

Chideock Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Chideock Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall, Chideock on Monday 24 July 2017 at 7:00pm

The Meeting commenced at 7:00pm

In attendance:

7 Chideock By-pass Working Group members: Derek Maxwell; Tony Peacock; Ian Hiscock; Kevin Heard; Mick Kelson; Anna Dunn; George Dunn.

88 members of the public who were asked to declare on arrival whether or not they were on the electoral register for Chideock Parish. Those members of the public not on the electoral register for Chideock Parish were directed to seats reserved for those not eligible to vote at the meeting.

WDDC Cllr Simon Christopher (arrived during the meeting at 7:40pm and left the meeting at 8:15pm).

1.00	Richard Benjamin gave the fire escape and safety instructions to the meeting.
2.00	Introduction
2.01	Derek Maxwell, chairman of the Chideock By-pass Working Group, introduced the meeting by stating that this Parish Meeting had been convened by 6 residents of Chideock Parish under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972.
2.01	Derek Maxwell explained that the purpose of the meeting was to endorse the suggestion by the Rt. Hon. Sir Oliver Letwin MP for a parish poll run by District Council to determine whether or not there is a consensus in the village for a relief road to the north of the existing A35 trunk road.
2.02	Derek Maxwell reported that the earlier survey conducted by the Chideock By-pass Working Group, with the support of the Parish Council, did not fulfil Sir Oliver Letwin's requirement for a clear consensus in favour of a by-pass that was established by a proper parish poll.
3.00	Minutes
3.01	As the secretary to the Parish Council was not available for this meeting it was necessary to appoint a person to take the minutes.
3.02	George Dunn was proposed to take the minutes by Anna Dunn. This was seconded by Richard Benjamin. There were no other nominations. George Dunn was appointed to take the minutes.
4.00	Appointment of Chairman
4.01	Derek Maxwell explained that in the absence of the Chideock Parish Council Chairman or vice- chairman a chairman had to be elected for this meeting.
4.02	Derek Maxwell was proposed by Tony Peacock and seconded by Mick Kelson
4.03	Alan Colville was proposed by Deirdre Coates and seconded by Frances Colville
4.04	A vote was taken which showed 39 in favour of Derek Maxwell and 37 in favour of Alan Colville. The meeting was happy for Derek Maxwell to be appointed Chairman.
5.00	Electoral Register

5.01	Derek Maxwell explained that the electoral register may be required to check the validity of anyone taking part in subsequent votes.
5.02	The electoral register had been given to Anna Dunn sealed in a tamper proof envelope by the clerk of the Parish Council. Anna Dunn handed this envelope to Derek Maxwell who verified that the register was still sealed.
6.00	Nomination of person to validate attendees against the Electoral Register
6.01	Nomination for Kevin Heard was proposed by Anna Dunn.
6.02	Nomination for Julia Greenshields was proposed by Frances Colville.
6.03	A vote was taken which showed 25 in favour of Kevin Heard and a number greater than 25 in favour of Julia Greenshields. The meeting was happy for Julia Greenshields to be appointed the nominated person to validate voters against the electoral register.
7.00	Timeline
7.01	Derek Maxwell gave a summary of the events leading up to the call for a Parish poll starting with the suggestion by the Rt. Hon. Sir Oliver Letwin MP to determine whether or not there is a consensus in the village for a relief road to the north of the existing A35 trunk road.
7.02	In response to a question from a member of the public about the Parish Council reviewing the requirement for a poll, Derek Maxwell accepted that Chideock Parish Council were continuing to review the requirement for a poll but felt that they were unlikely to conclude their discussions in time to put the case to Highways England for inclusion in their road budgets for 2020-2025
8.00	Proposed Question(s)
8.01	Extensive discussion took place over the proposed questions that should be included in any Parish Poll
8.02	A question was raised over the geological nature of the proposed route. Derek Maxwell explained that the aim of the poll was to get a relief road into the Highways England (HE) strategy for the area, stating that the meeting is not voting on a specific route for the relief road but simply on whether a District Poll should be convened to determine whether there is a consensus in the village for a relief road of any description. Therefore the vote will be on a question to determine whether or not a relief road is required.
8.03	A member of the public suggested that the purpose of the poll was simply to put the decision on determining the exact route to a “higher authority”.
8.04	A member of the public suggested that the question should simply ask whether or not a relief road should be considered.
8.05	A member of the public asked about the air pollution data. Tony Peacock explained the high levels of pollution demonstrated by the air monitors, explaining that having a relief road with lower gradients and with less slow moving traffic could be expected to improve the air pollution.
8.06	A member of the public questioned the validity of air pollution monitoring.
8.07	A member of the public suggested that the question should not divide village life whilst accepting that the road is currently bad for everyone.
8.08	A member of the public suggested that the South West Expressway will help to alleviate current problems.
8.09	A member of the public suggested that a strategic route should be considered via the A303. Derek Maxwell explained that HE are already considering measures for the A35 in Chideock but it was unlikely that the A35 would be de-trunked.

