

**CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 12 APRIL 2018**  
**SWINBROOK AND WIDFORD – PROPOSED 20MPH AND 30MPH**  
**SPEED LIMITS**

**Report by Director for Infrastructure Delivery**

**Introduction**

1. This report presents responses received to a statutory consultation to introduce a 20mph speed limit in place of the existing 30mph limit at Swinbrook and a 30mph speed limit at Widford.

**Background**

2. The above proposals have been put forward by Swinbrook and Widford Parish Council in response to concerns over road safety and the wider adverse impact of traffic on residents and visitors to the villages of Swinbrook and Widford. The roads in the villages are frequently used by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians and, if approved, would be funded by the parish council. A plan showing the proposals is provided at Annex 1.
3. As part of the technical appraisal for the proposals, speed surveys were carried out at four locations (three in Swinbrook and one in Widford) which showed current speeds within the villages to be largely compliant with the advice issued by the Department for Transport in respect of the proposed speed limits.

**Consultation**

4. Formal consultation on the proposal was carried out between 24 January and 16 February 2018. A public notice was placed in the Witney & West Oxfordshire Gazette newspaper and sent to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, Fire & Rescue Service, Ambulance service, West Oxfordshire District Council, Swinbrook and Widford Parish Council, Burford Town Council and the local County Councillor.
5. Fifty-eight responses were received, comprising 34 (59%) expressions of support and 24 (41%) objections in respect of the proposed 20mph speed limit at Swinbrook and 36 expressions of support (62%), 3 (5%) objections and 19 (33%) responses not objecting or commenting in respect of the proposed 30mph at Widford.
6. These responses are summarised at Annex 2. Copies of the full responses are available for inspection by County Councillors. The report in support of the

proposals received from Swinbrook and Widford Action Group for Responsible Driving (SWARD) is included at Annex 3.

## **Response to objections and other comments**

7. While Thames Valley Police considered that the proposed 30mph speed limit at Widford complied with national guidance, they objected to the proposed 20mph speed limit at Swinbrook due to concerns that speeds outside the core of the village were higher than advised by guidance for a 'sign only' 20mph limit. They recommended that consideration should be given to providing supporting traffic calming measures.
8. The above concerns of the police are noted and it is accepted that the current average speeds at the entries to the proposed limit at Swinbrook will be higher than the recommended level of 24mph for a 20mph limit without supporting traffic calming measures. However, it is considered that as these concerns relate to a small proportion of the village roads as a whole it would be reasonable in this instance to introduce and monitor the proposed 20mph limit and then assess if there is a need or not for low cost supporting measures (for example the placing of a carriageway roundel at the entries to the limit).
9. The other objections (23) to the proposed 20mph limit included concerns that the proposal was unnecessary taking account of the current speeds and absence of any reported higher severity accidents within the village, that it would have a minimal impact on speeds, especially taking account of the likely absence of police enforcement and be a poor use of public funds. Additionally, some respondents expressed concerns that the additional speed limit signing would be visually intrusive. It is accepted that the introduction of a 20mph speed limit without supporting additional traffic calming measures will not – on the basis of speed monitoring carried out for other 20mph speed limit projects – lead to a major change in speeds, at least in the short term, with a reduction in average speeds of around 1mph being realistic, noting that the police do not have the resources to carry out enforcement of such limits, and that the absence of any reported accident history in the village in the latest 5 years would further reduce the priority for the available police resources.
10. Noting the concerns over the potential adverse visual impact of a 20mph limit, while there will be a need for a small number of additional speed limit repeater signs, this will not materially change the amount of speed limit signing in the village given that there are already repeater signs for the existing 30mph limit.
11. The three objections to the proposed 30mph speed limit at Widford included the same concerns as expressed in relation to the proposed 20mph speed limit at Swinbrook.
12. The broader concerns on whether a 20mph speed limit is a sensible use of public funds is a matter for Swinbrook and Widford Parish Council - as funder of the project - to determine.

13. The balance of opinion expressed by respondents is supportive of both proposals, and there is clear evidence of strong local concern over the dangers and loss of amenity to residents and visitors to the area, in particular walkers, cyclists and equestrians expressed both by individual respondents and in the report submitted by the Swinbrook and Widford Action Group for Responsible Driving.

### **How the Project supports LTP4 Objectives**

14. The proposals would help facilitate the safe movement of traffic.

### **Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)**

15. Funding for the proposed speed limits has been provided by Swinbrook and Widford Parish Council.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

