

20mph Speed Limits Meeting with Joan McAlpine MSP,
Barbour Hall, Glencaple, 30th July 2018

Main points:

- Dangers due to unique nature of Glencaple - bad bends, blind corners and lack of pavements
- See annotated photos for visual 'hot spots': dangers for all - cyclists and drivers as well as pedestrians
- Increase in large vehicle numbers and the dangers they pose
 - motorhomes, farm vehicles, 6A bus, oil and coal delivery lorries, delivery/ service vehicles for The Nith Hotel and The Boathouse
- 30 limit needs to be pushed out in all 3 directions
 - North – Glencaple Road, South – Shore Road, East – Quay Hill
- Proposal - that the 20mph limit is substituted for the current 30mph area
- Countdown markers to maximise the visibility and effectiveness of speed signs
- Rumble strips – to maximise the effectiveness of 20mph speed limit
- Full community backing and formal proposal will go to Council after our August meeting (Wednesday 29th August 2018)
- The current limits do not protect our community and in particular our children
- Current limits do not protect other vulnerable people in our community including: elderly, wheelchair/ pushchair/ mobility scooter users, visually/ hearing impaired
- School – D&G Council policy = provision of 20mph limit at all schools
 - agreed at 3 July 2012 Planning, Housing and Environment Services (PHES) meeting
- Imposing 20mph limits in immediate vicinity of school ignores the fact that children walk to school from much further away
- New housing development proposed – south of Shore Road

Present:

Joan McAlpine MSP, Cllr John Campbell, Joe McGurk, Kenelma McCrae, Jean O'Toole, Revd Dave Logan, Douglas Anderson, Malcolm Laurie, Jane Baxter, Rona Carson, John Carson, Gail, Joshua and Jamie Stewart, Janette Murray, Amanda Henderson, Eilidh Henderson, Andrew Henderson, Judith Mylne, Lynne Sydes

Apologies:

David Gilbert, Lauren Turner, Anne-Marie Walker

Jean O'Toole opened the meeting by outlining her concerns about the lack of road safety in the village of Glencaple:

- Someone hit by a car at 30mph has a 20% chance of being fatally injured compared to a 2.5% chance of fatal injury by a car travelling at 20mph
- Glencaple has a 30mph speed limit, 'this is unacceptable'
- We have very limited pavement use
- Due to the historic nature of the village, cars are parked permanently on the roads
- The school road is also set at 30mph, with no speed calming measures in place
- We demand a 20mph speed limit be put in place throughout Glencaple village, with 3,2,1 slowing signs at least 400 yards beyond each of the 3 access points
- Rumble ridges/ strips leading into the village as a necessary precaution to alert drivers into the village from all directions
- More vehicle traffic than ever before, with much more to come with the 24 new homes set to be built in Glencaple
- An increasing number of children now independently walking, cycling and using scooters around the village
- With the increasing amount of traffic we are now experiencing, our call for speed calming measures is imperative

John Carson stated the importance of seeing Glencaple in the context of the increasing traffic travelling on the B725 in general.

Douglas Anderson relayed the past difficulty in getting the 30mph signs moved out from the Nith Inshore Rescue.

Gail Stewart, speaking on behalf of Caerlaverock Primary School council, added that the school have been campaigning for years to get something done about it. Speaking as a parent whose child walks down Church Street with no pavements onto the Glencaple Road, with no pavements, the parked cars and speed of traffic is very concerning, 'It's an accident waiting to happen'. She also stated fears about the speed of traffic coming down the Quay Hill [towards the school].

Cllr John Campbell enquired if this was the 'danger area' - GS asserted that whilst it is an issue, it is just one of many...

Malcolm Laurie confirmed that every area of the village has 'danger areas', whether on foot, cycling, walking a dog or in a car. He led the meeting through a 'slide show' of annotated photographs pin pointing the main areas in the village in which there are particular problems with the speed of traffic. A few key points:

- From the Quay Hill into the village, people don't actually slow down until they hit the 30mph sign - which is far too close to the school
- The junction with the Shore Road and Church Street is treacherous with no pavements, parked cars and blind corners – for pedestrians and for drivers; cars are coming from 3 directions. GS added that this is the junction where children have to cross the road to head up Church Street from the Shore Road.
- The area around the Nith Hotel is very busy with large motorhomes (visitors not sure of the road or where they're going), delivery vehicles, the bus turning, parked cars and vehicles travelling along the Shore Road. There is no pavement on the Nith Hotel side of the road, and the pavement from the bridge stops before the phone box. The bus stop is in the middle of this area and visitors don't know the area cross over to the Nith or head out for a walk.
 - Visitors leaving the restaurant/ pub having to cross on blind corner, legally parked cars hinder view even more, silent cyclists are another hazard here
- Glencaple Road – no pavements, pedestrians, parked cars, speeding cars, residents walk straight out onto the road.
- Wellington Street/ 'Road with No Name' junction with Shore Road – no visibility in either direction without creeping on to the road. Pavement on one side of Shore Road only. Residents walk straight on to the road.
 - A mirror has been requested by community members in the past.
- New development towards Gullsway – 30mph sign right at start of the village.

