

Highways and Road Safety Update

Community Speedwatch

All current members of the Community Speedwatch team have now been approved by Suffolk Constabulary.

The team has suggested a number of sites from which to operate, and these have been assessed on site by Suffolk Constabulary's Community Speedwatch team against the following criteria:

- Safe for volunteers to operate at
- Able to safely accommodate equipment, including safe positioning of CSW signs
- Good visibility to motorists to maximise educational impact and reduce the risk of sudden reactions

Nine sites have been identified, shown at **Appendix A** to this report.

The next step is a combined classroom and onsite training session, which should take place in March, with an official launch in April. The room hire (Pavilion) for this training session is likely to cost £20.

To ensure that the volunteer teams are properly resourced (particularly in the colder months), it is suggested that an initial budget of £50 be approved for volunteer refreshments (to be disbursed against receipts).

Wickham Street – Request for reduction in speed limit from 40 to 30mph.

For background, see previous report [WPC.24.01.02](#).

At its January meeting (Min. **25.01.7.4** refers), the parish council:

*...considered an update on Road Safety (previously circulated as **WPC.25.01.02**, with Cllr Karunaratne advising that all members of the Community Speed Watch team had been cleared by Suffolk Constabulary and once one outstanding form had been submitted the team would move to on-site training. When invited, no members of the team had volunteered to lead, and therefore Cllr Karunaratne had kindly agreed to fulfil this role initially.*

The clerk further advised that following her letter to Nick Timothy MP with respect to the parish council's request for support in reducing the speed limit at Wickham Street from 40mph to 30mph, he had responded advising with a copy of his letter to Suffolk County Council Highways in support of the parish's request, and offered to meet both councillors and residents of the parish. The meeting asked the clerk to set up a meeting (ideally including an on-site element attended by a highways engineer).

Cllr A Grimes reported that the parish gates at either end of Wickham Street were in poor condition and the meeting asked the clerk to look at costs of any necessary replacement.

Nick Timothy MP visited the parish on Friday 24th January to meet with councillors and local residents and better understand their concerns. Following this, his office issued a press release, which resulted in two news articles in the Haverhill Echo and East Anglian Daily Times w/c 10th February (attached as Appendix B). This generated discussion on the Wickhambrook Community Facebook Pages, and the clerk published an [update](#) on the parish council's website on Friday 14th February.

Cllr Bobby Bennett also responded to the discussion on Facebook (inset in update above) and has confirmed to the clerk that she would fund a new speed survey for Wickham Street on which to base a further request for a reduction in the speed limit. The cost of this survey is £390 (or £435 (with traffic classes)).

The clerk has contacted Nick Timothy MP's office, who advised the following response to his letter to Suffolk County Council in support of the parish council's request to reduce the speed limit:

"Thank you for your e-mail, apologies it has taken time to come back to you. I have been away on annual leave.

As you are aware we have a speed limit policy against which requests for reduced speed limits are assessed against to ensure a consistent approach across the whole of Suffolk.

We have a Community Speed and Safety team at Suffolk County Council who undertake assessments against the relevant criteria for requested speed limits. It is those officers who responded to the Parish Council and advised them, that in their opinion, insufficient of the criteria would be achieved to justify a reduction of the speed limit at that time. As officers, they are unable to approve speed limits where insufficient criteria can be met. This is what occurred when the parish council contacted the team in 2020 and again in 2022.

Where the parish council disagrees with the comments from officers and still seeks a reduction in the speed limit, they have a further option of having a factual report written for them by officers. The report will allow the Police, the local county councillor and the parish council to provide comments and officers to provide factual guidance against each of the criteria as to whether or not the criteria can be met.

The cost of this is £750 plus the cost of a traffic survey to enable current traffic volumes and speeds to be highlighted. The report will be considered by myself and the Head of Transport Strategy where we will provide a formal decision on whether or not a change of speed limit is justified.

If this is something that the parish council wishes to pursue then I will ask the Community Speed and Safety Engineer to write to the parish council with the cost of the report and survey.

If there is a question mark over the justification for a change in speed limit, the comments of officers can save the parish council money by not having a report written, however, I see from your comments this may now be appropriate.

Finally, each request is assessed on its merits so judging the justification on another speed limit approval is unwise. "

The clerk has asked Bobby Bennett for the locality funding for a Tube Speed Survey at Wickham Street (which records the speed/volume and class/type of vehicle (as the volume of high speed HGV's has been raised as a concern by residents too) at a cost of £435). In the event that only a single SDR survey can be funded at a cost of £390, the shortfall would be £45, which could be funded from this year's revenue budget for Highways).

The clerk has additionally asked whether the cost of a factual report (£750) could be funded from Cllr Bennett's locality budget.

The parish council currently has village gateways with existing speed limits installed behind them (although their condition is substantially weathered). The minimum cost of replacement would be in the region of £450 plus VAT per gate (delivery included, but not installation). The parish council could consider replacing the gates in the long term.

Hilary Workman
Clerk and RFO
February 2025

The cost of undertaking a survey across the whole parish to gauge the levels of concern and any willingness to raise additional funding toward the cost of reducing the speed limit would be in the region of:

- Printing - £150 plus VAT
- Delivery (last known price – Autumn '23) £150 plus VAT

Costs could be minimised through hand delivery by volunteers (if sufficient can be recruited).

Powers

1. Local Government Act 1972, s.142 - Power for councils to publish information about the council, its services and the services provided in the area by other local authorities, government departments, charities or other voluntary organisations.
2. Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 s.72(1) - Power to provide traffic signs on roads
3. Highways Act 1980, s.274A - Powers to contribute financially to a highways authority for traffic calming schemes for the benefit of the council's area.
4. Local Government Act 1972, s.111 - Power to do anything that will facilitate, be conducive to or incidental to the discharge of its powers and functions.

Funding Revenue	2024-25	2025-26
Highways	£1000	£500
Community Engagement	£382 (of £400)	£500
Earmarked Reserves	£750 (Highways)	

Shop Hill (pavement)

The clerk has received comments from concerned residents over a period of time about the footpath running up Shop Hill from Pump House (Cloak Lane) towards the school. This has become very congested and narrow, giving cause for concern for parents and guardians walking to or from the school. It is reported to be very difficult to negotiate with prams, pushchairs or mobility buggies.



This has been reported on report a problem, but is likely to be of low priority to Suffolk Highways. The Highways Community Liaison officer has confirmed that the parish could either undertake this work or commission someone to do it for them, without any requirement for permissions or licences.

The clerk has recently been contacted by a contractor who has carried out work to clear footpaths in Kennet with good reports from the clerk there, and a quote has been requested to establish the likely cost of the parish dealing with this issue.

Action:

Decide whether the parish should (funds permitting) instruct a contractor to undertake work to clear this footpath back to its original width where possible and trim back any overhanging vegetation.

Recommendation

- i. **The parish council approve the cost of room hire and refreshments at not more than £70 plus VAT to support the Community Speedwatch team.**
- ii. **The parish council approve the printing a newsletter/survey with respect to road safety in the parish at a cost of not more than £150 plus VAT**
- iii. **The parish council approve the cost of contributing to:**
 - a. **A tube speed survey with vehicle class at not more than £45**
 - b. **A full report by Suffolk Highways into the parish request for a reduction in the speed limit at Wickham Street from 40mph to 30mph at a cost of not more than £750.**







