

BISHOPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

BPC(06)22 - 20 MPH SPEED LIMITS IN BISHOPSTONE

1. At the meeting in November consideration was given to paper BPC(09)21 which set out a consideration of whether the Parish Council should apply to the South West Wiltshire Area Board's CATG (now Local Highways and Footways Improvement Group) for 20mph speed limits to be introduced in the village. It was noted that if speed limits were to be proposed for all the village roads south of the C12 then a further metro count would be required on Mill Lane, which was not covered by the earlier survey. Cllr Najjar indicated at the meeting that the SWWAB would prioritise any request if it could be shown that there was substantial community support within the village for such a proposal.
2. It was therefore decided (a) to ask for the additional metro count so that all the necessary data was available; and (b), in the meantime, to seek views from the community on whether there was sufficient support for introducing 20mph speed limits. A request for the metro count was submitted on 12 November. As regards community consultation, attached at Annex A is the article that appeared in the December/January edition of STaB. Responses to the article were requested by 20th December.

Metro Count

3. The metro count in Mill Lane was completed at the end of April and the results received on 17 May. A copy of the earlier metro count table, with the data for Mill Lane added, is below.

Location	Total vehicle movements (both directions combined).	Average speed of vehicles (both directions) - MPH	85 th percentile (both directions combined) - MPH
Flamstone St	530	15.7	21.1
Butt Lane	2390	18.2	23.0
Harvest Lane	1786	20.7	26.0
Church Lane	962	18.6	23.9
Faulston Lane	897	16.0	20.8
Mill Lane	175	18.3	26.55

The figures for Mill Lane are in line with those for the other locations, although the 85th percentile is the highest of all the local roads. This is perhaps a reflection of the count location on the long straight stretch of road west of Lower Mill. As indicated in previous papers, overall the metro counts show that average speeds at the survey locations are already less than 20mph. Even at the 85th percentile level, apart from Harvest Lane and Mill Lane, they are only marginally above.

4. Both national and local research indicates that the imposition of 20mph limits reduces traffic speed at the average level by 1-2mph. At the level of the 85th percentile the reduction is only about 0.5mph. In other words those who are already travelling at speeds in excess of 20mph will continue to do so despite the imposition of any limit. The police do not generally enforce within 20mph areas.

Response to consultation

5. Councillors will recall that nine members of the public attended the November meeting, Four of those spoke in favour of introducing speed limits. Three of those who spoke at the meeting have also responded to the STaB consultation. In all 24 responses were received to the STaB consultation. Of these, 12 were in favour of speed limits and 11 were against. One was unclear! Extracts from some of the responses are set out below. In several cases respondents set out their views at some length and two from each side are included in Annex B.

In Favour:

...fully in support of a 20mph speed limit in the village. Although it may only decrease the average speed by a small amount, I think it increases awareness.

I have, many a time, been confronted by vehicles driving way too fast through the village, especially larger delivery vehicles which are more plentiful in these times. I feel very strongly that imposing a speed limit is a must. It may not reduce speed enough but it is a start.... My vote is to act now, there is an accident waiting to happen and we need to do everything in our power to prevent this.

...would like to add our support for a 20mph speed limit in Harvest Lane. The reasoning is that it has the highest incidence of vehicles travelling at a higher than safe speed. Probably because being straight, drivers think they have a clear run from one end to the other. It also now services delivery traffic from the new development at Faulston Barns and the 'new' access road to the Croucheston Farm complex. Both added since any last regulatory changes. Currently the de-restriction sign at the top end of Harvest Lane is unhelpful. There are now at least four families with small children and speeding delivery drivers pose a high risk.

...we do indeed welcome any action that reduces the speed of vehicles using the village roads, especially in Harvest Lane, where the number and speed of vehicles has increased considerably in the last few years. We would like to see a speed limit of 20mph on all the roads off the main Chalke Valley Road, as in Broad Chalke. It's clearly nonsense that the limit at present is 60 mph on the village roads and even a small reduction in speed would be beneficial to the residents in our opinion.

