

Milford Area Preservation Group's Winter Newsletter 2025

Recent Survey on Measures to Reduce the Impact of Traffic Volumes on Milford Mill Road and Surrounding Roads

Many of you will have had a chance to complete the recent MAPG survey aimed at reducing the volume and impact of traffic on our roads, and to address the regular congestion on Milford Mill Road (MMR) particularly. Residents were asked to rank in order of preference the remedial measures most likely to pass the credibility test.

316 survey letters were distributed and we received 202 replies: an astonishing 64% response rate. The top three measures by weighted vote were: Automatic number-plate recognition (ANPR); traffic cushions ('sleeping policemen'); and an extended corner at the junction of Manor Farm Road with MMR.

Survey Results

Description	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	Total	Weighted Score
Build-outs on MMR	17	18	15	50	102
Squared Corner MMR/MFR	31	35	14	80	177
Sleeping Policemen	45	31	15	91	212
Pavement along MMR	15	8	10	33	71
ANPR	62	33	22	117	274
Adjust Light Timings	5	18	20	43	71

Weightings Explained

*1st Choice 3 points
2nd Choice 2 points
3rd Choice 1 point*

These results and other data, together with supporting argument, were presented by the MAPG committee to a special meeting on Dec 18th intended to comprise Salisbury Area Board, South Wiltshire Area Board, and Wiltshire Highways Officers. This meeting was agreed as part of a comprehensive plan of action at the previous Salisbury Area Board meeting in November. It was profoundly disappointing, then, that not a single councillor from the South Wiltshire Area Board came to the December meeting, and only two councillors from Salisbury Area Board attended. In the circumstances it was 'difficult' to believe that our concerns were being taken seriously, but only too easy to think that our work was being treated with disrespect by the many absentee councillors.

In these circumstances, the Highways Officers found it simple to dismiss our meticulously researched findings. The only concession was that MAPG could submit a Wiltshire Highways traffic survey request. This, as residents might recall, would be the third such official survey (those of 2011 and 2021 precede it) – not of course including our recent MAPG survey. We suspect that officials, and too many councillors who are elected to serve us, will always find reasons to do nothing.

Dangerous tree toppled

We had reports early in the New Year that an eccentrically-leaning tree in the Hollow had become dangerous. Some time ago tree surgeons pronounced the tree to be safe, but either through strong winter winds or perhaps from some ill-advised horizontal tree climbing, the tree had begun to overhang the path and sadly had to be felled. MAPG are planning to plant a new tree as a replacement.



Our thanks to Godolphin School for their prompt response.

Report on 'Return to the River' October 5th, 2024

As has now become traditional, a group of hardy volunteers spent a brisk autumnal Saturday morning cutting excess weed from the River Bourne below the medieval bridge and clearing the water channels. We also cut back the overgrown riverbanks and trimmed the crack willows so that kingfishers and other birds could be encouraged to fly along the river – and perch on the carefully positioned branches we left for them. The cut timber was re-used to reinforce the 'berms' built at the riversides to help aeration and the speed of water flow.

Contact milfordpreservationgroup@gmail.com if you would like to join the river volunteers.

Milford Hollow, Action Report

Saturday November 2nd

This was largely a tidy-up day. A small group of 'Hollowers' filled the composter with fallen leaves and renewed the worn pathways. Dozens of English bluebell bulbs, wild tulips, primroses and daffodils were also planted. We now await the spring and the burst of life and colour the Hollow will bring.



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JOIN THE MAPG NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH SCHEME AND HELP PROTECT THE AREA

MAPG is setting up a Neighbourhood Watch scheme to try and enhance the safety of people and property in the Milford Area. The scheme will be under the auspices of the national Neighbourhood Watch.

This is not about establishing a vigilante group and will not require direct action by members. The group will be a conduit for the passage of information amongst members from each other and from national and local authorities. It will not be the primary contact for reporting crime or matters of concern but a secondary system to ensure that the neighbourhood is aware of problems.

Crime and matters of concern should be reported as follows:

- Dial 999 if a crime is in progress or has just occurred.
- Dial 101 to report suspicious activity or an historic crime. The Wiltshire Police Website can also be used to report these activities. (<https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>)
- HGVs over 7.5t using Milford Mill Road on the Wiltshire Police Website. (<https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/rs/road-safety/making-a-road-traffic-incident-report/>) You should upload photographs clearly showing the vehicle number plate.

