

COMMENTS ON TRAFFIC CALMING POST NOVEMBER MALHERBE MONTHLY

1.	<p>I have been reading the reports in Malherbe Monthly re the proposed traffic calming measures. I attended the public meeting and I am of the opinion that the Parish Council proposal is sensible and workable. No one can predict 100% the outcome of any proposal but, it seems to me, doing nothing is not an option. Frequently I drive though Doddington and I have always appreciated the road management through the village because motorists know exactly what to do. The signs are clear and easy to obey.</p> <p>My view is that the Council should proceed. Perfect solutions are not possible in our small villages. Doing nothing is not an option. Speeding through the village is getting worse and we shall have to endure an increase in traffic if the proposed scheme for Lenham Heath goes ahead. I am grateful to the Parish Council for taking the speeding problems seriously and for working so hard.</p>
2.	<p>I hope this email finds you well. While not currently a resident of the parish, I am a member of St Nicolas PCC.</p> <p>Having read the November edition of the Malherbe Monthly I have some strong reservations regarding the Traffic Calming scheme, owed to the reasons listed below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed new houses in Lenham will likely increase the amount of traffic passing through the village. This in turn will increase maintenance costs the PC would be liable to pay for, making repairs more frequent. Given the current financial climate it seems unwise to have a scheme that increases PC costs formerly covered by KCC. 2. It has been noted that the first lockdown encouraged more people to move from cities to rural villages. The red tarmac would make Boughton Malherbe less aesthetically pleasing and perhaps then less attractive to future buyers. 3. As there is little evidence Traffic Calming schemes are effective, there is no guarantee this would work and the money spent would be wasted. Would the PC then also be liable to paying the costs of removing it?
3.	<p>We moved into XXXXXX at the end of February this year and were unaware of the proposals for a traffic calming scheme until the recently delivered Malherbe Monthly.</p> <p>My wife and I are concerned at the proposal of the granite chicane outside the front of XXXXX. Our main concern is regarding noise. I estimate that the front of our house is 5m away from where the granite setts will be located.</p> <p>As a Highways Engineer, I completely understand the challenges of this issue, however, if these granite sets are regularly overrun (which I strongly suspect will be the case, particularly all the vans, tractors and lorries that pass through) this will cause a very upsetting noise issue for our family, and those near us.</p>

	<p>I appreciate there being a need to control traffic speeds along Headcorn Road. I can also appreciate why the granite chicane location was chosen outside XXXXX. However I don't think the noise issue has been suitably considered, and an alternative needs to be found.</p> <p>An alternative that could be considered would be to change the junction arrangement at the Headcorn Road/Woodcock Lane. By a change of priority and creating a giveaway line on Headcorn Road heading south, with the uninterrupted traffic movement going down Woodcock Lane, a further speed reduction feature would be created in the village.</p> <p>This current proposal has the potential to make our lives miserable.</p>
4.	<p>Dear Sir, I write in response to the article in November's issue of Boughton Malherbes parish magazine regarding the proposed traffic calming through Grafty Green. I hope that the scheme will go ahead, a traffic calming scheme was the most popular choice by the residents in response to where the Quinn Estate money should be used., that surely should be respected. The route through the village is going to get busier year on year we have already experienced large construction trucks driving through, the van on articulated lorries is often ignored. It is imperative that we make a decision for the future generation coming along in Grafty ensuring a level of quality of life regarding noise pollution and speed of vehicles, so please parish council spend the Quinn Estate money and go ahead with traffic calming.</p>
5.	<p>I should like to add my opinion to the current issue of traffic calming in the village. As I live in the centre of the village next door to the XXXXXXX I am very aware of the speeding traffic through the village. I wish to say that I feel it is essential for the scheme to go ahead. Something MUST be done and the money from Quinn gave us the opportunity to do this.</p>
6.	<p>I write to you in my capacity as a resident of Boughton Malherbe . I personally wish to express my total support for a traffic calming scheme in Grafty Green . The levels of traffic are increasing and so is the speed of vehicles passing through through our community . The plan that is "on the table "seems to me as a very good way of attempting to reduce traffic speeds . Unless we do something now we are likely to be swamped by additional traffic with the expansion of Lenham and the potential development of Heathlands at Lenham Heath .. As a point this scheme has been talked about for at least three years .I hope that at last that we can get some action to make a start on the implementation of the proposed scheme .</p>
7.	<p>We have followed with interest the proposals regarding traffic calming in the village but feel somewhat ashamed that we have not, until now, involved ourselves in this matter.</p>

