

## Response from Devon County Highways to the Harberton Parish Clerk on Highways Matters

As always, our role within the Neighbourhood Team is to apply DCC policies to the reports and enquiries we receive. These policies are designed to provide guidance across the entire County and so often feel to some to be a 'blunt instrument' when applied to a specific, emotive sites. We are regularly told that 'it's an accident waiting to happen', 'there have been numerous near misses' or 'vehicles are travelling too fast', however, you will have to accept that these are unsubstantiated claims and therefore not included when we make an official assessment. DCC have to justify and evidence our decisions using verified data.

For requests relating to road safety and traffic speeds we consider if a relevant casualty accident record exists and review any held speed survey data. Our collision data is collected from Devon & Cornwall Police, this intelligence forms the basis of all decisions. A public version of the mapping system can be found at:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/safe-travel/road-safety/collision-data/collision-map/>

We also have to apply other governing legislation on what road markings/signs are legally available to us. Road traffic signs, signals and road markings need to be simple and concise so people can understand them quickly. The Department for Transport produces regulations and guidance to make sure that Highway Authorities use traffic signs and road markings correctly. The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD), prescribe the designs and conditions of use for traffic signs and markings to be lawfully placed on or near roads in England, Scotland and Wales. The Traffic Signs Manuals go into greater detail on the use, size and position of each marking. All of these documents can be browsed on line.

Therefore, applying these documents, below are the points raised recently in the PC meetings:

1. **Traffic Speeds at East Leigh Hamlet:** DCC has a speed policy that gives guidance on speed limits and where they should be imposed. When applied it provides consistency which avoids anomalies that may set a precedent which cannot be managed or maintained throughout the county. In accordance with the policy there are not sufficient properties in East Leigh for it to be considered a community (20 frontages over 600m) and therefore the national speed limit (NSL) is considered correct. This does not mean that 60mph would be considered appropriate but does mean that reports of vehicles travelling up to 50mph are not legally speeding. It must be remembered that the NSL is a limit, not a target and all drivers are expected to drive to their environment. As with any rural route, East Leigh is single lane road, undulating through bends where drivers should expect encounters with farm machinery, pedestrians, horses and other wildlife sharing the road. In addition, having reviewed the collision data for East Leigh I am happy to report there has been zero recorded collisions in the 60 month analysis window (01/01/2015 to 31/12/2019). Therefore, there is no scope to lower the speed of the road to 20mph as hoped.
2. **Traffic 'Slow' sign on blind summit near Dundridge:** The location highlighted is the C204. Warning signs can play an important part in improving road safety. However, they should only be used where there is a specific safety issue or hazard, not to sign readily apparent conditions or routine features of the road. Overuse of warning signs can dilute their effectiveness and tends to bring them into disrepute. I have never considered this location exceptional and feel the brow of this hill is replicated numerous times throughout the Harberton area alone. Warning signs should only be installed where there is an identified hazard or road safety problem, and not to solely to meet a perceived need. Again, DCC use a 60-month window of validated collision data, collected and submitted by the Police, to assess sites. Our collision data shows no recorded incidents at the location given. If the collision described was damage only then it would not be incorporated into the Police statistics and reported to DCC. If justification were found there are signs that could be used.
3. **Road Width/signage on Tristford Road:** There are two issues with this request. The first is that our Traffic Team are reviewing the process to review these additions/alterations and so it is currently a hold. The second is that I feel this needs serious consideration. I do accept that drivers of delivery vehicles may not consider themselves HGV's and therefore not heed the advice given by the existing advisory signs at Tristford Road/Ford Road. However, placing a sign at the proposed location may cause vehicles to use the access to the west of the Inn which

is equally narrow and likely to be even less popular with residents. A quick overview of Harberton makes it clear that there are a number of very narrow roads, narrower than the route the PC are proposing to sign and justifying this decision may prove difficult. In recent history DCC have received more requests for width restrictions at Ford Lane than we have at the Church House Inn pinch point.

4. **Screw Lane Flooding:** The last communication I have on Screw Lane was asking for the details of the lower land owner in order for DCC to issue a letter requesting the drainage is maintained. I am reluctant to remove the features from our inventory on the basis stated. I am still hopeful that with some effort from the landowners the surface water coming onto the lane can be reduced and the speed of the surface leaving the carriageway can be maintained.
5. **Snow Warden Scheme:** I can confirm that your two candidates are registered, so they should receive texts and emails at least once a month during our Winter Service. Due to Covid-19 DCC are not currently providing face-to-face training. It was hoped that it may be provided on line but I am not aware that it has yet been arranged. I would suggest that if they have the pack and the snow plan that if they have any questions then they can raise them.
6. **Water/Ice in Woodland Road:** I did visit to review, I don't believe there is a water leak. Having reviewed the photos since, I suspect the water is coming from the property downpipes and drainage channel that discharge into the carriageway, this is then being tracked by the vehicles. If that's the case I don't see a solution other than it's a site for the snow wardens to treat as required.
7. **New fence limiting vision of a splay at Dorsley Barton, Harberton:** Looking at the photos I agree that the new fences appear to restrict the visibility of vehicles emerging from the property. However, I don't feel it's hampering the visibility of vehicles using the highway so I would advise the PC to raise your concerns with the planning authority. I believe the planning application number is 0638/19/FUL.
8. **Stop sign/Stop line at Tristford Road - Vicarage Ball junction:** I cannot see the notes from the councillor but Chapter 3 of The Traffic Signs Manual covers Regulatory Signs, it states:

*2.1.7 - Schedule 9 General Direction 4 requires that the STOP sign and its associated road markings to diagrams 1002.1 and 1022 (S9-6-1 and 2 respectively, see **Figure 2-3** and **Figure 2-4**) must always be used together; the road markings must not be used on their own."*

Happily, there are no recorded incidents at this junction so DCC wouldn't progress this request further at this time.

I hope this answers the concerns and points raised.