

Black Cat device

Initial findings for Parish Council 19th August 2021



I have only had a limited amount of time since the July meeting to research the Black Cat device, these are my initial findings.

Some villages in Rother have purchased the device, Catsfield have been using one for quite a while and Sedlescombe have recently purchased one.

Keith Robertson at Catsfield gave me quite a bit of information, I have downloaded some from www.tagmaster.com and some information is available on the Rother Association of Local Councils (RALC) website www.ralc.org.uk

The Black Cat is a Radar unit that can be placed at the roadside to record the number of passing vehicles and speeds across two lanes of traffic over a period of time, battery operated, data is stored on an SD Card up to a maximum of 4GB, the data can then be transferred to computer software to be analysed.

Information gathered from Keith Robertson and online sources;

The device costs approx. **£2500**, can be hired for **£450 per week**.

The device is attached to an existing roadside post, with permission from Highways, **ALL** locations have to be agreed with Highways, if a suitably located post is not available Highways will install at a cost. Keith recommends making sure the selected locations are at least 1.2 metres from the Kerb, if closer to the kerb a very expensive safety course is required for whoever is designated to install the device when required.

When locations have been agreed with Highways there is an annual licence fee, currently **£57**, the licence covers multiple sites in the village. It is suggested that up to three locations are used, it is also suggested that a mounting bracket is purchased for each location as it makes it a lot easier to put the device in place if the bracket is already there, the brackets cost about **£20 each**. The brackets will fit any post from those used for roadside information signs up to telegraph pole size.

The device uses a rechargeable battery pack, Keith has found this lasts for about 10 days before it needs recharging. It can be run for longer periods with a solar panel kit, but that costs around **£800**, and is quite bulky.

The supplier will provide initial training when the device is first installed. Each location used will be given a specific name so that each site across the Rother area has a unique reference number.

Once the device is purchased two pieces of dedicated software need to be loaded to a laptop or tablet to enable you to download and analyse the recordings. The software for downloading is “Collect”, this is FREE and the suppliers will help with setting it up, the software for analysing the records is “VDA-Lite”

It is possible for two or more villages to share a device, in that case it would probably be best for the villages to share the costs, but one village hold the device and manage the usage between the villages, to ensure fair distribution of use. It is also suggested that if two or more villages share a device a dedicated tablet could be provided to go with the device, that way it would not be necessary for each village to install the two pieces of software.

Some PDF’s with further information regarding the device have been added to the ‘Documents’ section of the Parish Council website to make easier for Councillors to find the information

<https://etchinghamparishcouncil.org.uk/document-category/blackcat/>

Summary of potential costs.

Item	Cost	Notes
Device purchase	£2500	
Device hire	£450 pw	More than 5 hirings, better to buy.
Solar Panel Kit	Approx £800	Also quite bulky.
Fixing brackets	£20 each	One needed for each location. (x3?)
Highways licence	£57 pa	
“Collect” Software	FREE	
“VDA-Lite” Software		Not yet known
Ongoing costs		Not yet known
Annual Calibration		Not yet known

Things to investigate further;

Are there any technical issues regarding siting the device near to a VAS Sign (possible conflict of radar between the devices), as we have three VAS Signs in the village. *[current indication is no problem – but still checking]*

Can the device be attached to a suitable post on private property, for instance the front garden of a house on the High Street, if all the sites in the village were on private property is permission and licence still required from Highways.

Are there any ongoing costs with the device, such as an annual re-calibration.

If there is any aspect of the device use that Councillors would like more information on, let me know, so I can investigate.

Cllr. Colin Boylett