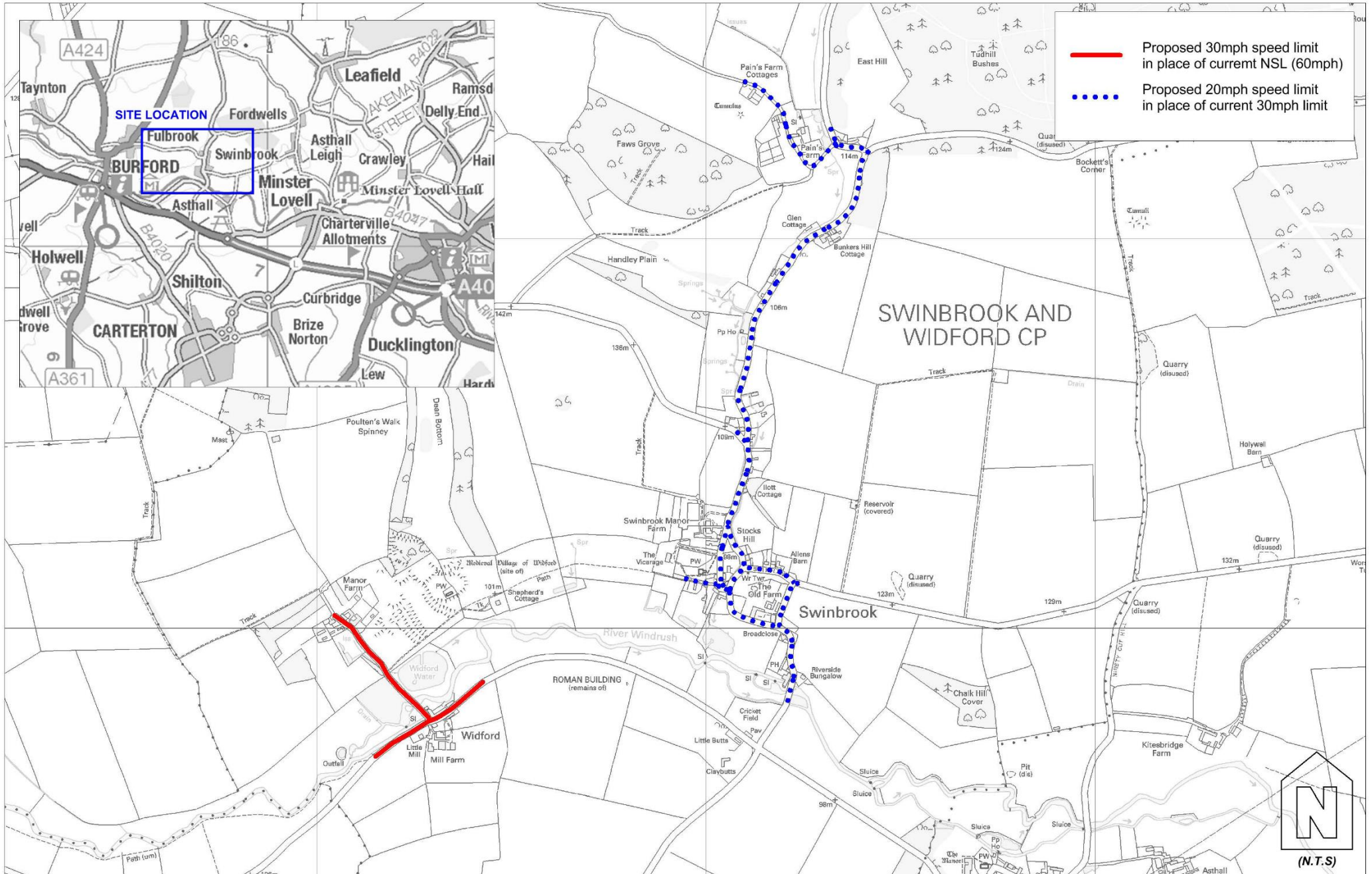
16. **The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve proposals to introduce a 20mph speed limit in place of the existing 30mph limit at Swinbrook and a 30mph speed limit at Widford as advertised.**

OWEN JENKINS  
Director for Infrastructure Delivery

Background papers:           Plan of proposed speed limits  
  Consultation responses

Contact Officers:               Hugh Potter 07766 998704

April 2018



| RESPONDENT   | SUMMARISED COMMENTS  |
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| (1) Traffic Management Officer, (Thames Valley Police)         | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – to the sections where current speeds are higher than the accepted criteria. The core part of this village would meet our policy but outside these bounds require consideration to calming for compliance in our view.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – <b>No objection</b> – is within the accepted guidelines and is accepted without comment on that basis.</p>   |
| (2) Swinbrook and Widford Action Group for Responsible Driving | <p><b>Support</b> – (see report in Annex 3)</p>  |
| (3) Local Resident, (unknown)                                  | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - Swinbrook Village was never designed to accommodate the volume of traffic nor the existing speed in which the majority of vehicles pass through the area and over the years Swinbrook has become a rat run between the B4437 and A40. It has now reached a stage where the current speed limit of 30mph presents a clear and present danger to pedestrians and traffic in general because the lanes are too narrow and there are numerous blind spots, with very few places where vehicles can pass each other safely.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment</p>  |
| (4) Local Resident, (Swinbrook)                                | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - 20 mph speed limit is unlikely to be cost effective and will achieve little. Average speeds through Swinbrook are already low and a 20 mph limit will on the basis of other such result only in a one mph reduction in average speed. The number of cars going through the village prevents anyone going too fast as there is usually another one coming the other way and care has to be taken passing. In over 30 years of riding horses and walking dogs through the village I have never had a problem. The road is a public one and not just for people who live in the village. Signs warning of riders, cyclists and walkers would be more cost effective.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - This is a narrow piece of road regularly used by walkers and tourists from Burford going from one footpath to another, and lies on a slight bend and road junction. Cars certainly need to slow down.</p> |
| (5) Local Resident, (Swinbrook)                                | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - the single track lane through Swinbrook has recently become a rat run for traffic and with this increased speeds have been experienced. As a resident who lives directly on the lane I have regularly experienced cars driving at excessive speeds past our house. This lane is used by horse riders, cyclists &amp; pedestrians including families with young children and pushchairs. It is only a matter of time before a serious accident is experienced</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b>. This village is very popular with cyclists who cycle the national cycle route 47 which goes right through the village. Also the Village is part of a number of popular circular walks where people have to walk</p>  |

