

Kempton Village, Not the Races

See and be seen, inform and learn

*Clunton and Clunbury,
Clungunford and Clun,
Are the quietest places
Under the sun.*

They may have been in 1896 when A E Housman wrote 'A Shropshire Lad', but they are no longer. The roads are not adapted to heavy traffic which is increasing all the time in size and speed. More and more lorries go through villages, guided by Satnav. The brief respite villages enjoyed during lockdown has evaporated. The parish of Clunbury in South Shropshire includes Clunton, Clunbury, Twitchen and Kempton, along with other satellites hamlets. With great effort the Parish Council has obtained mandatory 30mph speed limits through the villages of Clunton and Twitchen, both bisected by B roads carrying heavy traffic. Sadly, these are not respected.

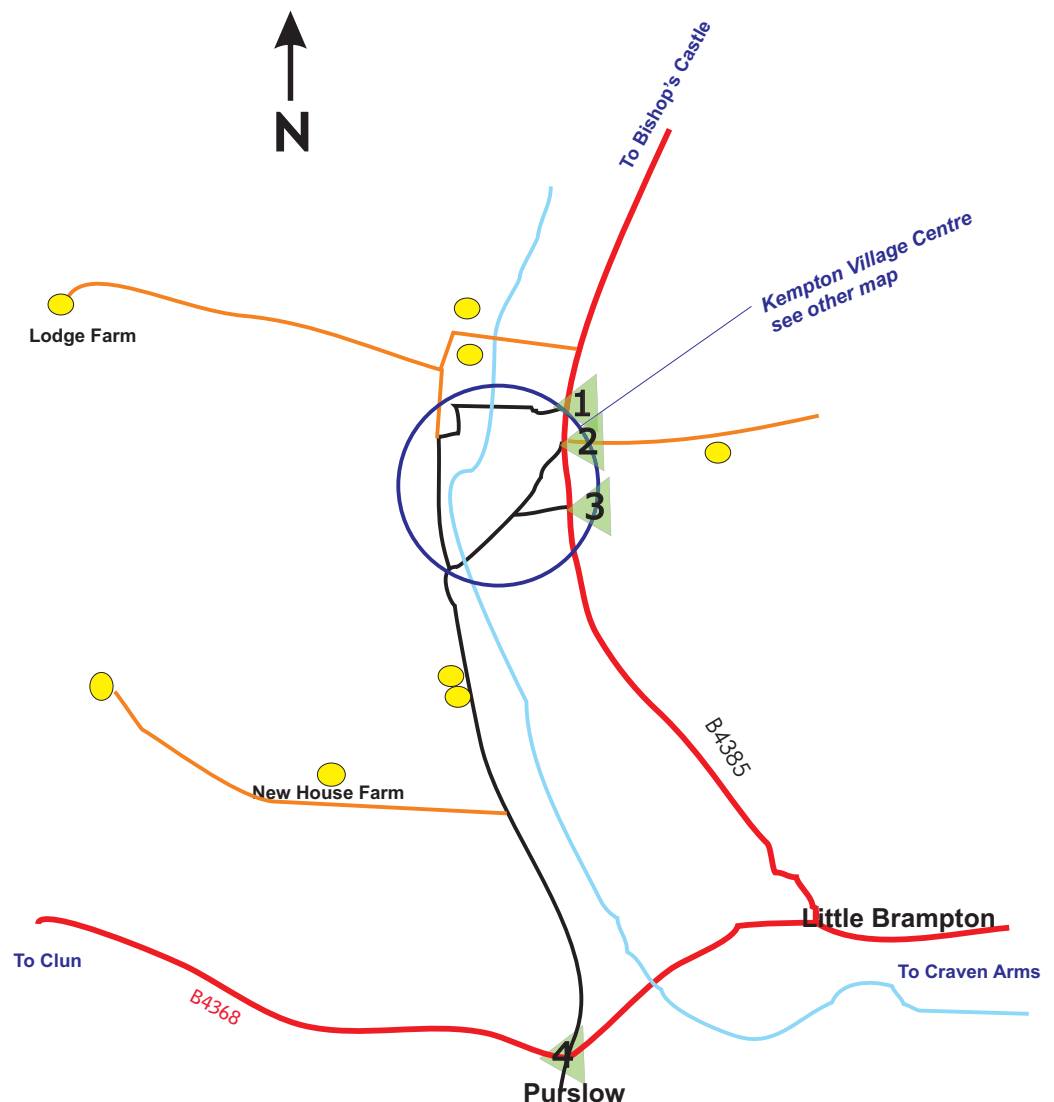
Kempton is a small village with 35 houses spread out over ½mile or so. Five new dwellings have recently been completed and await occupation, a sixth is planned, bringing the number of houses to 41. increasing the amount of traffic considerably. There are no amenities at all in the village, consequently villagers have to go out of the village for everything.

