

Henry Smethurst response to WRs, Deadline 2

Traffic and noise on A272

CowfoldvRampion, the parish council and many others have raised concerns in their written representations about traffic and its effects in Cowfold. WSCC also have highlighted that many of these effects, particularly noise, are underestimated by the applicant.

The residents of Cowfold have in recent years become increasingly concerned about the traffic, not only the numbers, the congestion and the air pollution, but the noise and vibration, especially from the increasing numbers of heavy vehicles. This is a daily misery, not only for the residents in the centre of the village, but those on the outskirts along the A272, in the area of Oakendene to the east, and Stonehouse Lane area to the west where the traffic speed has picked up again after leaving the village or before entering it.

Some residents on the western side have already found the noise levels and vibration to be intolerable. Sound recordings, even for properties up to a quarter of a mile down Stonehouse Lane, a tiny quiet lane coming off the A272, and very similar to Kent Street, show a constant 70Hz background hum and vibration. UKPN have agreed that it is most likely due to the bounce and reverberation across the fields generated by the increase in traffic volume and the weight of HGVs along the A272. This has got worse as trees have been cut down from this stretch reducing the sound buffer so the sound travels for longer and further away. More evidence on this will be submitted at the next deadline.

These east west routes are very similar in traffic numbers, congestion and general adverse traffic impacts. For those with gardens running along the A272 at Oakendene it can already be difficult sometimes to have a conversation in the garden over the traffic noise. At Oakendene a large number of trees and hedges are to be removed by Rampion, reducing their sound absorbing ability and making the situation worse. It will be many years before any replanted trees and hedges can adequately regrow. Almost all of the Section 3 construction traffic will be going back and forth to Oakendene making the noise and pollution effects even worse than to the west.

The WSCC Road Traffic Monitor on the Bolney Road confirms an increase in traffic levels passing through Cowfold of 6.5% in 2023 and a further 5.9% in the first two months of 2024. By the time Rampion construction work actually begins, if consented, the numbers will have increased even more by some margin. This will make the negative impacts of the Rampion traffic through and around the village even worse than currently feared. Rampion dismiss all these effects as 'not significant' or 'negligible'.