

GERMOE PARISH COUNCIL

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May 3, 2019

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Dear Mr James,

re the proposed removal of the existing 40mph Speed Restriction on the Class C road between Great Work Triangle and Ashton 30mph Signs.

With regard to the proposed removal of the existing 40mph Speed Restriction on the Class C road between Great Work Triangle and Ashton 30mph Signs (CC reference EDG1462_SN12) and further to e-mail correspondence from Mike Peters dated 27th February 2019 which stated "I would not propose putting up signs warning of walkers, cyclists and horse riders as these should be expected as being a possibility on the majority of Cornwall's rural roads to a greater or lesser degree."

It may be accepted that, if the 40mph restriction is removed, the number of vehicles travelling at reckless speeds along the road would be reduced and consequently there would be a reduction to the risk of accidents. **However, this does not address the more general risk of accidents arising from the conflict between the increasing numbers of vehicles that use this road and the increasing numbers of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders who also use this road.**

Germoe Parish Councillors have received considerable feedback from users of the road who have severe concerns about the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. In order to assist Cormac Consultancy Engineering Design Team with their approach to the removal of the 40mph speed limit we have set out below issues that we consider should be taken into account to ensure the safety of all road users is maintained, and if possible improved.

We recognise work is already under way to monitor the use of this road in its existing condition as well as after the removal of the 40mph speed limit. And we recognise that Cornwall Council may consider further traffic safety measures for the road. We are also aware of the extreme financial constraints that restrict the work Cornwall Council is able to undertake. It is in the light of these matters that we once again respectfully request that you consider, as a temporary measure and as an absolute minimum, the use of the existing repeater sign posts to display suitable warning signs to help inform through traffic drivers of unexpected hazards in the road.

Tourism Growth along this Road

Over recent years the existing tourist accommodation facilities along the route have increased considerably. Boscrege Caravan and Camp Site, Chycarne Farm Holiday Cottages and Tremorvu Camping and Caravan Site have all improved their accommodation facilities and consequently attract greater numbers of tourists for longer periods of time. Additionally Balwest Cottage, Lower Balwest Farm, The Little Wild Campsite & Activity Field Balwest plus various Air BnB offerings have all added to the numbers of holiday makers and have extended their period of occupancy.

Pedestrians

Following many initiatives, led by Government and Local Government, climate aware tourists and residents now enthusiastically seek to use "environmentally friendly" and "healthy" options for local travel. An increasing consequence of this change to the use of more sustainable modes of travel is the large increase in pedestrians, particularly in the summer months, walking from their homes or holiday accommodation along this road to catch public transport at the Ashton Bus Stop or to complete their journeys to the beach or other destination on foot. Additionally many more holiday makers and residents own dogs and seek to exercise themselves and their dogs by walking routinely along this road. It is also regrettable that parents who wish to walk or cycle to the local schools with their children feel unable to do so because of the dangerous situations they have experienced.

Cyclists

Cycling has increased dramatically in popularity over recent years. Tourists and residents routinely cycle along this road to access local amenities at Breage, Ashton, Porthleven and Helston. Recreational and sports cyclists searching for interesting routes away from busy main roads, connecting the towns with coast, often elect to travel along the Godolphin to Ashton road. This road has become particularly attractive to cycling groups such as "Penzance Wheelers" because of the beautiful views of Mount Bay.

Horse Riders

Horse riding remains a popular pursuit within the Parish and a significant number of horses are stabled in the local area. At the moment there are only a limited number of bridleways accessible from the Ashton to Greatwork Triangle route, consequently horse riders regularly travel along the road. It is anticipated that a number of bridleway routes will soon be added to the local network that will enable travel by horse over Tregonning Hill rather than along the road. However this will introduce three new entrance points to the bridleway network along the Ashton to Greatwork Triangle road, and these of course could bring additional risks to road users, together with an increased number of horse riders.

Vehicular Traffic

During recent years vehicular traffic has also altered considerably along this road. In addition to the daily school runs and commuter traffic, local farms now use considerably larger machinery, and "Contract Farming" methods have introduced the presence of harvesting convoys that travel at high speeds with exceptionally wide and heavy loads.

Since the expansion of internet shopping, our rural community has become served by a comprehensive range of home delivery services. These include DPD, Yodel, Royal Mail, Tesco, Sainsbury, Building Supplies Deliveries, Pet Care etc plus NHS Home Care services that have proliferated since the drive to reduce "in hospital care" to a minimum began. A feature of these new services is their need to travel as quickly as possible to meet the challenging demands of tight schedules.

