

# CHIDEOCK PARISH COUNCIL

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**Chair: Cllr Vanessa Glenn, 6 Winniford Close, Chideock, DT6 6SA 01 297 480810**

**Clerk: Miss Sal Robinson, 60 North Allington, Bridport, DT6 5DY 01 308 426327**

22 June 2021

Dear Ms Liggins

## **Re: - A35 Charmouth to Yellowham Hill Scheme - Chideock**

Further to Chideock Parish Council's response (sent 31 May 2021) to your e-mail dated 25 May 2021, the Parish Council requests that 2 items in particular be reassessed as part of the A35 Charmouth to Yellowham Hill Scheme – Chideock.

It is assumed that all other recommendations made in the 2019 Chideock Safety and Severance Report will be included in the new study.

### **A. The location of a second light-controlled pedestrian crossing to the west of the village.**

Reassessment is required for the following reasons:-

- Highways England intends to bring in a permanent change to the speed limit on Chideock Hill, reducing it from 50 mph to 30 mph.
- The additional crossing does not need to be located at the Village Hall – it could be further east.

The location suggested by WSP in the Safety and Severance Report (published January 2019) was rejected by Highways England for a number of reasons, as listed below together with the Parish Councils comments.

### **5.1.13. The feasibility of a new traffic signal-controlled pedestrian crossing facility on the A35 at the western end of the village has also been considered.**

This has been discounted at this stage for the following reasons:

- **Due to the downhill (eastbound) of the Chideock hill/gradient of the A35 in this location, it is considered that the provision of a signalised crossing facility located in the vicinity of the existing uncontrolled crossing could increase the risk of rear shunt collisions on the downhill approach to the traffic signals;**
  - The crossing does not need to be at the Village Hall but could be further to the east
  - Advance signage at the top of Chideock Hill on the eastbound carriage way, combined with speed enforcement(average speed cameras) on Chideock Hill will address this issue.
  - A crossing further East will be greatly used by many coming from north of the A35, including many tourists ,children and the elderly as this is the main safer foot route to Seatown and the beach.

- **The downhill approach to a signalised crossing facility could increase the risk of vehicles failing to stop in time at the signals, overshooting the stop line road markings, and potentially collide with a pedestrian crossing the road;**
  - As above.
  - In addition, ensuring, through DVSA vehicle checks, that HGVs are compliant with the law including tonnage will assist in improving safety.
- **Evidence of Personal Injury Collisions involving vehicles losing control on the A35 eastbound when travelling downhill at the western end of the village (see Section 3.5 of this report);**
  - The problem is not just Personal Injury Collisions.
  - In reality there are numerous occasions when vehicles (which may be possibly overloaded) fail to use their brakes early enough (because they do not abide by the speed limit), thus emitting noxious fumes from their tyres and brakes (PM2.5) - there have been occasions when vehicle tyres have caught fire in the village or have been heavily smoking. These types of events are as serious as one-off catastrophic events because they cause long term health issues for village residents.
  - Early speed reduction with good early signage of the crossing will deal with this issue.
- **Existing footway widths are inadequate to accommodate adequate pedestrian crossing 'landing areas and traffic signal control equipment (and there is no scope to narrow the carriageway width of the A35 in order to widen the footway widths);**
  - The Parish Council suggests that if the crossing were to be sited further east this may not be a problem.
- **Potential impact on the existing bus stops at the western end of the village (located adjacent to the existing uncontrolled crossing facility), and stationary buses at a bus stop could obstruct visibility at an adjacent traffic signal-controlled crossing facility;**
  - If the pedestrian crossing were further to the east then this would not be an issue.
  - The use of such a crossing is unlikely to create traffic congestion due to frequency of use. although it will in all probability be used more than the Morcombelake second crossing recently put in by HE.
  - The existing light controlled pedestrian crossing at the centre of the village is close to 2 bus stops – obscuring of the lights by buses was obviously not considered by HE to be an issue,
- **Impact of street lighting upgrade (required at a signalised crossing facility) on the potentially environmentally sensitive area and on residents living adjacent to a signalised crossing facility;**
  - If the crossing were further east it would be within the area where there is street lighting.
- **Traffic queues on the A35 eastbound approach to a signalised crossing facility could extend back past the existing escape lane on the downhill approach to the village;**
  - The Parish Council strongly suggests that the current levels of congestion lead to daily tailbacks on this section of the A35 throughout the day which can be regularly evidenced on the AA traffic site.
  - The flow of traffic may be important to HE but a pedestrian crossing will promote a feeling of safety and security in this village, as even when the traffic is slow it will not stop to let the anyone, let alone the elderly, children, and the disabled cross the road.

- **Various statutory undertakers located on the A35 in the vicinity of the location of the existing uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facility (i.e., SGN low pressure gas mains, BT Openreach cables, and Wessex Water distribution mains).**
  - This is clearly a problem along the whole length of the A35 where villages intersect with the trunk road.
  - This reflects the fact that the road was not designed to carry such heavy loads of traffic and that, when services were laid, they followed the easiest route.
  - However, this should not preclude the safety of this village being prioritised against the profits of these companies.
  - Furthermore, this is an environmental issue and an opportunity to do something different.

#### **B. Improvements to the disabled exit from the Village Hall.**

The 2019 Safety and Severance report stated

**“4.4.2. In addition, during the site visit on Friday 18th May 2018, the WSP Study Team were accompanied by representatives of the Parish Council. They identified the following additional concerns relating to the operation of the A35 in Chideock:**

- **Wheelchair users exiting the village hall can easily lose control and travel onto the carriageway due to the steep ramp and narrow footway in this location – consider the provision of pedestrian guardrailing beside the kerbline;**
- **.....”**


No recommendation was made in the report. Since then the Village Hall Committee has made several suggestions to Highways England, all of which have been discounted.

The Parish Council requests that, as part of the new study, a site visit is conducted, with members of the Village Hall Committee available to explain the issues and the potential solutions.

This issue discriminates against disabled residents, potentially precluding them from joining events at the Village Hall.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely



Sal Robinson (Miss), Chideock Parish Clerk