

Email from Chideock Bypass Working Group to Parish Councils, requesting public comments on proposals to deal with the traffic problems experienced by Chideock Village (A35, West of Bridport)

Subject: FW: The Case for a Chideock Bypass

23/01/2018

Dear Sir / Madam

Have you ever been caught in one of the regular traffic jams on the A35 in the vicinity of Chideock arising from traffic incidents or accidents?? Or do you live in one of the villages that become gridlocked while motorists try and get out of the inevitable traffic jams that follow?

We are the Chideock Bypass Working Group (CBG) and we are reaching out to all Parish Councils; District Councils and Town Councils in the area to express our position on a possible bypass for our village and to gather your feedback and your opinion on this matter.

The CBWG is a group of registered electors in the Parish of Chideock. It was formed in November 2016 at the instigation of the constituency MP Sir Oliver Letwin (OL) and with the support (at that time) of the Chideock Parish Council (CPC). Its main purpose then was to initiate a village survey to test village opinion for a bypass. This was organised by the CBWG in March 2017 when a questionnaire was delivered to every household in Chideock. The result from the 223 participants was that 80% were in favour of a bypass within the Parish boundary (approximately on the route of the cancelled 1990's bypass).

There have been several Village surveys and polls over the years attempting to determine the support amongst the village residents for a bypass. They have all been conducted in good faith and have always returned a significant proportion of those that participated IN FAVOUR of a bypass.

We are firmly of the opinion that a bypass is the only practical solution to the problems of safety; air pollution; traffic congestion; noise and vibration arising from the traffic through the village (particularly the ever increasing volume and size of HGVs) and the negative impact on the local economy from the traffic congestion detracting from tourism and making business travel longer and more costly.

The last village poll (held in August 2017) returned 78% of those participating to be in favour of a Chideock bypass, albeit that the wording of the question specified that the bypass should be located outside of our parish. We believe that in the absence of an alternative route question this was simply interpreted as being for a bypass anywhere!! We continue to argue AGAINST a route outside of our parish. We consider that proposal to be wrong for three major reasons:

1. A Chideock only bypass is our problem and is for us to resolve within our own boundary. It is slightly immoral to expect our problem to be passed onto our neighbours.
2. The additional time required for liaison with neighbouring parishes followed by rounds of public inquiries and consultations are likely to delay any bypass for years, possibly even render it totally impossible.
3. Any route outside of our boundary will be considerably longer than a bypass within our parish making the construction costs higher. Therefore returns on investment will be less also making the cost benefit analysis less attractive (or perhaps non-existent)

There is a body of thought that one of the ways of dealing with the problem is by introducing a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) for Chideock. While this can be seen as a well-meaning and environmentally friendly solution we believe that it is both naïve and impractical. This will add monetary cost and time to all those whose vehicles do not comply. We attach a copy of a report prepared by our group raising a number of very serious consequences of an LEZ which we are certain have not been fully considered by many people. We urge you to read this report and make your own minds up on the practicality of an LEZ for Chideock.

We ask you to seriously consider our situation, to investigate our proposals further through our website www.chideockbypass.co.uk and if you are in favour of a Chideock bypass to support our Government petition either via the homepage of our website or directly via <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/202521>

We also ask you to publish a copy of this letter on your Community website and in the next available edition of your Parish Magazine so that as many of your parishioners as possible may see our arguments and our position on a bypass for Chideock.

We thank you for taking the time to consider all this and hope that you may find time to respond to us with your comments, and hopefully your support.

Yours sincerely

George Dunn
For CBWG

Chideock Bypass Working Group

Proposed Low Emission Zone for Chideock

Chideock Bypass Working Group (CBPWG)
Research Paper & Conclusions

Author: Tony Peacock

Date Published: 6 November 2017

WWW.CHIDEOCKBYPASS.CO.UK

Proposed Low Emission Zone for Chideock

Main Report

While a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) may suit other areas of the UK, Chideock has a unique topography and I wonder whether all of those involved really understand the implications. Quite apart from getting the technical side right, various signs will have to be sited in places as far away as Dorchester and Honiton with reminders all the way along the stretches of the A35.

