

Dear Mr. Jordan

I am writing this open letter on behalf of Northwood Parish Council in response to your communication dated 10<sup>th</sup> November 2023 regarding the traffic safety issues on Pallance Road, Northwood. Following an official traffic survey carried out over a 6½ day period in July 2023, more than 21,000 vehicles were recorded travelling on this minor residential road, of which 4,000+ vehicles were breaking the speed limit of 30mph – with some travelling over 60 mph.

The public meeting you attended on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2023, attended by many members of the public to voice their safety concerns with the sheer volume of traffic on Pallance Road, highlighted the many safety issues facing the residents when walking or travelling along Pallance Road. These included speeding vehicles and oversized prohibited lorries on a narrow road with long sections without pavement. These issues were raised at the meeting by residents following dangerous incidents and near misses that have involved young children. One resident had her car door hit by a moving vehicle as she was putting her children into the car.

Unfortunately, your response of the prioritisation of the A3056 and certain staff shortages, positions including the Transport Programme Manager, Local Transport Planner, Project Manager and other traffic personnel vacancies, is unacceptable. Forward planning should have resolved these issues before they had arisen. Budget constraints can be a hard barrier to cross in the current financial climate. However, the safety of all residents, including children, is paramount. Measures must be put in place immediately to resolve the obvious dangers brought to your attention and that of your highway colleagues.

The background to the public meeting on 4th July last year can be explained as follows. In October 2021, Northwood Parish Council sent a questionnaire to residents and users of Pallance Road to establish their main concerns and the issues they experience on a daily basis on the road. The results of this survey are summarised briefly thus:

- 73% did not feel safe as a pedestrian, 70% did not feel safe to jog or run and 77% did not feel safe to use a pram or wheelchair.
- 99% were concerned or seriously concerned at the volume of traffic, 82% were concerned or seriously concerned at the size of vehicles, 88% were seriously concerned at the noise.

In February 2022 the full results of this questionnaire, as well as Northwood Parish Council's recommendations, were shared with yourself - as the Cabinet member for Transport and Infrastructure - and members of Island Roads. This was followed up with a Microsoft Teams meeting on the 3rd March 2022. During this meeting, we were promised a response to our recommendations by August 2022.

- In August and September 2022, you were pushed for a response.
- 21st September 2022, you sent a non-committal reply stating, "It is not dissimilar to numbers of villages across the Island" and that you were "not certain of what can or cannot be achieved in the circumstances and within highway regulations that exist, but I would like to engage and understand more fully the 'art of the possible' here."
- 22nd September 2022, we re-sent the results of the questionnaire, and recommendations to you, at your request.
- January 2023, we emailed you again about residents' concerns about speed from the Rew Street roundabout onto Pallance Road, they were requesting traffic calming measures.
- March 2023 a resident emailed you about the works Wight Fibre were undertaking on Pallance Road and how they had been told to provide better safety for pedestrians.
- 2nd April 2023, you were sent an email from a resident about cyclists speeding down the road, causing a nuisance to residents and other road users.
- 18th April 2023, another email about pedestrian safety in and around Wight Fibre's works on Pallance Road.
- 2nd November 2022, your response to another reminder email from us contained the following; "The speed reviews were due to be completed around the end of October but there is work involved in collating all of the raw data into a meaningful report format. I'm still awaiting a report back from Highways on potential measures in addition to the speed review data. I will chase that up from tomorrow as I am off Island all day today."
- May 2023, Michael Paler (Cowes Town Council) asked questions on our behalf at an IWC meeting. The response to which was relayed to us as "Pallance Road is an almost impossible issue to resolve because of width, lack of pavement and adjoining property issues. There is a belief in some residents that reduced speed is the answer but it's not the full answer and it's part of the ongoing speed review anyway."

- 4th July 2023, you were invited to attend a meeting of Northwood Parish Council, alongside Scott Headey, Stephen Ashman and Ian Middleton. At that meeting you assured councillors and residents that we were “pushing on an open door”. If you refer to the minutes of that meeting, you will see that you accepted that the road is a problem. It was generally felt that the meeting was positive and you (alongside the other guests) were invited to come and see the road in action, particularly at peak times, an invitation we are not sure you have taken up yet. The traffic survey which was requested at that meeting has now been conducted and the results are referred to within this letter.

Northwood Parish Council, on behalf of the residents and users of Pallance Road, request that the IW Council implement immediate safety measures as a matter of urgency. A quick and cost-effective method to help resolve some of the issues would be to reduce the speed limit, improve safety signage and to install speed indicators. We believe that these requests are not unreasonable and should be implemented as soon as possible.

We have asked the police for their support with this matter and asked them to monitor the incidences of speeding and oversized vehicles.

Yours sincerely

John Pullen (Chair)

On behalf of Northwood Parish Council