

Chideock Bypass Working Group Statement for Annual Village Meeting May 2018

The CBWG has had a busy year as it continues to press for what we consider to be the only long term solution to the traffic problems in our village (highlighted by the first day of the recent roadworks) – And that solution is the construction of a bypass.

The Group has had a recent change of Chairman with Mrs Anna Dunn now taking over this role since the previous chairman Mr Derek Maxwell has moved away from the village. He was our chairman from the Group's inception in November 2016 and ably guided us through some interesting times in our first full year of existence.

At the instigation of Sir Oliver Letwin we arranged the most comprehensive village survey to date in April 2017 when a survey questionnaire was hand delivered to every household in the village. The survey enjoyed a very reasonable 37% return rate with 80% of those returns in favour of a bypass. Further to this 56% of those expressed their preference for a bypass approximately on the line of the original route but with a short tunnel beneath North Road.

Despite the result of this survey the PC made it clear in May 2017 that they would NOT be supporting a bypass instead reiterating their position of June 2016 with the policy of introducing a Low Emission Zone and instigating a safety audit to identify measures to improve health and safety in the village by dealing with traffic and traffic impact on property and people.

We met with Sir Oliver Letwin in June 2017 to discuss the results of the survey although he refused to support the bypass solely on the strength of the survey requesting that the CPC hold a Parish Poll arranged by WDDC under electoral standards.

Following the prevarication of the PC to organise such a poll we exercised the right to call a Parish Meeting to enable an open debate on the subject and a question to be established for a village poll.

This meeting was held on 24th July 2017 and was attended by some 90 people. It was an open debate chaired by Derek Maxwell and concluded with 2 questions to be put to the village in a WDDC arranged poll which was held on 17 August 2017.

Q1 – For a bypass OUTSIDE of our parish – 189 people answered this question with 82% replying Yes; and

Q2 – The de-trunking of the A35 from Dorchester to Honiton – 175 people answered this question with 59% replying Yes

We were disappointed with the choice of questions agreed at the meeting but accepted that they were democratically chosen by the attendees of the meeting. However we made comment at the time that with only ONE bypass option for villagers to choose from we believed that the poll only really confirmed that the voters were just saying YES to a bypass - ANYWHERE.

We are also disappointed to note that it is now nearly 9 months since that poll was held and yet no approach has yet been made to any of the neighbouring parishes.

On 21st September our website chideockbypass.co.uk went live and we recommend anyone interested to visit it and to subscribe for free updates etc. It has become a well viewed website as well as providing easy access to a wealth of current and historic reports and data including:

The CBWG Timeline

Our RIS2 Public Consultation submission

Our reports on the feasibility of a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) / Clean Air Zone (CAZ) for Chideock

UK plan to tackle Nitrogen Dioxide Pollution

HE proposal for a contraflow traffic system through Chideock

Latest pollution figures / prediction graph of future traffic and pollution

For those of you who do not have this facility, we would be happy to show any of this information to you via one of our computers. Just leave a contact detail on our listing form at this meeting and we shall contact you.

In October 2017 we held a successful and most enjoyable open day with some refreshments and some games, which we hope to repeat this later in the year.

Also in October we got some very welcome TV and radio coverage via BBC Spotlight and Radio Solent, and continue to get headlines in our local Bridport News.

At the end of 2017 Highways England (HE) requested a Public Consultation for their Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) which will feed into their Strategic Road Network budget for 2020 to 2025. Although to date HE has not been forthcoming of their intentions for the A35 from Dorchester to Honiton and in particular through Chideock.

On 1 February 2018 we submitted our RIS2 response to HE making a strong case for a Chideock bypass as being the ONLY practical solution to the problems arising from the A35 through Chideock. Following consideration of the public consultation HE are expected to reveal their plans for 2020-2025 by the end of this year.

We commend the PC on their own well considered and well prepared response to the Public Consultation and were pleased to note the amount of agreement between us especially over the identification of the problems which include
Health hazards from the pollution from the ever increasing traffic flow through the village
Noise and vibration especially from the HGVs and the impact on the many Grade II listed buildings along Main Street
12 % and 15% gradients on approaching hills either side of Main Street
The many turnings on Main Street where vehicles can cross the road
General congestion arising from the 16,000 average daily traffic flow
The road width and lack of pavements

However we fear that we shall always differ on the solution as we consider the ONLY long term solution to our problem is a bypass and we shall continue to lobby and push for this as long as it takes.

So what of the future – we would remind the PC that our group has determination and enthusiasm and a wealth of relevant experience.

We have three engineers who have immense experience of designing and constructing major roads;

We have an air pollution expert; And

We have a man with a career spent with HGVs and the road haulage industry

Let us work together to get a better result for the road problems in our village.