Appendix A: Proposed 1-way road system

Proposal for the 1-way road system

Currently the four roads that lead into the village are single track roads with passing places. Two of the most well used roads, Lopen Road and Merriott Road, lead to the same stretch of the “Lopen- Merriott road”. It would make sense to have one road coming into the village and one road leaving the village.

The one way system should start after Windyridge on the Lopen road and end before the houses at the Lopen end. This way there is no inconvenience to residences on either end of Lopen road.

The Merriott road needs more of a compromise. This road has houses along its route as well as a chicken farm, which will need two way access. If the road was one way out of the village, after the last house until the entrance to the chicken farm, this would achieve the same result. This is only a short section but that is sufficient. Two way traffic could proceed from Merriott as far as the chicken farm but not into the village. Suitable signage would need to be erected at the turn off from Merriott. The houses on the village side would have two way access still and the commercial chicken farm would not be affected. This route would not be true one way but would reduce the oncoming traffic considerably.

Pros:

1. Lopen Road would be much more free flowing without the need to continually step into a lay-by of reverse.
2. Merriott Road would have fewer cars coming against the flow and only cars coming out of the village.
3. Residents of the village would not be affected.
4. The rat-run from the A30 to the A303 would be no longer as attractive, reducing traffic through the village.
5. Less reversing on the roads, which some people find difficult.
6. Horse riders, joggers and walkers would know which way the cars are coming from.
7. Cyclists would always be moving with the traffic making it safer for them.

Cons:

1. It would mean a change of the current status quo.
2. Some drivers may increase their speed along the road, knowing that nothing is coming against them. (This is a different topic as the roads are currently national speed limit roads of 60mph!).

Summary of Written Objections from 17 respondents to the proposed 1-way road system

1. Increased Traffic Speeds & Reduced Pedestrian Safety

- **Loss of Natural Friction:** Removing oncoming traffic removes the natural incentive for drivers to slow down and is likely to encourage higher average speeds.
- **False Sense of Security:** Drivers will treat the road as a "clear track". This directly endangers vulnerable road users such as children, dog walkers, elderly residents, horse riders, and cyclists.
- **Reduced Road Vigilance:** Drivers travelling unhindered in a single direction focus purely ahead rather than scanning verges, doorways, or field gateways.

2. Delayed Emergency Response Times

- **Elongated Detour Loops:** Restricting a key artery forces ambulances, fire engines, and police vehicles into long detours if approaching from the "wrong" direction.
- **Loss of Operational Flexibility:** In a life-or-death emergency, rigid one-way restrictions introduce unacceptable delays, especially if an incident or obstruction blocks the single designated lane.

3. Severe Disruption to Agriculture & Local Farms

- **Farm Machinery Forced into the Village:** Arable farmers and contractors purposefully keep heavy, slow, and wide machinery away from the narrow village crossroads. A one-way system would eliminate direct main road access, forcing these massive vehicles onto a loop through the village centre, risking damage to cars, kerbs, and verges.
- **Poultry Farm Traffic:** Vehicles servicing the poultry farm on Merriott Road currently avoid the village entirely. A one-way system could force this commercial, heavy traffic straight into residential village streets.
- **Livestock Safety:** Smallholders moving livestock at modest speeds in farm vehicles would be forced onto longer, busier, and higher-speed alternate roads, endangering the drivers and animals.

4. Risk of Total Isolation & Flooding Vulnerabilities

- **Trapping Residents:** The location of Hinton St George makes access roads highly susceptible to localized flooding and fallen trees. Two-way flows allow residents to turn around and find an alternative route. A rigid one-way system risks completely trapping or locking residents out of the village during severe weather.
- **Forced Traffic Violations:** Drivers faced with a flooded or blocked one-way path would be forced into an unsafe choice: risk driving into deep hazardous water or illegally drive the wrong way into oncoming traffic.

5. Negative Impact on Local Businesses, Tourism, & Community Life

- **Economic Harm to the Pub and Shop:** The Lord Poulett Arms notes that confusing detours will discourage passing tourists and trade. Complicated access routes may also discourage locals from making short trips to the village shop, pub, church, school, and village hall.
- **Disrupted Supply Chains:** Essential, time-sensitive deliveries (food, beverages, maintenance) to businesses and farms may face delays and routing issues.
- **Burdens on Community Assets:** Access to shared amenities like Jubilee Wood, local sports clubs, and the school would be heavily compromised, impacting recreational activities and equipment transport.

6. Disproportionate Inconvenience to Residents & Carers

- **Circuitous Everyday Journeys:** Simple, routine journeys (such as school drop-offs or trips to the pharmacy and garage in Merriott) will become significantly longer, costlier, and more time-consuming.
- **Impact on Vulnerable Residents:** Enforced detours heavily disadvantage those with limited mobility, disabilities, or dependency on home care. Visiting carers and community nurses operating on tight schedules will lose valuable care time due to added travel distances.

7. Environmental Harm & Traffic Displacement

- **Increased Emissions:** The cumulative extra mileage forced upon residents, deliveries, tradespeople, and agricultural vehicles will heavily increase fuel consumption, carbon footprints, tyre wear, and exhaust pollution.
- **Displacing the Hazard:** Traffic management is a zero-sum game. Traffic will simply be displaced onto even narrower, less suitable surrounding country lanes and bridleways that lack passing places or proper structural foundations.

8. Aesthetic Damage to the Village

- **Loss of Rural Character:** Enforcing a sweeping one-way system would require an abundance of urban-style road markings, signage, and potentially costly traffic calming measures (like sleeping policemen) that would spoil the historic, rural character of the village centre.

9. Lack of Evidence & Better Alternatives

- **No Proven Case:** Objectors emphasise that no formal evidence, traffic counts, speed data, or collision records have been presented to justify a change of this scale. There are already roughly 25 passing places along 1,500m of Merriott Road (one every 60m) which are perfectly adequate if people drive with country-lane caution.
- **Proposed Alternatives:** Instead of a sweeping scheme, the council should focus on targeted, evidence-based measures. This includes moving and improving the visibility of the shaded 30mph signs, considering a 20mph zone, utilizing Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs), or working with Somerset Highways for an impartial assessment.