



Regulation 29 Report to Chief Coroner

Response to Action to Prevent Other Deaths Report

A Means of Crossing the A25 Guildford Road,

at Abinger Hammer

Richard Bolton

Surrey County Council

Local Highway Services  
Group Manager

# 1. Introduction

There was a fatal accident on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015, where Mr John Watt was attempting to cross the A25 Guildford Road at Abinger Hammer, Surrey in order to reach the shops which were located on the other side of the road. Mr Watt was hit by a car travelling at approximately 30mph and sadly died of the resulting injuries.

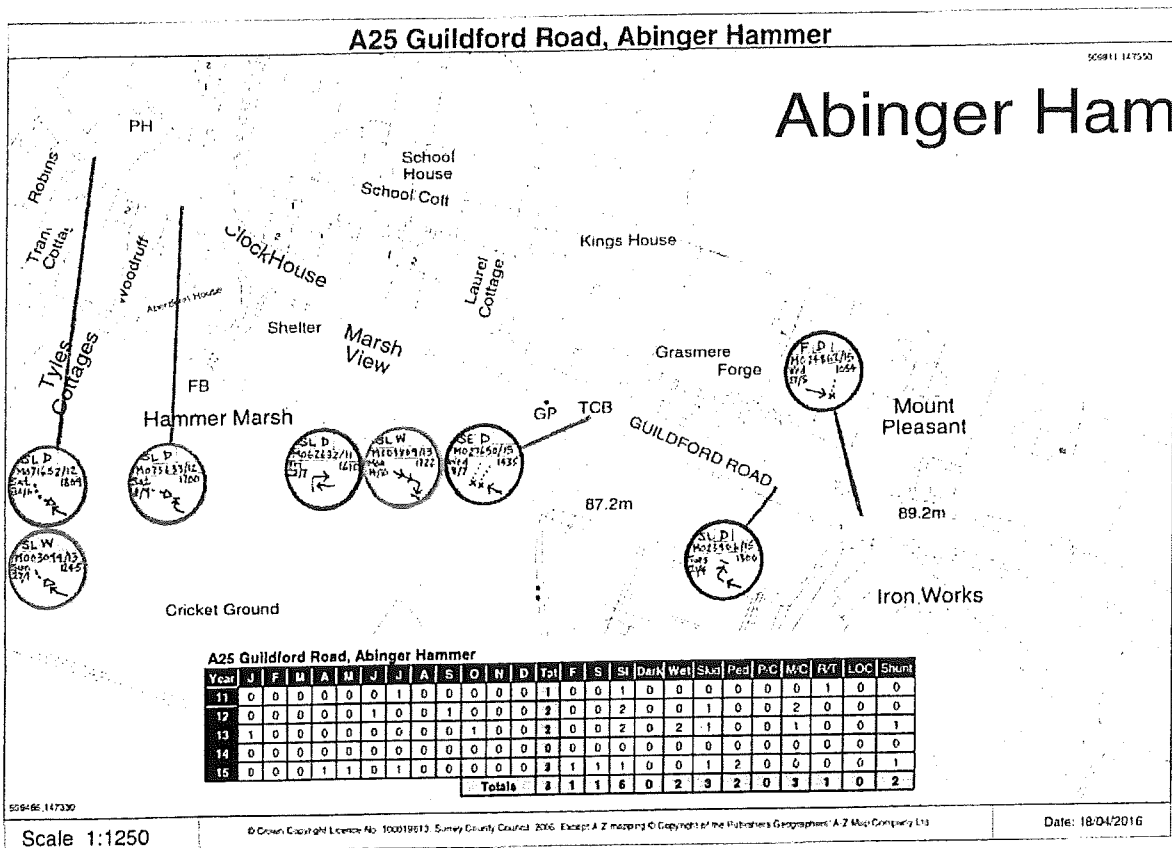
A Regulation 28 Report on Action to Prevent Other Deaths, following the Inquests touching the death of Mr Watt, was sent on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. In that report, the Coroner Mr Simon Wickens indicated that the Matter of Concern is **A Means of Crossing the A25 Guildford Road at Abinger Hammer**. That report requested that consideration should be given to providing a safe system of allowing pedestrians to cross the A25 at Abinger Hammer.

This report, in accordance with Regulation 29, sets out details and limitations of the action that has been taken.

## 2. Details of action that has been taken.

### 2.1 Collision Data Analysis

Accident data at junction of A25 Guildford Road and Felday Road



## Summary of collision analysis

Investment, to reduce the risk of future road casualties, is prioritised by Surrey County Council by analysing data collected by the Police on the circumstances and locations of road traffic collisions leading to injuries. A summary of this information is available for the public to view via [www.crashmap.co.uk](http://www.crashmap.co.uk). The detailed information collected by the Police is used to identify locations with a history of personal injury collisions (PIC). These locations are most likely to have the greatest risk of future collisions, unless any common incident patterns can be identified that could be addressed by safety improvements.

