what we are trying to achieve.

We will be at the local fetes during the summer and would welcome any ideas you may have so come and talk to us at these events.

We also need people to lobby their local councillors, County Councillors and MPs for support. If we write individual letters it has a greater impact than just one list of names.

Thank You

We greatly appreciate the prompt response of both Oxfordshire County and South Oxfordshire District Councils to our request for funds, as a result of which the survey has started.

Bucks County Councillors and Wycombe District Councillors have similarly offered to contribute funds to expand these studies to Buckinghamshire. We have also received grants from other charitable organisations

We owe special thanks to the following for their recent support.

David Shakespeare	-	Bucks County and Wycombe District Council
Peter Cartwright	-	Bucks County Council
Robert Woollard	-	Bucks County Council
Lesley Clarke	-	Wycombe District Council Leader

Jean Teesdale	-	Wycombe District Council
Ian McEnnis	-	Wycombe District Council

The following Parish Councils have contributed to our cause since our start in 2005-

Aston Rowant	Chepping Wycombe
Great Haseley	Ibstone
Lane End	Piddington & Wheeler End
Stokenchurch	Tetsworth
Tiddington with Albury	Lewknor & Postcombe

Report on noise studies in the next edition.

We will report further progress to all on our email lists, and thank you for your support.

Dr Ken Edwards Chairman - M40 CEG May 2008