Against:

...we would both like to lodge the view that a 20 mile an hour speed limit is not worth having due to all the reasons laid out such as it making virtually no difference to the speed of cars, it is not enforceable, and it requires numerous signs and road markings.

...it is clear to me that the effort (and expense) required to cause a marginal (0.5mph) reduction in traffic speeds is disproportionate. Especially as....the vast majority of motorists average less than 20mph anyway.

...most of the roads in the village are narrow and twisty naturally limiting driving at excess speed which has been confirmed by your speed census. I personally have never seen anyone

driving at what I consider excessive speed. I therefore think that the money required to replace the signage could be better employed elsewhere.

...the proposal to change it to 20mph will almost certainly make essentially no difference to people's speed or the safety of children and will be a total waste of money.

...I am strongly against the erection of any further signs in a rural setting.

6. The responses to the consultation do not seem to have raised any issues additional to those considered in earlier papers. The main points are:
 - (i) As indicated above, existing average speeds are at, or below, 20mph on all roads already, though there are a few travelling at slightly higher speeds.
 - (ii) Implementation of a limit would require the erection of signs – whilst the main signs at the entrances would merely replace the existing de-restriction signs, there would be 15 or so repeater signs along the village roads and roundels painted on the roads at all the entrances.
 - (iii) There are no current plans for the Police to enforce 20mph limits.
 - (iv) The overall cost of the work would be around £8,500, of which the Parish Council's share would be £2,125. In addition the PC will have to pay £625 towards the cost of the assessment by the LHFIG.
7. It is clear from the consultation that there is support for the introduction of limits, however marginal the effects might be. On the other hand there is also a strong view that the likely impacts are so marginal that they do not outweigh the costs, both financial and environmental in terms of the impact of the signage on the appearance of the village.
8. It is also relevant to consider the level of the response. STaB is delivered to every household in the village and those in favour of speed limits represent 6% of the total. Councillors will wish to consider whether that amounts to the "strong" community support mentioned by Cllr Najjar.
9. Whilst it is Cllr Najjar's view that Wiltshire Council may be more sympathetic now to requests for new speed limits if there is strong community support for the measure this is a fairly recent shift and there is no evidence yet from discussions in the LHFIG against which to judge how far things have changed and whether any application by Bishopstone is likely to be approved.

Next Steps

10. The next meeting of the LHFIG will be in the Autumn. Councillors need to take a decision now on how they wish to proceed so that, if it is decided to make an application, any papers can be prepared over the Summer.

Mike Ash
Clerk

June 2022

Annex A

DO YOU WANT 20 MPH SPEED LIMITS IN THE VILLAGE?



The Parish Council wants to hear your views.

At the meeting on 11th November the Parish Council discussed the traffic speed surveys reported in October's edition of STaB and whether to put forward an application for 20mph speed limits in the village roads south of the High Road.

Wiltshire Councillor Nabil Najjar, who attended the meeting, said that road safety was a priority for the South West Area Board but an application for the introduction of 20mph speed limits would only be supported if the criteria for their introduction were met and **there was strong backing from the local community**. The Parish Council therefore needs to assess the degree of support for such a proposal.

The Parish Council is very concerned to ensure the safety of those using the village roads, whether as drivers, cyclists, horse riders or pedestrians, particularly considering the number of children that regularly have to walk along roads where there is no footpath. However, it is a more open question as to whether the introduction of 20mph speed limits would make a real difference. The traffic surveys have shown that the average speed of vehicles in the village is already at or below 20mph on all roads. At the top end of the range (85th percentile) only Harvest Lane has speeds well above 20mph (26mph).

Research carried out nationally indicates that when limits are introduced average speeds are reduced by 1–2 mph, but only by about 0.5 mph at the 85th percentile level. So whilst some reduction in speeding is achieved, faster drivers continued to behave much as before any speed limit was introduced. The police do not carry out enforcement in 20mph limit areas.

It would be necessary to erect speed limit signs at the Flamstone Street, Butt Lane, Harvest Lane and Church Lane entrances and around 15 smaller repeater signs (at 200m intervals) along the network. Roundels would also be painted on the road. The cost of this work, together with the making of the Traffic Orders required by law, would be about £8,500, of which the Parish Council would be liable for 25% (£2,125).

