

## **P-04-468 Speed Reduction on the A48 in Chepstow – Correspondence from the petitioner to the clerking team, 28.09.13**

Dear Sian,

### **Chepstow A48 Bridge – Petition for extending the 30mph limit to the far side of the A48 Bridge to protect pedestrians especially school children on a main route to school**

Thank you for your email of 23 September 2013 giving us the opportunity to respond by midday 30 September 2013 to the response received by the Chair of the Petitions Committee from the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport dated 2 August 2013 regarding the speed limit on the A48 bridge crossing the River Wye at Chepstow.

The second paragraph of the Minister's response says that *'The speed limit review has now been undertaken and considered pedestrian usage, accidents and any change in residential development'* and it has been recommended that the limit is retained.

The circumstances of this bridge and the speed limit is a special case and would **not be measured appropriately by the statistics used by the department**. Pedestrian usage statistics, accidents and housing developments seem to be the criteria and method best used for open stretches of trunk roads rather than busy bridges in urban areas.

**The A48 Bridge across the River Wye at Chepstow is a special case.** It is a trunk road with a narrow pavement immediately adjacent to the carriageway with no intervening grass verge or railings or protective measures. It is in **an urban setting** immediately adjacent to a 30mph zone so there is no issue of needing to justify the slowing down of traffic. North east bound traffic leaving Chepstow across the bridge is travelling away from traffic lights and from a 30 mph zone. It is then is 'invited' to accelerate to 50mph on the bridge when **most drivers would not expect there to be an increase in the speed limit at that point**. There is a perfectly sensible place for an increase to 50mph at the far side of the bridge. The distance is only **335 metres (less than a quarter of a mile)** but it is a very significant quarter of a mile because **every day many school children walk across this bridge** to school.

There is **no pavement on the other side of the road** and so there are movements of pedestrians in both directions, trying to pass each other and groups of school children on this narrow pavement with traffic moving past at 50 mph.

Children going to school cannot see the vehicles coming up behind them but heavy lorries and buses with large wing mirrors are travelling at 50mph **within a few centimetres of children carrying** shoulder bags which could be caught by such vehicles with horrendous consequences.

**This is not a normal road situation** where 'housing development' statistics or 'total pedestrian flows over the course of a day' or 'road accidents per year' is going to indicate the need for 30 mph. This is a situation where common sense is a better measure.

A walk over the bridge at school arrival and departure times will show a very different picture than that of standard department statistics. We have attached some **photographs** of what it is like on the bridge at those very dangerous times.

We can see can no disadvantages for the Welsh Government or the Welsh economy to the granting of this simple request for extending Chepstow's 30mph zone by 335 metres further down the same road and so we are surprised that the Transport Minister cannot find a way of helping us. We can see **lots of dangers** and problems arising from not extending the 30mph limit to the far side of the bridge and so we would welcome a fresh look at the situation from the Welsh Government.

We are surprised that the department is not more helpful on this issue as it is very much an issue of **safe routes for communities** and safe routes to school which is a Government priority. This bridge is clearly part of the urban area of Chepstow and the speed limit should be 30 mph as it is in the rest of urban Chepstow.

On Thursday 27 September 2013 a man telephoned Chepstow Town Council to report that he had been in a vehicle behind a lorry which had narrowly missed a whole group of school children on the bridge that day and that he was so worried about the safety standards on the bridge he had decided to report it. This man knew nothing about the petition, and he has consented to his contact details being supplied should that be necessary.

Finally, we are also surprised that the Minister or her department has not been more responsive when the **source** of the request and petition is considered. This petition has come **from young people themselves**. Surely if we are to encourage the next generation to participate in public affairs and in Government (which is a priority of the National Assembly and the Welsh Government) we should be as responsive as we can when they do petition.

Of course not all petition requests from young people can be granted but this one does seem to be a **very reasonable case and with no financial implications** and would make an enormous difference to **public safety**. We hope that the Petitions Committee will give the petition a more positive hearing.

We would be grateful if you could put these views to the Petitions Committee.

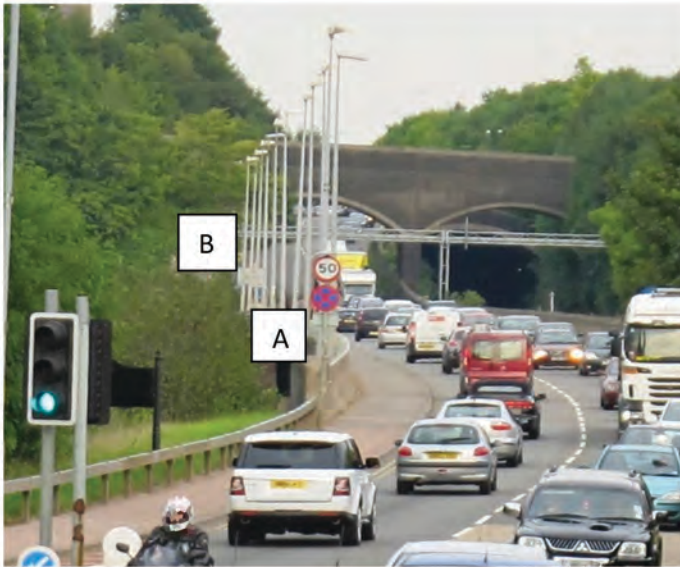
Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Bushell

Town Clerk, Chepstow Town Council

**A48 at Chepstow – Request for speed limit on bridge to be 30 mph in place of 50 mph 1**



The request is to move the 50mph sign in centre of this photo (Point A) to the bridge in the photo (Point B).



Railings would be help also, but 30 mph is essential.





A48 at Chepstow – Request for speed limit on bridge to be 30 mph in place of 50 mph 2





Chepstow A48 Bridge over River Wye – request for the Chepstow 30mph limit to be extended to cover the bridge.