

Alkham Valley Road

History, Current Challenges, and Proposed Way Forward

1. Background

The A20 dual carriageway between Folkestone and Dover was opened in 1993 as part of the Channel Tunnel Parliamentary Bill. As a result, the Alkham Valley Road (B2060) was downgraded to an unclassified route, with the clear intention that it should serve only local traffic within the Alkham Valley — a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Strategic east–west traffic in Kent was instead to be carried by the A2 and A20. To reinforce this, traffic calming was intended on Alkham Valley Road to discourage through-traffic. However, those measures were not implemented before the A20 opened, leaving the valley exposed to ongoing, and increasingly heavy, through-traffic.

2. Early Proposals (1994–1996)

Traffic surveys in 1994 recorded around 5,000 vehicles per day, including 300 HGVs, down from 7,000 before the A20 opened. But serious safety issues were also identified:

- Vehicle speeds of 49–52mph entering Alkham, well above the 30mph limit.
- Over 70 pedestrians per day using sections with no footway.

In response, proposals were drawn up in 1995–1996, including:

- Gateway schemes at village entrances.
- Road narrowing/chicanes to slow traffic.
- A new footway near the Marquis of Granby.
- Weight restrictions to deter HGV rat-running.

These were supported by the community, police, and emergency services. Yet, despite agreement in principle, none were implemented.

3. Growing Problems (1996–2023)

In the decades since, the situation has deteriorated:

- **Housing growth** north of Dover has driven increased traffic, with many drivers using Alkham Valley as a quicker route to the M20 at Hawkinge.
- **Operation TAP/STACK** diverts additional HGVs and other traffic onto unsuitable rural lanes, including Alkham Valley Road.
- **2017 survey data** showed daily traffic had doubled to more than 10,000 vehicles. TAP-related congestion on the A20 was shown to push yet more vehicles into the valley.
- **Latest survey data** now shows peak traffic flows of up to 1000 vehicles and hour through the village.

The consequences have been severe:

- Frequent HGV collisions with walls, junctions, and even listed heritage properties.
- Road structure deforming under the weight of traffic.
- Road closures caused by bridge strikes (two in the past year alone).
- Ongoing pedestrian safety risks at points where public rights of way intersect the road.

Incremental signage and markings introduced by Kent County Council (KCC) to date under the HIP scheme have had little meaningful effect.

4. Proposed Way Forward (2024)

The requirements today remain largely unchanged from those identified in 1994 — but are now far more urgent given traffic growth and safety concerns.

In February 2024, following support from our MP and local councillors, a letter was sent to Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport at Kent County Council, requesting a more strategic approach to managing east–west traffic. The letter asked for the issue to be given greater priority and for viable solutions to be developed to control traffic through Alkham Village and the Alkham Valley AONB.

Priority Measures

1. **Traffic Calming & Speed Reduction**
 - Gateway schemes at both village entrances.
 - Chicanes/road narrowing with “give way” points.
 - End to end speed limit reductions.
2. **Pedestrian & PROW Safety**
 - A new footway linking the Marquis of Granby to Slip Lane.
 - Safer crossing points where PROWs meet the road.
3. **HGV Management**
 - Enforceable 7.5-ton weight restrictions, except for access.
 - Improved signage at A2, A20, Whitfield, and Hawkinge to deter rat-running.
4. **Integration into the Strategic Dover Transport Plan**
 - Recognition of Alkham Valley Road as an unclassified local road within an AONB.
 - Ensuring Dover Access Improvements deliver resilient alternatives so that traffic has no incentive to divert through Alkham.

5. Highways Improvement Plan (2025)

To address these challenges, at the request of Kent Highways, Alkham Parish Council developed the latest version of the **Highways Improvement Plan (HIP)**, setting three clear priorities:

1. Road calming build-outs at both ends of the village.
2. A 10mph reduction in speed limits throughout the valley.
3. A 7.5-ton vehicle weight restriction (except for access).

The plan was developed from the original TAG report, and developed from earlier HIP iterations supported by Temple Ewell Parish Council and Hawkinge Town Council, and informed by surveys, Speedwatch data, and police input.

