

Name and Number Project: Postal addresses for rural areas. 4 March 2020

Report

Residents along Townfield Lane asked Mollington Parish Council to look into the idea of a name and numbering system for houses on Townfield Lane as there was a perception that emergency services and delivery drivers were having problems finding named properties along this long stretch of road.

Although the Parish Council's enquiries were met with approval by some residents this was not universally the case. Further, although CW&C were supportive and offered a negotiated rate (£140) to register all properties on Townfield Lane, CW&C made the Parish Council aware that in addition to this fee, residents would also have to fund the cost of high resolution OD maps, covering the area in question plus; the cost of a new Name and Number plate for each property to be fixed in a prominent location outside the residence and any administration fees to be paid to utility companies, banks, insurance companies and other organisations for making a change to an address.

Other considerations were whether a resident was willing to take the number 13 and where houses already have a number, whether they would be prepared to make a change to their number so that the sequence along the road was in order.

From the responses received it is clear that some residents value the tradition for houses in rural villages to be identified by name only.

We are fortunate to have a Townfield Lane resident, Anna McAdam, South Lodge, who is an expert in the field of location intelligence. Anna was able to give reassuring, up to date, information on the "last mile challenge" for delivery. Her message is that the technology is already there and indeed, has been used by the emergency services for a number of years, so residents should not be worried that emergency services will not be able to find a property. Further, the recent pandemic has accelerated location intelligence software which now uses co-ordinates and appends Geolocation information to an address within delivery point accuracy (i.e. the letterbox). Anna is of the view that creating multiply reference points for a single address will cause more problems than it solves and indeed is now becoming THE challenge for the online service sector.

Where local small business contractors/traders, without sophisticated, on-board location technology, find it difficult to find an address there is a solution. The **What 3 words**, will provide residents and the contractor/trader with 3 unique words that pin point a resident's location within a 3 meter square. This is becoming a useful application for sole traders such as local plumbers or builders. The **Whatsapp** 'location' pin-pointer also does a similar job.

Finally, Anna suggests that delivery problems often start with the on-line address form used to determine a delivery point. She has provided 8 top tips which will help to make sure that residents who use online delivery platforms use these platforms to best effect. These top tips were formulated to avoid the major mistakes that on-line users sometimes make when filling in delivery instruction, so we include them here for your information.

Top Tips

1) General: Check royalmail.co.uk for your full address and postcode format or that of a recipient you are sending to, you'd be surprised how many minor changes are made to the file over a relatively short period of time.

2) online: If you have an option to 'look up' your address and it isn't there don't click another property on your street and change the number/name, opt for 'can't find my address' and follow that process, refer to point 1 to support you.

3) online: Once you have selected your address from a drop down set of options don't add/change anything later in the checkout process. (Sometimes companies tailor the number of address fields they pass through to their delivery partners/carriers - editing can create an error and effect the automated process.

4) online: If the website doesn't offer the option to 'look up' your address and manual entry (line by line) is the only option beware, (first advice personally would be to find an alternative that does but if that isn't an option), see point one and ensure the format you give is correct, comma placement is very important when using manual entry.

5) online: Delivery instructions fields are becoming more and more common, use this field to give directions if you know you are a tough to find property set back from the road etc.

6) online: Give correct information such as mobile/email addresses, the data protection laws are in place to ensure that your information can only be used in the manner for which you have consented. If a company breaches this they are liable up to £10,000 in some cases. Mobile numbers help delivery drivers find you if they are struggling getting to your door.

7) General: if you have a smartphone download the application called 'what3words' you can get a unique set of three words that correlate to any 3x3metre cube across the whole world, meaning you can have a unique location you can share with other application users for your doorstep or anywhere! If the person you are trying to direct to you has a smartphone this should be a basic 'go to' option which will become more common in the near future.

8) General: WhatsApp user? Use the 'share my location feature on the type bar, your location pinpointed by your phones GPS will be shared in the conversation and will be live for an hour, only with the person with whom you have shared it with. Although not always as accurate as what three words, the location function in WhatsApp will function far better than sharing a postcode.

Foot Note: An article in the February addition of 'Are you in the Know', resulted in further opinions and suggestions from residents from across all five villages.

One suggestion was to create local road/house maps and address lists. The example of East Hanney Parish Council was given. However, having spoken to this Parish Council, they abandoned the idea after a number of years as the person responsible for its upkeep left the area. If residents feel that they want to take on the responsibility of keeping updated clean lists, then they are welcome to try this idea.