Access to the village is from the B4385 (Craven Arms to Bishop's Castle) and the B4368 (Craven Arms to Clun).

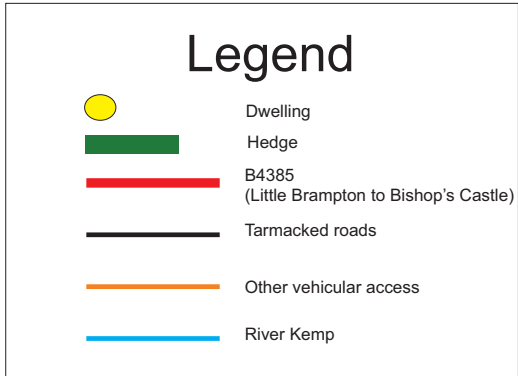
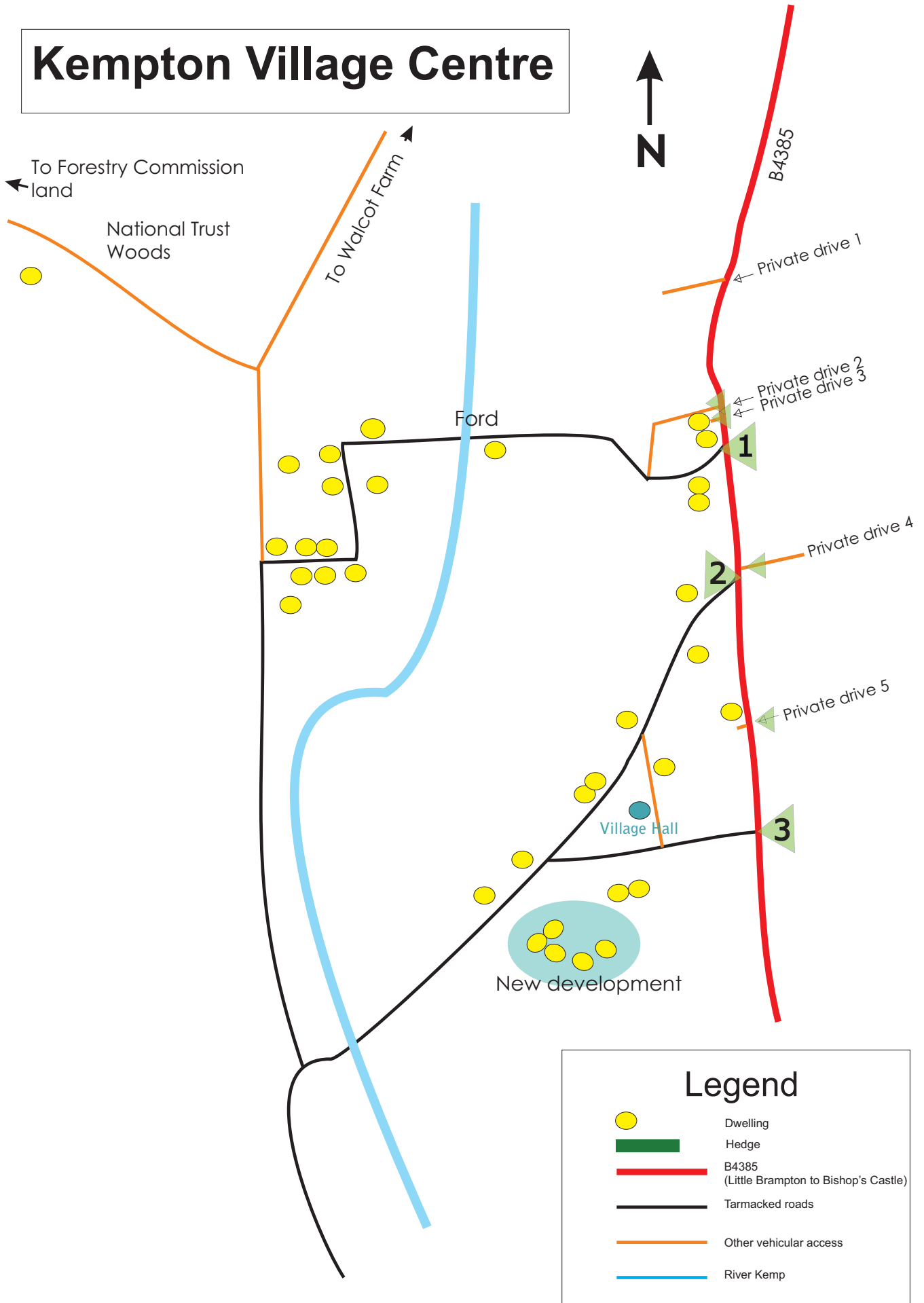
There are four main exits from: three onto the B4385 and one (along a narrow lane) to the B4368. Most of the houses are on the west side of the B4385, but there are a few whose driveways give directly onto both sides of this road.

