

Matters for consideration by CVPC:

1. Below, for information only at this stage, is the latest position following enquiries and meetings with National Highways, Dorset Highways, and local Police Community Liaison
2. There is an urgent request from National Highways local maintenance company: Connect; that CVPC write to all residents along the A35 to remind them of their obligations to maintain a safe hedge for pedestrians and road users. TWG have not yet discussed this.

**A35:** Cllr Christopher invited members of the Transport Working Group to meet with Highways England in Morcombelake on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October to discuss A35 local issues. There does seem to be more interest in improving the safety and reducing the severance impact of the A35 locally as part of the full review of the A35 from Bere Regis to Honiton. The meeting pointed out the many problems caused by the junctions, speeds, sight lines, and narrow pathways along the A35 in and approaching Morcombelake.

**A35 and pedestrian pathways through Morcombelake:** National Highways passed our concerns to CONNECT who acknowledged our concerns about the overgrown pathways beside the A35 and the dangers. They were writing to all the land owners to remind them of their responsibilities for maintaining hedges and will be taking action to cut back hedges etc in week beginning 18<sup>th</sup> October.

*They have requested that CVPC contact residents adjacent to the A35 to remind them of their obligations to maintain a safe hedge.*

**Local Roads:** Following the requests and complaints from residents in Whitchurch, Cllr Noon contacted Dorset Council Highways and followed up with various parties. In summary:

- 1) There is a concern that vehicles are exceeding the current speed limit of 30 mph and that the speed limit should be reduced to 20 mph through the village centre. This has been an ongoing concern of villagers for many years and may just be their perception of speeds as there are no footways and the roads are narrow.

Dorset Highways suggested that the first thing we need to do is to establish whether the speeding is genuine rather than perceived, and to do this we should enlist the assistance of our local CPSO to train local volunteers in order to undertake a Neighbourhood Speed Watch. We can then decide on further actions based on the outcome of that activity.

If speeding has been observed reliably then CVPC can Dorset Highways to install 'speed strips' to record 24hr traffic speed and types as a basis for any further actions such as the installation of a Speed Indication Device or gather enough evidence for a speed reduction through a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Such a TRO would cost Dorset about £20,000 and would have to be proven against other such applications from across Dorset within a limited overall budget of about £100k.

- 2) Whitchurch is an old village and consequently the streets are narrow without pedestrian pathways, but the vehicles have grown considerably wider and longer, particularly with the increase in camping and caravanning vehicles, the increase in size of farm vehicles, and the increase in the number of delivery vehicles. There have been many instances of damage to

garden and property walls, as well as increased danger to pedestrians, and congestion caused by stuck vehicles.

Dorset Highways explained that our previous MP, Oliver Letwin had attempted to get a general width restriction applied across the Marshwood Vale and surrounding spaces, but there was major local opposition and it was dropped. If we tried again, we would need evidence through cameras etc and would need to get a TRO with appropriate signage to apply a width restriction. This would need to allow exceptions for local access and, given that there are not many alternate routes available, most drivers would just claim exception.

We could have more signs erected warning of narrow streets at a costs to us.

We should also encourage local residents to use cameras, if possible, to record damage and, if the driver failed to stop, this then becomes a police case of criminal damage.

- 3) There are about 7 'Welcome to Whitchurch Canonorum' signs on the various road approaches. Many have an additional notice requesting drivers to please drive carefully. We would like all signs to have this additional request, but we question the effectiveness of these signs.

Dorset Highways explained that many villages have successfully reduced vehicle speeds by making drivers more aware of when they are entering villages. This is often done by creating a 'gate' feature, with, for example, a planting regime around the 'welcome to...' sign and the creation of a 'gate'-like feature on both sides of the road to give the impression of entering a habited area. Dorset Council can licence CVPC to maintain the verges around the village signs and the Parish Council could create village entry points, including additional signage. Dorset Highways have a department that could quote for creating supplementary signage if CVPC wants it.

- 4) The cost of a speed strip to monitor speeds 24hr/day carried out over 1 full week is £250+VAT for the first site and then £175+VAT for each additional site monitored at the same time in the same area.
- 5) If we want to proceed with a Speed Watch, then we need to find suitable volunteers and have them vetted by Dorset Police. To set up a scheme, we will need a team of volunteers to draw upon, ideally six or more, as one person needs to operate the camera and another needs to write down the registration number and vehicle details and record the speed and ideally we need a third person to assist acting as an observer. Dorset Police will recommend suitable sites for the speed watch. Once the roadside risk assessments have been completed the volunteers will receive training and when they start to carry out speed checks they will keep a record of how many vehicles were checked and how many were observed exceeding the speed limit thresholds (25 mph in a 20 mph area and 36 mph in a 30 mph area and 47 mph in a 40 mph area).

A warning letter will be sent by Dorset Police to the registered keeper on the first two occasions that their vehicle is seen exceeding the speed limit. If the vehicle is observed for a third time, an action will be sent to the local NPT for further attention. Occasionally, Policing Support Officers will conduct joint speed enforcement sessions alongside of Community

Speed Watch groups. On these occasions Notice of Intended Prosecution (NIPS) notices will be issued to vehicles detected speeding.

Usually, Dorset Police will loan a camera to the volunteers for a few months however the scheme will usually cover the cost of a camera themselves moving forward by seeking funding from their local council or another source. The equipment costs in the region of £326.

**Public Transport:** Note that the Winter timetable for the Jurassic Coaster (X51 and X53) provides an X53 Sunday service with 3 buses in each direction over the day, an X51 & X53 approx hourly on Saturdays, and similarly on weekdays

**Active Travel:** Dorset Council have an online survey to encourage suggestions for changes.

Councillor Chris Noon

07/10/2021