

Chillaton Newsletter

No. 2: 6th November 2012

This edition of the Newsletter contains the notes of a meeting held on 25th October at which local residents expressed their concerns about traffic in the village and put forward suggestions for further consideration.

Please note that the Agenda for the next Parish Council meeting is now on the website. Items to be discussed include next year's budget, feedback on our traffic meeting and new website, as well as an initial discussion about whether there is a need to create parish or neighbourhood local plans. The next edition of the Newsletter will report on the outcome.

Traffic in Chillaton - Public meeting 25th October 2012

Present:

Chris & Sally Aliss	Howard & Deborah Asbridge	Martin Beattie	Pat & Ray Brewer
Andrew Burch	Larry Girling	Patrick Kenna	Glenys Mansfield
Jasen & Zoe Quick	Christine & Jamie Rutherford	Amanda Westcott	Bob & Pat Porte
Tim Woodward			Jim Wilkinson

Comments were received by email from:

Neil Jury	Sandy Lelliott	Anna Ross	Guy Talbot
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Chillaton Parish Councillors had called this meeting so that residents could express their views about traffic in the village and discuss what improvements might be possible. Those present felt that vehicles generally travelled too fast, there were too many heavy lorries and, with one exception, it was thought that the overall amount of traffic had increased in recent years.

In 2001, the installation of speed humps/cushions had been considered, but in the end no action was taken. More than a decade later, it was now widely recognised that speed humps could damage vehicles and adjoining properties, as well as cause noise and pollution as vehicles accelerated away from them.

The meeting agreed that speed humps should not be considered as a possible solution and also adopted the following principles:

(i) Nothing should be done that would affect the ability of local businesses like machinery contractors, farmers or others, to drive large vehicles through the village, given the importance of maintaining as many local jobs for local people as possible.

(ii) Nothing should be done that would adversely affect individual properties, despite any apparent benefits for the rest of the village.

It was agreed that we needed to try to shift the emphasis from Chillaton being 'in the way' of traffic travelling at high speeds on commuter routes, to one where drivers had more of a sense that they were being 'allowed' through Chillaton.

That approach was similar to current attempts by the Government to reduce road deaths in the UK, 49% of which currently occurred on unclassified rural roads like those in Chillaton. Highway Authorities were now recommended to look at things like 20mph speed limits and minor alterations to highway layouts, to give better protection to other road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders.

There was a general discussion over concerns held about the traffic in Chillaton, which focussed on:

The speed at which vehicles went through the village and the danger this caused for pedestrians, especially children walking to and getting on and off the school bus in the Square.

Problems caused by speeding vehicles, including some cyclists, at points in the village where there were both narrow roads and inadequate sight lines. These regularly meant that vehicles going too fast had to make emergency stops to avoid accidents; although collisions did sometimes still occur.

The number of HGVs, including very large lorries, some of which came through the village as early as 3am.

In an email received after the meeting, concerns were also raised about the speed at which vehicles came round the sharp bend at Windwhistle corner.

There was then a general discussion about what could be done to slow vehicles down and reduce the number of non-local HGVs.

In no particular order and with no assessment of their suitability for Chillaton, they were:

Better signage and road markings to warn of hazards and to slow down vehicles.

HGV operators should be encouraged to vary their routes and not always come through Chillaton.

Flashing warning signs, activated by speeding vehicles.

Average speed cameras.

Kerbed parking bays in places where cars are currently parked, to protect them from passing traffic and to act as a deterrent to speeding, even when the bays are empty.

Slow signs on bridges.

Moving the boundary of the 30mph limit in the village further out.

Introducing a 40 mph limit between the 60 and 30 mph limits.

Having 20 mph limits where appropriate.

Pavements where appropriate.

Rumble strips.

Coloured tarmac.

Better education for HGV drivers on local speed limits [40 mph maximum on our roads]
Community Speed Watch
Informal advisory signs e.g. Frogs crossing.
Gateways [note: these are not gates across the highway].
Minor changes in highway layouts to discourage speeding.
Better policing of speed limits.
Countdown signs and road markings.
Contacting HGV operators to ask those with very large vehicles to use more suitable routes.
Checking if bridges should have weight or width limits.
Reviewing alternative routes around the village, especially for HGVs.

It must be stressed that the above ideas were simply the result of a 'brainstorming' session; they have no particular status and none would be considered for implementation without careful study and further public debate.

One exception to that was the Community Speed Watch [CSW] scheme. The Police had recently expanded the current scheme and were looking for volunteers from Chillaton to join a forthcoming training session. Under the CSW scheme, volunteers operated in pairs from locations approved by the Police, using radar 'guns' to identify speeding motorists. If vehicles were exceeding the speed limit, warning letters were sent and persistent offenders would have their vehicle registrations passed to highway patrols who would prosecute if they witnessed further offences.

Eight people at the meeting agreed to consider joining a Chillaton CSW Scheme, once they had learnt more about how such schemes operated. A further volunteer has come forward since then.

Next Steps

Martin Beattie, Jason Quick and Bob Porte offered to join with Chillaton parish councillors to form a working group that would try and develop a partnership approach with the Highway Authority and other relevant bodies, to take these ideas further.

Howard Asbridge
Parish Councillor