

**Felldownhead Road résumé
For the MAGPC Clerk
Part-2 (10th December 2015)**

Below is a copy of the email rcvd from Mike Jones/Highways 26th august in response to our request for EXCEPT FOR ACCESS SIGNS at both end of Felldownhead Road. **Jeremy Gallow's and my comments are inserted in red:**

Dear Councillor Edmonds,

Further to our telephone conversation yesterday regarding the above. As discussed, my team supports the Highway Neighbourhood Teams across Devon with advice on traffic related issues. We are a small team and must rely on local input from Neighbourhood Highway Officers as, given the size of the County, resourcing site visits can be challenging and I can rarely attend site myself. **(This is one site visit, meeting up with residents, Mr Mike Jones will have to make after the various 'blunders' of misleading & incorrect, legal and otherwise, information of his Highways Authority representative/s – see our resume dd 23rd October 2015.)**

As I understand matters the residents and Parish Council are concerned over the following matters

1. Speed and volume of traffic using Fellowdownhead Road
2. The perception that the road is being used as a Shortcut or Rat Run **(Analysis of traffic flows and CCTV shows a typical commuter and Rat-Run pattern. This is not a 'perception', it is a fact.)**
3. Concern over the safety of school pupils catching the bus to and from Tavistock **(and concern for property regularly being damaged by traffic. There are pedestrian walkers including residents and local B&B based tourists, Tamar Trail walkers, dog walkers, cyclists, horse riders & residents exiting from their properties mixed with local traffic including farm tractors, large farm milk collection lorries, rat-run commuters & delivery drivers –many at excessive speed. The road is very narrow in places (12') – the mix is 'Russian Roulette' on this road during commuting hours.**

I have tried to cover all the points discussed below but please come back to me if you need any further clarification.

A potential solution expected to be effective by residents is the introduction of a Prohibition of Motor Vehicles Order (PMV). The PMV sign is one which is frequently ignored where it is applied. Unlike the No Entry Sign which has International Recognition, the PMV sign is not universally understood and often ineffective. This has been DCC's experience at many locations across the County and my own experience over 25 years in traffic engineering across the UK supports this. The restriction is usually advertised with Except for Access which puts the onus on the Police as enforcement authority to monitor time of entry and exit from the "zone" and to then contact potential offenders to question their movements. **(The objective is simple and not related to enforcement but to moderate drivers' behavior and to reduce the traffic flow, particularly during commuting hours. In stark contrast to what is stated by Mike Jones, such EXCEPT FOR ACCESS signs at Trendle and B3257 to Denham Bridge Road have apparently been very successful in establishing such traffic flow reduction.)**

As discussed, as Highway Authority, DCC is responsible for many hundreds of miles of rural road similar to Fellowdownhead Road. 30mph Speed limits are not usual on such roads and would not now be progressed as they are usually found to be ineffective without regular

Police enforcement. However, in this case, average speeds appear to be around the 30mph level which probably has more to do with the steep hill, bends and general road environment than the repeater signs which are often difficult to make out due to vegetation. (Mike Jones is showing an appalling lack of knowledge relating to the Felldownhead Road traffic situation. The general traffic speed has significantly been reduced since the introduction of the 30 mph limit. We no longer see drivers at 50-60 mph. It is agreed that 'average' speed indeed is 'around 30 mph'. Many locals drive 15-20 mph being an appropriate speed whilst some rat-run & delivery drivers exceed 40 mph. The 'general road environment' mentioned has to be disregarded by road use facts.

Fellownhead road has a good safety record with only 1 injury collision reported to the Police in the last 5 year period. This was due to engine difficulties and inappropriate speed was not a contributory factor. The road is used to access communities in the Milton Abbot and Lifton hinterland and an "except for access" restriction would be very easily challenged if the Police were in a position to resource enforcement.

Traffic Volumes on the road have not been monitored in recent years but are not expected to exceed 500 vehicles a day which would represent a 15% increase on the last time volumes were monitored in 2006. For your information, Traffic Volumes throughout Devon were observed to fall by around 3% between 2007 and 2013. By comparison, the B3362 through Milton Abbot surveyed in 2012 was taking around 2500 vehicles a day. (A Traffic Count Survey by the Highways dd 13th October 2015 has unfortunately been done on the B3362 at Hardstone Wood and on the Felldownhead Road at Angars Ball outside commuting times 07:55 -08:25 hrs & 09:40 – 10:10 hrs.)