Access onto the B4385 from the west is steep in all cases. There is no pavement nor is there enough width on the verges to provide one. There is a small layby between junctions 1 and 2, where the children are picked up in the morning by the school bus. They are returned, in the afternoon, to the other side of the road where the visibility is very poor and they have to cross the road.

The B4368 rises steeply on approach to Purslow with poor visibility.



Kempton Village Centre



A closer view of the main part of the village shows that there are also 3 private drives on the west side of the B4385 and 1 on the east side; but there are also many fields on the east side, which are used by farmers on a regular basis: tractors (with trailers) and dairy cattle. Exiting the fields is often dangerous. For 14 weeks of the year, cattle in fields on the east side of the road are brought to and from the milking parlour (on the west side of the road) twice a day. Farm-related vehicles (as well as private vehicles) go to the farm on the west side regularly.

In addition, the Forestry Commission has woods on the west side of the village, which are sometimes felled, bringing heavy vehicles and machinery, often loaded with wood, in and out of the village and the National Trust has woods on the west side of the village, which generates traffic for maintenance purposes.

This is a village in which 82 people (adults and children) live. They need to get in and out of the village in safety. This safety is compromised by two facts:

- There is no compulsory speed limit on either of the B roads; the advisory speed limit of 30mph on the B4385 is ignored.
- The visibility at all exits is very poor.

An overview of all the exits

Junction 1

Driver's view approaching the B4385. The road is very steep.



Driver's view at junction 1, looking left along the B4385



Vision is very limited to the left and to the right the driver has to turn his/her neck more than 90 degrees. The car is still on the very steep slope, therefore a hill start is required. Cars exiting here could be wishing to go left or right. Residents along this exit have no other choice of exit due to the ford (see map) that is impassable by normal vehicles.

Driver's view at junction 1, looking right

Drivers wishing to turn right could choose to turn left and find a safe point to turn around using public roads. This requires a 3 mile return journey.

This view of Junction 1 shows that it is at a very acute angle to the B4385



Junction 2

This junction is at a very oblique angle to the B4385. Turning left requires twisting your head to a very uncomfortable degree in order to see whether traffic is approaching from the right.



Driver's view looking left



Driver's view looking right

Junction 3

The front of the car is in line with the white lines. The driver can only see a very limited way along the road. Not enough of a view to exit safely onto a road where cars may legally be approaching at 60mph. There is a mirror looking right in front of the junction but that is always obscured by vegetation even after a cut.



Looking left with the car in the same position as before. Again not enough of a view of the road to make a safe decision.

The pictures taken here were after the hedges and verges had been cut. Often the visibility is far worse owing to the vegetation.



This is where the car has to be for the driver to see on both sides, looking right, left and right again before turning right.

The view is now good but the car is in a dangerous position and if cars come from the right at 50 or 60mph (which they do) there could well be an accident.

