

Raglan Community Council
Notes of the Task & Finish Meeting held on Thursday
8 July 2021, at 10:00 am, to consider concerns over the Road Safety on
Chepstow Road Trewogan.

Present

Cllr Penny Jones
Cllr Brain Willott

In attendance:

Adrian Edwards, Clerk to the Raglan Community Council,
Mr Paul Keeble, Monmouthshire County Council Highways
Mr Graham Kinsella, Monmouthshire County Council Highways
9 residents from Treworgan Community

1 Agenda Item 1: Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr's Moorby, Merrett and Exton

2 Agenda Item 2: Declarations of interest.

No Declarations made

3 Agenda Item 3: Road safety matters at Chepstow Road, Trewogan

The clerk invited everyone to introduce themselves in the absence of the Chairman of the Community Council.

The Clerk invited Mr Keeble to introduce himself. Mr Keeble gave those present a brief description of his duties with the Highway Authority.

He explained that the current area has been under review with his colleagues. He explained that the Highways Authority works with the guidance that is available. He said that the area has an advisory speed limit, and the location is included in the national speed limit. The advisory signs are due to the number of properties in the location along Chepstow Road, at Trewogan.

He explained that the national speed limits are set out by Welsh Government. He explained that he believes that the advisory signs have given some benefit to residents and motorists.

It was explained that his colleagues have undertaken some investigation surveys in the area and found some improvements were needed. He asked his colleague to explain the findings of the surveys.

The clerk asked if everyone could introduce themselves. Mr Keeble explained that he was the group engineer for MCC, and looks after Highways and transport, and Graham Kinsella, explained again the highway has two advisory signs and verge marker posts indicting to motorists the dangers of the bend in this location.

He explained that one of his colleagues inspected the area and recommended that some further chevron posts and verge marker posts are introduced on the bend to extend the presence and the visibility of the oncoming bend.

He explained that the bend does not meet the criteria to reduce the speed limit on a national speed limit road. He explained that he appreciates the concerns of residents.

He reiterated that MCC will not be able to reduce the travelling speed limits in this location, but the Highway Authority would look at the layout of the highway.

It was explained that the highway is used by people that are local to the area and knows what the road conditions are. An excuse that was used was familiarity with the route allowing road users to drive faster at inappropriate speeds in this location.

It was explained that there are some members of the public who disregard any message or signage that warns road users of the dangers ahead. He explained that this is something that is encountered all over the county roads.

One resident explained that Highways officers have visited the location and inspected the signs and undertook some remedial works but that is not helping the speeding traffic matter.

A question was asked about the criteria the Highway Authority uses but no-one knows what the criteria is, and the resident explained that familiarity breeds contempt.

It was explained that one vehicle was travelling that fast the driver lost control and the vehicle snapped a wooden lamp post in half. It was explained that when people are advised about the speed and the signs they are told it's an advisory sign and to F...off, so what are all local residents to do.

It was explained if a speed limit was introduced it could be enforced and fines can be produced. That would help to stop the speeding. It was explained that surveys have been carried out with a van or an officer in a hi-vis jacket standing on the side of the road. Vehicles automatically slow down.

A local person who farms in the area expressed concern over the accessibility in and out of his property and farmyards. The highways officers were invited to stand and watch the speed and traffic movement from any time after 16.00 hrs onwards. It was explained that it's only going to be time before someone will have serious accident or there will be a fatality, due to some of the heavy vehicles using the farmyard.

It was explained that road work signs have been installed to see if that persuades drivers to slow down, but the abuse some people give is unwarranted.

One resident explained that he has two fundamental points to make. If any changes or improvements are made, traffic will be directed into his property. Currently he has experienced two accidents where one vehicle overturned, and no end of near misses with vehicles turning right from the Raglan direction of movement.

It was explained that a large degree of accidents are speed related. The residents who live in this location need to stop in the highway to turn right. It was explained that a number of times some vehicles have been travelling so fast and an accident has only been avoided by chance. It also illustrates some vehicles travelling towards Raglan are travelling so fast it only going to be time before someone is going to receive or cause serious injury or a fatality. What MCC officers need release is it could be one of the residents who lives in Treworgan.

One resident expressed concern that officers from MCC are not taking the concerns seriously and they aren't listening and taking on board the concerns.

One of the officers stated the relative low number of properties does not meet the requirements and the criteria. It was explained that Officers recognise the issues residents have, and the Highway Authority will look at other methods to address the concerns.

One resident said you are not going to change driving and the speeds in the area, so how will the Highway Authority address the concerns as the Highway Authority cannot rely on just signage.

