

For many years speeding in the village has been raised as an issue with the Parish Council. We have been trying, with no success, to make the village safer by having the 30mph speed limit on Church Lane reinstated and making the 20mph speed limit by the school permanent. There have been many accidents in both these locations so it is likely that reducing the speed limit will have a significant safety benefit. The correspondence below shows the current status but we are still pursuing making the village safer.

*****Due to General Data Protections Regulations some names and contact details have been removed. Any named persons below have granted Horsley Woodhouse Parish Council permission to print their name*****

Dear Sirs

Road Safety Improvements in Horsley Woodhouse

As a Parish Council we have previously raised concerns about traffic safety within the village and suggested cost-effective improvements that have not been supported by the Highways Authority. The hazards have not reduced and continue to be a major concern for residents, particularly since the introduction of a Vaccination Centre at the Church Hall has led to an influx of drivers unfamiliar with the perils near its location.

In a short 150m stretch of road, from Merlin Lane to Wood Lane, there are the following hazards:

The Parish Church has a very narrow pavement leading to attendees crossing the road on a blind corner. There have been many reported near misses including a Parish Councillor having to leap over the Church Wall to avoid being hit; not an option for all who attend.

Opposite the Church is Merlin lane, which leads to the recreation ground and play area. The lane slopes down towards the main road increasing the hazard to excited children exiting from the play area.

Merlin Lane also provides the exit for the Scout Hut, which meets four nights a week, resulting in many children heading for the main road in the dark during the winter.

The road outside the school is already recognised as being hazardous and retains a crossing patrol for this reason together with a 20mph limit when the lights are flashing. However, the crossing patrol does not cover the Breakfast club and after-school clubs. It is possible that, to recover the lost time due to the pandemic, young children may increasingly attend school at times when there is no crossing patrol.

The parked cars opposite the Church perform a safety function in terms of slowing down cars but there are regularly minor accidents as cars fail to stop in time. There is also an increased hazard to cyclists since cars often do not see them when they come round the blind bend forcing the cyclists into the parked cars.

The Church Hall normally has many events and is currently being used as a vaccination centre. It is opposite Fairfield road and next to the blind junction at Wood Lane, which can make crossing safely difficult, particularly with the increased traffic caused by the vaccination centre.

The visibility is very poor coming out of Wood Lane and cars frequently pull out in front of traffic. The Highways Authority has previously stated that installing a mirror to improve visibility may not improve safety and we accepted this so reducing the speed of cars seems the best way of reducing the likelihood of an accident.

When these have been raised previously the Highways Authority has treated the hazards independently and has concluded that nothing needs to be done. The Parish Council firmly believe that the high number of hazards in such a short space of road should be treated in aggregate and hence the solution should be aimed at highlighting to drivers a hazardous stretch of road.

The council notes that on many roads, including the A4 in Bristol, this has been done by introducing a short section of 20mph zoning. Whilst drivers may not slow down to 20mph they will be more cautious because they cannot see around the bend and it highlights that they are entering a more hazardous stretch of road. Our recently started Speed Watch managed to do two sessions approaching this stretch of road and found that many

of the cars were exceeding 30mph and that the peak speed recorded approaching this area was 46mph. The drivers may not slow down to 20mph but if they slow down to 30mph this will bring a significant improvement in safety. This will have minimal impact on travel times because the average speed along this stretch is less than 20mph but will, hopefully, eliminate cars mounting the pavement by the Church to avoid a collision with oncoming cars.

The Parish Council also believe that the reinstatement of the 30mph speed limit on Church Lane would improve safety at Stainsby Avenue and encourage parents to walk their children to school along this stretch of road. There have been several major accidents on this stretch of road in recent years (cars written off with ambulances called on at least two occasions). It is also dangerous for drivers pulling out of their drives and cars frequently cross the no-overtaking lines leaving the village to avoid slowing down as people pull into their drives.

The current siting of the 30mph does not align with any physical change in the surroundings increasing the likelihood of drivers ignoring it. This is because their perception of the risk has not changed so compliance is lower than it could be. It is also inconsistent with the entrance to Smalley, where the 30mph is well in advance of contiguous housing, and Wood Lane, where the speed limit is reduced as soon as housing is reached. It is now well-established that behaviours can be modified by a consistent approach and aligning speed limits with a change in the level of risk perceived by drivers is likely to lead to greater compliance to speed limits.

The entrance to the village is a blind corner with no overtaking. This is the natural place to change the limit to 30mph because drivers are aware that they are entering a more hazardous environment: they cannot see around the corner and there are houses with a junction. The continuation of the 40mph limit into the village sends a conflicting message that there is no change in the level of risk and that it is ok to travel at 40mph past houses. When the driver reaches the 30mph limit there is no physical change in the surroundings or the level of risk, perceived or actual, so the council is relying on drivers complying with a 30mph sign. This has proven to be ineffective leading to the council installing a go-slow sign, that frequently breaks down.