8.10	A member of the public reminded the meeting that 5 years ago attempts were made to divert all HGV traffic over 7 Tonnes onto the A303. However nothing has happened since to improve the situation.
8.11	A member of the public felt that the proposed question was too restrictive in choosing a route around the village. Derek Maxwell repeated that it would be HE that had the responsibility for choosing the exact route.
8.12	A member of the public asked for an expert geological opinion of the possible route of the relief road. A member of the public stated that he was an expert geological witness and gave his opinion on an assumed route to the north of the A35 concluding that there could be expensive engineering requirements and increased risk of water run-off with potential flooding in the village. Derek Maxwell emphasised that HE would be responsible for deciding on the actual route taking all these geological factors into consideration.
8.13	A member of the public suggested a satisfactory solution would be just removing heavy traffic from the A35.
8.14	A member of the public asked why any further consultation was necessary since the A35 through Chideock is already defined in the HE road strategy document (HE South West Peninsular Route Strategy March 2017). Derek Maxwell replied that this document only highlights the problems, many being associated with traffic congestion (in regards to Chideock this specifically includes road safety and air pollution), but does not currently outline solutions to these problems.
8.15	A member of the public repeated that everyone just wants the heavy goods vehicle (HGV) traffic to be diverted out of the village. Tony Peacock replied that removal of HGV traffic is not solely the problem and that since official figures show that in 2016 the 24 hour annual average daily flow through the village was over 16,000 vehicles per day this problem could not be solved but only improved.
8.16	A member of the public (declaring themselves to be from a neighbouring parish) suggested that valuable support could be forthcoming from surrounding parishes by a mutually acceptable development of the new trunk road strategy especially the potential for de-trunking this section of the A35.
8.17	A member of the public returned to the air pollution problem. Tony Peacock stated that the official data from the air quality monitoring points in the village showed that there has been no improvement since 2010 and therefore current air quality plans had actually achieved nothing.
8.18	A member of the public raised doubts over the Government's ability to fund anything at present and therefore lower cost solutions should be the ones to be considered since there would be more chance of these happening. Derek Maxwell explained that HE will be allocated funds for their road strategy plans and that all the working group is attempting to achieve is to get our proposal into this strategy plan for the 2020-2025 budget.
8.19	Derek Maxwell referred to the questions over simply de-trunking the A35 as being a satisfactory solution. He explained that de-trunking the A35 could have potentially serious consequences on the state of the A35 since it could not guarantee that the HGV traffic would significantly decrease but it would lose Government financial support and would then solely rely on the much smaller Local Authority budget for maintenance; repairs and improvements.

