

**CALL FOR SPEED REVIEW**

A PARISH council has welcomed the judge's recommendation for highway authorities to look again at reducing the speed limit in Hollow Lane.

Thanington Parish Council clerk Roger Cheesworth said he had heard the "same excuses again and again" but the council's fight would go on.

He was speaking after Judge Adele Williams asked Kent Highways Services to review the 60mph limit where Colleen van Rooyen died.

She asked that her sentencing remarks be sent to Kent County Council.

Judge Williams said: "Although this road has the national speed limit of 60mph, I consider perhaps further consideration should be given whether that speed limit needs amendment."

Mr Cheesworth said: "We are delighted the judge has asked Kent Highways to look at it again.

"We have been fighting this for a long time and we're still hearing the same excuses. It seems people have to be killed before anything is done."

KCC spokesman Phil Scrivener said the authority would have to look at it again.

**TRAGIC DEATH:** The driving of two young men ruled the cause of crash

# Jail sentence 'is not long enough'

by Matt Hoople

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THE brother of a single mother killed by the driving of two young men said their custody terms should have been longer.

Don van Rooyen, of Garlinge Green Road, Petham, was speaking after Friday's sentencing of 20-year-olds Thomas Vidler and Luke Dixon.

He said no sentence could properly compensate for the loss of his sister Colleen, 39, in a head-on crash at Hollow Lane, Thanington, in February last year, while on her way to pick up her son Joshua from cricket practice.

Vidler was sentenced to two years in a young offenders' institute and Dixon one year. Both were



Teacher and devoted mother Colleen van Rooyen

also banned from driving. Mr van Rooyen said: "To be honest we thought the sentences and the driving bans

should have been longer, but we understand the judge did everything under the powers available to her in law.

"Joshua has effectively been orphaned by their stupidity.

"He is still seeing a psychiatrist and has nightmares about that terrible day when he heard the sirens going towards the scene while waiting to be picked up.

"He is a bright lad and was also unhappy at the length of the sentences.

"We did not get the sense that the two men showed much remorse for their actions - that they were sorry at all - but that could have been their defence team."

Mr van Rooyen praised Kent Police's serious collision unit, the judge and the

jury and added the trial had been "a helpful way of sharing our grief."

He said: "I really got a sense that people heard the pain and suffering we endured as a family during the trial.

"The devastation to the family and in particular, to Joshua, is ongoing."

Mr van Rooyen welcomed the judge's comments on a possible reduction in the speed limit on Hollow Lane but said the tragedy was "ultimately a case of irresponsible young driving."

He added a lower limit there would "make drivers think twice".

His wife, Collette, said she wanted to see a rise in the minimum driving age to 18 or even 21, or have a restriction on engine performance for young drivers.

## Men in death crash tragedy to be locked up

TWO 20-year-old motorists who were involved in a crash that resulted in a teacher's death, have received custodial sentences and are banned from driving until they take further tests.

Colleen van Rooyen's Toyota Starlet was hit by a Honda Civic driven by Steven Vidler, of Davidson Road, Canterbury, who in June was convicted of causing her death by dangerous driving.

His friend Luke Dixon, of New House Lane, Canter-

bury, who had been following in another Civic, also struck the Toyota a glancing blow, hit a bank and came off hitting Vidler's car. He was convicted of dangerous driving.

At Canterbury Crown Court on Friday, Vidler was sentenced to two years custody and banned for three years and Dixon sentenced to one year custody with a 12 months ban. Both will be sent to young offenders' institutes.

Judge Adele Williams said it was a tragic case.

Of Ms van Rooyen she said: "She leaves a teenage son and many close family members. Her loss to them is immeasurable and I have read a victim impact statement which makes that quite clear.

"Nothing I can say nor the sentence I pass can replace her nor are they intended to put a value on her life."

She said on the evidence Vidler was going about 45mph and Dixon about 42mph - within the speed limit of 60mph for Hollow Lane - but

they were driving too fast for the road conditions.

Judge Williams took into account that both men had expressed remorse. She said under case guidelines, their case fell into the lower culpability bracket.

John Bishop, for Vidler, said the effect on his family had been devastating and Vidler had found custody a shock.

"He was a young man, perfectly law abiding, perfectly good character and hard working.

"A terrible lapse of only a few seconds led to the catastrophic events in Hollow Lane that night that will haunt him."

Rachel Bright, for Dixon, said there was a lack of aggravating factors and a number of mitigating ones and he had expressed remorse.