

Quarterly Report – Travel and Road Safety

Councillors will see the response from Cllr M Squires to our letter concerning road safety issues in the parish in this meeting's agenda. I would encourage all councillors to read it carefully.

I would make the following points:

- The response could be summed up as “these are all matters which have been raised before on a number of occasions”. This is only partly true. One issue of importance that has changed significantly since previous submissions and needs to be factored in, is the ever-increasing volume of traffic on the A377 through Newton St Cyres as housing developments in Crediton and beyond impact the number of commuters to and from Exeter.
- The proposed traffic island at Tytheing Close/Sandown Lane is a new initiative and differs from the previous request for a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing. I do not believe this option has been accurately costed.
- Likewise, the suggested change in signage at Smallbrook is new and would be a very low-cost option for DCC to deal with.
- The lack of school signage along Station Road is, in my view, a very serious issue and the failure of DCC to attend to this is a matter of shame. Of course, the PC could buy and erect its own signs, but the PC cannot erect solar powered wig-wag lights, it cannot paint the road to keep the entrance clear of parked cars to allow the school bus safe passage. And it cannot enforce a 20mph speed limit along Station Road (something we have applied for on several occasions without success). All these measures are enjoyed by our neighbouring parish at Sandford without any contribution from their PC. I fail to understand why a school travel plan is necessary to allow school signage to be erected. Presumably, if the PC raised sufficient funds to cover the entire cost of school signage, the DCC would not insist we need a travel plan? It seems to me that the school travel plan is merely a means to obstruct progress and obfuscate the important issues.

Community Speedwatch

We now have 8 volunteers who carry out sessions at various sites in NSC main village and Half Moon. I leave it to others to determine if our efforts have had any meaningful effect on the speed of traffic flowing through the village.

Road Wardens.

Three parish councillors and Nick Gillon have recently carried out a village walkthrough to determine what problems exist that affect the safety of parishioners and to decide what work might be taken on by the road wardens and what needs to be reported to DCC and MDDC. The work will be used to form the basis a work schedule for the routine clearance of roadside vegetation in residential areas. This will include overgrown pavements, together with banks and hedges that habitually become overgrown if not attended to.

We desperately need a list of landowners within the parish and contact details that they commit to respond to when approached by the PC. Personally, I have had no response to numerous phone calls, text messages, and emails (even Facebook messenger on one occasion) on most occasions when I have tried to contact landowners to raise issues of concern with them.

The Boniface trail

DCC has completed the public engagement exercise, but the outcome is unknown at the time of writing. The PC has engaged with the Boniface Trail Association (BTA) and the Exeter Cycling Campaign during this process to seek common ground. Most stakeholders are in favour of a route that hugs the A377 as much as possible and are very much against the so-called “quiet lanes” option.

We have asked DCC to meet with the PC and interested parties such as the BTA once the results have been processed to consider the available options in detail and to determine what the next steps will be.

John Dean 2nd December 2024