

# THESE NOTES HAVE NOT YET BEEN APPROVED BY OTHER ATTENDEES.

## Brief Notes of the A35 Parishes Meeting Held on Friday 13 October 2023 in Wootton Fitzpaine Village Hall

### Present:

Philip Webber (Wilmington Widworthy PC)  
Carol Miltenburg (Wilmington Widworthy PC)  
Anna Dunn (Chideock PC)  
George Dunn (Chideock PC)  
Steven Rose (Clerk Chideock PC)  
Tara Hansford (Independent)  
Kate Clarke (Dorset Council)  
John Firrell (Litton Cheney PC)  
And others.....

1. Philip Webber opened the meeting saying that currently there was much information about the A35, but it was fragmented with bits coming from every Parish. He referred to the previous Meeting held in October 2022 adding that this meeting will hopefully start the process of sharing information; checking commonality and creating a more powerful lobby to address the many issues of the A35.
2. Historically National Highways (NH) (under its then name of Highways England) initially identified small issues locally. However, they changed this approach to a whole route review of 78km from Honiton to Bere Regis to which they applied their "Cost Benefit Analysis" for assessing works to be undertaken. This led them to the proposals for
  - a) Average Speed Cameras (AVCs) throughout the route
  - b) Works to address frequent road flooding and drainage issues.
3. Philip explained that NH "Cost Value Benefit" was based on the "Cost" being taken at £2M for a fatality and £200K for a serious injury.
4. More recently NH embarked on a series of Village "Walk-throughs" which "opened their eyes" to the reality of the many problems existing along the A35. we believe This process is currently ongoing through the Design Phase with regular Audit Meetings to approve the costs.
5. The main emphasis of this process is for route "calming" by consistency of signage plus local enhancements, within an overall speed limit of 50mph and localised 30mph through villages etc.
6. NH had access to two separate budgets: -
  - a) A Safety and Congestion Budget driven by the road accident statistics for Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) with no weighting for "near misses". This budget is **re-active** to KSI statistics and
  - b) A User and Community Budget which is **pro-active** to local demands e.g. Wilmington where residents living on the opposite side of the A35 to the school must cross the road without a pedestrian crossing for the children to get to school.
7. NH have only visited 5 out of the 35 parishes directly affected by the A35 but whilst their main objective remains the through flow of the A35 traffic at least NH now accept that safety and village participation must be taken into account.
8. It was also suggested that there may be significant changes after the current PPI ends in 2026 and NH take overall control of the road.
9. Tara Hansford emphasised a number of important things to include in the A35 Parish Initiative now being proposed. These include: -
  - Using NH terminology.

- Provide real life stories.
  - Organise village questionnaires.
  - Determine the NH “scoring methodology”.
10. Paul Hartman put forward the importance of understanding the Department for Transport (DfT) hierarchy; How is NH funded nationally and regionally; He proposed the formation of a “Project Board” defining a mandate of what is to be achieved. He emphasised determining the case for money allocation to regions, stating that “political” decisions often outweigh “pragmatic” solutions, and also the necessity for cross party support. He also reminded the meeting that NH overspending on one budget will deprive money from another budget. He emphasised that any forthcoming Report must include factual evidence as well as personal experience.
  11. The make-up of the Project Board was discussed and whether future meetings should include Ward Councillors and the three local MPs whose constituencies include the A35.
  12. The process of collating the varied information was also discussed and needs to be settled. Suggestions included group emails and spread sheets; Drop Box and Google Drive. Carol said that she would set up a separate email address specifically for this project.
  13. All parishes had brought village maps and discussion was held on the best way of collating this information. It was thought that simply linking the individual maps would be the best solution. Also indicating on these maps, the many “near miss” accidents that have occurred, but which are still ignored by the NH criteria.
  14. There was consistent support for Average Speed Cameras (ASCs); consistent signage; suitable ways for people to cross the road; the long-term impact of bus stops and bus services especially in rural areas where limited public services put more emphasis on private cars and therefore even more traffic.
  15. The meeting accepted that the “politics” of the road has changed and that this will necessarily become a long-term campaign.
  16. The importance of village questionnaires was confirmed. The Admin Costs of the Working Group was discussed, and it was agreed that a modest contribution from each Parish precept would cover all such costs and should be raised at future respective PC meetings.
  17. Tara Hansford summarised a number of issues that must be considered including map based information; questionnaire based information; specific accident information; anecdotal evidence; perceived impacts; desire lines / movement mapping; impact on businesses, schools, hauliers and other road users; effects of community populations such as age and mobility demographics; the use of Information from neighbourhood plans; the names and hierarchy of NH Staff; Council Highways and Environment staff; Council Portfolio holders etc.
  18. Discussion also referred to the extent of air quality and noise issues. For instance, where Dorset Council already have AQ diffusion tubes established taking monthly readings of traffic related nitrogen dioxide pollution.
  19. A number of delegates offered to join the suggested “Project Team” for regular working group meetings these included:
    1. Philip Webber (Wilmington Widworthy PC) - Chair
    2. George Dunn (Chideock PC)
    3. David Taylor (Winterbourne Abbas PC)
    4. Paul Hartman (Symondsburry PC)
    5. ALSO:
    6. Chris Noon (Char Valley PC) - Not present but “volunteered” by others.
    7. Anna Dunn (Chideock PC) - Only if necessary
    8. Tara Hansford - On a “Consultancy / Advise” basis.
  20. The Meeting closed with particular thanks to Philip Webber and Carol Miltenburg