



Long Wittenham Parish Council

Ms Donna Harrison
Saxons Heath
Long Wittenham
Oxfordshire

25th September 2021

Dear Donna,

I am writing to you about your proposals for more traffic calming measures on the Didcot Road. I have discussed the issues with my colleagues on the Parish Council (PC) so that we can help with your requests, if possible.

Although the Parish Council has not seen the petitions that have been circulated around Saxons Heath/Westfield Road I understand that you have two concerns:

- 1) The speed of traffic along the Didcot Road
- 2) Tailbacks from the first chicane in the village at busy times, making it difficult to exit Saxons Heath onto the Didcot Road

The first point to make is that the regulations relating to road calming measures are very complicated and technical. Ultimately, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is responsible for our roads and they make the final decision about any changes to the road system. The PC cannot implement any changes, only make representation to OCC. This does not mean that the PC do not take these issues seriously. For example, we have been very active over the last year in asking OCC to implement a 20mph speed limit throughout the village and to improve our cycle paths.

I would like to start by explaining some of the regulations that would affect any changes in our road layout. The PC needed to understand these as there is no point in asking OCC to consider proposals that would not pass due to these regulations.

Firstly, traffic calming is usually introduced on stretches of road where there have been injury accidents. OCC budget is limited and these projects get priority. To our knowledge there have been no injury accidents along this stretch of road. There are also rules about the spacing of road calming measures and their distance from road junctions. Road humps must be preceded by some thing to naturally slow traffic or another type of traffic calming measure to give traffic a warning about the humps. Lastly, in 30mph areas there must be adequate street lighting in the vicinity of the road humps. These regulations would make the implementation of a new hump before Saxons Heath more complicated.

I understand that you are concerned about the road calming measure associated with the new housing development by VanderBilt. I think you would like the chicane to be moved closer to Saxons Heath. Unfortunately this would not be possible as VanderBilt have planning permission for this new chicane in a determined position. OCC consulted about these new measures a couple of years ago. You may remember that their original plan was to move Didcot Road nearer to the houses. The PC has worked very closely with VanderBilt to modify this scheme so that the road does not need to be moved. The new proposals to re-site the chicane have not been finally ap-

proved but we expect the simpler scheme to be adopted. To implement your suggestion, Vanderbilt would need to make a new planning application and have to start the legal process with OCC all over again. This would considerably hold up the completion of their project and they will not be prepared to do this.

I hope this information has been confirmed by any correspondence that you have had with OCC.

As I mentioned, I have discussed your issues with the PC and a contact in the Highways department of OCC and we have a number of suggestions of what we can do to help.

Your first concern is the speed of traffic in Didcot Road. OCC is currently consulting the village about the 20mph proposal. We cannot see any reason why this proposal will not be implemented. In other projects implementing 20mph speed limits, the subsequent average speed through these areas is around 24mph. This would be a great improvement on the current speeds down Didcot Road as monitored by the PC. However, if the simple speed signs do not work, we would lobby OCC to introduce more significant traffic calming measures. We have been working with a traffic consultant and have some ideas for this.

We have 2 suggestions to address your second point. We could consider putting in a mini roundabout at the Saxons Heath/Didcot Road junction. This would not only improve access from Saxons Heath traffic wishing to enter Didcot Road but would also slow traffic. We have asked OCC whether this would be a possible solution but have not had a reply.

As an alternative we could lobby OCC put in a road narrowing gateway at the start of the 30mph (or probably 20mph) zone. This will slow traffic into the village. Traffic would also be slowed leaving the village as the Vanderbilt chicane will be closer to Saxons Heath. I have attached an example of this sort of gateway.

I hope that you will find our proposals acceptable. We would need to persuade OCC that additional calming measures are needed and so we will need to do a lot more work on these before we can discuss them with OCC. Therefore, we do not feel that a public meeting specifically to discuss this issue is appropriate at this stage. However, every PC meeting is open to the public and you and your neighbours are very welcome to attend if you would like to discuss this further now. If you do wish to attend, please contact the Parish Clerk (longwittpc@hotmail.co.uk) and we can put this on the agenda. Alternatively you are very welcome to convene a public meeting yourself and invite the PC to attend. Please feel free to share this letter with the people who have signed your petitions.

We look forward to hearing your views on our suggestions.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Rogers
Chair, Long Wittenham Parish Council