The most important issues are:

- 1) Where does the traffic go? Have the alternatives actually been considered? See the **Alternative Routes** section below.
- 2) What charges and penalties will be set to ensure the LEZ works and reduces pollution to acceptable levels?
- 3) What exemptions will apply to local residents of Chideock, Morcombelake, Ryall, Whitchurch Canonorum and others? Will they be offered compensation for having to change to a much more expensive vehicle to enable them to carry out their business? Will they get a free pass to travel in and out of the LEZ several times a day, and how will that operate? Will a plumber from Bridport called out to repair an emergency leak in Chideock get a free pass or be charged? There will be a long list of exemptions.
- 4) What happens to Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) 4.5 tonnes and over? Unlikely someone is working on electric or hybrid HGVs. What about HGVs requiring access for delivery to the businesses, three pubs, B&B's and Cains Farm - who operate HGVs out of Chideock?
- 5) How will the local farming community be affected? During late summer when hay making is in full swing there are frequent convoys of large tractors and trailers passing through the village.
- 6) Will motorcycles get charged or fined? Chideock is on a popular touring route for motorcyclists, we have many come through the Village and big bikes like Harley Davidsons generate high emissions.
- 7) Can modified vehicles be identified? If vehicle registrations are checked by the DVLA to show the type of pollution for that vehicle, this may not include details of modifications to either improve or worsen emissions. Until modern technology is available that can sample and identify emissions in real time some vehicles will avoid charges and fines.
- 8) What about illegally modified vehicles? In theory, HGVs should no longer contravene the EU directive, since large fleets with continuous use will re-invest in the best possible and cleanest HGVs. There are the cowboys of course, but it still comes down to good and frequent maintenance. There is a black market in second hand Catalytic converters, these are punched with holes, blasted at high pressure and then re-sold.
- 9) What will happen to foreign registered HGVs, vans and cars? The UK does not have reciprocal arrangements with the EU for recovery of fines for motoring offences. The tanker that had 13 failed attempts at climbing Chideock hill had tractor and trailer units registered

Proposed Low Emission Zone for Chideock

in different countries. Government wrote off £26m of uncollected fines from the Dartford crossings when the franchises expired and responsibility transferred to Local Authorities.

- 10) Will vehicles be checked before they enter the LEZ? There is land available at Dorchester, just past McDonald's at the Monkey Jump roundabout, which I believe was used as a park and ride to Weymouth for the 2012 Olympics. Vehicles found not to conform could be diverted via the A37. Drivers could also use the facility to check their vehicle's compliance before continuing on to Chideock.

I am certain that there are many more issues and examples, what has been considered so far?

I believe that the LEZ has to be set up by 2020, so not much time to consult the residents of Chideock and the surrounding areas.

Alternative Routes

Let us look at the options available to vehicles who are unable to travel through Chideock or pay the charge:

- 1) A3066 from Bridport through Beaminster, B3163 through Broadwindsor, B3164, B3165 through Marshalsea and Marshwood before rejoining the A35 at Raymond's Hill.
- 2) A3066 from Bridport through Beaminster, Brunel Tunnel, Mosterton, Misterton and Crewkerne then A30 through Chard to Yarcombe and then A303.

Most other roads in the area are single track farm roads with passing places. Anyone who remembers when the Clockhouse Inn burnt down on Main Street, will recall the gridlock through these roads when traffic came to a halt at Shave cross for five hours.

I cannot see a lot of traffic wanting to travel through these roads, it would just cause havoc to farmers and residents of the farms and small hamlets.

Then consider the traffic through Bridport, Beaminster, Marshalsea, Marshwood, Broadwindsor and Raymond's Hill; and Mosterton, Misterton and Crewkerne. These towns and villages are congested at the best of times and of course the famous Brunel Tunnel has passing only for narrow vehicles. HGVs and wider vehicles have to use the centre of the carriageway. You certainly cannot contemplate HGVs travelling through these, towns, villages and Tunnel, with sharp bends and only suitable for local traffic not the 16,000 to 20,000 i.e., 50% of the traffic travelling through Chideock at peak times.