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|   | <p>a short distance along the road to pick up the Public Footpath. Pedestrians are unaware that this road can be busy with traffic and similarly traffic can be unaware that there may be walkers and cyclists in the middle of the ; signs alerting drivers (such as signs displaying walkers, horse riders, cyclists) this should also be considered along with a reduced speed limit.</p>  |
| (6) Local Resident,<br>(Swinbrook)              | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment<br/> <u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment</p>   |
| (7) Local Resident,<br>(unknown)                | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - The roads through the village are mainly single track that are regularly used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders. There are no footpaths or lighting. However, the volume and the speed of traffic has increased over recent years and this brings significant risk to walkers, cyclists and riders alike .<br/> <u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - The road through Widford is used as a rat run to Burford and is a very quick road despite being used by many walkers and cyclists, forming part of a national cycle route. The road is relatively wide and straight in places which encourages some people to drive at speeds which are inappropriate for a village environment.</p> |
| (8) Local Resident,<br>(Swinbrook)              | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - The lane through Swinbrook is narrow &amp; winding with a wider variety of users, including walkers, cyclists &amp; riders, as well as motor traffic. The proposed reduction in the speed limit should assist considerably in this respect and make the road much safer.<br/> <u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment</p>   |
| (9) Local Resident,<br>(Swinbrook)              | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> – while accepting that compliance may be low, need to start somewhere to manage speeds better. My drive exit and those of both immediate neighbours are totally blind as we exit our drives This lane daily has walkers, horse riders and cyclists also at risk.<br/> <u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b></p>  |
| (10) Local Resident,<br>(unknown)               | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - I support the proposal because we need to improve safety in Swinbrook where drivers too often drive through the village in an inconsiderate manner and with disregard for safety and the need to protect verges and drystone walls lining the lane. The number of vehicles using the lane has increased massively since the 30mph speed limit was introduced.<br/> <u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - The lane passes very close to a number of homes in Widford and a speed limit of 30mph should increase safety.</p>   |
| (11) Local Resident,<br>(Milton under Wychwood) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - I feel it is ridiculous to spend so much money replacing signs, etc when the majority of people drive through at well less than 30 mph anyway and those that do tend to speed would continue to do so. There is hardly likely to be any official policing of the limit.<br/> <u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Neither</b> - no comment</p>   |
| (12) Local Resident,<br>(Burford)               | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - the speed restriction would be highly beneficial to slow traffic (a) reducing the risk to vulnerable road users (walkers, cyclists and riders in particular) and (b) allowing drivers to react sooner when meeting approaching vehicles on the frequent single lane sections and using passing places rather than eroding the verges by</p>  |

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|                                  | <p>squeezing past each other.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> -The road through Widford is narrow and cars need to slow down considerably to pass each other in any event. Drivers unfamiliar with the route (particularly on occasions when the A40 is blocked for some reason) drive excessively fast through the hamlet as there is no warning that it is being approached. Furthermore, the junction from Widford End Road into the through route is completely blind as there is a house right on the corner. Several properties in Widford have their gardens or car parking areas across the road from the house, increasing the risk of pedestrian/vehicle conflict.</p>   |
| (13) Local Resident, (Swinbrook) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - 1) the repeated Traffic &amp; Speeding tests showed no excessive average speeding<br/>                 2) there have been no fatal accidents on the stretch of the proposed speed limit<br/>                 3) there have been no serious accidents on this stretch of road<br/>                 4) a statutory speed limit of 20 mph is un-enforceable and will not have any effect<br/>                 5) I support a 'voluntary ' speed limit of 20mph as in Barrington, Glos<br/>                 6) the accident hotspot is on road leading down from A40 just before the cricket field and cross road to Burford; this stretch of road should have a 30mph limit</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Neither</b> - 1) the stretch of road through Widford should have a 30 mph limit</p>   |
| (14) Local Resident, (Widford)   | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - Important safety and quality of life issue and this is a long overdue step forward.</p>  |
| (15) Local Resident, (Widford)   | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - All of the comments below on the Widford stretch of road are also valid for the Swinbrook roads and speed reduction.</p> <p>Swinbrook additionally suffers from the problem of traffic avoiding the Burford High St queues to cross the bridge across the Windrush by coming off the A40 at Asthall Turn or turns more directly to Swinbrook.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - The stretch of road for the proposed 30 mph speed limit in Widford is regularly used by pedestrians, organised walking groups (often 15 or more in number), individual cyclists, cycling teams (often of 20 or more in number), motor bikes, cars, delivery vehicles, dog walkers and horse riders (sometimes with additional horses on leads). Many of the walkers are there under recommendation of tourist web sites and the Burford tourist office. Many of the cyclists are there because this stretch of road is part of the National Cycle Route. There have been an increasing number of occasions over the past 15 years where accidents or blockages on the A40 or in Burford have caused diversions through Widford and Swinbrook often for several hours - partly due to the increased use of satellite navigation in cars. Besides making this stretch of road more hazardous for all users, the immediate roadside verges</p> |