Leaving the village, cars speed up when they get to the 40mph sign but, unfortunately, unconsciously speed up again when leaving the village because they are leaving a built-up area. This is because drivers subconsciously adjust their speed according the level of risk they perceive in the surroundings, driving more slowly in built up areas and faster in rural areas with open fields. Reinstating the 30mph limit at the edge of the village would coincide with the transition from open fields to built-up area and lead to greater compliance and a safer village without significant cost.

To summarise, the Parish Council believe there are significant safety benefits that can be achieved by use of speed limits that are consistent with the level of hazard. Heinrich's law suggests that the number of near misses and incidents on Church Lane and by the Church indicate it is only a matter of time before a life changing injury or death occurs. The reinstatement of the 30mph limit on Church Lane and the introduction of a short 20mph section on Main Street (making the school 20mph limit permanent) will show the council's positive commitment to making Derbyshire a safer place to live.

Yours sincerely

Clerk
Horsley Woodhouse Parish Council

Dear *****

Thank you for your enquiry of 22nd April regarding the above. I would first of all like to offer my sincere apologies for the delay in responding to you.

I would like to respond to the issues you raise as follows:

1. Vehicle Speeds and Road Safety - A609 Main Street (between Wood Lane and Merlin Lane)

First of all, please be assured that I fully acknowledge the concerns you raise in relation to vehicle speeds and associated road safety. This issue is a concern that residents and indeed road users across the County commonly report to us and one that is difficult to effectively address.

Additionally, whilst I also understand that the conditions you describe, [in response to your suggestion for a 20mph speed limit to be considered, as you can imagine, Derbyshire County Council receive numerous requests for a whole manner of highway changes from across the County. The sheer number of these requests far outweighs the resources available to fund and process them and as such these are prioritised using specific criteria.](#)

20mph speed limits are introduced sparingly, with casualty reduction being a priority for the selection of such schemes. A number of 20mph zones are in operation in Derbyshire. They should be self-enforcing and so are usually only appropriate in areas where speeds are already naturally low or where a suitable package of traffic calming measures can be used to ensure compliance with the speed limit.

The criteria for the introduction of 20mph speed limits is detailed below:

- Only available for existing 30mph speed limit areas.
- Not available for arterial/strategic routes.
- 6 personal injury collisions over 1km (pro rata) in the latest 3 years.
- Recorded mean speed and 85th percentile should be approximately 20mph.

Given the above, I must confirm that we would not be able to consider the introduction of a 20mph limit on the A609 through Horsley Woodhouse as it forms part of the strategic highway network.

Additionally, our records show that the current reported injury collision history on the section of road to which you refer (or indeed the whole length of the A609 through Horsley Woodhouse) over the latest available three year period would not meet this criteria.

I would also add that the injury collision aspect of the above criteria relates to the provision of other traffic measures such as Vehicle Activated Speed signs and Traffic Calming. I understand that this is often seen as having to await road collisions prior to action being considered, but prioritising locations that are already experiencing road injuries ensures that we are spending our limited funding as effectively as possible.

2. 30mph Speed Limit –

A609 Church Lane I would certainly agree with your [sentiments that the vast majority of drivers will choose to drive at speeds they feel are appropriate in terms of frontage development and unnaturally low speed limits might be less effective. I also wholly acknowledge your comments that the existing 30mph speed limit to which you refer does not seem to reflect any physical environmental change.](#)

When travelling west into Horsley Woodhouse along the A609 from the A608 Heanor Road the 40mph limit commences some small distance after the residential development to the east of Wilmot Drive where there is little in terms of frontage development. The road is then of a consistent character with an absence of frontage development until just past the village nameplate sign where residential development is present on one side of the road. The 30mph village speed limit commencing some distance after this.

My view in terms of consistency would be that a 40mph speed limit is more appropriate where development is present along one side of the road only and that a more realistic 30mph would be placed where village development would be placed on both sides of the road.

In reality of course this would mean extending the existing 40mph closer to Merlin Lane, and clearly this would not be palatable and as such would not be pursued.

I have to admit to having to look up your reference to Heinrich's Law to refresh my memory, and having done so fully understand the point you make. We acknowledge that in reviewing the accident history of any given length of road that 'near misses' and damage only incidents are not taken into account. It is understood that any such incident on the highway has the potential to be more serious though in striving to utilise our limited funding to improve road safety on our network, evidenced injury is the prime source of information we use in assessing priorities. In conclusion, whilst I appreciate my response may be a disappointment to you, I hope I have been able to clarify how we approach requests of the type you make and also how we ensure we direct our limited resources to addressing locations having an evidenced personal injury accident history

Yours Sincerely,*****

Dear *****

We recently sent a request to reinstate the 30mph speed limit on Church Lane and introduce a permanent 20mph speed limit by the school (attached). The response, whilst acknowledging the legitimacy of our concerns, stated that it was not possible due to policy (attached). When we raised this with our local Councillor, Trevor Ainsworth, he suggested we review the Government guidance since this is what Derbyshire's policy would be based upon. We have now reviewed the Government Guidance 'Setting local speed limits' 18 January 2013 (Department of Transport circular 01/2013) that clearly sets out the framework for assessing speed limits. Councillor ***** suggested we send our response to you.

