

Report of the Speeding Public Meeting held on Tuesday 26th November 2019, 7pm, in the Methodist Church, Mary Tavy

Present: Cllr. Butland; Cllr. Dunn; Cllr. Fife Cook; Cllr. Page; Borough Cllr. Pearce; Cllr. Prosser; Cllr. Reid; Cllr. Williams; Cllr. Wright; 30-40 members of the public (approximately).

1) Introduction of the Members of Mary Tavy Parish Council's Speeding Working Group: Cllr. Butland; Cllr. Fife Cook; Cllr. Page; Cllr. Reid. Katherine Anness (Clerk to the Council) was also introduced.

2) Apologies for Absence: Martin and Trish Evans; Tom Lee (Highways); Bev Ross; Lindsay Turpin.

3) Aims of the Speeding Working Group: delivered by Cllr. Butland. To be achieved by a targeted reduction in speed (traffic calming) through the village:

- To improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians
- To improve safety for vehicular traffic joining the A386.
- To reduce noise and environmental pollution.

4) Historical Background: delivered by Cllr. Page. Presentation included and referred to:

- Past achievements, in Mary Tavy, to aid traffic calming: The speed limit through Mary Tavy used to be 40-mph, it is now 30-mph. Mary Tavy is the only village between Tavistock and Okehampton which has a 30-mph speed limit on the A386. In the recent past, a zebra crossing and virtual footpath have been installed.
- It is essential for Mary Tavy Parish Council to obtain the agreement of the relevant authorities (e.g. Highways, local Police, WDBC and DNPA) before introducing new traffic calming measures and work within their parameters.

5) Traffic Calming Measures that the Speeding Working Group have ruled out: delivered by Cllr. Fife Cook:

- Another zebra crossing.
- Narrowing the road: Highways will not allow this, there is a given width.
- More road signs: there are lots of road signs in Mary Tavy already, motorists can get 'sign blind.'

Additionally, Cllr. Fife Cook informed the public of some of the barriers recently faced by the Parish Council when dealing with the relevant authorities (e.g. Highways and local Police) in relation to the potential installation of new traffic calming measures.

The Speeding Working Group's Proposals:

6) Village Gateways: delivered by Cllr. Page.

- May enhance motorist awareness that a village is being entered.
- They must be at least 45cms from the edge of the road, not unduly distract, be collapsible and with no flowers.

Members of the public highlighted and queried:

- Village gateways would make us separate/special from other villages.
- Is there any evidence to suggest whether they have an impact/actually work? Cllr. Reid replied that village gateways have been shown in some studies to reduce speeds by 1-2 mph.
- The biggest problem is not at the beginning of the village. Motorists tend to speed during the long stretch in the middle; need to find out how to stop speeding on the middle stretch.

7) Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS): delivered by Cllr. Reid.

- Current signs on the A386 just flash a warning to speeding motorists, they do not collect data.
- The speeding working group are considering the purchase of two new modern VAS that allow for the collection of data in terms of: time, entry speed and exit speed. The Parish Council could use this data to continually 'feed' to the relevant authorities, and publicise in the local press, on social media, etc. to highlight the magnitude of the speeding problem until action is taken.
- Several other parishes in Devon already have the ability to collect data. Locally, it is believed these include: Lifton, Lamerton and Lydford. At least one Parish Council already supplies data to the Police on a monthly basis. There may be scope to team up with these parishes to form a larger pressure group.
- Devon Highways' stance is that they do not accept the data received from VAS that are not their own for calibration/technical reasons. However, we can try, they can't ignore significant data forever.

Members of the public's opinions and questions included:

- A few members of the public voiced support for this course of action.
- There was a measuring box on a telegraph pole on the A386 in Mary Tavy a few weeks ago. Have the Parish Council received any correspondence/data from the Police or Highways with regards to this? Cllr. Reid answered that the Parish Council were not informed that the Police or Highways were monitoring speeds at the time and have not heard anything from them with regards to the results.
- A warning not to install signs that display actual speeds as some motorists may see this as a challenge, i.e. go faster to 'beat' their last score.

