

Buckden Parish Council

Chairman: Caroline Underwood



Sent by email to:

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Dear Gary and Clare,

Proposed traffic calming measure on High Street Buckden

Buckden Parish Council is writing to outline a number of concerns that have been expressed by councillors and residents in relation to the proposed traffic calming measure at the north end of the High Street in Buckden. (Ref Cambridgeshire Active Travel Buckden - H02)

Buckden Parish Council very much favours traffic calming measures and has initiated a number of schemes in the village to make the village safer. In this instance we have a number of concerns about the proposal.

We understand the aim of the scheme is to reduce traffic speed and provide a safe crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists. When the project was first discussed, at the March Parish Council meeting, concerns were raised but the assurance that this was a temporary scheme which could then be removed, resulted in us agreeing to the proposal.

We had no further contact until we were formally notified in September that the scheme was going ahead. This of course was the first time that affected residents were personally informed about the scheme.

There were sufficient concerns about the proposal that the Council held an extraordinary Council meeting on Tuesday 27th September to discuss the proposal, we appreciated the attendance of Clare Rankin and the designer but despite the discussions with them the Council and affected residents still had severe reservations about the scheme and we outline below the key concerns that were highlighted at the meeting. In addition, we have made some alternative suggestions for slowing the traffic.

We were informed at the meeting that a single speed survey was undertaken by CCC in April this year, although the Parish Council was not informed about this and the results were not shared. The survey found that the average speed going out of the village was 26m/hr and coming in 27.5m/hr.

At least 6 households will be directly affected by the scheme and two representatives raised the following points:

- Driveways will be affected by queuing cars waiting to get through the chicane. Residents are very concerned about the access to and from their driveways as those on the west side of the High Street will have traffic coming both ways on their side of the road.
- A survey was carried out by a resident at a peak time between 5pm-6pm Thursday 22nd September the findings were:
 - 33 cars entered the village from A1
 - 25 left the village
 - 13 pedestrians crossed
 - 1 cyclist travelled northThese numbers do not suggest to us a need for traffic calming measures to assist with active travel
- Concerns were also expressed regarding the potential effect on the Hinchingsbrooke school bus, which stops at the point of the proposed chicane, to drop / collect the children.

Other points raised by the District Councillor, councillors and residents were:

- There are real concerns over the safety/efficacy of chicanes as evidenced both in Buckden at the junction of Greenway and Mill Road and in Offord village, these are:
 - They channel traffic on to one carriage way with traffic in two directions meeting head-on
 - Traffic speeds up to get round/through the chicane before a car coming in the opposite direction
 - At the other chicanes in Buckden cyclists do not usually use the cycle path provided for them but instead they choose to cycle around the chicane
 - Another Councillor wrote in their concerns; *as a driver, cyclist and pedestrian, I do not like this method as I think they are unsafe; they seem to encourage motorists to speed up to get through when a car is coming in the opposite direction, then have to swerve back in once through. When cycling, drivers often sit immediately on your tail or even drive parallel with you as they can't judge your speed and how long it will take you to get through.*
 - Several councilors had "near miss" experiences with the chicanes in both Mill Road, Buckden and in the Offords. One councillor highlighted the fundamental design flaw of this type of traffic measure, as it forces vehicles into a "head on" accident situation, "head on" accidents being the most dangerous type of vehicle accident.

Other concerns

- There is no objective evidence of the need for this scheme.
- The evidence shared at the meeting of the speed survey in April, indicates that traffic is not speeding, indeed the sharp bend as cars leave the A1 forces cars to slow.

- The proposed chicane is very close to St Hugh's Road. It appeared that the Silver Street development was not taken into account, while considering this scheme. It is important to recognise that the numbers of cars turning right out of St Hugh's Road will increase significantly and this should have been factored into the plan. The volume of additional traffic will be available from National Highways.
- The proposed order is a permanent order. We have been informed that there will be the chance to comment on whether the scheme is working and if there is evidence it is not working, it will be removed, but how will that happen? Who will initiate a review, how will evidence be collated and who will make the decision about removal?
- The Council was concerned that National Highways had not been consulted as the chicane could have a direct impact on the flow of traffic on the A1

The Buckden LCWIP plan proposed a number of active travel measures including the planned cycleway from Buckden to Brampton on which we are working very closely with CCC Highways and which we expect to be in operation by Spring 2023. However, it was not clear how the impact of this change in active travel routes had been factored into the proposal under consideration.

We also are also very sceptical about the "temporary" nature of the installation, once something is installed even if it proves to cause more issues than it solves the likelihood of it being removed is small. The Parish Council also has concerns about whether the County will have the budget finance to remove the chicane, however desirable doing so may be.

As we have said Buckden Parish Council favours measures to slow traffic and support access for cyclists and walkers and we would be very happy to work with CCC and consider contributing towards a safer less disruptive alternative scheme, at appropriate locations.

Suggestions are:

- Speed bumps/cushions
- Speed bumps with a pedestrian/cyclist refuge
- Rumble strips

We ask that the Executive Working Group be made aware of our considerable number of concerns based on detailed local knowledge and that the scheme does not go ahead as proposed, even on a temporary basis.

Yours sincerely

Ramune Mimiene

Clerk to Buckden Parish Council