Looking at the reason for not reinstating the 30mph limit it seems to be that there is only housing on one side of the road, which is consistent with the table in paragraph 110 relating to 40 MPH and 50 MPH speed limits. This indicates that 30mph limit is used when development is on both sides of the road. The guidance also states that speed limits should not be used to solve isolated hazards (last paragraph Section 3 under 'Key points') and that other means should be used to address our concerns about the blind junction at Stainsby Avenue. However, the guidance is quite clear that this applies to urban areas and specifically states in section 7.3 Villages 'It is therefore government policy that a 30mph speed limit should be the norm through villages' (Paragraph 131). It defines a village as '20 or more houses (on one or both sides of the road) – and a minimum length of 600m' (paragraph 133). It is not clear what guidance was in place when Derbyshire County Council raised the speed limit on Church Lane to 40mph but the guidance is quite clear that 30mph is the appropriate speed limit now.

Again we request that the 30mph limit on Church Lane be re-instated for the safety and well-being of village residents.

On the 20mph limit Derbyshire County Council seem to have a set of criteria wholly missing from the Department for Transport guidance. The key claim seems to be that the route is an arterial/strategic route. Statutory guidance - 'Guidance on road classification and the primary route network (Published 13 March 2012)' indicates that the classification of Church Lane more likely falls within the definition from Paragraph 1.13:

- B roads – roads intended to connect different areas, and to feed traffic between A roads and smaller roads on the network

The A609 stretches from Ilkeston to Belper but is primarily used by local traffic to link to the A38 and A608. There is clearly limited demand to travel between Belper and Ilkeston since there is no bus route; in fact it is not possible to catch a bus from Horsley Woodhouse to either of these destinations. It therefore seems to be unreasonable to rely solely on this to not implement a permanent 20mph limit when there is already a variable 20mph limit on this stretch of road and the Government's guidance states:

- 20mph zones are predominantly used ... in the vicinity of schools (Paragraph 90)
- It may also be appropriate to consider 20mph limits ... where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high (paragraph 132)
- Signed-only 20mph limits are therefore most appropriate where vehicle speeds are already low. This may, for example, be on roads that are very narrow, through engineering or on-road parking (paragraph 95)

The section of road from Merlin Lane to Wood Lane is permanently narrowed by cars parked on one side and has high pedestrian traffic due to the Sitwell Recreation ground, Scout Hut, Church, School and Village hall accessing this one short stretch road. It would also benefit cars coming out of the blind junction from Wood Lane (Wood Lane is on the main route between Belper and Ilkeston, rather than Church Lane).

We believe the re-instatement of the 30mph limit on Church Lane and the introduction of a permanent, rather than a variable, 20mph speed limit by the school is not only an important road safety improvement but also supports the principal aim that speed limits provide a consistent message between speed limit and what the road looks like (Paragraph 29).

Regards,

Councillor Stephen Till On behalf of Horsley Woodhouse Parish Council

Dear Councillor Till

Road Safety – Horsley Woodhouse

Thank you for your enquiry of the 12th August 2021 regarding the concerns over vehicular speeds on Church Lane, Horsley Woodhouse. This matter has been investigated by officers in the Place Department and the response they have prepared is set out below:

In responding I would like to refer to the officer response of the 9th August 2021 to your subsequent enquiry of the 4th August 2021 on this matter, this is quoted below for ease of reference:

On the issue of the 30mph Speed Limit, Speed limits are set having regard to national criteria published by the Department for Transport. For a speed limit to be successful, it should be seen as reasonable by the majority of drivers by reflecting the environment through which the road passes and require little enforcement attention. For instance, a 30mph area is considered to be built up in nature with development in depth on both sides, frequent accesses, heavy pedestrian activity, etc.

However, whilst there is national guidance on setting speed limits, the fundamental consideration with any speed limit has to be whether a different signed speed limit will actually provide any benefits. Primarily, will actual speeds reduce accordingly? Experience elsewhere has shown that where speed limits have been lowered, actual speeds have stayed the same as previously. Therefore, changes in speed limit are only ever considered where they would be thought to be self-explanatory and self-compliant. It is not sustainable to have to rely on regular Police enforcement to encourage compliance.

It is also important that the speed limit should change as close to the change in environment as possible to convey the correct message to the motorist. It is my understanding that the speed limit in question does reflect and align with the level of roadside development. Indeed, lowering the 40mph speed limit to 30mph could have the effect of reducing its impact where it is really needed. This apart, on the issue of the 20mph Speed Limit being made permanent, the Conservative Manifesto, in undertaking to Invest in a Cleaner, Greener, More Vibrant Economy states its intention to seek implementation of 20mph zone trials in two towns in Derbyshire to promote clean air and cycling benefits, making them "Green Towns."

This work is however still in development though it is hoped that we will be able to provide further information on this initiative later this year.

In my role as***** , I can confirm that the information provided is in line with the Council's current priorities and policies. If you require any further information or clarification regarding the details of this letter, please contact ***** directly by email: *****

Regards
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