The driver of the car in the picture on the right reported: *"I was just about to go when I saw the roof of a van. My car does have hillhold on it so I had to make the quick decision to go or as I actually did, put it in reverse and ease back. I had to assume that the van might be travelling at 60mph and a slight stutter in the hill start would put me bang in the firing line. I also had to make sure that no one was directly behind me blocking my reverse manoeuvre.*

From the right the vehicles are coming out from the shadows of the trees. The driver is having to scan both ways and either ride the clutch or do a hill start. Many times a vehicle has come from the right at a high speed and had to swerve around my car, mostly they do not slow down. The brow of the hill on the right is 120 yards from the middle of the junction, where an exiting car would be. The highway code stopping distance for an average family car for 60 mph is 80 yards.

That figure assumes that the road is flat, dry, visibility is good and the driver is alert and able to react quickly. The run from the hill to the junction is downhill. Recent research suggests that in the wet and with poor visibility, the stopping distance could easily be doubled." From 30 mph the stopping distance flat, dry etc is 25 yards, giving plenty of safety room even in the wet and murky weather."

Junction 4 approaching Purslow from Kempton

Once again the approach to the junction is uphill

This is a crossroads, left to Craven Arms, right to Clunton and Clun and straight over to Twitchen.

Looking right, the visibility is non-existent, only a few yards visible down the road. Although the hedge has been splayed (which has been helpful), the tall vegetation impedes visibility.

Driver's view looking right



Driver's view looking left



Looking left is even more difficult: the Clun Road, B4368, rises uphill on the left of this junction. The brow of the hill impedes the view; it is emphasised by a telegraph pole with a tump of soil and grass at the bottom of it. Here again the hedge has been splayed and bollards have been placed to stop cars parking on the verge. This has helped, but visibility is still very limited, only a few yards and the speed limit is 60mph.

Two mirrors have been provided but they give a little help: the top one is always misted up and obscured by the hedge. The bottom one is of some help, provided no car is parked on the verge by the pub and the weather is dry. Relying only on the mirror would not be safe.

All exits from Kempton have their own dangers, there is no safe option because all roads out of Kempton meet 60mph roads and all have very limited visibility.



Five private drives and two farms have direct access onto the B4385.



Efforts to calm traffic

The Parish Council, conscious of the safety of the parishioners in leaving Kempton, tried to obtain a 30mph mandatory speed limit on the B4385. An advisory limit of 40mph was first adopted, followed, a few years later, by a 30mph advisory limit. There is NO MANDATORY SPEED LIMIT. The advisory limits made very little difference to the speed of vehicles on this road. Below are the latest exchanges between the Parish Councillor and a Shropshire Council representative, regarding the B4385.

07 October 2016

I am contacting you on behalf of Clunbury Parish Council and the residents of Kempton to raise our continuing concerns regarding speeding traffic along the B4385 through Kempton.

There have been at least 2 fairly serious accidents in the last year and I would like to discuss further what measures may be taken. For example some signage along the road is either missing or damaged and perhaps we could consider improvements to the type of signs.

21 February 2017

Clunbury Parish Council have agreed that I can ask you to review the signage at Kempton and make proposals to refresh and improve the warning signs along the road.

19 April 2017

I've been reminded by our dairy farmer that he still has no cattle warning sign on the road at the north end of Kempton (the herd crosses twice daily) and the cattle are now back out and were involved in a near miss a few days ago. You said when I mentioned it that the sign could be replaced quickly, particularly as the post holding it was still in place.

15 July 2017

There have been 2 road traffic accidents on the road in the last month. Don't know whether you routinely get reports but one involved a motorcyclist skidding whilst possibly taking the bend at the north end of the village too fast. The second involved a truck, again we believe skidding, leaving the roadway and turning over at the same point. In this accident damage was caused to field fencing, and the road was closed for some time due to fuel spillage and recovery.

Is it time for a compulsory speed limit?

More accidents have been reported by villagers and in the local newspaper. Here are some examples:

Shropshire Star 11 August 2017

It is one month on from the crash on the B4385 near Lydbury North that left a teenage driver with spinal injuries and a 60-year-old driver with severe whiplash.

The B4385 is a winding country road that runs between Little Brampton and Bishop's Castle, and has been the site of numerous serious accidents in the past.

In 2016 a man was airlifted to hospital after his car crashed into a tree, in a collision so violent that the engine was thrown from the vehicle. (This location coincides with the mains water supply to properties on Private drive 1, so a crash there is a risk to an essential service as well.)