8.20	<p>Cllr Christopher addressed the meeting referring again to the serious and immediate health problems being faced by the village. He advised that any forthcoming proposed questions should attempt to appeal to Sir Oliver Letwin who would obviously prefer proposals avoiding excessive costs.</p> <p>Cllr Christopher stated that in his opinion that HGVs would continue to use this section of the A35 even if it had been de-trunked and stressed that the meeting should consider the improvements to road safety and air pollution which would be achieved by a by-pass.</p> <p>Cllr Christopher cited the improvements in village life in nearby Charmouth since the 1970s when their bypass was constructed.</p> <p>A member of the public pointed out that the Charmouth by-pass had been constructed completely outside of that village.</p>
8.21	<p>A member of the public reminded the meeting of the importance of tourism to the local economy and the impact on this of any forthcoming by-pass proposals.</p>
8.22	<p>A member of the public suggested that HE are awaiting any proposals to quieten the traffic on this section of the A35 by de-trunking the road and was of the opinion that HE would not even consider a by-pass for Chideock.</p>
8.23	<p>There was some general discontent expressed by some of the members of the public that the Working Group had been biased to an extent in their dealings. Derek Maxwell reminded the meeting of the brief that had been given to the Chideock Parish Council by Sir Oliver Letwin (to survey village opinion on a relief road and/or other measures) which the Chideock Parish Council had chosen not to implement themselves but rather to pass onto any group within the parish willing to undertake such a task.</p> <p>Kevin Heard added that the Working Group had considered many aspects for the road improvements.</p> <p>A member of the public thanked the Working Group for the efforts it had made.</p> <p>Another member of the public added that his experiences with HE had only been of indifference from them towards village proposals.</p>
8.24	<p>During the extensive discussions five questions were proposed by members of the public to go forward to District Council for them to organise a poll. These questions were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First question (Q1) Proposed by Mick Kelson: “Do you support the construction of a single carriageway relief road for Chideock with a tunnel under North road routed to the north of the existing A35 trunk road?” • Second question (Q2) Proposed by Alan Colville: “Do you support the construction of a new A35 trunk road Chideock by-pass which does not pass through any part of the parish of Chideock?” • Third question (Q3) Proposed by Tony Peacock: “Do you support the construction of a single carriageway relief road for Chideock off the existing A35 trunk road?” • Fourth question (Q4) Proposed by :Tony Fuller “Do you support an alternative method of diverting the traffic apart from a road?”

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fifth question (Q5) Proposed by Deirdre Coates: “Do you support that the A35 from Dorchester to Honiton be de-trunked and therefore designated a scenic route?”
8.25	<p>A member of the public proposed that two questions go forward one on de-trunking and one on a relief road.</p> <p>Derek Maxwell clarified the purpose of this meeting was to decide on a question or questions to go forward to a poll of the village managed by District Council under Electoral reform rules.</p> <p>A member of the public read a section from the guidelines for parish polls stating that any question put forward must be a simple “Yes / No” question.</p>
8.26	<p>Derek Maxwell brought the meeting to order by stating that a vote would now be taken on the five proposed questions with the object of selecting two questions to go forward to District Council for a poll.</p> <p>The vote would be by a show of hands which would be independently counted by Mick Kelson and Alan Colville.</p> <p>Derek Maxwell reminded the meeting that only residents on the parish electoral register could now vote.</p>
8.27	<p>The questions were read aloud by George Dunn and voting was counted as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question 1 – In favour 13 Question 2 – In favour 44 Question 3 – In favour 4 Question 4 – In favour 2 Question 5 – In favour 21 <p>Derek Maxwell then proposed that the following two questions be put forward to District Council for a Poll and these will be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Q2): “Do you support the construction of a new A35 trunk road Chideock by-pass which does not pass through any part of the parish of Chideock?” Proposed by Alan Colville – residing at Applecombe, Main Street, Chideock DT6 6JD <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Q5): “Do you support that the A35 from Dorchester to Honiton be de-trunked and therefore designated a scenic route?” Proposed by Deirdre Coates – residing at Chideock Manor DT6 6LF <p>Derek Maxwell asked the meeting for a show of hands on whether the meeting had been conducted properly and in line with Local Authority guidance. An overwhelming majority agreed that this was the case.</p>
9.00	Parish Poll
9.01	<p>Derek Maxwell (Chairman of the Meeting) proposed a vote putting these two questions forward to District Council for a Parish Poll.</p> <p>This was carried by a majority show of hands exceeding the required number of 10 eligible residents of the Parish.</p>
10.00	What Happens Next

10,01	<p>Derek Maxwell stated that he will now put these two questions forward to District Council requesting that they organise the Parish Poll. To facilitate this Derek Maxwell will provide the Returning Officer for Weymouth and Portland BC with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Questions • Names and addresses of the proposers • Minutes of the meeting • Date of this Parish Meeting
11.00	Minutes of the Meeting
11.01	The sealed copy of the Electoral Register was left unopened and will be returned to Roger Carey (Parish Council chairman) by Derek Maxwell later that evening of the 24th July..
11.02	It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting will be posted onto the Chideock and Seatown website once having been signed by Chairman Derek Maxwell as a true record of the meeting

The Meeting concluded at 9:05pm