A number of local residents who attended the meeting expressed strong support for the introduction of speed limits. However, additional traffic surveys would be required on roads not covered by the earlier work before any application can be submitted. The Council therefore decided to request that this work be undertaken and, in the meantime, to seek the extent of support more widely in the village.

It is clear that the potential benefits of introducing speed limits in the village may be somewhat marginal. However, you may consider that any action that reduces the speed of vehicles using these roads is desirable. **The Parish Council would welcome your views – please email me at bishopstoneclerk@btinternet.com by 20th December.**

Mike Ash
Clerk

ANNEX B

REPRESENTATIONS IN FAVOUR OF THE INTRODUCTION OF 20MPH SPEED LIMITS.

(i)

Current situation.

Traffic in the village is increasing - as one would expect and the increased volume of cars circulating within the village is therefore a key reason for the consideration. There is no speed restriction in the village. Therefore in theory the legal speed limit is 60mph.

Village layout.

We are extremely fortunate in having the majority of the village lying to the south of the High Road. While this protects us from speeding vehicles on that road there is no such protection to the south. Nevertheless the layout of the village is such that there are only four entrances to the main village network - Church Lane, Harvest Lane, Butt Lane and Flamstone Street. I chose to forget Pitts Lane. The result is that there is a very easy way of establishing a speed limit area.

Speeding.

Common-sense dictates that most of the roads in question are not suitable for any form of fast driving - unfortunately common-sense often does not prevail. There are several blind corners, the one at Faulston House being the most notorious. Despite the fact that the lanes in the area considered are narrow, there are also straight stretches that invite high speed driving. The normal response to any excessive speed challenge to a driver is "There's no speed limit, mate!"

Traffic.

The number of cars is increasing. Types of car are switching from petrol and diesel, both of which can be heard, to electric or hybrid, both of which have a very low noise signature.

Commercial traffic is increasing in both quantity and scale.

The greater use of delivery services, UPS, DHL, Yodel, Amazon is very noticeable and increasing as people's purchasing habits go more on-line. Inevitably drivers of these types of vehicles are on tight time schedules and are anxious to complete their delivery rounds as quickly as possible. Speed is therefore an essential part of their lives.

Farm traffic.

Farm vehicles are increasing in size and in load carrying capability. Faulston Lane is now used, some might say illegally, as the commercial entrance to Croucheston Farm. Quite what the weight constraints on the two bridges are is unknown to the writer but inevitably damage and wear are being caused.

Demographics.

This aspect has been raised with the Parish Council before. In Harvest Lane there has been a demographic change in recent years. There are now far more young children in the stretch from the High Road, down through Faulston Lane and part of Mill Lane. They play in around The Styles/Harvest Lane junction and there has also been a noticeable increase in school pick up and drop

off traffic times - these usually coincide with white vans man's arrival and departure from jobs in the village.

Statistics.

The comment on national research is possibly true - but that is not a reason to apply it to our special circumstances, because:

- We have an elderly population.
- Many people walk, cycle or ride in the village.
- There are many dog walkers.
- There is a demographic change - more young children.

Marginality is not an issue. One accident due to excessive speed is excessive in itself. In order to get to the many walks in the village you have to walk along the roads. There are no pavements in most of the village.

Neighbouring villages.

Broadchalke and Coombe Bissett have effective speed limits. It is time we did.

Speed Limit Legality.

At the moment it is not a criminal offence to drive at 40mph plus on any of the lanes. The imposition of a speed limit if introduced would, presumably, give the right to prosecute in the case of an accident. There is no such right at present. A tractor with a loaded 20 ton trailer at 20 mph or more within the village is a potential death trap. White van man at 40 mph along Faulston Lane/Mill Lane is an accident waiting to happen. Despite survey evidence casual observation along any of these roads/lanes will highlight the issue.

We know it makes sense, it protects our children, it protects our elderly- is £2125.00 much to expend on achieving this?

(ii)

I am writing to record support for a speed limit in the village roads south of the High Road, in particular along Harvest Lane.