The A30 between Hayle, St Erth and Newtown Roundabout near Penzance frequently become congested during holiday periods. Additionally the A394 journey times between Penzance and Helston have become slower as drivers observe the 30mph speed limits. Drivers of commercial delivery vehicles travelling between these towns, when consulting their satellite navigation systems, follow the quickest alternative routes available and consequently often use this road as a cut through.

Significant Characteristics of the Ashton to Greatwork Triangle Road

Within the Cornwall Council Road Hierarchy this is a class 3b secondary distributor road, and is therefore intended to carrying an amount of through traffic as well as local traffic. The occurrence of through traffic is most prevalent during periods of congestion on major roads in the area.

The route is approximately 3km in length and varies in width from 2.6m to 6.0m. There are a variety of inherent hazards to be encountered along the route including concealed entrances, severe bends, double bends, sudden narrowing, uneven surfaces and there are few verges to provide a means of escape in the event of an emergency. There are no footways, consequently pedestrians have no option but to walk on the road. On the most narrow sections there is insufficient space for a lorry or tractor to pass a pedestrian let alone a bicycle or horse.

The section of route between Mount Whistle and Green Bank Farm includes several lengths where the road width is less than 3.5 m and is constrained by vertical hedges on both sides. These narrow sections do not allow vehicles to pass in opposite directions. These narrow sections are easily identified by the constant presence of tyre skid marks to provide witness to near (or actual) collisions of vehicles travelling at inappropriate speeds.

When approaching this route from the east, vehicles currently leave the 30mph restricted urban Higher Road Ashton and enter the 40 mph restricted rural road. When approaching this route from the west vehicles currently leave a national speed limit road from Godolphin Cross and enter the 40mph restricted rural road.

A feature of traffic flow along this route is the erratic presence of "through traffic" and agricultural traffic. Between daily commuter traffic flows the road can be very little used and appear to be a quiet country lane. This generally quiet nature of the road can easily lull visitors into the impression that there is little traffic about and little danger. It is at these times that complacent pedestrians or cyclists can suddenly find themselves confronting fast approaching through traffic.

Immediate Negative Impact of removing the 40mph with no additional Signage

For regular users of the road it is unlikely to result in significant negative impact, however for through traffic not familiar with the road it is likely that drivers will accelerate into the wider lengths of road only to find unexpected hazards with limited room to manoeuvre. In particular drivers will have no reason to anticipate sudden face to face encounters with pedestrians, cyclists or horse riders when turning an unsighted corner and entering a narrow section of road where there is no escape route.

It might sound reasonable to assert that sensible drivers will observe the general nature of the road and adjust their manner of driving to take into account the prevailing conditions. However, this route provides the final stage in a long journey for tourists, often arriving at the end of a long journey from the Midlands or London, and having travelled nearly all the way on Motorways and dual carriageways. The experience of local residents is that many tourists arrive in a state of exhaustion and have difficulty in reacting "sensibly" to the severe constraints they suddenly encounter in our narrow country lane.

Many residents have expressed their concern that the simple removal of the 40mph signs will leave unfamiliar drivers with little clue of the hazards that are very likely to be encountered as they reach their final destination further along the same road.

Suggested Road Safety Measures

Germoe Parish Council supports Cornwall Council in its objectives "to reduce reliance on fossil fuels" and to "encourage healthy active life styles" consequently we encourage residents and tourists to walk and cycle as much as possible and to walk to Ashton to catch the public bus service to reach local towns.

In order enable our residents and tourists to walk, cycle and ride safely along this route we believe it is essential to provide additional traffic safety measure, both to warn drivers and to give confidence to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders to enjoy their activity in this beautiful rural environment.

We therefore request that suitable signage is provided to increase drivers' awareness of the presence of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, particularly on approaches to unsighted narrow sections of road and in advance of severe bends.

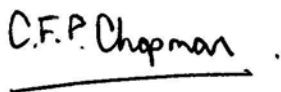
We recognise that too many signs could adversely effect the appearance of this route, and consequently suggest that the prudent use of the following signs "**road narrows**", "**pedestrians in the road ahead**", "**accompanied horses or ponies**" and "**double bend**" would help inform drivers of the presence of hazards in the road ahead. Alternatively the whole route, which includes very narrow sections, could be covered by "**single lane traffic with passing places**" approach warning signs.

It is the strongly held view of Germoe Parish Council that additional road safety measures are necessary on this road whether or not the 40mph restriction is removed.

We thank you for the consideration you have given to road safety issues on this road and we will be pleased to provide you with any further assistance in developing a safer road network which encourages residents and tourists to use environmentally friendly modes of travel at every opportunity.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,



C.F.P.Chapman
(Clerk to the Council)

cc CClr John Keeling