One resident explained that she has written to the ward members on a number of occasions about the ongoing concerns. It has also been noted from the Monmouthshire Beacon newspaper on the June 9th that a traffic management scheme has been put in place in Mitchel Troy which is known locally as the rat run. The speed limit has been reduced from 60 MPH to 30 MPH along with better signage, and it was explained that one of the officers in attendance was involved with the local MP.

It was explained that there is very little difference between both cases, and it was stated that the case in Treworgan may be more vital due to traffic speeds.

It was explained with the ongoing speed someone is going to get seriously injured or lose their life. It was asked when was the last time the road was monitored and the results published. It was explained that someone from the farm was seriously injured in 2012.

It was explained that Chepstow Road is a rat run for people travelling to the seven bridge and further afield. One resident asked if the location doesn't meet the criteria can MCC Highways share the criteria, and if the traffic speed increases and there are accidents would the residents need to ask again.

The officer explained that the road doesn't meet the criteria for reducing the speed. It was explained that the criteria will be sent out so residents can see what the Highway Authority can do relating to speed. He explained that the sign states a max 30 MPH therefore the Highway Authority are informing road users of the speed around the corner.

Cllr Penny Jones asked what the sign means when it advisory; can the speed be enforced or is it just advisory and cannot be enforced. The Councillor asked can the speed limit be changed to enable it to be enforceable.

A resident asked about the difference between the road from the A40/A449 in Raglan (Monmouth Road) where the road signage reduces the speed to 20 MPH. Can the officers explain what the difference is. What is the difference between Monmouth Road and Chepstow Road when Monmouth Road is relatively straight and the road in Treworgan is on a bend without visibility?

It was explained that the Highway Authority take road safety matters very seriously, and the roads are monitored by experienced road engineers and understand the gridlines and take everything into consideration. It was explained there is no difference between an advisory and mandatory sign if motorists ignore them and believe they don't need to comply. The guidance explains that roads like Chepstow Road come under the national speed limits with advisory signage.

It was explained if a 20 MPH limit was introduced on all roads in the County, motorists would ignore all the signage. The way forward would be to provide the appropriate speed limits with additional support.

If the current signage has not worked the Highway Authority may need to consider adding additional signage and road markings, additional chevrons along the side of the road along with monitoring, and if that doesn't help to reduce the speed the issues will need to be revisited.

It was confirmed that a 20 MPH is not appropriate for this location.

One resident believes rumble strips would be an alternative when approaching the bend. One person asked what the criteria is for laying rumble strips.

Cllr Willott was invited to make an observation and explained that residents are making the case very clear, and consideration could be given to rumble strips. If rumble strips are laid would that be an issue for environmental health and a noise issue.

One of the officers asked to allow him to share the screen. This could not be done. The officer explained that the Highway Officer will monitor the situation and present some suggestions. The officer explained the Highways Authority don't see an issue with additional road markings.

It was commented on, the speed is reduced over the flyover to 50 MPH and then it increases again once you are over the flyover. There are no warning signs for drivers that they are approaching a lower advisory speed limit.

Cllr Penny Jones referred to a bend where the Highways Authority changed the camber of the highway which reduced the number of accidents and would that be a consideration.

Concern was expressed again that the speed limit is not enforceable. Can a timeline be agreed so the concerns can be addressed as quickly as possible? Can this be monitored on a regular basis and reported to the community council.

One resident asked how driver compliance can be monitored and enforced.

One resident stressed that the matter is only going to get worse due to more houses being developed in Raglan and surrounding areas.

One resident felt it was disappointing that the speed limit cannot be addressed but would agree that the speed limit should be more than advisory and mandatory. It going to be a matter of time before a serious accident occurs.

One resident explained that the residents are trying to be proactive, but the Highways Authority will only consider reactive measures, to take something seriously.

The Clerk asked the officer would the Highway Authority be amenable to having meaningful dialogue with the Community Council. It is immaterial if it is two dwellings or two hundred dwellings. Lives are worth preserving. The clerk also asked would the Highway Authority consider installing some type of chicane as a physical barrier like on other roads.

The Highway Authority will consider most of the points, but the guidelines criteria will still need to be followed. There was some concern over financial restraints throughout the County.

One resident asked if the Highways Authority could provide details of the speed limits and other information. MCC will come up a with scheme and submit it to the Community Council.

4 Agenda Item 4: Update by Officers from Monmouthshire County Council Highways

No further points to be made, all the relevant points were made above.

There was no further information to consider, and the meeting closed 10:53 hrs

Signed Chair

Dated: 28 July 2021....

Please note: these notes are a summary of the above meeting, and a record of any decisions moved.