A study has been made of the PICs occurring over the last 5 years to date (1.1.11 to 29.2.16) over the length of the A25 Guildford Road, Abinger Hammer, extending from 100m west of Hackhurst Lane to 100m east of the Kingfisher Farm Shop entrance, a distance of approximately 400 metres. A total of 8 PICs have been recorded, including the accident in question, and the nature of the other 7 collisions is described below.

- In 2011 a car turning right out of Felday Road was struck by a westbound car, resulting in a slight injury to one of the drivers.
- In 2012 there were 2 recorded PICs within the study length. In June an eastbound motorcyclist lost control on the left-hand bend before Hackhurst Lane and collided with a westbound car, resulting in a slight injury to the motorcyclist. In September another eastbound motorcyclist lost control directly before Hackhurst Lane and collided with a stationary vehicle waiting to turn right into Hackhurst Lane, resulting in a slight injury to the motorcyclist.
- In 2013 there were 2 recorded PICs within the study length. In January another motorcyclist lost control on the left-hand bend directly before Hackhurst Lane and collided with a westbound car, resulting in a slight injury to the motorcyclist. In October, at the junction with Felday Road, two eastbound vehicles shunted a third stationary vehicle waiting to turn right into Felday Road, resulting in slight injury to two of the drivers.
- In 2014 there were no recorded PICs within the study length.
- In 2015 there were 3 recorded PICs within the study length. In April a westbound car shunted another stationary vehicle waiting to turn right into the car parking area outside Grasmere Forge, resulting in a slight injury. In July outside the Post Office/ Tea Room opposite Felday Road, a 2 yr old child ran in to the A25 away from the accompanying adult. The adult followed to protect the child but both were struck by a westbound van, resulting in serious injuries to both people.

From the police accident reports there appears to be very little pattern to the PICs described above except directly west of Hackhurst Lane, where 3 eastbound motorcyclists were involved in loss of control collisions between June 2012 and January 2013. Since then, no similar incidents have been recorded.

It would appear that the circumstances that led to the fatal accident involving Mr Watt, in the vicinity of the Kingfisher Farm Shop entrance, did not form part of a pattern of similar incidents at the same location. The only other pedestrian casualties took place over 100m to the west and involved an accident, described above, that could have taken place at any location.

## **2.2 Summary of Road Safety Working Group Conclusions** **(based on the analysis above, local site knowledge and observations).**

The details of every fatal collision are discussed at the next available Road Safety Working Group for that area to review whether the incident is part of a pattern of similar collisions that may need addressing by either highway or police interventions. This working group involve Area Highway Engineers, Road Safety Officers and the Police and so provides the opportunity of using all the available knowledge and expertise. This incident was discussed at the meeting on 5 May 2016.

There has not been a previous pattern of similar collisions at the location outside the entrance to Kingfisher Farm Shop where the accident involving Mr Watt occurred. However it is recognised that there is a pedestrian desire line between the village green and the Post Office /Tea Room. It is unclear whether Mr Watt would have used a pedestrian facility on the location of the desire line between the Post Office/Tea Room, had one been provided, because this is over 100m to the west of the point where he was crossing when the fatal incident occurred.

Due to the lack of a previous history and pattern of similar collisions, the likely cost of providing pedestrian crossing facilities on this road is unlikely to be justified solely on the potential for reducing casualties. However, given the pedestrian desire line between the village green and the Post Office/Tea Room the provision of improved crossing facilities may be justified in terms of improved accessibility and facilities for pedestrians in the village. Any such proposals will need to be weighed up against the demand for other highway improvements in Mole Valley.

The proposed feasibility study for improved crossing facilities would consider the extent of the public highway to assess whether there is sufficient width for the provision of suitably sized areas for pedestrians to wait to cross. The availability of an electrical power supply should also be considered (there is no street lighting on this road), as should the position of the bus stops in relation to the crossing point. Kerb build outs, to narrow the carriageway, would not be appropriate at this location given the nature and volume of traffic that uses the A25 through Abinger Hammer. There is insufficient carriageway width to provide a central pedestrian refuge island.