Proposed Low Emission Zone for Chideock

- 3) A37 from Dorchester to Yeovil then A30, A3088 to A303 and A30 to Honiton. This is the only viable HGV route but the A37 is not a Trunk Road.

Would DCC or South Somerset want an extra 16,000 to 20,000 (at peak times) cars and HGVs on their road network.

This was the preferred route put forward in the 2002 plan by the Highways Agency (predecessor of Highways England).

- 4) A37 from Dorchester to Yeovil then A30 through North and West Coker (20mph and narrow) , East Chinnock, Crewkerne, Chard, Yarcombe and then A303
- 5) A37 from Dorchester then A356 through Frampton, Maiden Newton, South Perrott, Misterton and Crewkerne, B3165 through Clapton, Birdsmoor Gate, Marshalsea, Marshwood to A35.
- 6) A37 from Dorchester then A356 through Frampton, Maiden Newton, B3163 to Beaminster through Broadwindsor, B3164, B3165 through Marshalsea and Marshwood before rejoining the A35 at Raymond's Hill.

Proposed Low Emission Zone for Chideock

Conclusion

Of the six alternative routes identified only options 4, 5 and 6 could take cars but not in the volumes required of a Trunk Road and are not suitable for HGVs. The routes pass through small villages like North and West Coker, East Chinnock, Frampton, Maiden Newton, Beaminster, Raymond's Hill, South Perrot, Misterton, Clapton and Birdsmoor gate. There are 20mph speed limits, width restrictions, sharp bends and steep hills like Chideock. All of these roads would require signage to prevent A35 vehicles using them. Otherwise there will be havoc and outcry in the villages of West Dorset, South Somerset and East Devon.

If a LEZ for Chideock is implemented Bridport will also need one as pollution in East Street is already very high. More vehicles passing through Bridport will cause gridlock and severe pollution. Traffic in East Street and West Street comes to a standstill at certain times every day except Sunday. Congestion increases on Wednesday and Saturday market days every week, with car parks full.

For a LEZ to be effective the charge not only the extra mileage should be taken into account but the time taken. So what is the charge to deter this traffic?

For example using option 3 as the only viable Trunk Route. The distance to Honiton using the fastest route is an 25.2 miles longer, which for a medium size car at 45p per mile (as per HMRC guidelines) amounts to £11.34 extra but the journey time is approximately an extra 56 minutes. So the charge has to be set to really discourage drivers. In the case of vehicles with high fuel consumption and HGVs the cost per mile could be tripled increasing the cost to around £34 the journey time would increase to 69 minutes. So a charge of £50 to £100 would seem appropriate. As another example travelling to Lyme Regis which is just 6.1 miles from Chideock, the alternative route from Dorchester via Yeovil then A303 to Honiton and then back on the A35 is approximately 59.5 miles. So an additional 53.4 miles at 45p per mile costs an extra £24.03, but the journey time is a massive 1 hour 42 minutes longer. For vehicles with high fuel consumption and HGVs the cost rises to £72 mileage plus some 2 hours longer. Therefore, a minimum charge of £100 for cars seems appropriate, rising to £200 for HGVs and gas guzzlers!

Of course, pollution is not the only problem facing Chideock. On its own a LEZ will not solve the problems of PM2.5 particulates, noise pollution, vibration, safety, quality of life and the protection of a unique medieval village. Finally there is the constant threat of traffic accidents particularly the catastrophic potential of out of control HGVs destroying the centre of the village, especially petrol and propane tankers. This has happened before on a number of occasions with damage to buildings but fortunately no fatalities.

At the Chideock Parish Council (CPC) meeting on 25 September 2017 following the late publishing of the minutes of the meeting with Highways England in May, CPC admitted that neither they nor anyone else involved had any idea where the traffic would go after implementing a LEZ!

The only answer is a bypass.