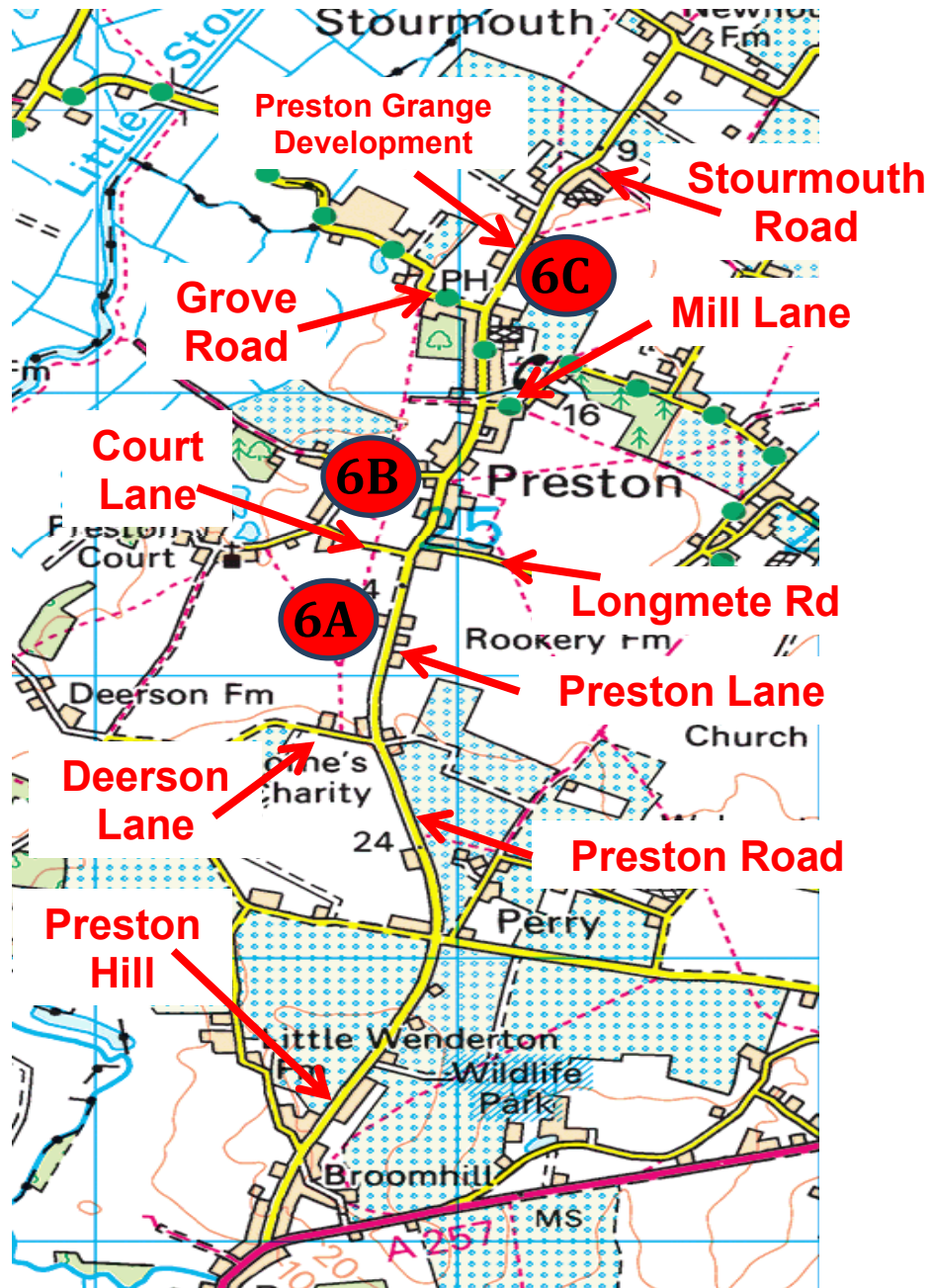


Highways improvement plan for Preston – Alwyn Pidgen

The traffic area covered by this plan runs from the junction of Preston Lane with Deerson Lane, through the Preston village gateway (near Court Lane) along The Street, past Grove Road where it becomes Stourmouth Road until it reaches the end of the 30mph speed limit just after Preston Grange.



The road through Preston village connects the A257 with the A253/A28/A299 and is often used as a “rat-run” between these roads. Speeding traffic, congestion at peak times and a lack of safe pedestrian walkways are major areas of concern.

6.1 Map designation hotspot 6A

Hotspot 6A Features

- This hotspot runs from the junction between Preston Lane and Deerson Lane north to the junction of Longmete Road with The Street, just after the Preston village “gateway” (30 mph limit).
- The junction between Preston Lane and Deerson Lane lies on a blind narrow bend within a 60mph speed limit area.
- Vehicles approaching the Preston village gateway (from both directions) have limited sight of oncoming traffic due to a bend in the road.
- Upon reaching the gateway into Preston village the speed limit suddenly changes from 60 to 30mph.
- Immediately after the village gateway there is a left turning leading into the residential area of Court Lane and a difficult and narrow right turning into the residential area of Longmete Road.
- There are no safe pedestrian areas in the vicinity of the village gateway either on The Street, or near Court Lane and Longmete Road

Hotspot 6A Issues

- The 60mph speed limit at the narrow blind bend by the Deerson Lane junction is far too high. Should vehicles actually take the bend at this speed (in either direction) a very serious accident could occur.
- Due to the road layout at the Deerson Lane junction, congestion regularly occurs due to wider vehicles (e.g. HGV's, Buses and Farm vehicles) being unable to pass other vehicles.
- Traffic approaching the gateway into Preston village (from the Wingham direction) rarely slows to 30mph before entering the village. This represents a real danger to pedestrians given the blind bends and lack of pavements
- The village gateway is sited on a blind bend and in its current position offers no real scope for safe traffic calming (e.g. pinch points) to slow traffic down to the 30mph limit.
- Passengers (especially schoolchildren) who board or disembark buses on The Street near its junctions with Court Lane and Longmete Road are put at risk by the lack of safe pedestrian areas.