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|                                  | <p>are being worn away by cars whose drivers are not prepared to slow down to enable safe passage. Thus, the verges acting as a refuge for pedestrians are gradually diminishing and increasing the idea to drivers that they can use yet more of the road width and hence not reduce their speed appropriately.</p>   |
| (16) Local Resident, (Swinbrook) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - As a resident in the centre of Swinbrook with over 600 vehicles passing our house per day and as a dog walker I feel strongly that safety should be improved by reducing the speed limit.<br/> <u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - As a user of this section of road on a regular basis both as a driver and a walker I strongly recommend reducing the speed limit in an attempt to increase safety at little or no cost to future users.</p>  |
| (17) Local Resident, (Widford)   | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> – no comment<br/> <u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - As we live on the main road through Widford with a baby, we would welcome the speed limit being reduced. Currently vehicles travel too fast along a single track road with a number of turnings. Vehicles rarely give way as they are unable to stop due to the speed they are travelling and end up running over the grass areas. A lower speed limit will help to prevent this.</p>   |
| (18) Local Resident, (Swinbrook) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - The road running through Swinbrook village has mixed usage..mixed vehicle traffic, dog walkers, joggers, tourist groups, ramblers, horse riders, groups of cyclists and much local pedestrian activity...therefore, it is a 'mixed space' environment. The road is narrow with a number of blind corners and a fair share of potholes, surely, it would be sensible to have a reduced speed limit for motor vehicles. We support this whole heartedly...and hope to see this implemented before someone is seriously injured.<br/> <u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - our comments above for Swinbrook apply equally to Widford</p>  |
| (19) Local Resident, (Swinbrook) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - Evidence shows that the majority of vehicles are not travelling in excess of 22mph. A reduction to 20mph is of no great significance . The issue is traffic VOLUME not speed - speed is of far greater issue on the outbound road towards Shipton under Wychwood. Furthermore a 20mph speed limit is no more Enforceable than the current 30mph. There are signs asking for people to drive at 20mph already... it's unlikely that spending 4-6k pounds of council money will make any dramatic difference. The volume of traffic through the village is increasing exponentially and is what ultimately requires addressing particularly paying attention to people using the road as a "rat run" - unaware that local users include farm machinery, horses and riders, walkers and cyclists and failing to take this into consideration when driving through and becoming frustrated at delays... I believe THIS is the problem. They are avoiding the traffic issues at Burford.... long term this it the problem that requires addressing, not speed in the village.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Neither</b> - If this is going to be regularly enforced then it may be worth doing - however, in this case then the road heading out to Shipton Under Wychwood is just as important as the majority of road users (frustrated at having to keep stopping to let oncoming traffic pass in the village and on the narrow roads) speed with little or no regard for other road users or the narrowness of the road.</p> |



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| <p>(20) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - I work and drive through Swinbrook all week long 10 times a day sometimes and find it virtually impossible to do more than 30 on most stretches of road.If you are walking or standing in the road and a car passes by it always feels as if it's going faster than it should.<br/><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Neither</b> - no comment</p>   |
| <p>(21) Local Resident,<br/>(Widford)</p>   | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - As a regular walker along the lanes through Swinbrook over the past 20 years it has become increasingly busy with many vehicles travelling too fast especially making it unsafe for people on foot, with children, dogs or on horse back as cars and lorries use the village road as a "cut through" to avoid the bridge in Burford. The destruction of the grass verges, even where they form a steep bank has been the result of drivers failing to adapt to the conditions.<br/><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> Cars, lorries, farm vehicles all share the narrow road with cyclists, walkers (including many using a very popular circular walking route and horse riders;The road is on a national cycle route and is very well used by cyclists.Much of the increase in traffic over recent years is due to vehicles choosing this road solely to miss the traffic in Burford and the A40.</p> |
| <p>(22) Local Resident,<br/>(Asthall)</p>   | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment<br/><u>0mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Neither</b> - no comment</p>   |
| <p>(23) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment<br/><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment</p>  |
| <p>(24) Local Resident,<br/>(Burford)</p>   | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b>. The route through Swinbrook is increasingly used as a rat run by through traffic which avoids the bottle neck on Burford High Street. This is leading to vehicles being driven at excessive speed on such a narrow road with sharp bends and no protection for other road users. The road is mainly a single lane width with passing places and a 20 mph limit is far more appropriate than 30 mph.<br/><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b>. Drivers unfamiliar with the route drive excessively fast through the hamlet as it is unsigned. Furthermore, the junction from Widford End Road into the through route is completely blind as there is a house right on the corner. Several properties in Widford have their gardens or car parking areas across the road from the house, increasing the risk of pedestrian/vehicle conflict.</p>   |
| <p>(25) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – Many drivers will be unlikely to pay any attention to 20 mph road signs; and are even less likely to adjust their speed accordingly in the knowledge that the 20mph speed limit is impossible to enforce or police; the £5,000 outlay on speed limit signs would achieve little. But signage which alerts drivers to the fact that they share the narrow roadway through the village with pedestrians, cyclists and horses might be an alternative?</p>   |

