

Notes of the Meeting between Chideock Parish Councillors and David Sidwick, Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner, 10 am on 10 August 2021.

1. Attendees.

David Sidwick (PCC))
Cllr Simon Christopher (SC)
Deirdre Coates (DC)
Mick Downes (MD)
Anna Dunn (AD)
George Dunn (GD), who chaired the meeting in the absence of Cllr Vanessa McAra
Peter Hunt (PH)
Tony Peacock (TP).

2. In Attendance.

Sal Robinson, Clerk (CC)

3. Apologies.

Vanessa McAra.

4. Welcome and Introductions.

GD asked PCC if he was happy for notes from the meeting to be made public, after his approval.

PCC confirmed that this was OK.

GD welcomed everyone and went round so everyone could introduce themselves.

PCC explained why he had stood for election as PCC and why his aims are:-

A. Reasons for standing for election.

- Concerns that anti-social behaviour was being ignored by the police
- Shoplifting
- Defrauding – no police action being taken
- Merging with Devon and Cornwall police

He spent 3 years preparing for election

- 1 year looking at how other police forces operate
- 2 years as a candidate, with many face to face and Zoom meetings

B. His Aims as PCC.

- To make Dorset the safest county
- Tackle anti-social behaviour, crime, and road safety
- To create a more visible police force with better connections to the public
- Tackle drugs, violence, and hidden harm
- Tackle rural crime – poaching, hare coursing, farm thefts
- Put victims and communities first
- Making every penny count

His initial plan will be completed by October 2021 (required date is March 2022)

A 100-day plan will be completed by 19th August 2021.

Focus on connecting with people is very important.

Before going on to the topics suggested by the Parish Council PCC pointed out that he can only have discussions with the Chief Constable to raise common community concerns on matters within the remit of the Police.

5. Topics for discussion.

A. Speed enforcement throughout the Chideock A35 speed limit zone, Including support for Average Speed Cameras. Why are cameras not present in the housings at all times?

PCC took the second point first.

The absence of the eastbound camera is due to a lack of cameras – fewer cameras than sites. It was pointed out that this camera has been missing for at least a year.

PCC knows the problems in Chideock – Average Speed Cameras (ASCs) are the only solution.

The Police have “waded” in with Highways England on this and collaborating with HE regarding feasibility and location – the expectation is that this will be complete in the next few months.

MD said that this type of cameras bought by Dorset Police are capable of acting as average speed cameras – PCC said he would raise this with the Police.

Levels of vehicle noise – the Chief Constable recently raised noisy motorcycles as an issue, where the exhaust has been deliberately “tweaked” to make more noise. Noise cameras are a long-term solution.

TP suggested that manufactures should make it impossible to “tweak” exhausts.

PH said that 4 years ago the Parish Council was informed by HE that ASCs would follow the change over from GATSO wet film to digital cameras. Which has not happened.

CS said that he is meeting with Ben Hampson (HE South West, interim replacement for Andy Roberts) on 25 August and would like councillors to attend – he will forward the information to the Clerk.

B. Pedestrian safety in the village, especially where there are no pavements. Including support for additional controlled pedestrian crossings.

PCC said that this is not within his remit.

SC said that this is a discussion to be had with HE and Chris Loder MP.

PH said that HE caused some pavements to be removed in the past in order to widen the road.

TP spoke of his “near death” experience when he was nearly mown down by a HGV driver on the section near the Clock House Inn, where there is no pavement.

SC said that given that HE has made changes in the past why can’t there be two additional controlled pedestrian crossings?

C. Support for All-Weather All-Purpose path allowing safe travel from Chideock towards Bridport for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, buggies (both disabled and child)

PCC said that whilst he is interested in this it can only be considered on safety grounds – lack of safety needs to be proven for Police intervention.

SC said that plans are already in place and Dorset Council is talking to residents. He himself is meeting with Cllr Flower later in the day to specifically talk about the need for this path.

DC said she had not had any further update from Tara Hansford (Dorset Council Rights of Way Development Officer) since being told that it would be considered in the next financial year and that, before that could be done, DC and others needed to supply a lot of information regarding potential routes, land owner permissions etc.

The Clerk said that this “project” has been ongoing since the 1990’s, with no end result.

D. Use of e-scooters on public highways and footways.

PCC said that this is within his remit.

It has become “the thing” in his post bag!

Until recently it has not been a priority.

Dorset Police has now produced a policy document, as part of a national effort.

The police have contacted/visited every retailer in Dorset and told that they must inform customers that an electric scooter is only legal for use on private land.

In addition the police will be speaking with schools in case parent have bought e-scooters for their children to use to get to school.

The police can take the following actions when they stop a person using an electric scooter on anything other than private land: -

- i. For a first offence the police will take the person's name OR seize the scooter without warning as it is a vehicle being driven without insurance
- ii. For a repeat offence the police can take action – a fine, points on a driving licence, scooter seized

However, it is important not to clog up the courts with such offences.

E. Information re news from Dorset Police Chief Constable Mr Vaughan regarding Dorset developing stronger links with Devon and Cornwall Constabulary. What effect would this have on policing resources in Dorset, which are currently inadequate?

There is a current "strategic alliance between the forces which has been in place for many years – this covers mainly "back office" functions only.

No other move is on the agenda. Any such move would in the PCC's opinion be detrimental to the Dorset service.

The incoming Chief Constable, Scott Chilton, understands rural policing.

The PCC wants to see the same level of policing everywhere in Dorset, including the borders with other counties, with increased cross border liaison and has discussed this with the PCC for Devon and Cornwall.