



Petitions Panel

19 January 2017

1. Background to the Petition Scheme

- 1.1 The County Council's Petitions Scheme was adopted on 29 April 2010 and came into effect on 15 June 2010. The Scheme was subsequently updated by the County Council on 21 July 2016.
- 1.2 If a petition is supported by 50 or more signatories then it will be dealt with by a small customer focussed panel. If a petition is supported by 1,000 or more signatories it will be scheduled for a debate at the next meeting of the full County Council.

2. Petition – Request for reduced speeds limits and a review of warning signs

- 2.1 The County Council received a petition organised by Ms P Haywood on 30 November 2016. This reads as follows:

Following the recent accident on February 17th [2016] and numerous previous accidents, we feel strongly that the safety of village residents, church goers and families attending Milton School is severely compromised by the excessive speed of traffic passing through the village on the B3092.

We urge the council to implement the following safety measures as a matter of priority:

- 1) *A reduction of the speed limit on the B3092 through the village to 30mph*
- 2) *Create a safe walkway along Post Office Road and a continuation of the cycle path to the church, to enable roadside walking.*
- 3) *To review and upgrade signage warning of junctions and various hazards*

Please note – A footway on Post Office Road is under investigation and therefore will not be included within this report.

Also, it is understood that Milton on Stour CE VA Primary School are preparing a separate petition so the points raised within the letter at Appendix 12 of the petition report (Appendix A) taken to Gillingham Town Council will not be covered in this report.

- 2.2 As this petition contains more than 50 signatures, the Panel are invited to note and discuss.
- 2.3 This petition contains 341 signatures.
- 2.4 A copy of the petition report submitted to Gillingham Town Council can be found at Appendix A.

Gillingham Town Council agreed to support this petition. Appendix B is an email from Clare Ratcliffe, Deputy Clerk for Gillingham Town Council which includes a summary of the discussion of this petition at Gillingham Town Council's Full Council meeting on 28 November 2016.
- 2.5 This discussion should conclude with a decision as to how to respond to the petition. This may include one or more of the following:

- taking the action requested in the petition

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- considering the petition at a council meeting
- holding an inquiry into the matter
- undertaking research into the matter
- holding a public meeting
- holding a consultation
- referring the petition for consideration by the council's Audit and Governance Committee
- calling a referendum
- writing to the petition organiser setting out the Panel's views about the request in the petition.

2.6 Alternatively, the Panel may determine a combination of the options above, or decide on another course of action as appropriate.

3. Context

3.1 A map can be found at Appendix C which shows the extent of existing speed limits and warning signs on the roads within Milton on Stour.

The petition includes a detailed review of the concerns and the layout of the road(s) at Milton on Stour, a copy of the petition submission to Gillingham Town Council is at Appendix A.

3.2 Traffic survey data is available for Post Office Road and the B3092. The location of these survey are shown on the map at Appendix C. The details and implications of these surveys will be discussed later.

3.3 The County Council adopts Department for Transport guidelines for setting speed limits as policy. There are various criteria that need to be satisfied in order for a speed limit to be reduced. In short, speed limits should be set at a level that is 'self-enforcing'.

3.4 The speed of traffic is an important consideration when reviewing speed limits. Speeds should be close to the requested/proposed lower limit in order for it to be 'self-enforcing'. Setting a speed limit significantly lower than the typical vehicle speeds would likely result in greater conflict and not be adhered to consistently.

3.5 **The petition requests that the speed limit on the B3092** is reduced from 40mph to 30mph. A speed survey conducted on the B3092 in March 2016 showed that speeds were close to the existing 40mph limit.

The 85thile seed was 44.7mph and the mean average was 39.5.

The above speeds suggest that the existing 40mph is appropriate.

3.6 Reducing a speed limit in isolation does not significantly reduce traffic speeds. Drivers typically drive to the prevailing conditions and if a speed limit is set artificially low it can lead to greater levels of conflict and therefore increased likelihood of collisions; levels of tailgating and overtaking would be expected to increase if the speed limit on the B3092 were to be reduced to 30mph.

3.7 The speed survey revealed that there were a minority of drivers choosing to drive notably higher than the 40mph on the B3092. Improved forewarning of the 40mph would be a cost effective way of raising the profile of the 40mph limit and would help to encourage improved adherence to the existing limit.

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- 3.8 A request could be made to Dorset Road Safe for enforcement of the existing 40mph limit on the B3092. This would be dependent upon there being a suitable location for the camera van.
- 3.9 The collision history included within the petition has been reviewed alongside collision data available to the County Council.

Collision data available to the County Council is provided and validated by Dorset Police. It includes collisions that occurred on public highway reported to the police that resulted in personal injury to any person(s) involved.

It is accepted that this data is not the complete picture of collisions that have occurred however, it is the most robust and reliable data available to the County Council.

Records are available from 1 January 1998 to 31 August 2016. The area analysed for this report including the location of collisions can be found at Appendix D.

A total of 19 collisions have been reported on the B3092 at Milton on Stour. The most recent occurring in October 2015.

The collisions show a mix of circumstances. The majority are single vehicle loss of control outside of school run times or away from the School/Church site and some due to a poor manoeuvre to/from and side road junctions. The details of the collisions cannot be included within this report for data protection reasons. A summary will be provided at the petition panel meeting.

An overview of the collisions can be found at Appendix E.

Two Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) were installed in May 2008. These signs flash a '40' roundel when vehicles speeds are in excess of 40mph. Since these signs were installed, the number of injury collisions on the B3092 has decreased.