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|                                     | <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - A 30mph speed limit through Widford makes good sense.</p>   |
| (26) Local Resident,<br>(Swinbrook) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - We live in the middle of the affected area. We believe 30mph is a dangerous speed for cars to be travelling past our house. There is insufficient route visibility on the twisting, single track road for these speeds to be safe. Driving out of our garage on to the road is often dangerous and we've had a few near misses, particularly in poor weather conditions. In addition, we often walk through the village with our puppy and kids. Cars travelling at 30mph make little effort to slow down when taking a blind corner and then pass our (high spirited!) young ones leaving very little excess space..</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment</p>   |
| (27) Local Resident,<br>(Swinbrook) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - We live in the middle of the affected area. We believe 30mph is a dangerous speed for cars to be travelling past our house. There is insufficient route visibility on the twisting, single track road for these speeds to be safe. Driving out of our garage on to the road is often dangerous and we've had a few near misses, particularly in poor weather conditions. In addition, we often walk through the village with our puppy and kids. Cars travelling at 30mph make little effort to slow down when taking a blind corner and then pass our (high spirited!) young ones leaving very little excess space. It has been pretty scary on occasion.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment</p>  |
| (28) Local Resident,<br>(Swinbrook) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - We have children and dogs and regularly walk through the village and have had a number of near misses. Drivers use the village as a rat run on their morning and afternoon commutes, and at many points in the village there are blind bends/ corners and even cars travelling at 30 miles are dangerous.</p> <p>Hence, in the interest of all pedestrians/ cyclists/ horse riders and drivers. A reduced speed limit 20 mph will make the roads in the villages much safer.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - The road at this point is narrow, and difficult for two cars to pass each other safely without slowing down significantly . The area is also part of a marked footpath, where walkers have to walk down the road to rejoin the footpath towards either Burford or Swinbrook.</p> <p>A reduced speed limit will make the road much safer for all road users.</p> |

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| (29) Local Resident,<br>(unknown)   | <u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - no comment<br><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment  |
| (30) Local Resident,<br>(Swinbrook) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - The timing of this could not come at a better time as the spring is upon us and the road through the village becomes busier as the weather improves with hundreds of walkers and cyclists. More so on the weekends when the road through the village is packed with children cyclists dog walkers enjoying this designated area of outstanding natural beauty.</p> <p>The area in and around the pub (swan) is very busy with all of the above and large amounts of parked cars on the road through this area of the vacillate especially can only help for the safety of everyone including people driving cars vans etc going on their daily business or routine.</p> <p>The road through the viallge is a signed and designated single track road and has no official marked passing places. As a qualified hgv driver with 20 years of driving experience, I can only see the positives of this change to 20 mph, to benefit the whole community and for the safety of visitors.</p> <p>My comments are a true reflection of what I as an individual believe and hope they are taken into account in giving the village what we need and want.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - The area proposed should be 30 or even 20 and to think the road is rated as 60 mph is beyond believe.</p> <p>There are very limited views coming from the bridge area and private car park opposite, on a section of road that becomes very narrow for all road users.</p> <p>I beleive it is a matter of safety that the speed limit is changed.</p> |
| (31) Local Resident,<br>(Swinbrook) | <u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment<br><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment   |
| (32) Local Resident,<br>(unknown)   | <u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - As a local resident of Widford and a regular cyclist/walker I fully support this proposal. Whilst walking with a colleague through Swinbrook a car actually clipped a hand as it sped past us. I believe with the increase in car population this is a limit well overdue.   |

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|                                     | <u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment   |
| (33) Local Resident,<br>(Swinbrook) | <u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment<br><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment   |
| (34) Local Resident,<br>(Widford)   | <u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment<br><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - no comment   |
| (35) Local Resident,<br>(Swinbrook) | <u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - Even though it is VERY HARD to drive through this village at 30mph, a surprising number of drivers try to do this, and there is frequently evidence of minor accidents. Many cars also drive close to pedestrians; with a 20mph limit most drivers would drive at 24 rather than 30 and may be more understanding that we are entitled to share the road with them.<br><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - It is completely crazy that Widford is 60 mph. The visibility in the centre of Widford when you come across 2 children on bikes or 10 hikers is about 3 car lengths. The inappropriate speed of many drivers means that families have to literally throw themselves into the hedgerows and precariously perch in muddy trenches where the verges have been eroded - as many cars will barely slow down.   |
| (36) Local Resident,<br>(Swinbrook) | <u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - Many drivers do not accept that we need to share the road and I hope this will make them more considerate and understanding.....<br><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - This is a dangerous place to walk with current 60 mph limit. I am sure most drivers will think this is a good initiative   |
| (37) Local Resident,<br>(unknown)   | <u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - Both speed surveys showed an average speed of 24 mph through the village in the 30 mph zone, regardless of whether the gadgets that recorded the speed were placed on a bend or on a straight piece of road. There is no history of serious accidents in the village. Considering the number of vehicles shown in the speed surveys to drive through the village, this shows that people are driving with due care and attention. I understand that the police are not likely to support an application for 20 mph and that it is not easily enforceable.<br><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - I would support an application for a 30 mph zone on either side of the cross roads but feel it is not necessary to extend it up the no through road to the houses at the top. The road to Burford is used by many walkers and also many people park up the no through road and the when emerging from the side road to return to Swinbrook or Burford visibility is very poor. |

