

Milton Abbot Grouped Parish Council

2nd March 2016

Traffic in Chillaton

Background

Chillaton Cllrs and other local residents have been trying for several years to reduce traffic speeds in the village and increase the safety of vulnerable road users. Their aim has been to identify proposals that, if funds were available, would have the approval of the Highway Authority.

As with any community trying to bring about improvements before there have been any recent serious or fatal accidents, these measures do not have a high priority with Highways and if they were to go ahead, they would have to compete with other schemes for DCC funding and/or attract other sources of finance.

The following proposals are in general accord with DfT Circular 01/2014, which aims to increase road safety particularly for vulnerable road users and especially on unclassified rural roads.

Although there are a few outstanding issues, it now seems appropriate to seek the endorsement of the Parish Council for the measures proposed, so that final discussions with Highways can take place and the process of identifying possible sources of funding may begin.

Overview

Chillaton is on a commuter rat-run between Tavistock and Lifton/Launceston and on a significant traffic route between the Bere peninsular and Exeter. These proposals are aimed at increasing drivers' awareness of other road users and their perception of the need to drive appropriately through the village. They were the subject of a public presentation and consultation exercise and have the overwhelming support of those local residents who expressed a view.

Common issues

Each route is dealt with in turn below, but there are also some proposals common to all routes:

Removal of centre-line markings: Within the 30 mph zone in the village, there would be no centre lines. As reported on national news recently, this decreases drivers' confidence that they have room to pass and lowers vehicle speeds. This proposal has the support of Highways and will be done when re-surfacing takes place in 2016/17.

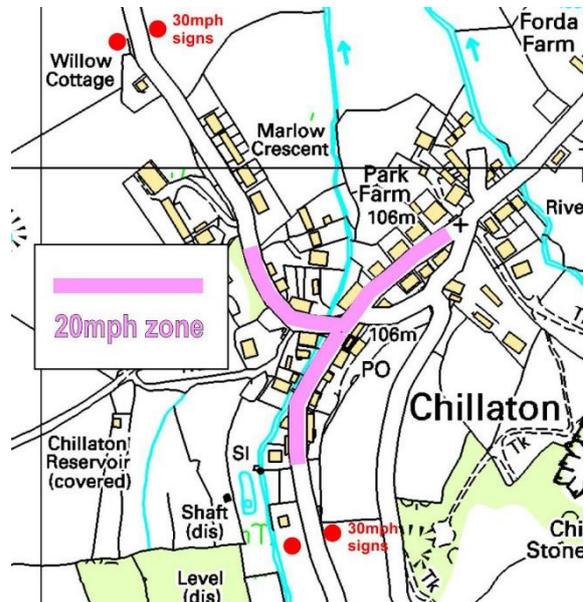
Reinstatement of edge of carriageway markings: In several places in the village, the edge of carriageway marking was placed far enough away from side of the road to create a space for pedestrians to walk in. It is accepted that any measure that gives pedestrians a false sense of security should be viewed with caution and that a white line offers no physical protection. However, experience shows that this road marking does discourage vehicles from being driven in this space and

encourages people to continue to walk around the village, which is important for social interaction. There is also a body of motorists who do not consider that pedestrians should walk in the road, but these markings clearly delineate space for both parties.

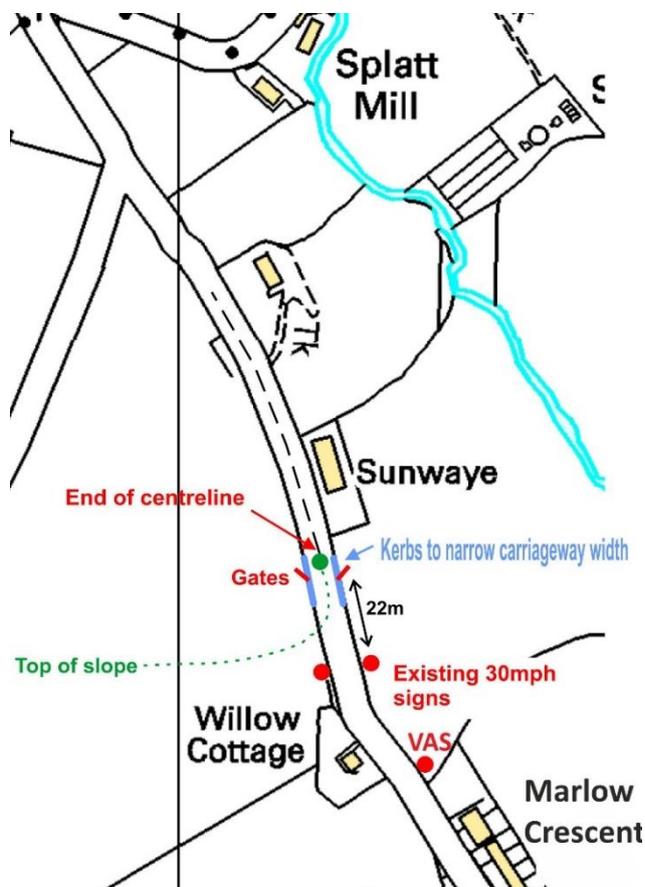
The Parish Council is therefore requested to support the continuation of this facility when the roads in the village are re-surfaced.

20 mph zone in village centre: This has been made easier to implement, as a result of DfT Circular 01/2014. Although Highways supports the provisions of the Circular, it is awaiting further guidance on this issue and would be happy to discuss this further.