DA reminded us the Community Association spent £1500 purchasing and putting in the speed sign at Bankend, which works, but that this should have been done by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

In response to DA asking about traffic orders, Rev David Logan [who worked 30 years as a police officer] asserted that it is the Council, not the police who issue traffic orders, the police enforce speed limits.

DL explained that as a police officer, he has dealt with many fatal accidents – and that there is no archetypal fatal accident. DL has observed that Glencaple has an 'absolute plethora of danger points':

- NIR often has traffic moving in and out, blue-light traffic 'in a hurry'
- Motorhomes moving off from the Quay – on the blind bend – they're heavy, they can't get a good line of vision, pulling out into traffic which legally can be doing 30mph

- Increasing traffic with the draw of the Nith Hotel and The Boathouse
- 24 new homes with improved play provision will create more movement of children
- No pavement for most of the village
- Street lighting is not particularly good
- Church Street is a problem – but to have a 20mph limit/ zone just outside the school would be trying to put a plaster on a gaping wound – the problem is that children will be moving past that area and still be at severe risk
- DL advice is that the whole village be 20mph
- E.g. in Edinburgh – any street coming from a main street is 20mph, as is Scottish Government Policy
- Glencaple - the legacy of a village that has grown, most of the houses were built when transport was a horse and cart, we now have roads that are not fit for the amount and speed of traffic. We can't do anything about the roads, so we have to do something about the speed limits and traffic
- It has to be enforced
- Without prosecutions, there will be little effect
- At Nith Hotel corner, if there is silence, you can listen for vehicles, any ambient noise and you simply can't hear anything coming. And cyclists are virtually silent
- 'If there's going to be a fatal accident in this village – that's where it's going to be' (The 'Nith Hotel corner')

JC stated that the council, in determining safety policies for B roads, are guided by the Scottish Office directive which is advisory – not compulsory. He doesn't see that Glencaple poses a problem here (as he and Rona had at Kelton Bank).

DL noted that the demonstrable problem in Glencaple specifically (with the mixed use of traffic – agricultural machinery, cyclists, motorhomes etc. - it's not safe) – are easily addressed by a 20mph speed limit.

Joan McAlpine MSP asked Cllr John Campbell to clarify if the council had a 20mph policy being rolled out.

JC said he would look into it.

Jane Baxter quoted from a meeting of the council's policy on 20mph speed limits held on 3rd July 2012, where it was agreed that the council will "conclude [the] programme of provision [of 20mph speed limits] at all schools in region".

Gail Stewart concurred, and stated that, according to the minutes of a council meeting in 2016, "88% of schools in Dumfries and Galloway now have a 20mph limit".

JMcA pointed out the unique problem in Glencaple – that people coming down the Quay Hill could be doing 60mph up until they get to the school. ML added that they also speed up towards the national speed limit sign coming from the other direction.

GS stated that one of the other priorities of the November 2016 meeting [which quoted the 2012 policy] was, "locations requested by the community, and where need and support can be demonstrated (minimum of five residents)." She pointed out the demonstrated need and the

support in the room alone...

JB cited the additional support from the community demonstrated by JO'T petition.

Judith Mylne stated that, whilst she is obviously concerned for the welfare of the children, as she is now 70 and walks around the village, the time will come when she can no longer drive and will have to be able to walk to the bus stop in safety. She can't do that safely from Wellington Street just now. This is her 'plea for the oldies'.

JMcA wondered if there would be support for some kind of crossing? Several objections to this were declared: expense compared to designating the whole village as a 20mph zone, complications of it being a 6 way crossing, lack of visibility and no pavements to name a few. JC gave the example of the corner by the Station Hotel/ Lovers Walk in Dumfries where there just weren't the parameters for the council to put in a crossing – thus the crossing at the top of the road, which just isn't used.

ML confirmed that a 20mph village-wide limit is the minimum that the community are looking for, whilst acknowledging that at previous CCA meetings, farmers were reluctant to support some traffic calming measures. The limit has to be supported and highlighted through other measures than just signage. Pushing out the 30 signs, rumble strips, 3, 2, 1 count-down markers and light-up speed signals were mentioned – not just simple signage.