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| <p>(38) Local Resident,<br/>(unknown)</p>   | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - I think that the speed through the village will not be reduced by the implementation of a 20 mile an hour speed limit which cannot be enforced .The survey shows the average speed of vehicles through the 30 mile zone is negligible .The layout of the road and the potholes through the village prohibit speeding through the village . In my opinion any new speed limit imposed on Swinbrook is not necessary and achieve very little and would not be cost effective</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> – no comment</p>  |
| <p>(39) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - The single track lane, with many blind corners and the occasional passing place, that winds through the length of Swinbrook , a village in an area of outstanding natural beauty, is used extensively by pedestrians, often carrying small children or pushing a pram, dog walkers , cyclists and horse riders. There are no footpaths alongside the lane and so all users are forced to utilise the shared space of the tarmac surfaced road.</p> <p>The speed and the volume of traffic has, over time, resulted in extensive and significant vertical and lateral erosion of the natural verges making it both extremely difficult for users to get off the road quickly and causing damage to property. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly difficult for some residents to drive into and exit their properties safely given the speed at which some cars, vans and trucks travel.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> – as above</p> |
| <p>(40) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – no comment</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – no comment</p>   |
| <p>(41) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - The exponential increase in traffic and users of the road has resulted in this being an undeniable necessity, on the grounds of safety.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> – as above</p>  |
| <p>(42) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> – no comment</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p>  |

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| <p>(43) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - I watch someone driving at speed through the village and pray that someone on a bike , horse or with a baby buggy isn't coming the other way around the blind corner. Too many times I have heard the screeching of breaks as cars narrowly miss each other right outside our window. I have nearly met my end twice on the lane outside our house (once when I was loading my small child into the back of the car and a van hit black ice and broadsided our car.)</p> <p>It is a matter of time before there is a terrible accident here. Reducing the speed limit is a very positive step to stopping that from happening.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> – as above</p>   |
| <p>(44) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - 1. Whilst the volume of traffic is probably average for this type of village, the proportion of cars that are not driving safely for the road conditions (single track road with numerous blind bends) is high. When driving through the village I have been forced to make emergency stops or pull sharply off the road to avoid collisions on many, many occasions. During the recent poor weather, I narrowly avoided head-on collision when one driver travelling too fast on the road was unable to stop. Equally when on foot I find myself having to signal to drivers to slow because even at 30mph coming round a blind corner on narrow road is too fast, especially when not considering the possibility of pedestrian traffic which is unusually high owing to tourism in the village.</p> <p>2. If there were to be an accident the likelihood that it would be serious is very high. No doubt you are familiar with road traffic accident statistics, but on rural roads like ours that are winding and single track especially where foot traffic is high, were there to be an accident involving a pedestrian it would have a greater than 50% chance of resulting in a fatality - higher than urban areas or motorways. I take this statistic personally because it could easily be me or my child involved.</p> <p>3. Statistics from traffic monitoring only tell half the story. The percentage of cars travelling at much higher speed than the limit was significant and a serious risk to foot traffic which wasn't measured and as I have said is high.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p> |

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| <p>(45) Local Resident,<br/>(Widford)</p>   | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – have never seen anyone speeding. Don't try to mend something that's not broken.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p>   |
| <p>(46) Local Resident,<br/>(Widford)</p>   | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – do not think it necessary and would not like to see any other signage in and around our lovely villages.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p>  |
| <p>(47) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - the only time we were really troubled by the road was when traffic was forced to use the road as the result of an accident on the A40 or A361 . It was brought to a standstill on those occasions but at other times the traffic was almost always moving at less than 30 mph , indeed it would be foolish to attempt a greater speed at any time , as you never know what you might meet...and where the next pothole is going to appear . We think that the formal reduction in speed limit is quite unnecessary and would urge you not to invoke the reduction</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – as above</p> |
| <p>(48) Local Resident,<br/>(unknown)</p>   | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - not cost effective.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – as above</p>   |
| <p>(49) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – The money would be better spent on filling in the pot holes, which cause damage to all of our cars.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p>   |
| <p>(50) Local Resident,<br/>(unknown)</p>   | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - feel 30 mph is the correct speed limit. Mostly when traveling through the village you don't hit 30 mph anyway, but 20MPH is to slow.</p>   |

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|  | <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p>  |
| <p>(51) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p>      | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - the volume of traffic has increased beyond belief, as is the case throughout the whole of Britain I would imagine. I do not however feel the speed of traffic has increased any, infact sheer volume probably keeps speed down as drivers are likely to meet traffic coming in the opposite direction along the single track road. I would also note that in all that time I can only recall 3 accidents, 2 involving horses of which the riders lost control no vehicle involved the other being an elderly village resident whose car skidded on ice when taking the bend outside our house. There may be more I can't recall but to best of my knowledge there has never been a serious road accident in the village. This leads me to believe that traffic travelling through the village does so in a safe &amp; considerate manner.</p> <p>This is also backed up by 2 speeding surveys both of which put average speed through the village at just 24mph. I feel that reducing the speed limit would be a complete waste of time &amp; valuable resources to everyone involved &amp; would like to formally object to this proposal</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p> |
| <p>(52) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p>      | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> - I feel this would be a complete waste of time &amp; money as traffic does not speed through the village as backed up by 2 speed monitoring surveys &amp; since there have been no serious accidents drivers are obviously driving with care &amp; consideration.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p>   |
| <p>(53) Local Resident,<br/>(Swinbrook)</p>      | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – a waste of money.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p>  |
| <p>(54) Local Resident,<br/>(Minster Lovell)</p> | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – no comment</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p>   |