Having put a lot of effort into fighting the proposals for the new build in Church Road and having lost that battle, we felt disinclined to get involved in another issue. We also felt that the proposal of red tarmac was so incongruous in a beautiful countryside location there was no chance that it would even be entertained. With the current lockdown, it just didn't seem to be a priority and for that we apologise.

However the excellent article by Chris Wheal in the November issue of Malherbe Monthly and the request for opinions from the public have spurred us to write. Unfortunately apathy means that many detractors won't bother (or don't read the MM) so the measure of "overwhelming majority" does not really stack up. I would also point out that you invite us to write to the Parish Clerk but no address is given. Not every resident has access to email.

Having only moved into the village a couple of years ago, we do not know the history of the Quinn money, but feel the original intention of this legacy should be considered, as I cannot imagine the donor would have wanted all of the money to go to a scheme that only benefits a small part of the parish and is unlikely to be effective and therefore wasted. Personally I would love the traffic to slow down in Headcorn Road so that I could safely walk along there but I do not believe the scheme would make a difference. Living in Church Road we appreciate the problems of speeding traffic and lorries without even ditches to protect us.

It feels that the "Quinn money" is burning a hole in the pockets of the Parish Council. Whilst appreciating that there is no point in keeping the money in a bank account to depreciate with the current low interest rates, it is quite possible that another, more appropriate use will crop up in the near future. For example we heard a rumour that the village shop was likely to be up for sale. I do not know how true that is, but neighbours I have spoken to have suggested, should that be the case in the future, we should get together to form a co-operative to prevent its closure. To help with something like that would be of true benefit to the whole village.

To summarise:

1. We totally support the views of Chris Wheal as expressed in the Malherbe Monthly.
2. We feel that the ideal of **red tarmac** in a pretty countryside location is ugly and incongruous. There is no way it will "improve" the village. The garden club do a great job planting flowers to make the village welcoming and the red tarmac would certainly overpower their efforts.
3. We feel the suggested **cost** of the scheme is unjustifiable. We do not feel that the majority of the Quinn donation should be used for a project that may or may not be effective and only benefits a small part of the village. Yes, most of the parishoners use that road but the speeding traffic affects residents, not road users.

Given that not every person reads a parish magazine, possibly being unaware that it contains anything of significance, we do feel that there should be a canvassing of opinion; as Chris suggests, some sort of village **vote**.

8.	<p>Thank you for all the effort made.</p> <p>Thank you also for giving an opportunity to say whether we support the scheme now that the cost is more known. I think the impression at the meetings was that it would cost a lot less. When questions were raised about traffic calming elsewhere in the village we were told several times "we have got to start somewhere" implying there would be money available, let alone for other projects that might crop up</p> <p>..Also I am concerned about the ongoing maintenance costs being taken from the budget</p> <p>I do not support the scheme</p>
9.	<p>As a parishioner and not a PC member, please count me on the list in favour of the traffic calming scheme at the cost given which is good value for money in my opinion.</p>
10.	<p>As a resident in the Boughton Malherbe parish.</p> <p>I would like to express my support for the proposed traffic calming scheme for Grafty Green.</p> <p>Although I do not live in Grafty Green but in one of the outlying lanes I still think that all will benefit if this scheme is adopted.</p>
11.	<p>We would like to confirm that we are very much in favour of a traffic calming scheme, for the village. Living in the centre of the village, as we do, we experience the full force of all the speeding vehicles. With all the house building happening around us, this will only get much worse, so we feel a scheme now and for the future, is vital.</p>
12.	<p>I refer to the proposed traffic calming plans for Grafty Green, Whilst, in principle, I am in favour of some form of traffic calming measures I am concerned about the possibility of the costs of the proposed scheme escalating. I am also concerned that the Parish Council would be responsible for the future maintenance of the scheme.</p>
13.	<p>I would like to register my support for the Grafty Green traffic calming scheme. I think this is the best option we have since other schemes so far appear not to have worked.</p>
14.	<p>I would like to comment on the traffic calming scheme. My husband and I live next to the XXXXXXXX it and we are strongly in favour of the scheme. I often have to walk to the village and most of the time I feel frightened as the cars are so fast and drive close. We also struggle with cutting the grass verge at the front of our house as it is dangerous due to speeding cars. In recent weeks we have noticed grab lorries speeding through the village at a rate of every 5</p>