Shropshire Star 29 December 2017

Car rolls onto its roof in B4385 Shropshire crash

By Aimee Jones, Bishop's Castle, published: Dec 29, 2017, last updated: Dec 29, 2017.

A driver and passenger escaped injury after a car rolled onto its roof in south Shropshire.

A spokesman for West Midlands Ambulance Service said: "We were called by the fire service to reports of a car that had been involved in a crash and rolled onto its roof.

"One ambulance attended and the air ambulance landed at a night landing site in Bishop's Castle but was stood down. No injuries were reported."

Three fire crews were on the scene and freed two people from the car.

More reports:

Travelling down from Lydbury North, a car crashed into the cattle warning sign and ended up on the verge in a mess. They were going too fast and got caught out by a herd of cows crossing the road.

A motorcyclist came off his bike outside our drive and we had to call an ambulance.

In 2018 and 2019 two car accidents taking out our front hedge.

Just past us, going towards Bishop's Castle and before Private drive 1, a truck overturned onto the top of a car.

None so far have been fatal, but this is only a matter of time.

Villagers' opinions

A questionnaire was sent to all 33 households; two additional houses are holiday cottages. Thirty one responded. They yielded the following results:

There are 56 private cars in the village and people use them to go in and out of the village 450 times a week and their visitors contribute to an additional 125 cars a week. This does not include working traffic and ad hoc traffic (people taking shortcuts; drivers following Satnavs, etc).

No villager felt safe turning right on the B4385, from any exit.

No villager felt safe turning left on the B4385 at exits 1,3 and all private drives. Eight felt 'safer' using exit 2, but not completely safe, due to the angle of the road, the hill start and the speed of traffic on the B road.

No villager felt safe turning right or going straight across at the B4368 crossroads. Few villagers take the turning to the left, at this crossroads as, to reach the crossroads necessitates driving a long, very narrow road, with very few passing places. However a few thought it was slightly safer, though not very safe due to the speed at which cars arrive from the right.

Villagers' comments:

"I have had several narrow escapes exiting Kempton both in the car and on foot! We are in need of a traffic calming scheme before someone is killed.

Traffic speeds through Kempton well above the current advised 30mph.

The following incidents stick in my mind: On one occasion when leaving via exit 3 towards Craven Arms I had just pulled out and thankfully was not moving very fast when all at once a Ludlow Brewery truck came hurtling towards me at speed over the brow of the hill on my side of the road. He was attempting to overtake a tractor and could not possibly have seen anything ahead before making his life-threatening manoeuvre. I was forced to veer into the hedge, he made no attempt to slow down and just managed to swerve in front of the tractor and continued his journey towards Bishop's Castle at speed. Even the tractor driver threw his arms in the air in disbelief. Had I been going any faster he would have hit me head on at speed.

On another occasion, also leaving via exit 3 towards Craven Arms, I had made sure all was clear, there was nothing in sight so I pulled out and within seconds a car travelling from Bishop's Castle was right up behind me almost in my boot! He must have been travelling in excess of 60mph to get that close so quickly as the road had been clear. After nearly going in the back of me he swerved out and came along side me and drove along side me for some while making rude gestures through the window! He was now on the wrong side of the road, not concentrating on where he was going approaching a blind summit, anything coming the other way had no way of seeing him and would have encountered him on their side of the road. He swung in front of me and roared away!

Coming from Bishop's Castle, and indicating to turn right into Kempton at exit 1, I was overtaken!

Several times when on foot to the post box I have been forced to jump in the hedge as traffic is speeding towards me, not slowing or giving room to me as a pedestrian. It is ridiculous. We have a dairy farm and the cattle are often crossing the road to be milked, cars cannot possibly see them in advance travelling at

speed when they enter Kempton needs to be addressed. The farmers are in the road guiding the cattle it is a miracle there has not been a fatality. Vehicles have also hit trees landing in fields and come crashing through fences and landed in gardens."

From Private drive 1:

"Exiting is difficult

Looking to the right, after a few yards (when it stops raining I'll do an estimate by foot) the road bends sharply to the left such that our visibility is obscured. This isn't so bad when exiting to the right as visibility to the left is good and there's enough time to pull out onto the left side of the road. Exiting to the left is perilous though, because the road can look clear but if something is coming along even as slow as 40mph (they're usually faster) by the time you've pulled out a car can be up your backside and has to brake.