Outcomes to date:

- *Speed limit reduction*: KCC agreed only to a 10mph reduction on the eastern approach to Dover. Other sections were rejected, as recorded speeds were considered too high to justify reductions without physical traffic calming.
- *Road calming build-outs*: Initial designs were promising but ultimately rejected, due to KCC's current lighting policy that prevents the use of overhead power poles.
- *HGV weight restriction*: No progress has been made, despite repeated incidents involving bridge strikes, road damage, and HGVs rat-running through the valley.

After more than a year of engagement, only one minor element of the HIP has been approved. The Parish Council remains deeply disappointed that Kent Highways, despite acknowledging the problems, has not supported proactive safety measures. This runs counter to their own stated aim of reducing the “attractiveness” of Alkham Valley Road as a through-route.

6. Conclusion and way forward

The issues first identified over 30 years ago remain unresolved and have now intensified. Parish-led initiatives and minor measures cannot solve what is fundamentally a strategic transport issue — shaped by port operations, housing growth, and international freight pressures.

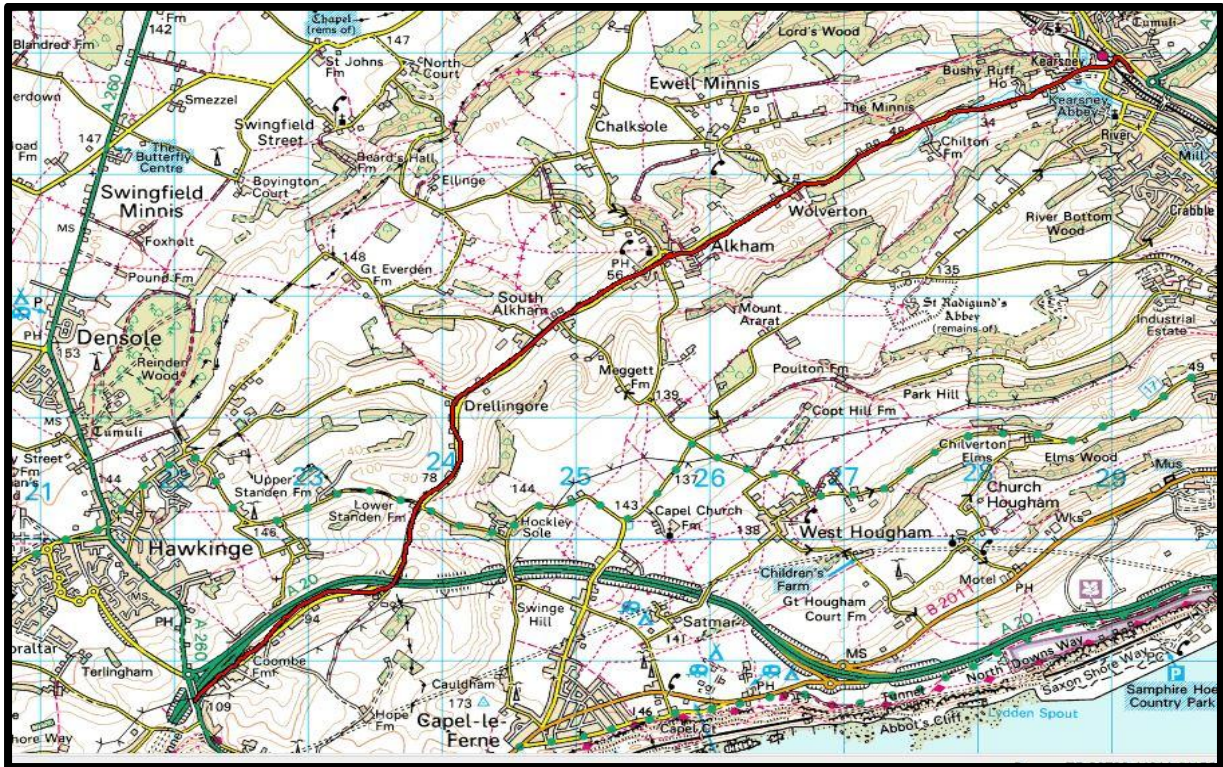
The Parish Council remains committed to securing the necessary highways improvements. While progress so far following the defined HIP process has been limited signage changes and a single speed limit reduction, the urgency for effective traffic calming, HGV management, and pedestrian safety measures has never been greater.

