

# 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

3 November 2020

Dear Mr Page-Dove

## **Re: Chideock Parish Council Stage 3 Complaint**

Thank you for your letter dated 19 October 2020 in reply to Chideock Parish Council's Stage 2 Complaint Letter (dated 13 September 2020).

Unfortunately, the Parish Council remains unhappy and asks that you refer the complaint to an Independent Complaints Assessor (ICA) as outlined in your final paragraph. The council is aware that the ICA cannot consider matters of policy or legislation.

Chideock Parish Council appreciates that you have completed a more thorough review of the Stage 1 complaint and have explained HE's position very clearly. However the council cannot accept that HE has fulfilled its obligations to the residents of and visitors to Chideock - every matter of concern identified over 27 years ago (and certainly within the period since HE took over the SRN in 2015) has progressively worsened. Indeed, pollution has only been considered seriously since Chideock was designated as an AQMA in May 2007 and is now considerably worse, with Chideock being identified as the most polluted location for NO<sub>2</sub> in the UK, and now BBC Countryfile has proven that Chideock also has excessive levels of PM<sub>2.5</sub>, a pollutant that you will not even measure.

Indeed, in your letter you maintain that there is no PM<sub>2.5</sub> alongside any Strategic Road in the UK. This is clearly a miscalculation since Countryfile has now proved that PM<sub>2.5</sub> does exist in Chideock at remarkably excessive levels!!

All experts and the World Health Organisation say that any PM<sub>2.5</sub> is a danger to health and that there is no safe level.

The fundamental reason for our very serious complaint is because NOTHING has improved for the village since 1993 when the Inspector for the Enquiry for the Bypass proposal stated that this section was not fit for purpose.

- Not the level of traffic congestion
- Not the many safety and severance issues (many neatly identified in your WSP Report of 2019, but NONE addressed)
- Not the excessive noise and vibration damaging many village properties on a daily basis
- Not the illegal levels of traffic related pollution
- The list is extensive and goes on!!

So **NO**, the Parish Council is not satisfied with HE's achievements on any of these matters.

In reply to the specific items in the Stage 2 Complaint letter and your response, the Parish Council elaborates as follows:

### **Village Flooding**

The Parish Councils appreciate the scheduled gully clearing and the speed with which HE attends to specific reports of blocked gullies. However the complaint is that surely the long term solution must be for HE to upgrade what you admit to being an old and inadequate drainage system rather than cause distress to villagers who regularly find themselves fearing flooding inside their homes.

### **30mph Speed Limit Trial**

Thank you for elaborating on this trial, however the Parish Council still fails to understand exactly how the pollution readings will be indicative of all traffic complying with the 30mph limit if this is not enforced e.g. by average speed cameras. How will HE know that in the period in between your "before and after" speed monitoring the traffic did comply with the reduced limit and that NO<sub>2</sub> readings taken are not worthless?

You state that the above trial is the only proposition available to reduce pollution. May we remind you that you have you have £27billion at your disposal and yet you cannot find enough money to come up with a solution to the Chideock problem. Under RIS2 HE can solve Chideock's problem under the small projects scheme. The money is there, use it.

### **A35 Chideock Safety & Severance 2019 report**

Firstly, the Parish Council reminds you that HE's Safety and Severance Report identified 16 issues only 4 of which were to be considered for further action and those 4 did not include the adverse footway cambers.

However, regarding the footways, the council thanks you for the additional report which you attached to your letter, which clearly shows that the footways do not meet the safety standards particularly for disabled users. Therefore, the council suggests that your "obligations under the Equalities Act" are NOT met simply because the solutions "go beyond what is reasonably practicable". The Parish Council is not sure that the many disabled users of the village footways would derive much comfort from your assertion nor would the village mobility scooter users who are forced to drive on the carriageway of a Strategic Highway carrying 16,000 vehicles per day on average.

It was HE's predecessors who constructed the "not fit for purpose" pavements and carriageway, to increase the traffic flow, which is now causing all the problems.

Clearly the logo at the bottom of your pages "Disability confident committed" has severe limitations!! The Parish Council simply asks that you follow your own statement and resolve this awful problem for those already disadvantaged users.

### **Air Quality**

Thank you for acknowledging the illegal levels of NO<sub>2</sub> found in Chideock. You may also have seen BBC Countryfile (broadcast Sunday 4th October 2020) in which Dr Ben Barrett (Imperial College London) revealed, in a few moments with a hand held monitor, that the levels of PM<sub>2.5</sub> taken in the centre of the village also exceed (by five times) the Government guidelines for this pollutant, which apparently has even greater potential health risks than NO<sub>2</sub>.

So even though you say that there are no PM<sub>2.5</sub> or PM<sub>10</sub> exceedances alongside the SRN in England it appears that you definitely have an exceedance here in Chideock and, In the light of Dr Barrett's findings, the Parish Council hopes that you will now review your refusal to measure PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> and will immediately start to monitor for these alongside the A35 in Chideock.

Therefore, the Parish Council remains sceptical of the current trial which you state is the "only feasible measure within the constraints of the village and existing highway so far identified". The council sincerely hopes that this trial will prove that the speed limit reduction does reduce the NO<sub>2</sub>

pollution to within Government statutory limits but remain frustrated at the continuing reluctance to even monitor for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>.

The Parish Council does find it a little ironic that you blame individual road users for the pollution. Surely this can have no factual basis because if only one polluting vehicle per day was passing through the village there would be no excessive pollution. No, the problem is the sheer volume of traffic passing through the village on HE's road which is simply no longer fit for purpose. Therefore, the Parish Council contends that the solution to these pollution problems is most definitely with HE.

### **Liaison meetings**

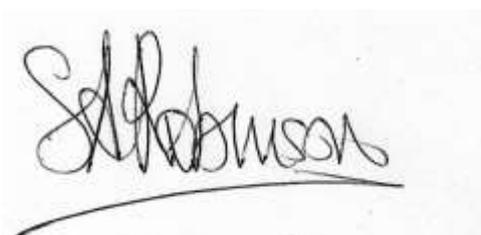
The Parish Council remains disappointed that you will not re-engage in a quarterly meeting specifically for Chideock's problems. The workload within your "small team" appears to be heavy but the council remains surprised that you cannot commit even one team member for a half-day meeting four times a year here in Chideock, which must surely rank as one of your most problematic pinch points on the SRN in the south-west.

The Parish Council maintains that the forum of the Bridport A35 Working Group with Chris Loder MP is just too big a group for the specific Chideock problems to be properly dealt with and sincerely hopes that you will agree to reintroduce the Chideock only meetings.

In conclusion, thank you for offering a telephone conversation between your Route Manager, Andy Roberts, and the Parish Council Chair. Andy has always been courteous and most helpful but it would be wrong for one member of the Parish Council to speak privately on behalf of the whole council on these issues and the council believes that these complaints have gone beyond that point.

Therefore, we now ask you to please elevate our complaint to your Stage 3 Independent Complaints Assessor and we look forward to your acknowledgment of our request and contact from the ICA 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

**“Photograph of Main Street Chideock taken approximately 100 years ago. Apart from the addition of footways the road is the same now but with a traffic flow of 16,000 - 20,000 vehicles per day”**

