

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING - TUESDAY 8TH DECEMBER 2020

ITEM NO: 11 – Copythorne Speed Indicator Device (SID) Replacement

This is an update report on the replacement SID or similar for the Community Speedwatch Team and recommends a way forward

Information

The Parish Council previously considered the replacement issues pertaining to our ageing Speed Indicator Device (SID) at the meeting on 13th October 2020. At that meeting a number of issues were raised regarding a replacement, including whether or not we should move to a radar based speed gun system. Also discussed, was an offer of a possible loan of a new machine from New Forest District Council, as suggested by our PCSO, Richard Williams.

As highlighted in earlier reports on this matter, the current SID, while still in use and working, needs replacement due to:

1. The gradual reduction in power retention of the SID batteries and the lack of replacements (the system is no longer made), and
2. The old IT system which is reliant on hand held devices which are no longer made or supported, along with unsupported software.
3. Therefore, for Copythorne Parish, we need to determine a way forward as we are advised by the Community Speedwatch Team that the SID is now beginning to show a greater level of battery deterioration and the software is causing delays in getting the results of monitoring recorded.

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Copythorne has a very active Community Speedwatch team with a number of volunteers who can be regularly seen in various locations around the Parish. General community feedback is that this is a valued contribution to road safety in our Parish which is well-run. The local Police are also very supportive of the work of the team.

Options

Following discussions at the Parish Council meeting on October 13th 2020, further investigations were required into:

1. The basis on which Hampshire Constabulary supports either SID use or Radar Gun use for Community Speedwatch activities;
2. A possible move to the purchase of a radar 'gun' system for use by the CSW Team, in place of a portable SID;
3. The true costs associated with the purchase of a new SID;
4. The possibilities for a loan system from NFDC and what would be involved;
5. The possibilities of 'partnering' with other Parish Councils on any new purchase of a SID, were that the route chosen.

Speed Indicator Device (SID) vs. Speed Gun

The option for Community Speed Watch teams to be able to move to the use of speed guns, poses some specific issues for consideration. The characteristics of each system can be summarised as follows:

- **Speed Guns:** basically a 'punitive' device – designed to catch motorists speeding without their knowledge as there is no visual indication of speed to the driver. Records are then used for police to contact the offenders well over the speed limit. No positive reinforcement for the driver.
- **Speed Indicator Device:** can be seen as both 'punitive' as speeds are recorded and actions taken if appropriate, by the police, but also 'educational' as there is a clear display to motorists for the speed they are doing and thereby becoming 'psychologically' more informative and reinforcing (smiley / unhappy face).

Updates

- 1. Hampshire Constabulary Support for SIDs and Speed Guns:** Previously, the Constabulary did not support the use of Radar Guns by Community Speedwatch Teams. Recently, the Constabulary has stated that it does not object to the use of Radar Guns. However, the Constabulary makes a very clear statement on their website that *'Community SpeedWatch is an educational scheme, not enforcement. It is considered as the first tier response to speeding issues. If a problem persists, it can be escalated to tier two, meaning that enforcement can be undertaken by the police neighbourhood policing teams'*. Therefore, the use of SID systems is far more in line with the stated objective. Radar Guns are only seen as punitive as the speeding motorist is unaware of what is being recorded and thus unable to amend their driving behaviour.
- 2. Purchase of Radar Guns for use by Community Speedwatch:** Good quality 'guns' with software can be obtained for between £150.00 and £250.00 from a range of suppliers with the 'Rolls Royce' versions costing about £500.00. It is possible to buy even cheaper models – as low as £80.00 – but these are mass-manufactured and have no transitioning software. In addition, cheaper 'guns' are less well-calibrated and do not conform to the tolerances set for active use on a formal basis. It should be noted here that our CSW Team have stated that they would not support the switch to a radar gun system as they believe it goes against the 'spirit' of the Community Speedwatch objective which is to educate as well as record and where appropriate report.
- 3. Costs of a new SID:** The system we would require would need to be fully portable and easy to assemble and use. In addition, key issues for any purchase would be the use of 'standardised' rechargeable batteries, rather than bespoke batteries and software which is compatible with standard contemporary technology – smartphone and laptop. Previously reviewed systems are priced at between approximately £2,500.00 and £2,800.00 (ex VAT) and plus training costs and licensed software updates. However, Roadside Technologies have now produced a lightweight model which is an adapted version of the system used by police forces and which meets all the criteria set by our CSW Team. This costs £2,100.00 ex. VAT including training and with continuing 'passed on' software updates at no cost. The CSW Team have investigated the Roadside Technologies system and have identified it as a very suitable system for their use, which meets their criteria.
- 4. Loan of a SID from NFDC:** The Clerk, as was requested at our October 2020 meeting, has held discussions with NFDC regarding the use (via a loan) of a Speed Indicator Device owned by them. Any loan would be subject to the following conditions:

- The loan would not be exclusive as other Parishes would still be able to request loans.
- Loan arrangements would need to be reviewed by NFDC on a quarterly basis.
- The equipment would need to be collected from and returned to NFDC on each occasion.

These conditions would make the loan option a difficult one to work with when compared to the more straight forward process of the Copythorne CSW using a SID owned by the Parish Council.

- 5. Further investigations for ‘partnering’ with other Parish Councils:** The Clerk had already received confirmations from Bramshaw PC & Minstead PC that they would not wish to continue the existing ownership partnership with us. Ashurst & Colbury PC and Netley Marsh PC have also confirmed that they would not wish to enter into an ownership partnership with us.

The Way Forward

The evidence suggests that SID use is very effective in community engagement on speeding matters whereas speed gun use is seen as punitive and potentially confrontational. This view is supported by our PCSO and our CSW Team who have expressed the view that they would probably not wish to be involved in a switch to a radar gun system as it would conflict with the objectives they see as the purpose of a Community Speedwatch activity. This would almost certainly result in the loss of a dedicated volunteer service to our community which is increasingly seen as a valuable support to our community safety.

In respect of a possible loan system from NFDC, investigations reveal this to be impractical as a result of the loan conditions detailed above.

Taking into account the information now obtained and the premise for the use of speed monitoring systems by CSW Teams – i.e. to educate as well as enforce, plus the clear success of the CSW Team in Copythorne Parish to date, the recommended way forward is to proceed with the purchase of a new SID which will service the needs of the CSW Team and their work on Speedwatch on behalf of the Parish for at least the next 10 years.

At present, the Parish Council is holding in dedicated reserves £1,500.00 for the purchase of a new SID. The proposed purchase of a Roadside Technologies system at £2,100.00 would require the addition of a further £600.00 to complete the funding, and we have already highlighted a further £500.00 into the 2021-2022 budget accordingly. Plus, we have also raised the purchase issue in our grant application to the County Council for support on projects for the forthcoming year.

Our current SID, while beginning to deteriorate remains functional and can be used as a back-up system or we may wish to negotiate with our two original partners (Bramshaw and Minstead) a possible sale of the system to a newly interested Parish Council as a means of ‘start-up’ pending their own acquisition.

Recommendations

The Parish Council is asked to approve that:

1. The Parish Council adopts a wholly owned replacement SID as its preferred option for Community Speedwatch rather than a radar gun approach.
2. In the light of the research undertaken we use the already allocated reserve of £1,500; the recommended allocation of £500 in the 2021-2022 budget; plus part of the expected County Councillor grant to allow for the purchase of the new preferred Roadside Technologies SID system as detailed above.