We therefore call again for a proper strategic review of Alkham Valley Road to be instigated as part of the wider Dover transport strategy. This is essential to:

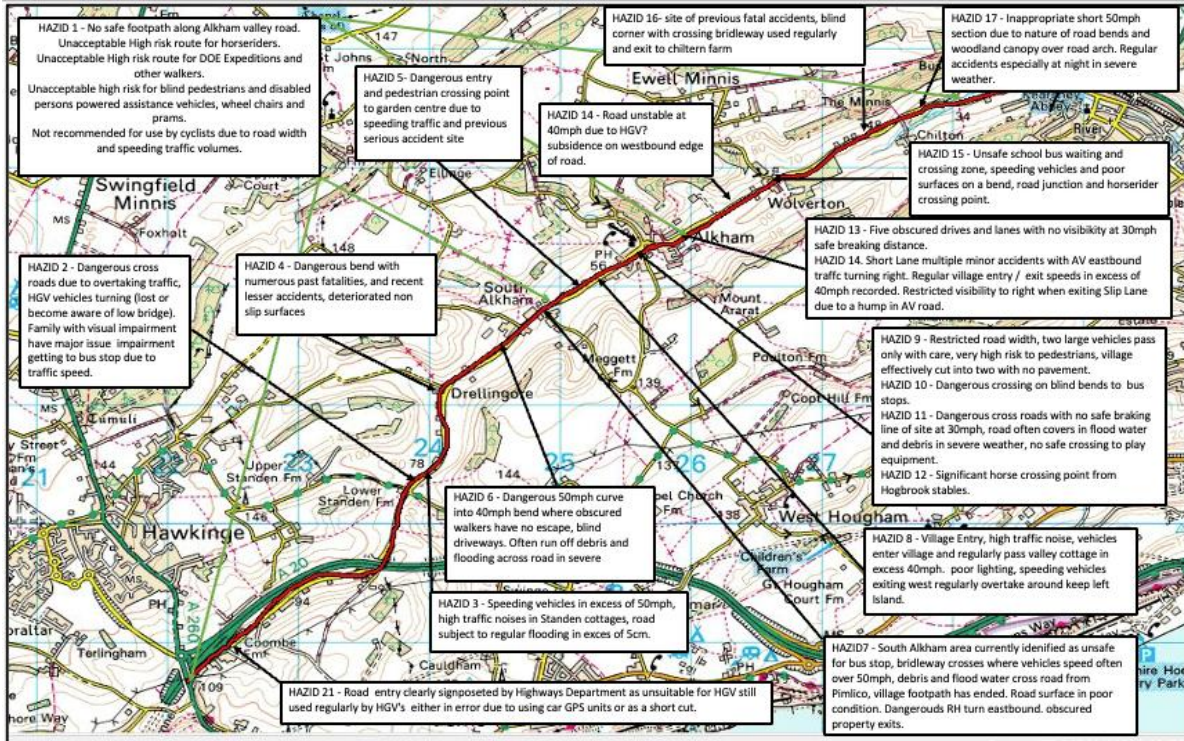
- Protect Alkham residents and heritage.
 - Safeguard and seek to further the purposes' of the designated landscape (AONB)
 - Restore the original 1993 intent that through-traffic should use the A2 and A20, not Alkham Valley Road.
 - Address Kent Highways', aim to reduce the “attractiveness” of the Alkham Valley as a cut-through route between Dover and Folkestone. *Local Transport Plan v5: Striking the Balance*
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1. Context Map

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- Showing Alkham Valley Road in relation to the A2, A20, Dover, and Folkestone.