	<p>minutes, full of Earth and heading goodness knows where. These lorries have also eroded some of the grass verges. With the Lenham Heath project looming I feel we should be doing all we can to protect our beautiful village for the present and future generations.</p>
15.	<p>With reference to the above proposal we further endorse previously submitted comment and summarise as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From the Clerk's note in Malherbe Monthly "to review responses along with further information from recent discussions with Kent County Council"; should this not be information in the public domain prior to expecting comments? It cannot be for Councillor's to decide what the public do and do not see. 2. Whilst generally sympathetic to traffic calming proposals, like any project in the commercial sector there needs to be a "value benefit" against investment - arguments that we have got the money anyway and throw caution to the wind are simply not acceptable when spending what after all is "public" money. The spending has to be accountable. 3. KCC evaluation has been that there was no justification from surveys for KCC to pursue any traffic calming proposal / request in Grafty Green. There is unquestionable reservation expressed by KCC which have been dressed in their presentation to us, the public. The inference is the traffic calming proposal will make little difference if any - a phenomenon of many traffic calming schemes, which indeed can make things worse rather than better. 4. We do not have a definitive project with a defined cost, or indeed maintenance costs going forward and this cannot be good practice when spending what is a very large capital sum. 5. To now consider spending the balance of the £100,000 Quinn monies - around £72,000 including monies already spent, plus a balance of £11,000, supplemented by parish precept monies for forward maintenance on a scheme which at best is likely to provide minimal, if any, benefit would seem to be both foolhardy and naive which would not stand up to audit. <p>In conclusion, whilst we support traffic calming initiatives in principle, because of the doubt, reservation, and general lack of detail information regarding the scheme under review we think it wholly wrong to commit the spending outlined and thereby, purely on a "punt" that a maximum cap of £40,000 should apply, notwithstanding that even this should stand up to scrutiny. Sadly throughout we do not think this project has been handled with due diligence, KCC advice not heeded, no suitably qualified consultants detailed report, no scheme drafted on the basis of a qualified formal report, no definitive costs, and even now inferences that details have not been finalised - all of these things should be in place for proper consultation.</p>

16.	<p>We write to record our objection to the proposed {white elephant} Traffic calming scheme.</p> <p>The lack of benefit from a Scheme that will not effectively slow the traffic, can not justify using the £100,000 donation , an item that we think should be carried out by Kent Highways and by not local funding.</p> <p>We know this donation has been very difficult for the Parish Council to use, but there is no time scale on it, and a better use of the donation to benefit this and future generations may be more accommodating.</p>
17.	<p>My house is on the main road through Grafty Green and every day at the moment 2 large open trucks seem to speed past my house very noisely.This happens many many times a day.</p> <p>I am all for Traffic Calming in Grafty as it not only dangerous in the village but outside of the village they are damaging the edges when overtaking cars. Is it possible to put a limit on the width of any vehicle using this cut through from Lenham to Headcorn as the roads are narrow and very winding?</p> <p>I am all for any restrictions to make it safer for us villagers.</p>
18.	<p>We have been following all the information on the traffic calming scheme proposed in Grafty green, we would like to say that we are in favour of it.</p>
19.	<p>I have lived in Boughton Malherbe for 70 years out of the last 80 and I live on Headcorn Road</p> <p>The Quinn donation was made to the Parish Council for the benefit of The Parish as a whole. It was made as soon as The Parish Council agreed to supprt the application and not demand any particular off site infrastructure works which immediately removed 2 obstacles to their application which were likely to cause delay to their application.</p> <p>There is 1 direct problem caused by the development and that is the flooding in the area of Crumps Lane and Headcorn Road normally Quinns would have had to pay to alleviate this problem which alone would have cost many tens of thousands. It is disappointing that the parish council has shown no concern over this problem which is a serious traffic hazard and likely to cause an accident especially when frosty.</p> <p>The traffic calming scheme has been said by KCC to not likely achieve the desired effect.</p> <p>It is in effect a huge gamble of a large amount of our reserves with an unlimited liability for future maintenance.</p> <p>The parish is divided with many against the scheme.</p> <p>The parish council was divided voting 3 for 1 against and 1 abstention, and since then 1 councillor has resigned.</p> <p>How can the council consider spending all this money on a contentious scheme when they have an election coming up in a few momths time.</p> <p>This decision needs to be made unanimously by 5 parish councillors. or it needs to be turned down.</p> <p>I sincerely hope the the council will realise that this money does not have to be spent on a pipe dream better to leave the money where it is until it can be spent wisely we have no right to burden future generations with an unlimited liability to be shared by so few</p>
20.	<p>While in favour of traffic calming, the comment from KCC saying it would not be very effective in slowing down traffic has made me form the opinion that we should not be pursuing this scheme. Indeed, when details of the costs were made known this re-enforced my opinion. I feel the money should be kept</p>