A relatively recent development which may be relevant to local drivers would have been the shuttle signals put in place in the Hardstone Woods area last year due to a landslip. The delays this occasioned may well have encouraged some drivers to detour on Fellownhead Road and this practice may have continued, particularly when vehicles have negotiated Greystone bridge behind a lorry carrying stone from Greystone Quarry. This is a local issue and not one which provision of signing would be likely to effect.

I have enquired about the school bus service and DCC have no record of Parents or the Bus Company contacting us to complain that arrangements are dangerous. If this is the case then I can arrange for our Transport Co-ordination Service to assess the matter.

With regard to the photographs attached I would comment as follows.

- Denham Bridge is well known for vehicle strikes and the width restriction is dictated by the physical parameters of the site. As mentioned above, PMV restrictions are often ineffective.
- Dupath Lane near Callington links the A390 and A388. It has entry treatments along the restricted section and is again "Except for access". I have no feedback from Cornwall Council regarding this site but would not expect compliance to be good with the majority of non-compliance being local drivers "in the know". The level of any enforcement undertaken is a matter for the Police to resource. In this case, enforcement might be fairly simple as there are only limited access requirements along the lane for "offenders" to claim an interest in. (Again, Mike Jones talks about the police & 'enforcement' – the real issue is actual traffic flow reduction which works both at Dupath Lane and Trendle!)

I understand that there has been some interest in additional speed limit signing. DCC is trying to reduce the amount of signing on its network for both cost and environmental reasons and is encouraged to do so by central government. In addition, the more structures

at the side of a road the more opportunities for vehicle and rider collision will exist. In the event of a collision with a sign post assembly it is not unusual for the Police to request details of the signing and why it has been provided. (We are kindly asking HA to refrain from this type of comment. Sign posts are put up to support signs. Signs are there to guide traffic, not to be driven in to by reckless drivers. Is Mike Jones saying that he can not erect EXCEPT FOR ACCESS signs at each end of Felldownhead Road as drivers may collide with the posts?)

However, with regard to Speed Limit signing there are clear rules as to what is allowed and how it should be mounted. Eg although not directly relevant to Fellowdownhead Rd the placing of 30mph repeater signs on a highway lighting column will render the limit unenforceable. There have been other instances where local communities have put up their own versions of speed limit signing to supplement existing signing and the Police have advised that enforcement will not be possible until they are removed. (These comments are not relevant to Felldownhead Road.)

To conclude, whilst sympathetic with residents regarding the “Rat Running” neither the scale of the issue nor the safety record on Fellowdownhead Road justify intervention by the Highway Authority. Experience dictates that the type of measures legally available are unlikely to be effective and would result in an unsightly proliferation of signing in a rural area. If the Parish Council wish to fund a Traffic Regulation Order then the costs involved would be around £3,000 for the legal and advertising work. Cost of signing would be around £250 per sign and the number of these would be governed by the need to sign routes which can join the road at a point where they have a clear alternative available to divert along. I would estimate the number required to be at least 10.

The legal process involved in introducing a traffic regulation order (TRO) allows members of the public and statutory consultees such as the Police, Fire and Ambulance services to make comment and potentially to object to the process. As enforcement authority it is possible that the Police would object on the grounds that enforcement could not be resourced and lack of justification. The Committee determining the outcome of the consultation would take these concerns into account. The result might be that the TRO would not be introduced. (This needs to be clarified by HA! Felldownhead Road has a number of speed limit signs. A TRO has repeatedly been mentioned by the HA as the main preventive reason to erect further signs, referring to general road requirements. The HA now appear to suggest MAGPC may wish to fund a TRO!? A TRO would be a HA responsibility. What the HA has done is to generalize traffic regulations. What they have not done is to explain in exact terms which signs would be applicable to Felldownhead Road without a TRO!

I regret that I have not been able to give a more positive assessment of the situation but hope that my explanations some of the difficulties involved will be of assistance. (We are confident that a positive and ‘open’ discussion between the HA and the local residents will lead to a solution which will solve the Felldownhead issues.)

Yours sincerely

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With best regards,
Jeremy Gallow (Felldownhead resident and previous Bradstone Parish Clerk)

Magnus Pahlsson (Cllr. Bradstone)

CC: All Felldownhead Road residents