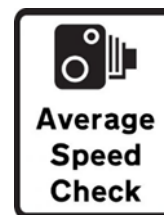


## **Parish Council Update – Ford End Average Speed Camera (ASC) Scheme**

We received 241 responses to our recent consultation (around 25% of the households of the Great Waltham Parish). These are the results for the two questions we asked:



- Q.1 – Are you in FAVOUR of the Parish Council going ahead with the Average Speed Camera Scheme? YES – 183 (75.9% of respondents); NO – 58 (24.1%)
- Q.2 – Are you in FAVOUR of the Parish Council going ahead with the Average Speed Camera Scheme if it includes a Council Tax parish precept increase equivalent to 25p per week/£13 annually (for a Band D property type) for five years for the purpose of repaying the loan? YES – 159 (66.0% of respondents); NO – 82 (34.0%)

At our December monthly meeting we agreed these results give the Council a mandate to seek a loan as represented in Q.2. However, as we said in the consultation information, *“match funding would still need to be secured, and the precise precept increase would depend on the exact amount of the loan”*. We agreed at our November meeting a future precept increase to cover the expected value of the loan as it stood then.

Match funding was made available by Essex Highways four years ago by the then cabinet member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport. This commitment lapsed two years later when the arrangement moved an agreement for match funding to be *considered* if the Council should show it had raised its half of the costs. In October we wrote to the new, recently appointed cabinet member to say we would make contact again when the consultation results were known with a view to requesting a reconfirmation of the previous commitment. In early November we also became aware from Highways that they believe the cost of the scheme has significantly increased since its conception in 2019, possibly doubling. We requested an urgent meeting with the scheme’s design manager to understand the reasons for the increase.

At the December meeting we also received notification from our county councillor that the new cabinet member has stated he is unable to reconfirm the previous commitment. In his statement he said that, given the current financial pressures, funds are not available, and that furthermore, he is also not of a mind to overrule the Highways view that Ford End does not meet the criteria for an ASC (that is, the speed of vehicles through the village is not considered sufficiently excessive), although he is open to reconsider this if a safety case can be made.

Since then both your county councillor and the Council have looked to engage with the new cabinet member and the Highways design manager. It would be fair to say that such engagement has not been readily forthcoming, but together we continue to press for a meeting. We will be giving consideration to whether the Council can wholly fund the scheme, but to do so, we need further details on the current view of the costs.

We understand that these developments may come as disappointments to many (especially Ford End) residents. However, the Council will continue to explore all possible avenues and opportunities available to see whether the scheme can still be implemented but without ECC financial support.

I will report back on future developments.

Steve Gilbert  
Chair, Great Waltham Parish Council  
15<sup>th</sup> January 2024