	<p>for any future projects as and when they occur and not be put towards a scheme which will not produce the results that all of us have anticipated. Grafty Green resident</p>
21.	<p>I refer to the Parish Council's request for comments on the proposed traffic calming scheme on the BMPC website; the drawing uploaded on 19 March 2020 and the Estimate uploaded on 3 September 2020.</p> <p>These proposals have a relatively long history and in my view it would be unwise of the Parish Council to go ahead with the current scheme for a number of reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evidence base for the success proposals in actually slowing down traffic appears to be non-existent. The PC should not be spending this large sum of money without appropriate evidence that it will work. • The original traffic speed assessment by Kent Highways was by the pub where the traffic is slowest. This gives a false reading for the danger of speeding traffic for the rest of the village. It led to Kent Highways saying that a traffic calming scheme funded by them was not justified. New speed checks should be undertaken at each end of Headcorn Road to provide the true picture before any decision is taken to go ahead with the implementation of the proposals when it may be that they should after all be funded by Kent Highways. • The implementation costs are <i>Estimated</i> meaning that, legally and in contractual terms, there is no commitment to the final cost of the works. The Parish Council should not go ahead with these works unless there is a commitment to the maximum cost of the work. • The Estimate is very basic and not detailed enough for proper cost control. The Estimate should be a 'Quotation' and provide a breakdown of the areas of the elements involved and the costs per square metre or unit costs. • The Preliminaries in the Estimate are a large part of the cost and the details of these should be provided. • There are no commitments on construction costs in relation to the actual condition of the existing carriageway. The state of the carriageway (the part of the public highway which is for vehicles) is deteriorating rapidly after the wet winter and dry summer. This is typical on our Weald Clay soil

	<p>which shrinks and expands in these conditions. Will Kent Highways charge the PC for reconstruction of the carriageway where it is subsiding? This would be a very high cost to the scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The open ended commitment to future maintenance costs is a major concern. Who pays for reinstating road markings and granite setts if there are road repairs or service trenches opened up? Who pays for reinstating road markings and granite setts if there is carriageway reconstruction and / or resurfacing over a wider area? It should be essential that Kent Highways commits to the legal answer to this in writing. • As currently proposed, the scheme could bankrupt the Parish Council both in the construction costs and the commitments to future maintenance. Parish Councillors should protect the parish, and indeed themselves, from this possible outcome. <p>These comments are based on my fifty years' experience of hard landscape (including road works) and relevant contracts.</p> <p>In my view the PC should not go ahead with the works until the above questions have been answered and the next elected Parish Council has the general approval of parishioners to go ahead with an agreed scheme.</p> <p>Please report my comments to the PC at its next meeting.</p>
22.	<p>As XXXXXXXX seated in the centre of our lovely village, we are well aware of the horrific speed a vast majority of traffic whizzes past!.. We would like to stress how fully supportive of the Quinn Estate 'gifted' funds we are, to be spent on an effective traffic calming scheme. The road has seemed not only to have got busier and busier but faster and faster. There are elderly and disabled members of our community that frequently cross the road to visit the post office/shop, dog walkers etc that.. at the risk of being dramatic.., take their life into their own hands when crossing this racetrack!!.. I appreciate that it IS a vast expense but what price do we put on somebody's life.???. do we have to wait for a nasty accident before we hear the saying.. "perhaps we should have invested that money" as we are standing by a graveside? We have been here for 28 odd years and seen the road grow faster and busier and I think we can all agree that it will only get faster and busier when more and more houses are built in and around our surrounds. The commuter stretch to Headcorn to catch a train to London leaving minutes to spare... and the return to rush home to the family for dinner or just to get home after a stressful day at the office is only part of the problem. something DOES need to be done. Thanks for listening.</p>
23.	<p>The main objections to approval of this scheme are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kent County Council (KCC) after a survey of the speed of traffic through Grafty Green stated that the results of the survey indicated a modest speed problem but it did not comply with the level of speeding that would invoke a KCC response and approval of KCC funding a calming scheme. 2. As the Parish Council has agreed to fund this scheme itself it appears to be approving a scheme that KCC have stated will have no material effect that the speed of traffic will be reduced.