Additional forewarning of the 40mph for southbound traffic could also be achieved through additional road markings and roundels painted on the road surface. The cost of these measures is relatively low and relatively quick to turn around.

Please note that during winter months lining work tends to reduce as the roads need to be dry and free from salt/grit.

It has been observed that there are no village 'name plates' at the point at which the 40mph limit begins on the B3092 north of the School/Church at Milton on Stour. Whilst the 40mph is not the boundary of Milton on Stour a name plate may help to reinforce the reason/purpose for the 40mph limit.

- 3.10 The VAS cited on the B3092 north of Post Office Road was taken out of action due to the theft of the solar panels used to power the sign. These panels were repaired in the middle of December 2016 and the VAS is operational again. It is not known how long the VAS was out of action for.

Being more up to date the newly installed solar panels will provide a better charge to the VAS batteries.

- 3.11 The VAS located on the B3092 south of Post Office Road has been queried as being intermittent. This is due to the way it is powered. This VAS has solar panels and a wind turbine, however, only the solar panels are being used. The wind turbine has been fixed as the noise generated was creating an issue for residents in the adjacent property.

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3.12 Consideration could be given to replacing the solar panels on the VAS sign south of Post Office Road. Modern solar panels are more efficient than the current ones installed so could improve the reported intermittent operation of the VAS. The cost of this would be in the region of £1,500.

3.13 The petition report mentions concerns regarding crossing the B3092 from Milton on Stour to access the both the school and church.

A formal survey could be conducted to see if the basic criteria for a formal crossing is met. However, observations suggest that it would not meet the criteria.

3.14 **Post Office Road** can be treated differently than the B3092 as its use is different.

Post Office Road in isolation does not meet the criteria for a 30mph limit. However, if it is considered as part of the wider area i.e. an extension of the existing 30mph in Milton on Stour then a 30mph could be supported.

3.15 Unfortunately, whilst a 30mph limit on Post Office Road could be supported it is important to recognise that it would not rank highly against the existing requests for a new/amended Traffic Regulation Order.

There are over 200 individual requests for a new/amended TRO across the County Council area.

There is only budget to complete 20 requests during 2017/18.

If a 30mph limit for Post Office Road were to be included within the speed limit programme it is not possible to commit to when it would be implemented.

3.16 Two speed surveys were conducted on Post Office Road in November 2009.

Site A revealed an 85th percentile speed of 33.6mph and a mean average speed of 28.6mph.

Site B revealed an 85th percentile speed of 33.6mph and a mean average speed of 28.3mph.

Locations of these surveys can be found on the map at Appendix C.

It is accepted that there will have been a minority of vehicles travelling faster than the speeds mentioned above however, those drivers would not likely adjust their speed if the speed limit was reduced. This is based on Department for Transport guidance that the County Council adopts as policy.

These surveys suggest that the majority of drivers are driving according the prevailing conditions so a reduced speed limit of 30mph, whilst being appropriate would not likely result in a notable change in the way drivers use the road.

It is accepted that the speed surveys on Post Office Road may not be representative of traffic speeds now. A new survey could be considered.

Speed management measures such as signing and lining could be considered in key areas in a bid to address concerns regarding speed on Post Office Road.

Improved forewarning of the start of the 40mph on Post Office Road could be considered.

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This could be achieved through signing and lining. A village name plate similar to the one that is in place at the beginning of the 30mph at the southern end of the village (see Appendix C) would be a reasonable consideration.

- 3.17 **Kendalls Lane** could be treated in a similar way to Post Office Road. Despite this road not meeting the criteria for a 30mph in isolation it could be considered as part of the wider area.

Unfortunately, the same situation applies to Kendalls Lane as for Post Office Road. It would not rank highly against the existing requests. It is not possible to commit to when it would be implemented.

No speed survey data is available for Kendalls Lane. Observations suggest that the layout of Kendalls Lane would encourage speeds much lower than the national speed limit of 60mph. A reduced limit, whilst appropriate would not likely result in a notable change in the way drivers use the road.

- 3.18 Signage that is obscured throughout Milton on Stour should be cleared of vegetation. Arrangements can be made for this work to take place via the Community Highways Team.

- 3.19 A general review of signing on all roads in Milton on Stour could be considered.

Additional signing could be considered to raise awareness of side road junctions such as School Lane and the exit from Milton on Stour CE VA School.

It is important to note that as there are already a notable number of warning signs already in place some may have to be removed if new signs are to be installed. Too many signs lessen their impact as drivers can become 'sign blind'.

It is important that the most prevalent potential hazards are the ones that are signed in order to achieve the greatest impact.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The Panel is invited to note the receipt of this petition and decide how to respond to it, possible options are available in paragraph 2.5.
- 4.2 A request could be made for Dorset Road Safe to conduct enforcement at specific times. Visits would have to be programmed alongside other enforcement in the area. This would be dependent upon there being a suitable location.
- 4.3 Review all existing signing and refresh/upgrade where appropriate.
- 4.4 Improve forewarning of existing 40mph limits.
- 4.5 Consider upgrading the solar panel on the '40' VAS on the B3092 to the south of Milton on Stour.
- 4.6 Consider undertaking new speed surveys on Post Office Road in order to assess existing traffic speed.
- 4.7 Cost implications will have to be considered. Whilst the cost of possible options is relatively low, all the measures suggested in this report combined would result in a not insignificant cost.

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