

# Survey for sat navs to articulate safer routes

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\* Investigation into HGVs' maps welcomed by villages

by Trisha Fermor

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HUNDREDS of unsuitable roads have been logged where HGV drivers are causing misery by slavishly following satellite navigation directions.

Roads and lanes from Paddock Wood to Platt and Marden to Maidstone have been earmarked as causing inconvenience and damage .

Kent Highway Services is carrying out the lengthy survey, prompted initially by a Slovenian driver who left villagers stranded in Mereworth in July last year.

It wants to work with sat nav companies to flag up unsuitable roads and produce an up-to-date preferred lorry route map to be sent to all freight transport agencies. It is also looking to put up more warning signs.

The Mereworth incident involved a driver on his first trip in the UK, en route from Dover to Wales.

He was guided off the M20 by his sat nav, but ended up jammed between a fence and a wall at the junction of Butchers Lane and Beech Road.

Residents were left stranded and complaining it was the second incident in six months.

Gill Kirby, clerk to Mereworth Parish Council, said: "The survey is fantastic news. It seems like a brilliant idea. Mereworth has been very worried about the problem in the country roads, partly due to sat navs."

People living in Symonds Lane, Yalding, suffered a similar problem in March when the driver of a 40ft articulated lorry, relying on his sat nav, was sent along the single-track lane.

He tried turning round on adjoining grass and got bogged down, blocking the lane. The incident underlined villagers' anger at HGVs unnecessarily driving through the village.

Parish council vice-chairman, Cllr Vivienne Robinson, said: "Any moves to stop lorries going through the village because of sat navs will be welcomed, but we're campaigning to stop the rat- running.

The survey has also highlighted problems in Maidstone with Barming Bridge, Freeman Way and Albert Street, flagged up.

\* Do you think more should be done to solve the problem? Write to the Kent Messenger, 6 & 7 Middle Row, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TG or email [messengernews@thekmgroun.co.uk](mailto:messengernews@thekmgroun.co.uk)