JMcA agreed "That has to happen".

JMcA asked who would be responsible for this in the council – who is the decision maker at officer level?

JC wasn't sure. Perhaps Alistair Speedie [Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure] or Graeme Allison [Roads Manager, Economy, Environment and Infrastructure]?

JMcA suggested that in order to get the whole package of measures, somebody would need to come down and do a study of the village.

JC said that Graeme Allison would come out, as he had done similar at Torthorwald, and Alistair Speedie came too. The council wouldn't pay for the lights there though. They are 'advisory'.

JMcA commented that lights can be paid for by Community Councils. As Caerlaverock is a Community Association, it was pointed out that this doesn't apply.

JC suggested that the CCA could apply for funding.

DA asked what we would need funding for? Surely the council should pay? The CCA had already had to pay for the speed sign at Bankend...

RC asked who paid for the flashing signs at Kelton Bank – JC understood that it was the council who paid for them. The Kelton Bank signs are also advisory.

DL pointed out the difference between 'advisory' infrared/ motion sensor "your speed is..." type signs and the signage required for an area that is designated under the road traffic act. So, if there is a 20mph limit, there will be specified in law 'this is the signage you must have' and that doesn't fall to our community to pay for. It's a speed limit put in by the National Roads Authority.

DA asserted that if need be, the CCA could probably get funding, but we'd rather not have to, it should be the council who fund it.

JC acknowledged that 'there's no reason the council can't do the school', how far it would go is not known.

JMcA stated that the 3,2,1 signs are council funded. She thinks that the sensor signs are very effective, but they tend to be paid for by communities.

JMcA suggested that communities can buy their own speed cameras and wondered if the CCA have any source of income e.g. windfarm money. [No]

JB stated that the community wants this to be enforced, not just advisory.

DL acknowledged that that's the problem. Will the procurator fiscal actually prosecute if it has been used by an untrained resident who hasn't undertaken testing etc.?

DL asserted that if you simply put a 20mph limit at the school, you have problems.

Folk will probably slow down for the 20mph limit at the school (whether or not it is enforced), but then traffic starts to speed up again, and coming down Church Street, you're coming to a junction. The last thing you want is traffic travelling faster – and it would be.

DL clarified that in his own view, the best solution would be to have a 20mph limit throughout the village.

JMcA affirmed that everyone is agreed on that. And over and above that.

JMcA however, stated that as a matter of urgency the [20mph] signs should be at the school and the 30mph should be pushed back.

GS stressed that she agrees, but as soon as our children reach high school age, they are crossing the bottom – busier - road to get to the bus stop.

JMcA asked about the history of this campaign.

GS advised that the school parent council had been trying on and off for years

JMcA suggested that what is needed is a meeting attended by the senior officers from the council, the police and all elected representatives (councillors and MSPs) - and that whilst it would be better coming from us, they would be happy to write to request a meeting on our behalf.

JC said that he would get in touch with Ward Officer Chris Woodness, who would get in touch with all the relevant officers. JC will get in touch with the police divisional commander.

DA proposed that this could be at our open CCA meeting that everyone can come to [on 29th August]

JC advised that a separate meeting on this one subject might be better.

GS asked how that would be fed back – through the CCA website?

ML mentioned that David Gilbert, current Chair of CCA, is working on a detailed document of information.

JMcA recommended that a coordinated approach is best – writing jointly to the police; that the document could be circulated to the relevant people ahead of the meeting.

ML asked if there was anything anybody feels had been missed?

DL wondered about getting in touch with the local cycling clubs. Liaising with the cycling community, especially with regards to e.g. speed bumps/ rumble strips – the former can be quite greasy and dangerous for cyclists. If we can get in touch with them in advance, this will be a good 'box ticked'.

JC stated that with the Kelton Bank campaign, they found the Dumfries Cycling Club, and the

other cycling clubs were most helpful in signing petitions, appearing for the press, Sally Hinchcliffe in particular was very encouraging, helpful and active in spreading the word throughout the cycling community.

DL asserted that it is important to get this right, for everyone, first time

ML brought up the fact that whilst he is a cyclist (a pedestrian, dog walker, campervanner and driver), this route is used as a time trial circuit and it is a double-edged sword as there have been concerns about the speed of these cyclists, especially around the Nith Hotel bend.

Other conversation developed – you can't hear cyclists coming, bells should be used...

ML offered to broach this subject with the cyclists.

Lynn Sydes brought up the subject of the 6A Bus which she uses a lot. She is very concerned that it sometimes turns by doing a 3 point turn on the main road (at the Nith Hotel), it sometimes reverses into the Nith Hotel carpark, or it otherwise uses the Quay End to turn.

