

# DEATHTRAP

A POTENTIAL deathtrap has been created on a normally safe stretch of rural road in Hollywood - with 16 bad accidents in the last 18 months - and locals want to know, "WHY?"

Concerned residents living just a few hundred yards apart along Whinney Hill cannot understand how it has so quickly gone from quiet country road to accident blackspot.

In the past year and a half vehicles have begun crashing out of control on their very doorsteps at the rate of almost one a month - where before accidents were a rarity.

Lampposts have been knocked down and garden walls partly demolished by vehicles, which have ended up on their sides or completely overturned during both day and night.

On one recent morning a woman going to work spotted a crashed car perched high in a large hedge around a neighbour's home - with the shocked driver still inside the vehicle.

She fears a vehicle will soon crash into the garden where her children play - just like the horrific DoE television advert warning against the threat posed by speeding drivers.

Residents say they are perplexed as to why the once relatively safe stretch of Whinney Hill, at its junction with Ballymenoch Road, has now become so notorious.

They say that point in the road has not had a problem with speeding as it features a number of very prominent twists and turns which encourage drivers to slow down.

They say the accidents seem

to happen when the road, which was resurfaced in recent years, is either wet or particularly dirty with muck falling from passing vehicles.

Local mum Cathy Abbas, who house is at the junction of Whinney Hill and Ballymenoch Road, fears a real tragedy is now unfortunately just waiting to happen.

She said, "We have been here for the last 12 years and this has all happened in the last 18 months or so. There have been 16 car crashes.

"All these accidents are happening with vehicles coming down the hill. We don't know whether it's a road or a traffic problem.

"There is a bad bend just before our house but it all seems to happen when there is something on the road surface, either rain or muck."

The mother of four said the location of her own home seemed to leave it particularly exposed to the recurring danger from the out-of-control vehicles.

She said, "They are crashing into the boundary wall of our house. Our garden is lower than the road level which is very worrying.

"Two of our children, who are seven and nine, did play on their trampoline on that side of the garden. We moved it away from there as we were concerned for their safety.

"But at the end of the day they are just kids and we can't stop them playing in their own garden.

"My concern is that at some point a vehicle is going to crash right into our garden when the

children are playing there, just like that advert on the TV

"Alternatively I am going to go outside some day and find a body in a car and I desperately don't want that to happen either."

Cathy Abbas said one of the most recent crashes was typical of what had been happening in the area.

She said, "Luckily the car spun around and clipped our garden wall and ended up lying on its passenger side.

"If it had turned the other way it would have been through the hedge and into our garden.

"The funny thing was that one of our children had just come out of the garden and stepped into the house when we heard a big bang.

"All the accidents can't be down to speed. Some drivers said they were coming down the hill and all of a sudden their vehicles started to slide off the road.

"I came out one morning and there was a mini perched on the top of our neighbour's hedge on the other corner of Ballymenoch Road with the driver still in it.

"On another occasion my 14 year old son had to phone an ambulance over another accident outside our house. Children shouldn't have to see things like that."

Neighbouring farmer Hugo Perry said residents of the area were 'fed-up' with the rising

accident rate on that stretch of Whinney Hill.

He added, "There have been four crashes onto land belonging to me and other people in recent months and four lampposts knocked down which have had to be replaced.

"I think part of the problem seems to be that there is a blind spot in the road just at the point where vehicles emerge from Ballymenoch Road. That needs to be out right."

## MUM'S THE WORD



Hollywood 'Supermum' childminder Kate Graham gets Daniel (aged 8), Charlotte (18 months), Zoe (aged 5), Hannah (aged 6) and Gabriel (6) to make their Mothers' Day cards for the biggest day of the year for mums everywhere on March 14th.

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