Road safety in Croyde

Request

Croyde in summer has one of the highest pedestrian densities in North Devon as people move between accommodation, the beach and facilities. Could their experience be improved in terms of comfort and safety? The Parish Council would welcome a response from the County Council, ideally at a meeting, largely on site, to discuss issues. Road safety officers, and maybe a highway engineer, and representatives of Georgeham Parish Council and Croyde Area Residents Association could then express their views. It would be possible to cover constraints, priorities, plans and possibilities. With the climate emergency Devon CC should be seeking ways to promote walking and cycling. Another reason why it is appropriate to consider this now is that in recent years not only has traffic increased but also vehicles are getting larger and using more road space, yet it is unlikely that driving standards or patience are increasing commensurately.

Overview

The centre of Croyde is mostly a shared road space which includes places where pedestrians find themselves close to vehicles moving at inappropriately high speeds. The Council’s duty of care to all road users could include more positive measures to reduce these hazards. Locations of major concern are: (1) Cott Lane Corner and (2) Moor Lane. In both cases there is an adjacency of a two lane road with separate footway and a narrower shared roadway. Motorists often make inadequate adjustment to the changing conditions. The issues covered below relate to the roads and paths in Croyde as they exist in June 2019. Devon CC may already have plans and research that cover the points. For example, about halfway along Moor Lane the current construction of five apartments is expected to include a footway. Will this be extended in either direction?

Calming measures

1. Speed limits.

Croyde is a 30mph zone. This may be appropriate in Croyde Road with its two lane width and ample footway. In the centre of the village, with its many pedestrians in a shared space, 15mph or less could be considered reasonable. Such areas are often 20mph zones and there would be a good case for one here. It is clear that 20mph zones reduce speeds, especially if combined with a camera. There is a view that the classification of a road (in this case B3231) constrains options for speed reduction. This is unclear. In the South Hams the A379 passes through villages with narrow shared streets (as in Croyde). Most of the village limits are set at 20mph and this is without further engineering, apart from road signs. In Croyde the B3231 ends at Croyde Bridge (it originally continued to Ilfracombe). It could end in Croyde Road so that a different regime operated in Hobbs Hill. Speed restricted areas often include street furniture, road markings or more interventionist engineering to reinforce speed reduction, for example ‘gateway’ treatment at the start of the area.

2. Speed cushions and speed tables.

These are widespread in residential or commercial streets and are effective. For example the new crossing in Croyde Road at Bay View Close could have been on a speed table. Such measures require careful planning and locations may be unsuitable – corners, road noise to adjacent houses, use by emergency vehicles, poor design and claims by users.

3. Signal regulation.

Narrow road sections can be reduced to one way use with traffic signals. This reduces speeds, improves safety and can allow for footway or cycle slips alongside. In Devon this occurs at narrow bridges but elsewhere it is sometimes seen in narrow village streets, for example on A396 in Dunster. It is doubtful if it would work in Croyde where, because of junctions, parking and deliveries, backing up could lead to the traffic seizing up. Croyde currently uses the incremental nudge forward approach which works most of the time.

4. Road narrowings and chicanes.

These are often used to slow traffic, not only in residential streets but also in bigger roads (e.g. B3165 in Uplyme). A build out from one kerb and ‘Give Way to oncoming vehicles’ effectively slows traffic and can allow additional space for pedestrians and cycle slips. There is a strong case for such consideration in Croyde.

5. Road signing: (a) at roadside, (b) road paint.

This can be a cost effective way to reduce speeds and alert motorists of hazards. As Croyde Road approaches Cott Lane Corner / Hobbs Hill there are signs and SLOW is painted on the road. The road narrows sign and ‘No footway for 160yde’ are across the 1.6m footway and partly obscured by trees. Could alternatives be more effective? A give way to oncoming vehicles sign puts a liability onto the motorist and thus an incentive to slow significantly. Some places have a painted ‘pavement’ which may help slow traffic but is not considered satisfactory – many motorists will choose to ignore it, especially if oncoming vehicles.

Aims

1. To reduce vehicle speeds and improve safety in the centre of Croyde.

2. To raise the status and safety of pedestrians as road users.

Site specifics and possibilities

1. Croyde Road / Hobbs Hill (Cott Lane Corner)

The main issue is that drivers coming to Croyde make a late or insufficient adjustment to the transition from a two lane road to a shared space at a blind corner. Motorists leaving Croyde are slower, coming up hill away from the junction at Croyde Bridge. Pedestrians enjoy footway space by Croyde Bridge which peters out up Hobbs Hill. This busy pedestrian route in the road round the inside of two blind corners is most unsatisfactory. Most pedestrians stick to the west edge of the road as this fits the desire line but a few cross over for better visibility or to face oncoming traffic. There should be greater encouragement for motorists to slow approaching Cott Lane Corner. Various measures could achieve this but many of the calming methods listed above would come with drawbacks. A road narrowing in Croyde Road in advance of the corner would slow traffic but if this was near the corner it would cause congestion. When large vehicles meet at the corner there is a need for full road space for reversing. Thus, suggested front runners would be a 20mph zone and more emphatic signing. ‘Give Way’ signing is usually part of a built road narrowing but in this case the road narrows anyway. In advance of the corner, where SLOW is painted, could a narrowing sign be painted (hatched left part)? The extent of the central white line is questionable – these encourage speed and can push motorists towards pedestrians at the road edge. It should have no place in a shared space – remove at least 5m of the central white line from approach to Cott Lane Corner and in Hobbs Hill. A sketch map is attached (cottlanecorner0619.pdf).

2. Moor Lane.

The main issues are (a) vehicles moving fast in a residential street and (b) the intermittent footway which brings pedestrians close to vehicles. Pedestrians frequently cross the road whether moving to and from houses and side roads or to walk on side with oncoming traffic. There are two gaps in the footway, both of which partly coincide with narrow sections of the road. It has long been an aspiration to complete the footway but this would involve taking land from properties along the route. In places a simpler alternative would be to use part of the roadway. At the two narrow sections reduce Moor Lane to one lane width with ’Give Way to oncoming vehicles’ sign (facing eastbound traffic / Ruda direction). This could give two 10m long narrow parts with a footway on the south side. The slightly longer remainder of the existing footway gaps could see a new footway mostly at road edge and verge and by the shop the parking would move out to allow for the footway. A sketch map is attached (moorlane0619.pdf).

Mike Harrison 19/09/19