ML suggested next time we are on the bus, can we find out from the driver if they have a designated bus turning point, why they sometimes don't use the Quay End to turn etc.

LS asserted that it is just a further complication...

With regards to the school JMcA asked if we would like her to wait until the meeting, or whether we would like her to get in touch with Graeme Allison now, re the school. She thinks this is something the council should be doing now. She is shocked and can flag up to him that JC is going to be in touch.

DA is concerned that this is something we don't want to die off, as has happened before JMcA reassured that this is a 'perfect storm' – we have the increased visitor traffic, more people coming down to the tourist attractions, there is the prospect of new housing and the 'new' council policy [re 20mph limits], with increased awareness. If we 'keep at it', it's structured and we have the meeting – inviting everyone, across all parties and get as widespread support as possible. In advance of the meeting, make sure the local media know about it.

JC warned that such campaigns can be beset by appalling communication problems, despite using appropriate protocols the delays can be so frustrating... (it took a year to hear back about their petition, though they were informed that they would be at the meeting, they were informed by the press that it was going to be happening...)

JMcA asked about JO'T petition – what were the plans?

JO'T stated that it was to show the support of the community, and to hand in with our document

JMcA advised that it is handed into the council, and arrange for somebody to take it, and make sure the press know, and get photos taken on the council steps. JMcA stated that she would be happy to help with that if we wanted a press release, she can help with that.

Petition numbers were discussed, DL reminded us that the parish population is 330, the support is significant – a very high percentage have signed.

JC asked about if we had gathered comments as this is particularly valuable as it gives fantastic, qualitative evidence of people's concerns which can be convincing and enabling to whomever the decision (re the 20mph limit) falls.

JMcA recommended that in terms of raising awareness of the campaign, in advance of the meeting date, we contact the council, alert the Standard that we're handing in this petition and having this meeting – and they will come back on for the next meeting and it just builds up the momentum around the campaign.

RC let us know that Stephen Temlett was their contact at the Standard (he was also the guy who told them about their meeting happening!)

DL suggested that Border News may also be interested. We have the contact details of Charlotte Briere-Edney.

JMcA agreed – that Glencaple is a beautiful village in a lovely setting – it will look good on the telly. The success of the village for tourism is another angle to consider, there are lots of people coming to visit, but it is causing this problem...

DL and JMcA spoke about the success of the Caerlaverock area – the draw of the WWT Caerlaverock and Caerlaverock Castle becoming the focus of Historic Scotland campaigns etc. JC stated that having safe conditions for visitors was an argument they used at Kelton Bank. Glencaple is on the Burns Trail.

ML also mentioned the Merlin Trail coming through.

DL talked about a Pilgrim Trail – for people who are interested in graveyards, and Caerlaverock has several very interesting grave stones.

JMcA referred to a fund that the Scottish Government brought up last year in response to the infrastructure on Skye coming under pressure from tourism. It is for rural communities who find themselves with increasing numbers of tourists putting pressure on their infrastructures.

Applications go through the council, though they may not need council approval, they are then passed on to Visit Scotland. Particularly with Caerlaverock Castle being a big national campaign that Historic Scotland are talking a lot about – there are many more tourists – could use it to fund signs (Slow down). Something to bear in mind.

DA mentioned that Brian Morrell, Learning Manager at the WWT is also Chair of the Cycling Association, and Joe Bilous, secretary of the NIR is also Reserve Manager at WWT. We have local people to call on.

JB stated that we also have support from Lady Clare and the Estate.

ML confirmed that we will get all this information collated and continue to work on the official document with David Gilbert and to get this in front of the community again, to get the backing of everybody.

Janette Murray told us about her railings at the 'S' bend at Conheath, which have taken 17 hits. She has to do the most dangerous manoeuvre in turning right into her drive. She has witnessed, first hand, 2 deaths on this road – she knows the dangers.

JC stated that few accidents are actually reported to the police

DL agreed - that one accident is one too many – especially if it is preventable. The cost is huge. And in the global scheme of things, this is not a huge project.

JM brought up the fact that the 24 new houses being built will bring a lot of heavy traffic during the construction of the development.

RC added that a bus and a lorry can't get past each-other as it is

JC asked when the development was going to be started – ‘by the end of the year’ – with 2.5 years construction time

The school have stated their full support, but this all began to take off as the school summer holidays started. We will contact Alice Cochrane, Head Teacher after the holidays.

ML suggested that an awareness campaign using posters by the children.

JMcA agreed that this was a great idea that should be taken to the papers.

ML thanked everybody for coming and for their support and wished everyone a safe journey home.

Thanks to The Barbour Hall for providing their facilities at short notice.