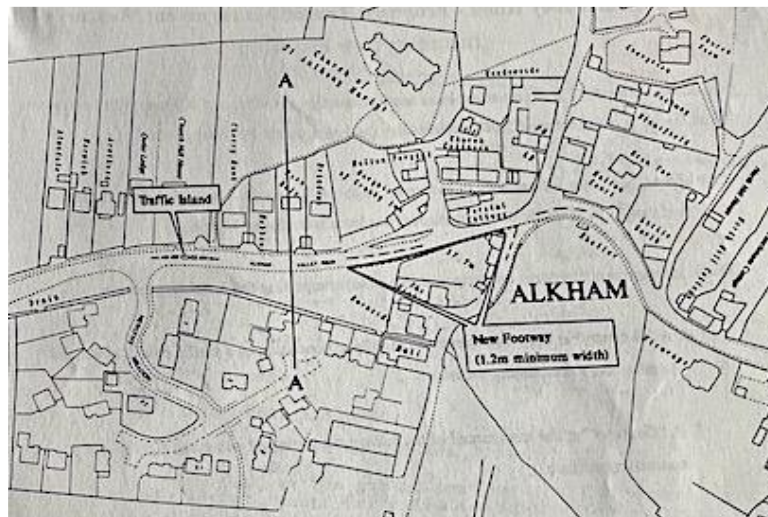
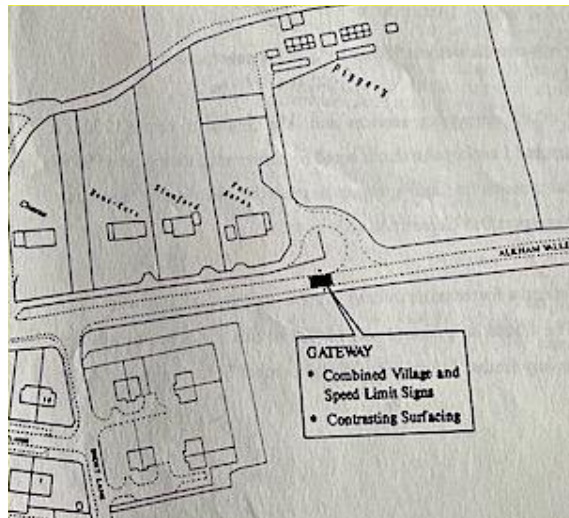


2. Highlighted Risk areas



3. Historic Plans

Early KCC Highway proposals (1995 gateways, chicanes, footway).



4. Proposed Improvements Map (from TAG report)

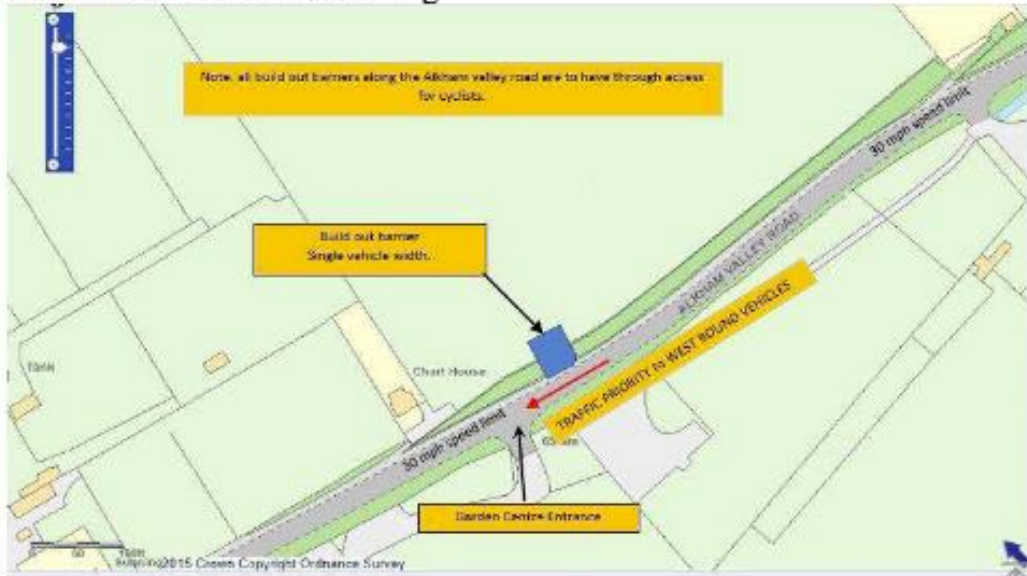
Village Eastern Entrance



Western End, Valley Cottages



Garden Centre Traffic Calming



Village Centre & School Bus Stop