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| (55) Local Resident,<br>(Asthall) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – Maybe install caution signs (please drive carefully).</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p>  |
| (56) Local Resident,<br>(Asthall) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – Signs instead to make people more aware of the hazards.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p>  |
| (57) Local Resident,<br>(Burford) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Object</b> – Not cost effective.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> – no comment</p>  |
| (58) Local Resident,<br>(unknown) | <p><u>20mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> - I know the question of speed limit has raised tensions in the village, but I write this in the hope that it might bring us together in recognising a problem. People - especially non-villagers - are not treating these narrow, winding roads with the respect they deserve, especially when weather conditions make them even more difficult.</p> <p><u>30mph Speed Limit</u> - <b>Support</b> – as above.</p> |



## REDUCTION OF SPEED LIMITS IN SWINBROOK AND WIDFORD

### CONTENTS

- Introduction
- The context
- Views of Residents
- Views of Visitors
- OCC Speed Monitoring events
- Conclusions and Recommendations
- References
- Appendices




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### INTRODUCTION

This report presents a case for reducing the present speed limits in Swinbrook and Widford. It is written on behalf of concerned residents, local visitors and tourists to support the speed reductions as part of the Parish initiative to create a safer environment for all road users. The lower speed limits would highlight the nature of the village lanes and are intended to encourage drivers to adopt appropriate and safe speeds when sharing the roads with vulnerable road users. This report is sponsored and authored by representatives of the Swinbrook and Widford Action Group for Responsible Driving (SWARD).

The results of the two recent Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Speed Monitoring events are interpreted within the context of additional evidence including the views of both residents and visitors. The DOT Guidelines *Setting Local Speed Limits* Circular 01/2013 is used to inform the report.

### THE CONTEXT - THE NATURE OF THE WIDFORD AND SWINBROOK LANES

#### Swinbrook:

*"Swinbrook is about 2 miles east of Burford on the north side of the River Windrush away from all main roads and can only be reached along country lanes". Oxfordshire villages website, 2017*

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**The lane through Swinbrook for which a 20mph limit** is now being requested (referred to as the Village Lane for the purposes of this report) is a narrow, single-track lane where residents, visitors and tourists walk in the lane itself. In keeping with such a rural environment there are no road-side footpaths or pavements, although there are occasional grass verges which provide important safe places for walkers whenever a vehicle passes. Extensive erosion of these verges by cars, vans and HGVs has not only reduced the amount of safe space for walkers but also provides a false impression of road width and road conditions, further encouraging inappropriate speed - with road users frequently driving at 30mph within inches of pedestrians.

- The Village Lane has multiple single-track blind bends with restricted visibility, very few places that are wide enough for 2 vehicles to pass unless both vehicles mount the verges - and is regularly used by many vulnerable road users including residents accessing their homes or visiting neighbours and tourists and local visitors including families with young children, cyclists, horse riders, and dog walkers
- The local authorities encourage tourists and visitors to come to walk the Village Lanes, including publishing details on several information websites, widely advertised in many tourist guides - and furthermore promoting walks through the village lanes with the provision of on-line maps as a recommended countryside walk.
- Swinbrook is a popular tourist destination due to it's historic links with the Mitford family and the popular Swan Inn, which attracts many diners and hotel guests – many of whom will be first time visitors and tend to walk the Village Lane.
- Hence it is not unusual to round a bend or drive over the brow of a hill and suddenly come across a single dog walker, a family pushing babies in buggies, horse riders or a conducted tour of up to 15 people walking on the Village Lane.



Photograph Swinbrook 1



Photograph Swinbrook 2

**(Please see further photographs in Appendix 2)**

**Widford:**

The residents' survey indicated that 93% of Parish residents supported the reduction of the speed limit through Widford.

We therefore strongly support the present application to reduce it to 30mph for the following reasons:

- The road through Widford is frequently used by cyclists, dog walkers and families following a well publicised circular walk (see photos below and in Appendix 2)
- The following link is the recommended map which encourages visitors to visit and walk along the Widford road.  
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/environmentandplanning/countryside/walksandrides/westoxwalks/cwwindrushmap1.pdf>
- Widford is a small hamlet located around a road junction on a narrow lane. Nearby is St Oswalds Church, a medieval building with significant wall paintings, this is a very popular tourist site which is heavily promoted.
- The road junction at Widford is a blind exit, it is extremely difficult to exit, especially when traffic is travelling at speed. Some of the houses in Widford have their car parking facility on the other side of the lane, residents therefore need to cross regularly by foot.

The DOT states that it is government policy that a 30 mph speed limit should be the norm in villages. Traffic advisory leaflet 01/04 (DfT 2004) suggests a set of reasonable minimum criteria for a speed limit of 30 mph but it also states that when the character of a village falls outside this definition, local authorities are encouraged to use their discretion to decide whether this speed limit is appropriate. We strongly support that this is the case in Widford, as this is a tourist attraction in an AONB and the lane is used by large numbers of vulnerable road users.