Hotspot 6A Recommendations

- In its current position the village gateway offers little or no scope for safe traffic calming (e.g. pinch points) to slow traffic down to the 30 mph limit. Move the gateway (and hence 30 mph limit) further back in the Wingham direction and use traffic calming measures to slow vehicles down before they reach the Court Lane and Longmete Road junctions.
- To complement this, introduce a 40 mph buffer zone between Carpenters Farm (just south of Deerson Lane) and the Preston village gateway to encourage drivers to reduce their speed.
- Employ additional signage in both directions to inform drivers of the dangers of the blind and narrow bends.
- Modify the layout of the Longmete Road junction if feasible to allow safer vehicle access.
- Ensure pedestrian areas are available at the Court Lane and Longmete Road junctions to allow adults and schoolchildren to safely board and disembark buses.

6.2 Map designation hotspot 6B

Hotspot 6B Features

- This hotspot covers the length of The Street between the Longmete Road and Mill Lane junctions.
- There are two blind bends along this stretch of road, one near the old Oak Barn Farm Shop and the other at the junction with The Forstal.
- There is no safe pedestrian walkway along The Street from its junction with Longmete Road until just after its junction with The Forstal.
- There is no safe place for elderly and disabled residents to cross The Street at The Downs
- Parents living along this part of The Street face the choice of either walking their children to and from Preston Primary School (negotiating the hazards) or opt to use their cars.

Hotspot 6B Issues

- Speeding regularly occurs along this stretch, and is particularly dangerous at the blind bends. Traffic is heavy at school drop off / pick-up times, with congestion outside the primary school in Mill Lane and at its junction with The Street.

- Horses and riders from the Shotfield Equestrian Centre emerge onto The Street at a point where the road is narrow with no pavement and they are susceptible to speeding traffic.
- There is no safe pedestrian walkway along The Street from the Longmete Road junction until just after The Forstal junction.
- There is no safe pedestrian crossing from The Downs to the village shop. This particularly affects elderly and disabled residents who need more time to cross the road. Although KCC have approved a pedestrian walkway opposite the Downs, it is very narrow and requires pedestrians to walk right next to the open road.
- Northbound vehicles have to move to the centre of the road to overtake parked cars at the village shop. This can be particularly hazardous when vehicles are turning out of the blind junction at Mill Lane at the same time.

Hotspot 6B Recommendations

- Install a speed deterrent at both blind bends e.g. suitably sited signs flashing danger and slow down.
- There are limited practical options apart from signage to reduce the hazard for vehicles turning onto The Street at its junction with Mill Lane opposite the village shop.
- Enforce the 30 mph speed limit by:
 - The addition of a speed camera warning sign;
 - Actual periodical mobile speed camera checks.
- The adequacy of street lighting should be reviewed between Longmete Road and The Forstal.
- A safe pedestrian crossing should be installed to connect the footway alongside The Downs to the pedestrian walkway on the other side of the Street leading to the Village Shop.

6.3 Map designation hotspot 6C

Hotspot 6C Features

- This hotspot covers the length of The Street from the Mill Lane junction, past Grove Road onto Stourmouth Road until it reaches the speed limit signs just past Preston Grange.
- This section of The Street is reasonably straight with good visibility. It serves Preston Primary School, the Butcher's shop, the village shop,

Preston Nursery and the village pub. It also serves the residential area of Preston Grange.

- There is a stand-alone sign near the Garden Centre that flashes when a vehicle exceeds 30 mph.
- A virtual pedestrian walkway runs along the Street (in between the paved areas) from The Downs to Grove Road.
- A KCC highways approved traffic calming measure has been installed on The Street between the Grove Road junction and the public house. This kerbed build-out aims to control traffic flow by using directional priority signs.

Hotspot 6C Issues

- Southbound vehicles from Stourmouth rarely slow down to the 30 mph limit as they approach Preston Village past the Preston Grange development.
- The KCC approved virtual pedestrian walkway, though welcome, still leaves pedestrians vulnerable to speeding traffic. It is simply a white line painted in the existing road. There is no guarantee that vehicle drivers from outside the village will recognise what it is, or avoid parking on it.

Hotspot 6C Recommendation

- A village “Gateway” similar to the one proposed at the south end of the Village should be constructed at the north boundary, to encourage traffic to slow down before reaching the residential areas.
- Creation of a 40 mph buffer zone should be introduced before the 30 mph zone begins.
- Enforce the 30 mph speed limit by:
 - Including mobile speed camera warning sign
 - Actual periodical mobile speed camera checks
- Enhance the visual aspect of the pedestrian walkway, to make sure that vehicle drivers understand and respect its purpose.