Members of the scheme will also be given a Neighbourhood Watch sticker to place in a window in a highly visible place. Hopefully a rash of stickers across the area, demonstrating that the neighbourhood is alert and reporting suspicious activity, will then act as a deterrent to potential criminals.

To join please go to the following website: <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/support-our-work/find-my-local-scheme> and enter your postcode. Then click on **Milford Area Preservation Group**. Then click **Join** followed by **Sign up here**.

You will then be asked what alert messages you wish to be sent.

Once the coordinator has been informed of your registration, they will arrange for you to receive a sticker to place in your window or door to show you are a member of the scheme. You will also have the option of signing up for the Whatsapp group which will be used to spread information concerning incidents or matters of concern.

Please join and help keep Milford safe.

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Major Engineering Work to Reduce Flooding is Completed

Fears of possible pollution of the Bourne from road run-off

Residents will have seen the work of Wiltshire Highways to deepen the ditches at the junction of Milford Mill Road with Queen Manor Road. Engineers also installed a much larger outfall pipe to carry floodwater from the road and into the Bourne below the medieval bridge. Although the improvements have been generally appreciated, there are concerns that toxic water run-off (i.e. pollutants from the thousands of vehicles using MMR) would damage the river.

As many of you will know, the Bourne is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by virtue of its status as a precious chalk stream. We wrote to the Environment Agency, Natural England and to Wiltshire Highways to clarify the position. Highways responded thus:

“National Highways and Local Highways Authorities have a right to discharge highway run-off from highways into ground waters/watercourses and ditches under the provisions of Highway Act (HA 1980 S.100 (1), S100 (5)). These powers and rights are in force in relation to flooding and drainage and to avoid risk of accident and nuisance to highway users.”

There was some confusion between Natural England and the Environment Agency as to which body was responsible for managing the well-being of the Bourne. The ‘Lead Adviser’ of Natural England emailed to say:

“I’ve consulted with our in-house fresh-water team and whilst we are not free of concern regarding the effects of this run-off water entering a SSSI stream, we feel that this issue is primarily within the remit of the Environment Agency as they deal with flooding and flood risk management. We have tried contacting both the Environment Agency and the Highways department of Wiltshire Council but have received responses from neither.”

Finally, Daniel Griffin of the Environment Agency’s Partnership & Strategic Overview Team, said:

“The Highways Act gives a highway authority the power to discharge surface water from highways into any inland waters and such discharges do not require the permission of the EA. The outfall structure itself does however require a Flood Risk Activity Permission from the EA, and this was not obtained prior to its installation. This was due to a misunderstanding of the legislation by Wiltshire Council and this breach has been discussed with them. However, the structure, although not the most aesthetically pleasing, is not considered problematic.”

And that, as they say, is that.



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MAPG Events Report

Stourhead Garden Visit Friday October 11th

This was the third of our outings in 2024. Members and friends enjoyed leisurely walks through the predominantly 18thC formal landscape and saw the autumnal colours beginning their first blush.



Left: Trip to Stourhead

Right: A packed hall at the quiz



Quiz Night, Saturday November 23rd

Our annual quiz nights have become perhaps MAPG's most popular event. This year a remarkable eighty quizzers in a dozen teams tackled questions on pop music through the years, Christmas traditions, mystery bridges...and much else. A supper of Chili con carne was thoroughly enjoyed – to the extent of second or even third helpings. Thanks to some outstanding prizes, the raffle was particularly successful and we were able to donate £500 to the Laverstock Village Hall roof repair fund.

Forthcoming Litter-Picks

- Saturday March 8th at 10am
- Sunday June 29th at 11am.

Assembly is at the Black Barn, opposite Milford House Care Home. If you can help please contact Julie at: Jupe.eastaugh@btinternet.com



AGM Wednesday 16th April, 2025 at The Laverstock and Ford Village Hall.

Doors open at 6.30pm for a 7pm start. Further details to follow. ***Please note the change of venue.***

Thank You

Finally, very many thanks to the teams of volunteers without whose help none of the work we do would be possible; whether curatorial (the Hollow, the Bourne), or speed-watching, litter-picking, outings, quizzes, helping residents with problems over flooding, potholes, traffic, development pressures, talks to care homes ... We are busy and always eager to welcome helpers. If interested, our email address is:

milfordpreservationgroup@gmail.com