

Saturday, 23rd July 2016 - FOR INFORMATION
Replies received to date, in reply to Capel-le-Ferne Parish Council letter sent to various agencies

Thank you for your letter addressed to the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the exceptional tourist traffic delays that were experienced over the course of last weekend as a result of staffing challenges at the French border controls in dealing with heightened security checks following recent terrorist activity. As a result of the delays experienced, Kent Police coordinated an emergency response in line with our existing plans.

Highways England has primary responsibility for all traffic management and for the Traffic Access Protocol (TAP) to which you refer. Operation Stack is not used to manage tourist traffic.

In response to the exceptional delays at the weekend, Kent Police provided support to Highways England, Kent County Council (KCC) and the Port of Dover in order to try and keep travel disruption to a minimum. Kent Police officers have been working at the Port and at key stretches of roads in Dover in order to assist partner agencies as necessary. This included assisting Highways England in enforcing road closures and the KCC in distributing water and checking on the welfare of motorists and their families, who had been stranded for some considerable time without refreshment or sanitary provision in particularly hot weather.

Kent Police will always support agencies wherever possible and there was a significant amount of resource deployed over the weekend to assist those stranded who were our primary focus. However, at the same time, we are sure you will appreciate that Kent Police also had to ensure that all other incidents occurring as a matter of course elsewhere in the county were responded to appropriately. This was a particularly challenging weekend and the scale of this meant we were unable to maintain normal levels of service and had to divert resources to ensure those most at risk were kept safe.

Please be assured that the lead agencies will be reviewing all activity undertaken at the weekend as is standard practice and developing a comprehensive plan should this arise again. Information will continue to be published by all agencies regarding any potential disruption via local media outlets, websites and social media.

Yours sincerely

Ms Sonya Grandsen, Staff Officer to Chief Constable, Kent Police Headquarters

Thank you Sonya for your reply, which will be shared with our Councillors and Residents.

LITTER PROBLEM NOW!

I have copied everyone into this reply, as you can imagine the amount of litter transpired from this weekend's incident is now a cause for concern, especially the laybys Dover to Folkestone. It would be appreciated if the Litter problem, now evident on the M20/A20/B2011, could be addressed as soon as possible.

Thank you again everyone, look forward to more replies in due course!

Capel-le-Ferne Parish Council

Our officers really pushed on this yesterday and have had some quick success with Highways England.

Viola for DDC will be on the A20 between the Round Hill Tunnels and the Western Heights roundabout tomorrow, Wednesday 27th, plus Thursday 28th and Friday 29th between 0900 and 1500. They will be doing 4 km at a time. Contractors will also be strumming the verge back to see whether other litter needs removing.

Our officers pressed for a daytime lane closure as opposed to the usual night time as dark objects are difficult to see during hours of failing light or darkness.

Fingers crossed that there will be no exceptional traffic build up.

Regards, Nigel Collor, Councillor Dover District Council

A20 litter

Thank you for your contacting Highways England Customer Contact Centre regarding the litter on the A20 following the recent delays.

A-one+ are the Asset Support Contractors working on behalf of Highways England in Area 4. Area 4 consists of Motorways and trunk roads in Kent, Sussex and a small part of Surrey.

I understand your concerns with this situation and I can confirm that A-one+, on behalf of Highways England are working with Dover District Council and their contractors to resolve this urgent, environmental situation.

We have arranged for litter collection and deep cleaning along this stretch of road beginning today (27 July) for three days, during off peak, daytime hours between the Roundhill tunnel and Dover.

We expect that this will make a visible and tangible difference to this section.

I note in your email, you mention the need for litter collection on the B2011, unfortunately, Highways England does not manage this road, so I am unable to comment on the maintenance of this road. I would suggest contacting Kent County Council in this regard.

I hope that I have been able to resolve your concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Kind regards, Chris Carter

continued.....

**Customer and Stakeholder Liaison Assistant
On behalf of Highways England**

Dear Ms Leppard

Thank you for your letter dated 24 July and your further emails of 26 July regarding the traffic problems in Capel-Le-Ferne arising from delays at the Port of Dover.

I am sorry that the village bore much of the brunt of the traffic chaos caused by the increased security checks by French customs at the Port, and I am very pleased to hear that your villagers have such strong community spirit and good will.

Kent County Council, together with the other agencies, was well aware that the weekend was going to be one of the busiest of the year for the Port and as such, meetings were held to plan for the increase in traffic. The Port of Dover had assurances from the French border control, PAF, that all the required passport control points would be fully manned. However, late on Friday night it became apparent that PAF only resourced three out of the four booths. With the 100% checks due to increased security in France, traffic queues soon built up and by 06:30 on Saturday morning the Port was full and traffic queued back along the A20 for up to ten miles. This in turn meant that traffic looked at alternative routes to Dover, using the road through Capel-Le-Ferne and all the surrounding lanes.

