

Update on the 'A35 Route Safety Study' October 2020

The Highways England Route Manager for the South West region issued a note in September 2020 to all the parishes involved in the A35 safety working group – namely Offwell, Widworthy, Shute, Dalwood and Kilmington Parish Councils. Kilmington Parish Council would like to share with you a brief update.

As we are all aware there is an issue with the safety of the A35 particularly as it runs through our village at 50mph, with numerous accidents every year. The village rallied together in 2014 to highlight the issue once again to Highways England. The relevant surveys were undertaken and it was agreed in 2016 that there was indeed a safety issue, suggesting the speed limit should be lowered to 40mph. But at this stage other users along the A35 were also campaigning for improvements. In 2019 we were told that the Kilmington and Wilmington would not be considered alone for improvements but they would be amalgamated into a much larger study from Charmouth Roundabout to Honiton. It was suggested that there was potential for “new technology” to be used such as average speed cameras to reduce speed and thereby hopefully reducing collisions across this section. For Kilmington a 40mph speed limit and crossing are also being considered – but this is by no means certain. This is a very slow burning process, where we have indeed got through the first stage of ‘recognition of need’ the Highways England team now need to make further feasibility studies to establish the infrastructure costs and benefits of such a scheme across the larger section of the A35 (Charmouth to Honiton).

As the Department of Transport run their finances in 5 year cycles, we must remain hopeful to obtain some of the current 2020-2025 funds to improve this road. The timescales continue to stretch and we currently being advised that construction/delivery of scheme will be in 2023/24 (but as always dependent on their feasibility/costing business case). And yes 10 years after we started the Make it Safer campaign. Given the Department of Transport predicts a 40% increase in road users by 2040 this really is an important improvement for all road users of the A35 and of course to preserve our village and all its users (on foot, cycle, horse too).

We hope that you appreciate that these are the details we have from Highways England, and we will continue to pressurise Highways England, as much as we can, and ensuring that improving safety of the A35 remains is a high priority for them.

Useful links to view:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/872252/road-investment-strategy-2-2020-2025.pdf