

Press Release

**From Councillor Barry Stamp
Stafford Borough Councillor
Church Eaton Ward**

Date : 14th February 2006

Use: Immediate

Changes to Road Layout Threaten Long Term Survival of Village Shops

Changes to the road layout outside Houghton village shops have today been branded a disaster by the Borough Councillor for the area.

Cllr Barry Stamp said that since the traffic flow through the road serving the shops in the centre of the Village had been reversed he had received numerous complaints from both the shop keepers and local residents.

“As part of the scheme to install a new pedestrian crossing on the A518 next to the shops in Houghton the County Council insisted the traffic flow through the shops one way service road was reversed. They argued that as the crossing was position right next to what was the exit pedestrian safety would be compromised. Despite objections from myself and local residents they insisted that the traffic flow be reversed. Last week they carried out the work to put this plan in place. Since that time I have received numerous complaints from both the shop keepers and local residents. The shop owners are all complaining that the new road layout prevents some vehicles travelling from the Stafford direction, especially those with trailers from pulling into the service road. This has certainly reduced considerably the amount of passing trade and all the shop owners are reporting a drop in takings since the changes were made. On the other hand local residents are saying the new exit is now dangerous and a number of people have reported near misses as they try to leave the shops. When the County Council proposed this change in layout I did point out to them the problems it would cause but they insisted the new layout would be much safer than the old. I did remind them that the County Council had moved the exit from the railway station taxi rank so that it came out directly on a pedestrian crossing and so they must have thought that was safe, so why did they not think this would be the case in Houghton. I will now be working with the shop owners and the local community to try to get the County Council to reinstate the traffic layout in Houghton. Local communities rely on their village shops and we should be doing everything possible to help them survive. Making it difficult for residents and passing drivers to call at the shops will do little to ensure their long-term survival,” said Barry Stamp.

Further details from: Councillor Barry Stamp

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Notes to editors:

i) A photograph can be arranged with Cllr Stamp and the owners of the Village Shops – please ring Barry on 01785 822723 to arrange.