Entering is worse

Is horrible whichever direction we're coming from. Cars can be going at a legal speed but not take account of how much we have to slow down to do the turn. The track is very steep on entering so you can't do a left or right turn at the normal speed."

What about children and cyclists?

"My biggest concern is children crossing the B4385. Drivers are starting to speed home at the end of the school day. This is when the children are crossing the road. Drivers maybe don't expect to see children on this road, unaware that it is a residential setting maybe, as there are no visible houses on the left hand side of the road going towards Craven Arms. The advisory speed signs currently in situ are ignored. The sign showing walkers on road also seems to have ZERO impact on slowing traffic.

5 people in my household use bikes. We cycle out of Kempton using exits 1,2,3 & 4. Re-entering the village at exit 2 is dangerous as traffic often overtakes cyclists as we are about to turn right off the main road. Drivers see a straight bit of road and speed up. As the signs are only advisory, drivers often speed up at the precise point where they should slow down. The speed signs need to be made mandatory 30mph."

A farmer's view

"I live and work on opposite sides of the B4385, and have reason to emerge onto it, or cross it many times per day, 7 days per week. From exits 1, 2 & 3 as well as private drives and field gates. The speed of traffic can make this very difficult.

When working with others in the village, I have had to join the B4385 at exit 3, to slow traffic down allowing a tractor and trailer to emerge from exit 2 and cross to the farm drive.

With a trailer on, I frequently find I need to emerge from the farm, turning left then right at exit 3 to re-join the B4385 from exit 2, rather than turn right towards Bishop's Castle.

The recommended speed notices are ignored, because they are not mandatory."

The speed is a recurring theme in all responses.

A neighbouring village, with a mandatory speed limit of 30mph, has installed a recording device which enables them to monitor speeds in the village. The following example shows that, even in an area where speed limit is mandatory, drivers do not necessarily respect it.

Traffic Report

Traffic Overview from Wed Sep 30 2020 to Tue Oct 6 2020

Vehicle Speed Classes (Mph)

Time of day	15		20		25		30		35		40		45		50		55		60		65		Total	85th Percentil
	<15	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60	60-65	65-70	>70											
00:00	0	0	0	0	1	4	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	47.2	
01:00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	59.2	
02:00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	
03:00	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	45.3	
04:00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	48.9	
05:00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	59.2	
06:00	0	0	0	0	1	2	5	4	11	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	53.5	
07:00	0	0	0	5	19	18	20	26	12	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	105	49.3	
08:00	0	0	0	16	38	46	33	31	32	9	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	212	51.0	
09:00	0	0	2	12	28	38	34	27	26	34	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	182	51.9	
10:00	0	0	0	13	28	41	46	30	17	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	183	48.6	
11:00	0	0	3	7	29	36	39	22	17	6	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	164	49.4	
12:00	0	0	0	10	13	40	44	24	11	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	148	47.6	
13:00	0	1	3	14	30	28	35	36	16	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	181	51.3	
14:00	0	0	1	9	24	37	37	41	20	6	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	188	51.9	
15:00	0	0	0	17	32	42	32	36	20	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	189	49.3	
16:00	0	0	3	17	26	34	47	46	19	15	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	210	49.7	
17:00	0	0	2	8	21	23	32	28	27	10	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	155	52.2	
18:00	0	0	1	5	15	19	19	25	16	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	108	50.9	
19:00	0	0	2	7	8	10	14	11	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	58	47.8	
20:00	0	0	0	5	9	7	12	10	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	48	48.4	
21:00	0	0	0	2	7	9	4	3	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31	49.4	
22:00	0	0	1	2	1	4	8	11	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	53.5	
23:00	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	47.9	
AM Total	0	0	5	53	143	186	184	152	120	38	18	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	47.2	
PM Total	0	1	13	96	186	254	286	274	141	64	21	2	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	59.2	
Total Percent	0	0.00%	0.04%	0.79%	6.57%	14.51%	19.41%	20.73%	18.79%	4.50%	1.72%	0.49%	0.93%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	47.2	

Total Vehicles : 2267

- 30th Percentile : 36.2 MPH
- 50th Percentile : 41.1 MPH
- 85th Percentile : 50.4 MPH
- 95th Percentile : 55.9 MPH
- Average Speed : 42.1 MPH
- Highest Speed : 90.3 MPH

