

A pedestrian's view of Horsham – a walk on the wild side?

IT'S ALWAYS interesting to venture into town on foot as you form a totally different view of Horsham in the process.

So let's take a walk from the Trafalgar side of the town into the town centre.

Once we're on North Parade, we have two choices. We can cross into the park via the traffic island near Rushams Road or we can cross at the pedestrian crossing just past Blunts Way.

Let's choose not to take the scenic route through the park but plod on down North Parade. The crossing is one of the few in Horsham that can be classed as truly



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pedestrian-friendly. It is fairly responsive to the pedestrian's desire to get across to the other side and it has both clear visible and audible signals.

Unfortunately, it also seems to be a challenge to many drivers. The sight of the crossing lights moving from green to amber seems to activate a need to accelerate and it's not unusual to find

a vehicle shooting across in front of you just as you start to cross when the lights are at red.

Our route now takes us up London Road and onto the Circus Maximus of Horsham, Albion Way. The dual carriageway has become a racetrack and the ambient traffic speed is way in excess of 30mph, making crossing hazardous.

Once we're across, we enter what is probably the most dangerous zone to cross, the road leading into and out of the Swan Walk car park.

Here we have two way traffic coming at you quite

quickly and no light-controlled crossing.

It really is a nightmare safely negotiating this final obstacle to the town centre.

We have lots of pedestrian crossings in and around the town but we need to improve their safety.

There is so much talk these days about catering for people with disabilities, how can we possibly allow crossings to exist, which have no audible signal?

How is a partially-sighted or blind person ever going to know when it's safe to cross?

And what about other people, including children? How are they to know when

the lights are changing from red to amber, when they cannot see any visible signals on the other side of the crossing?

The absence of an audible signal just adds to the danger. We have to feel safe when we cross a road and we must be able to rely on pedestrian crossings offering us protection.

We need better enforcement to stop the speeding drivers on North Parade and Albion Way from threatening the pedestrians.

We also need the highways authority to look at the suitability of the crossings, which it has installed, and

to undertake a proper risk assessment on their safe use by pedestrians.

If we want people to make less use of their cars and encourage all of us to walk more, we must make it easy and safe for them to do so.

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone, who shares these concerns. For more information, visit our website www.horshamsociety.org or telephone 01403 263870.