

Chideock Bypass Working Group Press Release 0911207

This press release is to announce the publication of a report on the proposed Low Emission Zone for Chideock on the A35

Chideock Parish Council has an agreed policy to seek to implement a Low Emission Zone along the A35 through Chideock and not to support the construction of a bypass. This is in spite of a survey and official parish poll showing almost 80% support for a bypass.

While a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) may suit other areas of the UK such as big cities, Chideock has a unique topography and is one of the major pinch points along the A35, one of the 18 key strategic routes in England.

Ten key issues have been identified that have to be resolved before a LEZ could be considered as a viable proposition for Chideock, namely:

- Where does the traffic go?
- What charges and penalties will be set?
- What exemptions will apply to local residents?
- What happens to Heavy Goods Vehicles?
- How will the local farming community be affected?
- Will motorcycles get charged or fined?
- Can modified vehicles be identified?
- What about illegally modified vehicles?
- What will happen to foreign registered vehicles? and
- Will vehicles be checked before they enter the LEZ?

Six alternative routes have been identified but only one is considered remotely viable and this would divert traffic round the LEZ via the A37 from Dorchester to Yeovil. The route would then follow the A30, A3088, A303 and A30 to Honiton. This was the preferred route put forward in the 2002 plan by the Highways Agency (predecessor of Highways England) but the A37 is not currently designated as a trunk road. The route would add approximately 25 miles to the journey and take around an hour longer, thereby adding to transport costs and deterring visitors.

Pollution is not the only problem facing Chideock. Introducing a LEZ will not solve the problems of some of the most dangerous airborne pollutants generated by traffic. Neither will it solve the problems of noise pollution, vibration, safety, quality of life and the protection of a unique medieval village. Chideock residents live under the constant threat of traffic accidents, in particular the catastrophic potential of out of control HGVs destroying the centre of the village. See www.chideockbypass.co.uk for pictures and videos of recent incidents.

What is quite clear is that none of our local elected representatives or Highways England have any idea where the traffic would go after implementing a LEZ!

The only answer is a bypass.

If you agree please sign the Government Petition

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/202521>

Website: www.chideockbypass.co.uk

Email: chideockbypass@outlook.com

Or find us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube

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What the Group Does

The Chideock Bypass Working Group (CBWG) was formed towards the end of 2016 at the suggestion of Chideock Parish Council (CPC) after the public meeting of the village in May 2016 with our MP the Rt. Hon. Oliver Letwin (OL). The initial aim agreed with OL was to determine the level of support within the village for a bypass. Without any financial support from CPC, CBWG carried out a survey of residents and instigated a Parish Poll at the request of OL to identify public support for a bypass. With the results of both polls showing almost 80% support for a bypass OL has pledged to work with CPC and other Parish Councils to find a solution. CBWG continues to lobby for support with the key players Highways England (HE) and the Department for Transport (DfT). Recently we have developed our own website www.chideockbypass.co.uk and established a presence on social media sites Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. We have also started a UK Government petition calling for a debate in Parliament.

What the Group hopes to achieve

CBWG aims to influence the spending plans for 2020-2025 in respect of the A35 Trunk Road which is one of the 18 key strategic routes in England. Our hope is that funding will be found in HE's forthcoming Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) to build a much needed bypass for Chideock and thereby alleviate the air pollution, road safety, noise, congestion and community severance issues. Caused largely by the massive 58% increase in traffic between 1987-2016 since plans for the previously agreed bypass were revoked. HE predicts a further 55% growth in traffic by 2050 which for anyone who regularly travels or lives on the A35 through Chideock defies belief!

CBWG also lobbies the Parish Council which continues with its agreed policy, that is to focus on safety improvements through the village that are considered to be achievable in the short to medium term. This translates as seeking to implement a Low Emission Zone along the A35 and not to support the construction of a bypass. The CPC's approach to resolving A35 issues has not delivered much in the way of positive outcomes, traffic levels and pollution are both increasing.

CBWG would urge everyone who agrees that Chideock needs a bypass to look at our website, join our mailing list, like our pages and posts on Facebook and Twitter and sign the petition.

Chideock Bypass Working Group - November 2017

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