- Is it possible, should the purchase of new VAS signs go ahead, to relocate them? One of the current signs is partially hidden by foliage for some of the year. Councillors replied that this would probably not be possible as there is an electric feed already in-situ for the current signs and Highways have already approved their siting, i.e. to change location may require planning permission.

8) Community Speed Watch Scheme in conjunction with Local Police: delivered by Cllr. Fife Cook.

An overview of speed watch was provided including: training opportunities for volunteers provided by local Police; appropriate clothing (high visibility jackets) and equipment (a speed gun and official signs that warn motorists that they are approaching a speed monitoring zone).

It was highlighted that it may be beneficial to involve those from other interested parishes.

Cllr. Fife Cook asked for interested potential volunteers to provide their contact details and sign a form, at the end of the public meeting, consenting for their details to be made available to local Police as per GDPR regulations.

Members of the public mentioned and queried:

- One member of the public, who had been involved in a previous speed watch within the village, highlighted the necessity for a large group of volunteers to successfully facilitate a speed watch scheme on a regular basis. Problems in the past included too few volunteers which meant that the burden always fell on the same small group of people.
- It was highlighted that although a large group of volunteers would allow for regular speed watch sessions, there would be a restriction on the frequency with which the borrowed speed gun from local Police would be provided.
- It was suggested that a combined approach, involving both new VAS that capture data within the 30-mph zone and a speed watch team to target the 40-mph zone, may be the optimal solution as data could be gathered in both speed restricted zones.
- One member of the public asked: how many volunteers could be trained in a batch? The answer to this question was not known at the time.
- Cllr. Prosser made a plea for potential volunteers to only sign up for speed watch if they are fully committed.

9) Other Ideas, Suggestions and Opinions provided by Members of the Public:

- A request for a 40-mph speed limit coming into the village from the south (Cllr. Dunn).
- Rumble strips. Potential disadvantages to this solution include that rumble strips become worn down by traffic over time and produce a noise disturbance for local residents.
- The installation of double white lines in the centre of the road to prevent overtaking.
- ‘Sleeping Policemen’.

- Report known offenders - e.g. transport companies, haulage companies and taxi firms to their Head Offices. Cllr. Reid mentioned 'Operation Snap.'
- Virtual footpath on the A386: could be made safer for pedestrians by providing lighting and/or by installing a new virtual footpath which is of a different colour to the rest of the road surface to enhance visibility.
- Allow interested and committed residents to join the Parish Council's Speeding Working Group.
- Create a bend in the long straight section of road to prevent overtaking (e.g. maybe a central island in the zebra crossing?)
- The Parish Council should demand more of local Police including information on what they have been doing to tackle speeding, i.e. data on mobile speed surveillance sessions performed within the village should be provided to the Parish Council.
- Unfortunately, Devon Highways often only consider traffic calming measures when there is evidence of accidents caused by speeding, which is not the case in Mary Tavy. The traffic calming chicane installed in the nearby village of Lake was a result of serious accidents recorded there (Borough Cllr. Pearce). Therefore, it falls to the Parish Council to take action.

10) Close:

Cllr. Reid began to draw a close to the meeting by asking members of the public to take part in three informal votes, by a show of hands, on the following proposals:

- The installation of village gateways, at both ends of the village of Mary Tavy, on the A386.
- The purchase of two new Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) that collect data to replace the current signs.
- The creation of a Community Speed Watch team, in conjunction with local Police, using willing, committed and trained volunteers from the parish.

It was not possible to count votes due to the high-turnout for the meeting. Although not an objective measurement, the Clerk subjectively noted that members of the public voted on the proposals in the following order of preference: 1) New VAS signs (most popular); 2) Community Speed Watch; 3) Village Gateways (one against).

Cllr. Butland closed the meeting and informed the public that actual decisions must be made during Parish Council meetings, the next one being held on Tuesday 10th December 2019 at 7pm in the Reading Room. Members of the public and press are welcome to attend.

MEETING CLOSED

Signed..... Date.....

Print Name.....