ROAD SAFETY TRUST APPLICATION

PROPOSALS FOR KEMPTON

All exits from Kempton involve the B4385 (Craven Arms to Lydbury North) or B4368 (Craven Arms to Clun). They are all unsafe and a survey of the community shows that no villager feels safe leaving the village by any exit, particularly in view of the increasing traffic and the speed of vehicles (many of them lorries). A mandatory speed limit has been requested from Shropshire Council for years, but this has only resulted in a 30mph ADVISORY speed limit on the B4385 (which is not respected) and no speed limit on the B4368. This is aggravated by the layout of the minor roads leading to the B roads; they are all on slopes and the visibility is extremely limited.

Some traffic-calming measures (eg interactive speed signs) are only applicable where a mandatory speed limit applies. **It is therefore necessary to continue pressing Shropshire Council and the Police for a mandatory 30mph speed limit.** In the interim, we need to address the two issues of reducing the speed of passing vehicles and improving visibility at the exits.

How to reduce the speed of vehicles on the B roads?

On the B4385

1. Create 'gateways' on the B4385 north and south of the village, doing so with signs stating 'Kempton Village' (not just 'Kempton') placed at white palisade fences on both sides of the road, north and south of the village.

These would be placed:

From Craven Arms: before the brow of the hill

From Lydbury North: approximately 12m on the Lydbury North side of the turning to Lodge Barn.



2. Signage

Interactive signs, showing SLOW DOWN and lateral roads.

From Craven Arms: one positioned immediately after the brow of the hill.

From Lydbury North: one positioned where the present Kempton sign is.

A static CONCEALED EXIT AHEAD before the Kempton Village sign.

On both sides:


No overtaking at each entrance of the village

Repeat (not interactive) signs for concealed exit/children crossing, etc, which could be changed occasionally to prevent drivers' over familiarisation.



Cattle crossing signage for Kempton Farm:

Interactive signs, solar-powered, with remote control operation of flashing amber lights when the cattle are about to cross.



<p>3. Markings on the road</p> <p>Double white lines in the middle of the road between the 2 gateways, to discourage overtaking.</p> <p>Chevrons or zigzag lines leading to each exit from the village.</p> <p>SLOW reminders painted on the road.</p>	
<p>4. Rib lines across the road</p> <p>Rumble areas, rumble strips and speed bumps have been dismissed before, due to the type of road and the noise generated by rumble strips. However, thick strips of paint could be strategically placed across the road.</p>	
<p>On the B 4368</p>	
<p>1. Signage</p> <p>Interactive sign, as above, on each approach to the junction to Kempton and Twitchen</p> <p>2 Lines/chevrons on the road</p>	

How to improve the visibility at exits

<p>Opening the view by removing hedges and replanting</p>	
<p>At exit 1 (Lydbury North side)</p> <p>Remove hedge along 65m, clearing visibility to the bend; replace with fence.</p> <p>As environmental compensation, replant a hedge of the same length on the other side of the cattle track.</p>	
<p>At exit 3</p> <p>Craven Arms side: remove hedge on a length of 45m clearing visibility to the first oak; replace with fence.</p> <p>Erect 45m of new fencing</p> <p>Plant and fence 45m of compensatory hedging/tree planting elsewhere on the holding.</p> <p>Lydbury North side: remove hedge on length of 30m to oak and for 3m downhill from the exit. Remove and dispose of any existing fence. Erect 33m of new fencing</p> <p>Plant and fence 33 m of compensatory hedging (or tree planting equivalent) elsewhere on the holding.</p>	

Replacing and adding mirrors

The present mirrors are proving unsatisfactory. They could be replaced by larger (60cm x 40cm of the type shown here) rectangular mirrors which would provide a wider view.

2 at exit 1 (Lydbury North side)

2 at exit 2

2 at exit 3 (Craven Arms side)

2 at exit 4 (Purslow)



Moving of telegraph pole at Purslow

Telegraph pole and mound to the east of the exit: move the telegraph pole to the hedgerow, and flatten the mound.

Verge cutting: Parish Council to agree a cutting regime with the County Council. Monthly cutting from April to September is suggested.



Maintenance of verges

Parish Council to negotiate a cutting regime at all exits.