As Highways have stated, traffic through the village is generally well below 30 mph, which is normally a requirement before introducing a 20 mph limit. Again, the idea is to make drivers aware that they are entering an area where extra caution is needed and that they are not the only road users.



Chillaton to Lifton road



The speed sign [VAS] on this road does have a deterrent effect, but that is less so for commuters than other motorists, no doubt because of their familiarity with both the sign and the road conditions.

The centre line would end at a village 'gateway'. These are often seen at the entrances to rural communities and are splayed to give the impression of a narrower road than is the case.

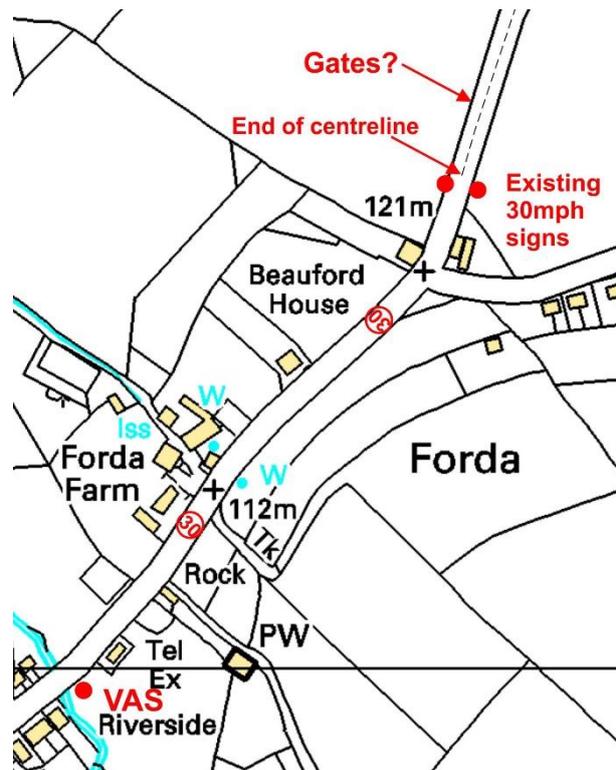
In this instance, there is insufficient room to create the necessary clearance between the gates and the edge of the carriageway and so a kerb on either side of the gateway would be provided. This would still allow the largest vehicles to pass each other, but would act as a further deterrent to excessive speed.

Chillaton to Lewdown road

Several attempts have been made to come up with a means of giving greater protection to pedestrians walking around the blind bend at Green Cross, near Beauford House, and also to cyclists using the National Cycle route that goes past this corner, before turning left to Brentor. However, the poor sightlines associated with the blind bend make it too dangerous to narrow the road here with a pavement.

There is also insufficient width to install 'gates' on the verge before the bend. However, further attempts will be made to find an alternative location, given that other measures have proved impracticable.

The VAS on this road has good coverage of traffic coming from Lewdown as it will be triggered by vehicles passing Forda Farm. It has proved an effective means of lowering vehicle speeds, but it does nothing for vehicles leaving the village towards Lewdown. There is also a long stretch of road between the beginning of the 30 mph zone and the triggering of the VAS and vehicles often exceed the limit in this section.



It is therefore requested that, provided they comply with the traffic signs regulations, Highways be asked to place two 'roundels' on the road, after it has been re-surfaced, as shown on the above plan and 30 mph repeater 'lollipop' signs where appropriate. The yellow bars on the road surface on the approach to the 30 mph zone should also be refreshed, as they do not currently provide a sufficiently effective 'rumble strip'.

Chillaton to Tavistock road

The speed of the traffic, restricted sight lines and over-shadowing by adjacent trees make the suggested gateway in this location impractical. There is also no suitable location for another VAS. Pedestrians are effectively prevented from walking from the village to join the bridleway leading to Hogstor and frequent minor accidents occur as vehicles clash on the blind bend entering the village.

Residents in this area are rightly concerned and have complained to Chillaton PCs that nothing has been done to remedy the situation.

Highways was previously requested to consider extending the 30 mph limit to the Tavistock side of the junction with the track/bridleway to Hogstor, but this was not accepted. Given the lack of other solutions and the danger to traffic of any chicane or other lane restriction here, it may be that 'speed cushions' would be appropriate. If so, they would have to be within the 30mph limit and to allow them be effective and avoid unwanted noise to nearby properties, the 30 mph limit would need to be moved as previously proposed.

The Parish council is requested to ask Highways to look again at suitable means of reducing the speed of traffic at this location, including the measures referred to above.

Chillaton village centre – pedestrian refuge



At present, vehicles travelling towards Lifton turn this corner too fast to be able to assess what traffic is coming towards them and whether there are parked vehicles and/or pedestrians in the road ahead. By creating a pedestrian refuge as shown, vehicles would have to make a more pronounced left turn and thereby drive more slowly.

Pedestrians would also benefit greatly by having a safe place to stand when assessing whether or not it is safe to cross the road. Highways have no problem with this in principle, but advise that drainage considerations would have to be taken into account in the design of the refuge.

The design shown here is simply illustrative. If installed, it would have to allow large vehicles to continue to use this road junction.

Financial implications

Chillaton Cllrs and other local residents have always recognised the pressures on Highways budgets and that competing schemes must be prioritised. If the Parish Council endorses i) the overall approach and those elements already accepted in principle by highways and ii) further discussion with Highways over the specific issues where such action is recommended as set out above, then hopefully the eventual outcome will be a set of proposals that, if funded, would be endorsed by Highways.

Further consideration could then be given to the options available for their implementation together with their associated costs and steps taken to identify sources of funding.

The Parish Council's views are requested.