	<p>3. There is no evidence available that a scheme such as the one proposed will work which brings into question of why the Parish Council is prepared to spend a large sum of public money on a scheme that would be ineffective.</p> <p>4. In the “Good Councillors Guide” that Parish Councillors are supposed to adhere to, there is a section entitled “Value for Money”. As no evidence is available to measure this proposed scheme it would appear that this scheme fails to adhere to this guidance and therefore should not be undertaken until a review of the scheme and its Value for Money status can be satisfied.</p> <p>5. The costs for this scheme are an estimate and the cost requirement of the Parish Council to maintain it after it is installed are also unknown. Again, in the “Good Councillors Guide” there is a section on “Risk Management” which details how projects and expenditure should be managed. I do not believe that spending over £70,000 on an estimate for the calming scheme is a prudent way forward and having no idea what future expenditure is required to maintain the scheme is adhering to this advice. For this reason, only the Parish Council should not under any circumstances proceed with this project.</p>
24	<p>Whilst we wish to see the reduction of speeding vehicles in Grafty Green, we have certain reservations regarding the scheme proposed, the financial cost being the main one on a project that cannot be guaranteed to work, Although we have these reservations, something needs to be done, so would support the Parish Council in this project.</p>
25	<p>Having seen the Malherbe Monthly article my answer to your question is I am in favour of the scheme proceeding at the cost given.</p>
26	<p>We do agree that the money should be used for the traffic calming scheme in Grafty Green. The traffic is quiet heavy and fast at times. However, we are not sure that the scheme proposed will slow down any of the traffic. We also think that the proposed area is not suitable. We think this could cause a bottleneck of traffic and make it difficult for the residents to get in and out of their drives. Or for visitors parking.</p>
27	<p>I wish to raise my objections to the traffic calming scheme and I list my main reasons below:</p> <p>I have heard that the scheme does not meet KCC’s criteria for a traffic calming scheme, but if it did then they would fund it. In my opinion there is not a traffic problem in the village. The level of traffic varies during the day but most of the time it is reasonably quiet and although there is the occasional driver who does not adhere to the speed limit, I believe most drivers do. Should the problem increase in the future then KCC should be asked to do another assessment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have heard that where a scheme does not have a physical barrier then it does not work. We will be spending an enormous amount of money on a project that is unlikely to bring any benefits. • There is no firm price for the cost of the scheme. I do not understand how the village can possibly enter into a contract when it is not known what the final liability will be. • The village will be liable for future maintenance costs and there is no way of knowing what those costs are likely to be; this is likely to result in much higher council tax bills. <p>The money from Quinn Estates was for the parish of Boughton Malherbe but Grafty Green is just a part of the parish. I believe that the money should be spent in a way that benefits all parishioners. This scheme will benefit none of the residents of the parish but only tie us in to a future financial commitment.</p>

	Regards
28	I confirm that I support the Boughton Malherbe Traffic Calming Scheme.
	-

As at 14th December 2020