

As you are no doubt aware, there was a very frightening road traffic accident outside Steep C of E VC Primary School on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July in which two girls were hit by a vehicle.

A lethal combination of speed, congestion, children crossing the road and lack of parking is a dangerous cocktail!

On this occasion the driver had not seen the children, as their attention was on another vehicle due to the congestion outside the school. The driver had slowed for another vehicle but the girls assumed that the driver had slowed for them to cross. Consequently as they stepped into the road, the car gathered speed again and knocked them both to the ground. The girls were, understandably, very shaken and were extremely lucky to escape with only minor injuries. Both girls sustained cuts and bruises one also suffered whip-lash and a rather nasty bump to the head. Thankfully on this occasion no bones were broken, but it could have been a lot worse!

A full analysis of the incident has taken place and a whole range of options are being explored. The school has been working with the highways agency, with parents and with the Parish Council over recent years to improve the safety of children travelling to school, and this incident only serves to make the point that the school has been making for some time: more can and must be done to safeguard children on their journey to school. We are also now working with the Hampshire County Council Health and Safety team who very keen to support this campaign to consider all the options.

I have requested a crossing patrol from Hampshire County Council and following a traffic study it was concluded that unfortunately we are not eligible for a crossing patrol, although this will be re-considered with the increase in traffic in September.

The school will be doing all it can to increase visibility by reducing the height of hedging and moving the school gate further back from the road.

I have investigated what we as a community can do to help. I have learnt from the police that there is a scheme that we, as a community, can run called 'speed watch'. This is a traffic monitoring scheme which empowers local people to address speeding issues. Four to six community volunteers are needed to run the scheme, who will be required to use speed monitoring equipment to measure vehicles' speed and collect information including number plates of speeding vehicles. Any offenders are then informed via letter that they have been speeding and a second letter and visit follow for any second offences. Any further offences are then passed onto the police for full investigation. This scheme also needs a volunteer 'co-ordinator' who will oversee the running of the scheme. There are set up costs involved for which funding can be sought through grants, etc, and this pays for a 'Speeding Indication Device', high visibility waistcoats and tally counters. If you are interested in volunteering to take part in this scheme or to co-ordinate it, please let me know. I will be delighted to hear from you and can provide you with more details about what is involved. More details are also available at: <http://www.hampshire.police.uk/internet/advice-and-information/crime-prevention/community-speedwatch>

If you would like to be part of this campaign for safe travel in Steep, please feel free to contact the school or attend the next Parish Council meeting which will be taking place on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> September in Steep Village Hall, starting at 7.30pm.

Lou Romans, Headteacher.

