

Traffic in Chillaton

Notes of a meeting held on 7th December 2012

Present:	Howard Asbridge	Milton Abbot Grouped Parish Council
	Ray Brewer	Milton Abbot Grouped Parish Council
	Jon Farr	Devon & Cornwall Safety Camera Partnership
	Michael Newcombe	Devon County Council Road Safety Unit

Background

Howard Asbridge described the previous attempt, over a decade ago, to introduce some form of traffic calming in Chillaton. There was then a general discussion of current traffic issues in Chillaton, concern over which had led to a recent public meeting. Those present at that meeting had agreed that a fresh attempt should be made to introduce some remedial measures, on the basis that:

- (i) they did not include any form of speed humps
- (ii) they did not impede the movement of local large vehicles through the village
- (iii) they did not adversely affect individual properties.

Chillaton parish councillors accepted that there might well be other Devon villages through which traffic moved at higher speeds. However, they contended that the combination of excessive or inappropriate speed, poor road layout, high traffic volume and a greater degree of pedestrian vulnerability, made Chillaton more dangerous than some other villages with higher vehicle speeds but better road layouts, pavements, etc.

Potential remedial measures

Against the background of recent traffic speed data collected in Chillaton and the Government's current initiative to reduce speeds on rural roads, various possibilities were looked at, on the basis that such discussion did not imply any commitment to a particular action, at this stage.

Mobile Enforcement: Regardless of what long-term changes were introduced, Jon Farr considered that traffic speeds in some parts of Chillaton warranted action which could include the Police mobile speed camera unit. Such action was likely to catch local motorists, as well as long-distance drivers which could of course give rise to negative views on tackling traffic problems in Chillaton.

It was felt that, as parish councillors would be able to notify local residents, via the village website, email and the local notice board, of any impending action, villagers would have had fair warning and that they could not expect to be exempt from the consequences of breaking the law. Such action was, in any event, no different from that regularly carried out in other villages, such as Lifton.

Speed signs: Subject to checking various technical and legal aspects, it appeared that a significant benefit of having regular mobile speed patrols in the village would be that reminder signs could be erected within the 30mph zone. These would have an outline of a speed camera over a 30mph sign and would act as a permanent reminder of the possibility of Police enforcement action.

There was also a need to review the layout of the current 30mph zone in the village, to ensure that it adequately reflected the onset of the built up area. However, caution would need to be exercised

when looking at extending the zone, as inappropriate measures tended to increase any existing disregard for 30mph limits.

Flashing speed signs: Ray Brewer confirmed that up to £3,000 was available to purchase a flashing speed sign for Chillaton. However, there seemed to be little enthusiasm within the Highway Authority to get this installed, despite the manufacturer now offering a six-year maintenance warranty. Michael Newcombe agreed to look into this.

Average speed cameras: Jon Farr explained that the cost of a pair of average speed cameras was in the region of £150,000 and this meant it was unlikely that such equipment could be justified in any individual village. However, manufacturers were looking at the possibility of offering de-mountable cameras which could be moved around between a cluster of villages. This would bring the cost per village down to £25,000 - £30,000. There were no firm plans to introduce this, but the cost-benefits of this approach were obvious.

Targetted Police enforcement: Jon Farr emphasised the scarcity of traffic police in Devon generally, but said that it should be possible to arrange for Police officers to take enforcement action against specific individuals, once they had been provided with information as to the alleged offence, vehicle registration, usual time of occurrence, etc. This could be applied to an HGV regularly being driven at excessive speeds or to a private car regularly being driven recklessly through the village, for example.

Potential for a 20mph zone in the village: Michael Newcombe said that in villages where these had been applied successfully, the zones had largely been self-enforcing due to the constricted nature of the roads concerned. There was some discussion over the potential for enhancing the existing constriction caused by parked vehicles on the approach to the village centre from Lewdown, by creating parking protection barriers ahead of the areas in which vehicles currently parked.

Any 20 mph zones had to comply with Devon County Council's policies on such matters.

Reducing the numbers of HGVs: It was thought that there was potential in discussing the concept of traffic sharing, with haulage firms at Haye Down, so that HGVs heading for Lifton, did not always have to travel via Chillaton.

Next steps

Michael Newcombe would:

- (i) produce a list of speed reduction measures that might be suitable in Chillaton, for more detailed consideration
- (ii) commission the review by DCC, needed to see if additional speed warning signs could be installed in Chillaton.

Jon Farr would look into the possibility of a mobile speed camera being deployed in Chillaton and advise when such arrangements were in hand.

Howard Asbridge and Ray Brewer would pursue the idea of a flashing speed sign, funded by the Parish Council.

Howard Asbridge would produce a note of this meeting, for approval by those present.