Following the traffic chaos of the weekend, an urgent meeting was convened on Monday to discuss the impact of the problems at the Port and to take steps should a similar situation occur in the future. Over the week, a multi-agency plan has been developed to ensure minimum disruption for Dover and the surrounding area. In addition, partners worked together to ensure that Dover District Council could clear the rubbish left from the weekend.

Thank you for raising your concerns with me. I hope the above reassures you that agencies across Kent take the wellbeing of our residents seriously.

Yours sincerely, **Paul Carter, CBE, Leader of Kent County Council**



Our ref: CRS 740634
Your ref:

Maureen Leppard
Capel-le-Ferne Parish Council Clerk
39 Victoria Road
Capel-le-Ferne
Folkestone
Kent
CT18 7LT

Angela Porter
Team Executive
Second Floor
Bridge House
Walnut Tree Close
Guildford GU1 4LZ

8 August 2016

Dear Ms Leppard

Thank you for your letter of 24 July, addressed to various agencies, about access to the town and port of Dover on Saturday 23 July. I'm sorry to hear that the residents of Capel-le-Ferne have felt let down by the agencies involved in regulating and controlling the traffic during that weekend.

The heavy congestion on the routes to the Port of Dover on Saturday 23 July was due to French government requirements to deliver heightened security checks following the recent attacks in France. The tragic events in France triggered an understandable step up in security, resulting in increased congestion on this side of the channel. In addition, a DFDS system issue caused delays of up to 4 hours for the check-in of vehicles on DFDS ferries from the Port of Dover.

Highways England was prepared for the busiest weekend of the year for travel, as always, but could not have prepared for the unforeseen events which also affected the road network in Kent. We worked hand in hand with the Port of Dover, Kent Police and Kent County Council around the clock to co-ordinate a multi-agency response, which included providing food and drink to drivers. Extra patrols were on duty over the weekend to help manage the traffic and welfare efforts, and we had free recovery in place to clear any broken down vehicles. Measures were also taken on the approach to the port where Kent police were proactively managing the traffic to speed up the process.

We were advising road users of the delays with messages on our electronic signs, as well as through social media and website channels, and we continue to advise anyone heading to the port to check travel conditions before setting out and to allow plenty of time to reach their destination.

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Now to address your concerns about Operation Stack and Dover TAP. Operation Stack, also known as Op Stack, is a way of managing traffic during disruption to Eurotunnel or ferry services in Kent. Op Stack was initiated and is managed by Kent Police, with the support of Highways England as operator of the M20 Motorway. The way Op Stack works is that lorries waiting to use the port queue on the M20 and all other traffic is diverted to other routes. Op Stack is used between junction 8 (Maidstone services) and junction 9 (Ashford) on the M20. If more space is needed, the closed section will extend to junction 11. Freight is separated into 2 queues on either side of the coastbound carriageway, 1 for tunnel traffic and 1 for port traffic. The middle lanes are kept clear for emergency vehicles. Lorries are released at the request of the Port of Dover and Channel Tunnel.

Alternatively, Dover TAP was put in place to control the increasing numbers of freight vehicles using the A20 to travel through the Port of Dover on a daily basis. We have received many letters of support from individual businesses and members of the public who have found that TAP does avoid the level of congestion experienced in and around Dover before it was introduced. The current 40 mph speed limit was put in place for safety reasons. However, increased lorry parking within the Port of Dover appears to have reduced the length of Dover TAP and the frequency with which it is implemented.

Following discussions with Kent Police and Kent County Council we are now reviewing whether the current limit could safely be replaced with a variable speed limit using permanent electronic signs, or alternatively, the use of dual speed limits, ensuring the national speed limit applies when TAP is not in operation. It's too early to give timescales as we are still developing these ideas and proposals. The control of the speed limit is managed by Kent Police and the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership, and it is their responsibility to monitor the road network for any traffic infringements.

As you can see, Highways England does work in partnership with Kent Police, Kent County Council and the Port of Dover in a continuous effort to manage the congestion in and around the ports and the towns in this area, particularly at this very busy time of year. The security of our citizens is paramount, and we working with the French to ensure the border between our two countries remains secure at Dover, while ensuring goods and passengers move as quickly and efficiently as possible between them.

Yours sincerely



Angela Porter
Correspondence Team
Email: angela.porter@highwaysengland.co.uk