

**May 2023**

**Max Campbell**

## **Kirtling 30mph zone**

### **History to date**

Kirtling and Upend Parish Council (KUPC) applied to Cambridgeshire County Council (Highways) (CCCH) to extend the 30 mph zone on Malting End from its current starting point outside Prospect Villa to the same position as the village sign, near Ash Leas.

This stretch of road, about 500 - 600m, passes 10 dwellings, one of which is my own, so I am here declaring an interest, but 4 of those 10 dwellings are new and additional, and we as a council felt this new density of dwellings justified the application. It was also felt that it made sense to have the 30mph sign at the same position as the village sign.

The application had to be approved by the police before being considered by CCCH. Most speed limit extensions are objected to by the police - they don't have the resources to effectively police an expanding mileage of restricted roads, and there are a lot of communities trying to restrict speed. Our application was not objected to by the police, so could go ahead for consideration by CCCH.

CCCH only consider an area to be "built up", and so eligible for an automatic 30mph restriction, if there are houses on both sides of the road. What they did offer was to allow a 40mph buffer zone starting at the village sign. Work to install 40mph signs would still require funding

They also said that they would approve our application (for 30mph) if we could demonstrate that the current average speed was already below 35mph. This sounds counter-intuitive, but essentially they don't want people to get a false sense of confidence thinking they are on a 30mph road, when other users have ignored the speed restriction.

We commissioned a traffic survey (at a cost of about £360), which measured the current average speed as being about 35mph, so CCCH have agreed that we can move the 30mph sign to a position near the village sign. This result was surprising to CCCH, and I think we may have been helped by the frosty conditions, but that was the result.

Because of the distance between the current sign and the new location, we would have to have 3 repeater signs installed.

The next step would be to undertake a statutory public consultation. CCCH places adverts and logs the responses, and gives people a chance to object - objections are then dealt with. This would cost £250 for the application, plus advertising likely to be between £500 and £1,000. The PC believes it very unlikely that anyone will object.

At the start of the process, before we found the person in CCCH who has taken responsibility for our application (Stephen Marshall), we were informally told that the likely cost of moving a 30mph sign would be about £1,500.

We can't get a firm quote for the actual cost of having the work done until the public consultation has been successful, but Stephen Marshall has recently said that it's likely to be between £5k and £10k.

It has been confirmed that we can use our Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds for this project, but there may be other competing projects that may be able to use those funds (although none have so far been identified). The PC is currently holding £19.6k of CIL, and more will be forthcoming as newly developed houses are put on the market. The only other expenditure of CIL by KUPC was the new porch / entrance to the village hall, which cost over £30k.

## Local Highways Improvement (LHI)

The LHI is a scheme whereby local councils can apply to have a highway improvement funded at least partly by the County Council. Once each year a shortlist of schemes is drawn up from the previous year's applications and those schemes making the shortlist attract County funding. Applications close around January and the shortlist is published the following May / June time. The PC didn't originally make the application under this scheme because the feedback was that such a project would be very unlikely to be given the priority to make the shortlist, but a future application is still allowed.

## Options for the future

Stephen Marshall judges that the speed survey data is valid for applications made within two years. This is not a statutory provision.

The maximum time between a favourable public consultation result and commissioning work on a scheme to start is two years, and this is a statutory provision.

Option 1 - The PC commits to fund the work, up to a ceiling of, for example, £12k, and commences the public consultation. This would cost between £750 and £1,250 for the public consultation and the £5k - £12k likely cost of the works.

Option 2 - The PC goes ahead with public consultation, so we can get a firm idea of cost, without committing to go ahead with the work. This starts the two year countdown on commissioning the work.

Option 3 - Make an LHI application. If we submit an LHI application before the end of 2023 we'll know in May / June 2024 whether it's been successful, which still allows us to then do the public consultation and continue with our own funding. The surprising speed survey result may improve our chance of success compared to the original thinking, and CCCH, who draw up the shortlist, already know that the police don't object.

Option 4 - Discontinue the application. We know that the current average speed was measured at only 35mph, and the cost is higher than originally envisaged.

## Comment

Please feel free to comment or question - this topic will be on the PC agenda

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The PC email account has had some difficulties, so if I don't respond to an email please phone me on 07711 675 613.

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