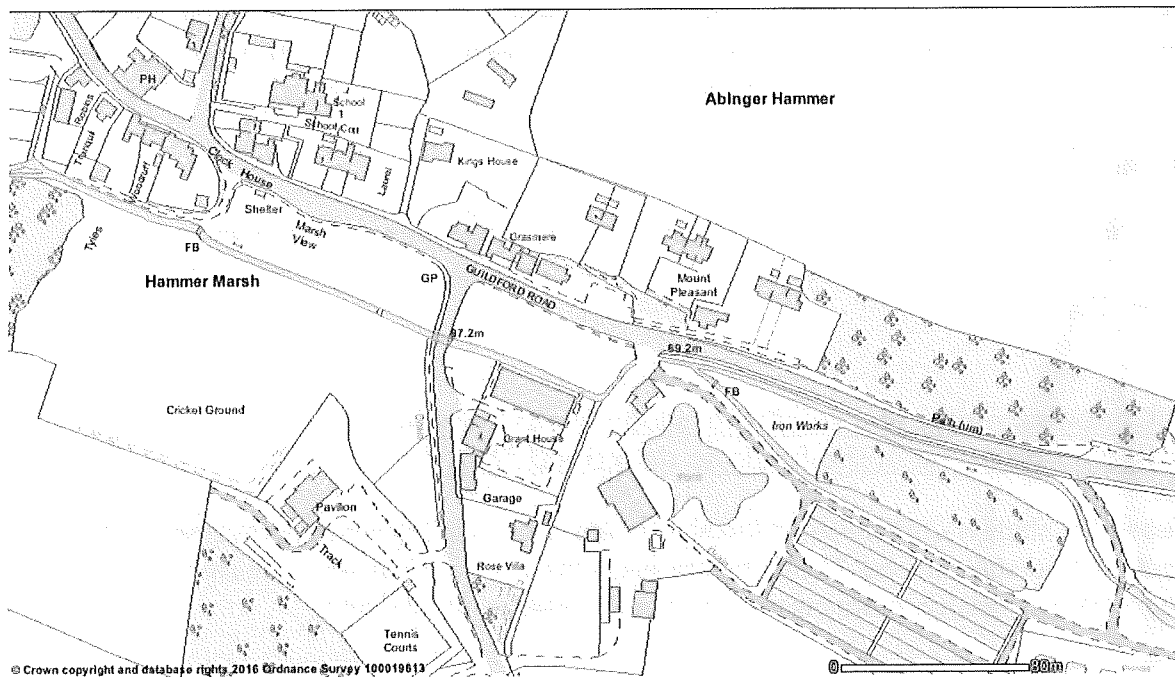
In the short term it is proposed to investigate the provision of signs to warn drivers that pedestrians are crossing the A25 in the vicinity of the village green.

There is also a solar powered electronic vehicle activated sign that illuminates to drivers to remind them of the 30 mph speed limit and to "SLOW DOWN" if they are travelling too fast on the westbound approach to the pedestrian desire line near the Post Office/Tea Room. It is thought that the operation of the sign may be sporadic depending on the level of sunlight, number of activations and battery longevity. Consequently funding will be sought to undertake an inspection of the sign and to overhaul it if necessary.

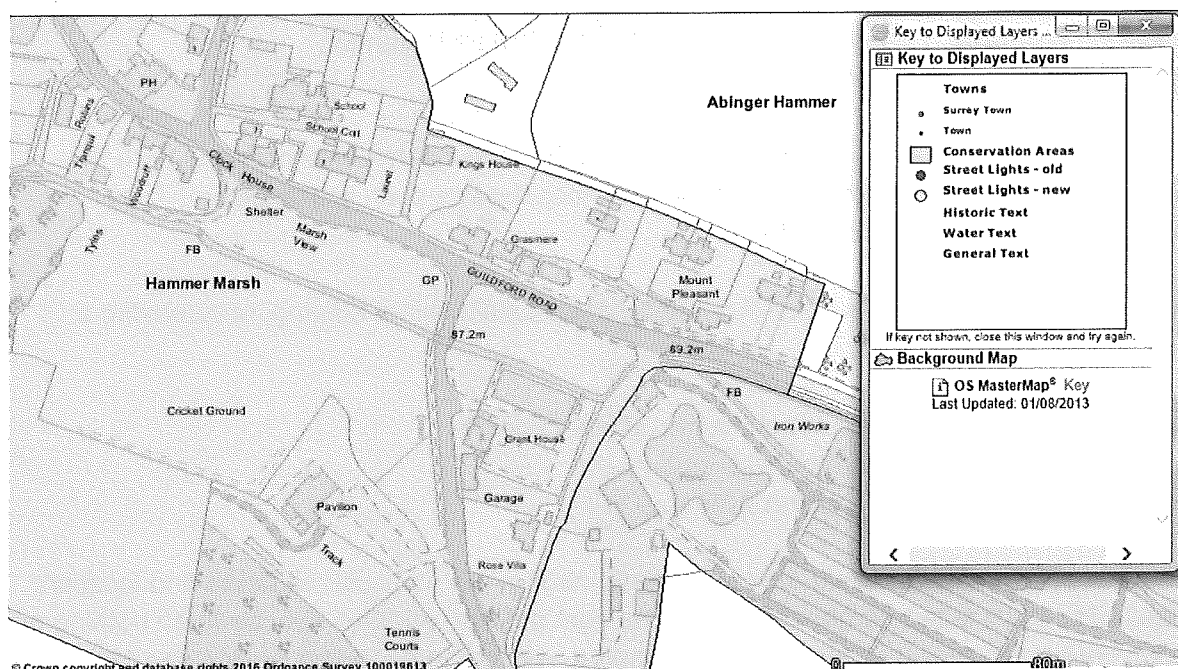
The proposed Feasibility Study will determine if this location is suitable for a formal crossing. However, an initial assessment of this location has indicated that there are many constraints on this being suitable for a formal crossing. The village is within a Conservation Area and there is no street lighting (which is required to provide power to any signalised crossing or

