

From: Village Concerns villageconcerns2016@gmail.com
Subject: Village Concerns Update 51 - Quiet Lanes Designation initiative
Date: 31 July 2018 at 10:58
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Below is an update from the Steering Group of the Quiet Lanes Designation initiative. Village Concerns is emailing this update to all of you (instead of only those of you who have agreed to remain on our email list re General Data Protection Regulation) because the original email re the Quiet Lanes Designation initiative went out to all on Village Concerns' email list. Thank you.

Village Concerns

Hi All,

Just to update you on progress (or lack of it) following our jointly-signed letter to ESCC requesting consideration of Quiet Lanes Designation (QLD) for the rural lanes around the Village.

Towards the end of June, I had a rather aggressive (initially at least) phone call from our County Councillor, Nick Bennett - to whom I had sent a copy of our letter, asking for his support. I think it only right to let you all know that he was clearly very irritated/angry that I'd written on behalf of so many of you, and wanted to:

- (a) know why I hadn't 'bothered' to find out more about the issue before 'whipping up all these expectations' amongst the people of East Hoathly,
- (b) tell me (without waiting for my reply to the first question) that Quiet Lanes are a complete waste of time and money, that Kent CC had spent a fortune on them, and they'd been a complete failure,
- (c) know why I hadn't simply asked him about them first, so that he could have told us we were all wasting our time,
- (d) remind me that East Hoathly had already been 'given' a bypass (implying, I can only presume, that we'd had enough money spent on us already), which seemed something of a red herring, given that we were looking to protect local residents wishing to access the village, not those who want to by-pass it,
- (e) assure me that, as an ex-police officer, he knew full well that QLD signage would only act as a 'red rag to a bull' inciting drivers to speed more, not less (which seemed to me a strange, un-evidenced, comment from a former police officer, part of whose role must have been to enforce speed limits on all kinds of road).

He did not seem interested in my attempts (I could hardly get a word in edgeways anyway) to explain that I had not 'whipped up' any expectations; that a number of people had heard about QLD during the public consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan; that it had been suggested that I pull together a small steering group to gauge the likely level of local support, and, if sufficient numbers, write to ESCC (demonstrating local support by the number of 'signatories' on the letter), after getting the support of the Parish Council. I added that I and the steering group, having done some on-line research into the issue initially, believed we had gone about submitting the formal request in the most appropriate way.

I did point out to Cllr Bennett that I had already had an acknowledgement of our letter directly from Rupert Clubb's Administrative Support Officer, explaining that the issue had been passed on to his Assistant Director for Communities to deal with, and so Cllr Bennett finished the call by saying that he would go straight away to speak to the officer himself. He did, though, add that he would have no objection to the Parish Council putting up whatever signs of this nature they think appropriate, as long as they took full responsibility, including for their financing.

I have now received the Assistant Director's reply, the nub of which is - **that the DfT's evaluation** [an evaluation I believe was carried out as long ago as 2003, though I am trying to clarify this] **of QLD initiatives found that, though they are 'a method of retaining a lane's existing rural status', QLD did not reduce the level of traffic or contribute significantly to speed reduction, nor did they encourage more vulnerable road users to utilise the routes. ESCC have therefore concluded that, in the present financial climate, there would be little justification in progressing any Quiet Lanes scheme as they are unlikely to have the desired impact and will not contribute to the council's stated aims** [which omitted any reference to the possible introduction of QLD schemes in any case] **contained within the Local Transport Plan.**

For now, the steering group will attempt to find out (a) what current DfT policy on QLD is, (b) whether the CPRE are still championing QLD, and (c) whether there is any contrary evidence, elsewhere in the country, of QLD schemes which have been deemed successful or worthwhile. We will keep you informed if there is anything more optimistic to report.

Regards

Barbara Sutherland

(on behalf of the QLD steering group – Ronda Armitage, Jan Burdon, Fred Carter, Annie Oakley, Tom Serpell)