

Dear Jo,

You will I hope forgive me for immediately knowing correctly what the response would be when I saw that it was you who had replied to my email to Alyn Jones. While I assume that some things may have changed since my day I am sorry to say that I do find much of your argument hard to follow and accept.

Let's take your comments one at a time:

You said the following in your email to Mrs Fulthorpe dated 24 October 2016: (and it is well worthwhile reading the exchange of correspondence with her once again!):

However, on a positive note, we are extending the 30mph speed limit from Staplegrove Road to Norton Fitzwarren and I believe this will have a positive effect of slowing traffic speeds down on this stretch of road.

Why should moving the notice of the 30mph speed limit west 1.25 miles to the other side of NFW have any effect in slowing the traffic speed on our section of Staplegrove Road? Quite the contrary if anything.

You say that the whole length of the road has street lighting, which it does and which will help at night time, but as many of the lighting columns are masked by trees this is not so apparent during the day and as much of the existing 40mph length does not have housing fronting on to it drivers might think that it is still the 40mph it always used to be. As the sign post is already there, rather than waste money taking it away, it would seem to make remarkably good sense to use it, for at least a transition period, to hold one of the options you told us was a possibility in your email dated 7 October 2016:

On a more positive note, we may be able to use a blue backed 30 repeater sign with a camera logo on it when we change the speed limit to 30mph along Staplegrove road.

It is of course a little unfortunate that the 30mph roundel on the carriageway adjacent to the post has been removed some months ago before the change has actually happened. Its return, plus if not a blue sign then a repeater sign, would be two valuable contributions in the short term to increased safety, with no confusion caused.

With regard to our request for SLOW on the carriageway ahead of the left hand bends before Staplegrove village hall, you said:

Chapter 5 of the Traffic Signs Manual states on page 131 "Although the marking may be used alone, it is most effective when it complements a warning sign so that drivers are told why they need to slow down." In Somerset we have had a policy in place for a number of years of not putting down 'SLOW' markings in isolation.

Which is why I referred to the SLOW and yellow bars that have been included with the new NIDR, on less demanding right hand bends and without the provision of posts and signs.

You answered;

The reason for the SLOW and Yellow Bar markings on the NIDR is due to a speed reduction measure being required on the approach to the bend after a long extent of straight road. This measure was recommended by the safety audit team and was permissible because there are no houses fronting the NIDR.

It is a speed reduction measure that we are asking for on a similar long extent of road to the NIDR but, in our case, before left hand bends with very limited forward visibility and without the very obvious lighting columns installed on the NIDR which confirm the 30mph limit there clearly. And surely it is more hazardous and therefore more worthwhile to have SLOW if you do have housing fronting on the road and particularly so in the case of a very well used village hall carpark.

Can we ask for the safety audit team to examine and make a recommendation on our length of road, please?

I am sorry to continue to persist with these matters but as you know there have been serious accidents here, both with Mr Farmer's brother, Mrs Fulthorpe's experience and with the unfortunate Taunton school girl killed and injured a few hundred metres further on and if you are worried that the provision of SLOW would set a precedent then surely it can be shown to be at a site where a relaxation of the traffic Signs Manual's recommendations is fully justified.

Michael Clark
Chairman, Staplegrove Parish Council