As you point out in your article in Stab, the traffic survey showed a significant number of vehicles travelling along Harvest Lane at unacceptably high speeds and we do take the view that any action that reduces the speed of vehicles along the network of roads south of the High Road is worthwhile.

I do not entirely share your views about the potential benefits being somewhat marginal. First, although the police may not presently enforce 20mph speed limits, with more and more of such limits appearing in and around villages and towns, there may well come a point where a policy of non-enforcement is challenged and compels a change.

Secondly, while I recognise that not everybody appreciates a proliferation of road signs, at present as you drive into Harvest Lane from the High road you see a large sign telling you that the road is de-restricted so that the speed limit is 60mph – not the right message! On the other

hand, if that were replaced by a sign telling you that limit is 20mph, it might well have a calming effect.

What is more, if the 20mph limit were introduced, it should make it possible to use other speed-limiting devices such as SID, which I believe does have a beneficial effect along the High Road.

We do appreciate the Parish Council's willingness to take matters further if there is strong local support.

REPRESENTATION AGAINST THE INTRODUCTION OF 20MPH SPEED LIMITS.

(i)

I don't believe such a limit is needed or would be a positive change, and would not personally support it.

To give you a context I grew up in a rural area of Suffolk, spent the next 20 years or so living in cities and in more recent years returned to the countryside. I witnessed what was generally felt to be an ill-considered blanket application across Suffolk of reduced speed limits where quite often no real danger actually existed simply because people didn't take the time to evaluate the individual needs on a case by case basis; which it seems you are, so I hope I write to listening ears.

- The main road past the village already has a suitably low speed limit so traffic is already calibrated to a lower speed.
- Once you turn off this road in to the respective hamlets themselves the roads are so small and twisty a reduction in speed limit is not necessary to stipulate. I've rarely witnessed anyone driving with any haste through these lanes as they are so clearly residential and there is little incentive.
- We saw the 20mph limit introduced around accident hotspots, or very risky areas like schools where kids can be found crossing the road; and even these when properly implemented are time based.
- By way of consideration how many road traffic accidents involving pedestrians have we actually seen in the village on these back roads?
- There is a great danger in 'going over the top' and missing the point of why they were introduced i.e. highlight a specific need.
- Someone who wants to speed will simply ignore these signs, hence I say 'conscientious driver'.

- We live in a beautiful rural place, an ANOB, a conservation area, a dark skies area; why would you litter it with repeaters, road signs (on poles or painted on the road). Let's enjoy the beauty and not erode it especially when no specific need requires it.
- Living in the countryside we often escape the need for overt regulation often resorted to where we see increased population density & the associated lack of local relationships (that cause one to consider ones neighbour more easily). I don't believe this is actually necessary and there is a danger of implementing it just because its seen to be the right thing, its being offered; or speeding is someones bug bare, personal or political agenda and they are pushing for it.

(ii)

Whilst in theory I completely support any measures that make the village roads safer for myself and my children (who are regular walkers and cyclists around the lanes), I am not convinced that the effort and cost of introducing a 20mph speed limit make it worth pursuing. As you described in STaB, these measures do not seem to make much difference to the behaviour of drivers, and there appears to be no 'punishment' for those who break a 20mph speed limit. I also object strongly to the mass of new signage that would appear to be necessary to mark the new speed limit.

From my observations in Harvest Lane, there appear to be a small minority of drivers that make up the majority of the speeders, and I wonder if we have any other 'soft options' that we could pursue rather than imposing a speed limit. The regular offenders include the Coombe Bissett School taxi..., the Hermes delivery driver, the vans who deliver car parts to Robin Higdon's garage... I'm sure there are more. Is it worth trying to have a word with these drivers.., mentioning that they have been noticed driving too fast along these very narrow minor roads?

Other options might include some more 'informal' signage (I like the one on the High Road outside the Old School for example – 'Drive like your children live here'), or indeed the '20 is plenty' stickers that the residents of Quidhampton have on their bins. I know that these signs might not be strictly allowed, but I also don't know that many people are likely to complain about them... (although obviously the PC probably can't officially support them).