

## **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**

**30 November 2020**

**Re: Stage 2 Complaint regarding Dorset Council's failure to address the pollution crisis in Chideock**

Dear Mr Duggan

Thank you for your letter dated 16th November 2020 in response to the earlier complaint letter dated 19th October 2020.

Chideock Parish Council appreciates the difficulties presented by the air pollution in Chideock but does not accept that simply "acknowledging" that the air quality in Chideock remains unsatisfactory is any comfort to the residents who have to daily endure this very real Public Health issue. Unfortunately, the Parish Council is dissatisfied with your response and requests that this complaint is elevated to the next stage for review by a senior manager and complaints team.

The Parish Council feels that the information to support this complaint is already well known by all parties and has already been well documented in earlier correspondence. However, for the removal of any doubt the Parish Council considers the outstanding issues to be:

1. Dorset Council's continuing failure to resolve the known illegal levels of traffic related NO<sub>2</sub> pollution within the village.

2. Dorset Council's continuing refusal to monitor Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>) air pollution within the village. This is despite independent proof of extremely high levels of PM pollution in the village (BBC Countryfile broadcast 4 October 2020) and this pollutant being accepted by health experts as very hazardous to Public Health.

The outcomes the Parish Council is seeking are very straightforward to state but, as you acknowledge, are not so easy to implement. These outcomes are that:

1. Dorset Council monitors for PM pollution within the village
2. Dorset Council implements measures which will either reduce air pollution to below the legal limits that have been set by our Government or takes whatever measures are necessary to protect the residents of Chideock from the health risks to which they are currently exposed.

Returning to some of the specific points made within your letter:

1. Chideock Parish Council does NOT accept that your legal responsibility to reduce emissions (where their concentrations exceed national objectives) has been achieved due to the A35 through Chideock being a part of Highways England (HE) Strategic Road Network and therefore responsibility lies with them.
2. As part of separate correspondence, the Parish Council has received the following statement from Department for Transport (DfT):

"Turning to the Parish Council's air quality concerns, Highways England is actively performing its duty to assist Dorset Council in the delivery of its legal responsibilities for local air quality management, despite not being legally obligated to do so."

So, the DfT is clear that although HE assists Dorset Council the "delivery" remains the legal responsibility of Dorset Council.

3. Regarding your refusal to monitor for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>, Chideock Parish Council does NOT accept your reasons for rejecting such monitoring especially since the BBC Countryfile consultant revealed the excessive levels of these pollutants with a simple hand-held device. Nor does the Parish Council accept that any measures to reduce NO<sub>2</sub> would also effectively reduce PM pollution. These two pollutants have, in the main, different sources so whilst NO<sub>2</sub> arises from vehicle exhaust and can therefore be reduced or eliminated by “clean engine” technology or reduced traffic concentrations, vehicle related PM pollution arises from brake dust and tyres, some from vehicle exhausts, some from background sources and therefore would not necessarily be reduced in parallel with NO<sub>2</sub> reduction. Indeed traffic reduction would be the best method of reducing both pollutants along with measures to reduce the gradients on both hills avoiding excess braking thus avoiding tyre and brake wear and the possibility of an out of control HGV containing flammable material destroying most of the centre of Chideock.

The Parish Council refers you to an excerpt from your own Air Quality Management Report 2008 item D7:

Subject to funding, monitor for relevant particulates and assess against air quality objectives. Research brake pad and clutch components as contributory factors WDDC (EH)

Explore whether particulate matter is a significant component of air pollution locally

Action by March 2010

4. Unfortunately your list of pollution reduction measures that have been explored/actioned is simply a list of failures, for by your own admission not a single one has yet been identified that will improve the air pollution within Chideock, indeed as your own records show the pollution has been getting steadily worse ever since the Air Quality Management Area was made in May 2007. Furthermore, your assertion that

"the air quality objectives for Chideock may not be achieved until cleaner vehicle technology is more readily available and in use"

suggests that you are happy to wait until 2040 or 2050 and have little intention of improving anything in Chideock whilst the residents continue to suffer very real Public Health issues on a daily basis.

5. The assertion that buses stopping is the cause of pollution instead of vehicles turning left or right into Duck Street confirms that Dorset Council has no idea about traffic movements in Chideock and a small CCTV survey will tell you nothing of the year round traffic movements through Chideock.

Dorset Council and their predecessors' blindness and lack of foresight in not improving vehicular access to the sea over the last 70 years has contributed significantly to the current state of poor traffic access through Chideock. The fact that polluting buses; refuse collection; parcel and letter deliveries; contractors and many more are unable to park temporarily without causing delays and congestion. The road was not fit for purpose in 1993 and in 2020 is even less fit for purpose.

6. The work on the A303 will not be completed until 2030 for the latest approvals now signed off. There remain other stretches that may not go ahead for 20 years or more. None of this will improve the amount of traffic through Chideock which comes from the southern ports route. No improvement in the A303 will ever change anyone's opinion that using the A303 will be shorter in time and distance. It will need enforcement to direct traffic away from Chideock, a bypass, or road narrowing in Chideock causing massive congestion to change people's minds to re-route.
7. Many people have moved to Chideock since 2007. But in the Environmental searches there has been no mention of the traffic and pollution. Some people have had to move away. Should you not warn on searches that this is a problem as it is likely some aggrieved residents may take legal action against you.

In conclusion Chideock Parish Council does not consider that the list of excuses for failing to address the pollution in Chideock contained in your letter fulfils your requirement to be a responsible and legally compliant public body which is able to introduce and deliver measures which safeguard the residents of this village over and above the needs of the Strategic Road Network.

Please look very closely at your own Air Quality Management Action Plan from 2008 to see how much has not been achieved.

Therefore, Chideock Parish Council repeats the request that this complaint is now elevated to the next stage and look forward to hearing from that process in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sal Robinson', written over a horizontal line.

Sal Robinson (Miss), Chideock Parish Clerk

Copied to: -

Dorset Council Complaints Team

Chris Loder MP

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Baroness de Vere

Mr Matt Prosser, Chief Executive Dorset Council

Cllr Spencer Flower, Dorset Council Leader

Cllr Christopher, Ward Councillor for Marshwood Vale

Cllr Ray Bryan, Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

Cllr Rebecca Knox, Dorset Council - Health and Wellbeing Board