lighting). There are constraints on available land for a formal crossing and the environmental impact of such a crossing within the Conservation Area. The Feasibility Study may determine if alternative measures to encourage pedestrians to cross away from the junction (nearer to the bus stops) would be appropriate. One such measure may be to extend the low rustic post and rail fence from Felday Road. This may also discourage parking on the footway. Also, it may be proposed to provide information to users of the green and stream area, potentially by contacting websites and/or via the local shop.

### General Location Plan of the A25 Guildford Road, at Abinger Hammer



### Location Plan of the A25, Guildford Road, at Abinger Hammer showing the extent of the Conservation Area and no street lighting.



## **Traffic speeds on A25**

A survey using handheld equipment was undertaken (afternoon) in October 2013, from the private car park next to Hackhurst Lane. The average measured speeds were 24.5mph in the eastbound direction and 22.5mph in the westbound direction, with maximum recorded speeds of 32mph and 31mph respectively.

## **Parking and obstruction**

There is some evidence of vehicles parking in the bus stop and reports of obstructive parking, particularly in the summer. There are increased, large numbers of visitors in the summer months. A Bus Stop Clearway Order is in progress (agreed at the meeting of the Mole Valley Local Committee in December 2015).

## **Signing**

There are yellow-backed terminal signs entering the 30mph section near to the farm shop. Speed limit repeaters are also in place, along with a number of warning signs (road narrows, side road ahead).

## **2.3 Commissioning of a feasibility study for a crossing (based on some of the findings described above)**

A feasibility study is undertaken at the start of any proposed highway improvement scheme to set out available options. The study assesses the effectiveness and viability of these options within known constraints such as land availability and funding.

There are different pedestrian crossing facilities that can be installed; these include dropped kerb preferred crossing point, pedestrian refuge island, and zebra, pelican, puffin, toucan crossings. The feasibility of installing a new crossing point is determined to the specific location by an Engineer who takes in to account various factors such as road safety (including assessing accident patterns and causes), the environment and maintenance implications.

There is consultation on the feasibility of any proposed new pedestrian crossing, with the Police, residents, local businesses, Councillors, local bodies such as Parish and Town Councils, or Residents Associations.

Under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, before establishing, altering, or removing a crossing a local authority shall:-

- (a) consult the chief of police about their proposal to do so;
- (b) give public notice of that proposal; and
- (c) inform the Secretary of State in writing.

The most appropriate and safe action is determined for the particular situation and location. A feasibility study is required to determine the right answer, and this may be to do nothing or to provide an alternative solution. It is proposed to request that funding is allocated from the

Mole Valley Local Committee small safety schemes budget to determine if it is feasible to safely install a new pedestrian crossing facility of any kind at this location, and the feasibility study be delivered in this 2016/17 financial year.

If the feasibility study concludes that there is a justifiable need for some work to take place, and the proposed solution is suitable for the location, then the proposal would be added to the Integrated Transport Schemes (ITS) List of schemes for possible future funding. The Mole Valley Forward Programme of schemes for design and construction is made up from schemes on the ITS List and this programme is presented to the Mole Valley Local Committee each year for decision. The County Councillors are responsible for deciding which schemes to prioritise and where to allocate resources. County Councillors will take into account representations from the public, the advice from the engineers and the availability of funding. It can take over 18 months before any improvement works are implemented, even if a scheme is approved and funding available. This is because there are a number of essential steps that have to be undertaken, including detailed design and safety audit.

### **3. Conclusion**

There has been some initial investigation of the constraints to a formal pedestrian crossing at the location of the accident on the A25 Guildford Road, in Abinger Hammer. A Road Safety Working Group for that area has reviewed whether the incident is part of a pattern of similar collisions that may need addressing by either highway or police interventions. Funding for a feasibility study, to determine if a pedestrian crossing facility is possible and safe in this location, is going to be requested from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Mole Valley Local Committee. The existing Vehicle Activated Sign, east of Felday Road, will be inspected and reconditioned if necessary. In the short term, it is proposed to investigate the provision of signs to warn drivers that pedestrians are crossing the A25 in the vicinity of the village green.