Photograph Widford 3

Photograph Widford 4



**THE CONTEXT - OTHER POINTS OF REFERENCE:**

The World Health Organisation (WHO 2017) argues strongly that 20mph limits are required for authorities to meet “Duty of Care” responsibilities and recommend a speed limit of 30km/h (19mph) when “roads provide possible conflicts between car and unprotected users”( WHO 2017:9).

- Visitors are encouraged to come to walk through our lanes in both villages, not only by necessity but also as a tourist attraction and these visitors include many elderly walkers and young children. We believe that this requires some consideration for their safety during their visit, as well as the safety of local residents.
- In Parish Council (PC) meetings residents have frequently expressed concern about the safety of visitors, residents and especially children walking these lanes because of the increasing volume and speed of traffic through the Swinbrook and Widford parish.
- Residents have raised the need “to do something” before a serious incident may occur. Recent records, kept by the Parish Council Clerk list many near-misses and incidents including an overturned car during 2017 requiring attendance by emergency services.
- The introduction of a 20 mph limit is therefore very important in terms of Duty of Care, to encourage drivers to drive with due consideration of the shared nature of these lanes.

Traffic Authorities are encouraged to consider the introduction of more 20mph limits to create a safer environment and improve the quality of life in a community (Department of Transport (DOT) 2013).

- The DOT 2013 guidelines state: *“If a rural road is below A or B classification and there is a risk to vulnerable road users then it should be classified as a local access road .....*”

It is our opinion that this condition is met, and OCC confirmed at a recent meeting that this is indeed the classification. When a road is classified as a local access road the DOT guidelines recommend that the wishes and needs of the local community are considered to be of paramount importance when considering a reduction in speed limits.

**VIEWS OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS**

In response to discussions at Parish Council Meetings two research surveys have been conducted by a group of residents to identify the views of i) local residents ii) visitors to the village to reducing the present speed limits. The raw data for both surveys are available for inspection.

**RESIDENTS’ VIEWS : survey of households in Swinbrook and Widford**

At the Village Traffic Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017, following the support offered by Anthony Kirkwood (Assistant Principal Engineer, Traffic Safety and Accident Prevention, Oxford CC) and Neil Owen (Oxfordshire County Councillor) three key proposals and options were discussed. Both of the guest County officials indicated that our parish needs to respond urgently to the increasing traffic volume and to consider the options for safer and calmer roads.

The aim of this survey was to seek the opinion of a large representative sample of parishioners as to whether they agreed or disagreed with the three proposals and to provide a summary of the data for the PC so they could act in the best interests of our community and with respect for the views expressed. The results summarized below are based on the 85% of households in the parish who responded to this survey, either in writing or in person. This is an extremely high response rate for such surveys and demonstrates the strength of local feeling on the issue.

A brief summary of the survey follows. **A more detailed account of methodology is in Appendix 3**

### Methods

The three key proposals from the Parish Council Traffic Meeting were presented in writing or by personal communication as follows:

1. Are you supportive of the proposal *that Swinbrook and Widford Parish Council should move forward with an application for a 20mph speed limit to replace the current 30 mph limit through the village?*

**RESULT: YES: 86% NO: 14%**

2. Are you supportive that this proposal *be supplemented with an application to additionally reduce the speed down from 60mph to 40mph on all other village approach roads (e.g from the A40, from Burford via Widford and past South Lawn from the A361)?*

**RESULT: YES: 93% NO: 7%**

3. Finally, are you supportive *that the Parish Council also put together a plan whereby Swinbrook may be designated as an official "Shared Use" lane at some time in the future?*

This would fall under a Department of Transport use order, known as a " Quiet Lane" policy and is described in detail by the CPRE via the attached link.

[www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/download/378](http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/download/378)

**RESULT: YES: 84% NO: 16%**

The many reasons given for the "Yes" responses focus on serious concerns about the safety of residents, visitors and notably children in our villages, the need to remind drivers of the risks their vehicles pose to people who live and tourists who walk here - and to encourage drivers to be more responsible and respectful of our community. In addition, there is a strong sense that we need to protect this very special recreational and walking environment from the impact of advancing urban surrounds and increasing traffic volumes.

### Residents' Views: Conclusions

A clear majority of the households who responded voted in favour of all three proposals. It was recommended that steps should be taken to investigate and implement these changes as swiftly as

possible.

One concern raised by the PC was that the cost of implementing changes to the speed limit would result in an increase in The Parish Precept, but decisions were made at a subsequent parish meeting that this would not be necessary.

## THE VIEWS OF VISITORS

After discussion at the Parish Council of the results of the residents' survey it was decided to conduct a short survey of the views of visitors to Swinbrook. The survey was carried out by 2 residents, who are both experienced research scientists, over a combined period of 9.5 hours. A total of 453 signatures in support of the road speed limit reductions were received as follows:

One survey took place on the 2 weekends either side of the second OCC Traffic Monitoring event i.e. Sat 13th /Sun 14th May and Sat 20th/Sun 21st May; it is of note the weather was not good during 3 of these dates and the numbers of visitors was lower than expected on a fine weather weekend..

Both researchers were located at the same point in the village (outside the Swinbrook Village Hall ). The times chosen for this activity were approximately 1 to 2 hour time slots between 11.30 hrs and 15.30 hrs. They did not stop cyclists.

Visitors who walked by were asked if they had concerns about the speed of the traffic during their walks and if they would be happy to sign a petition to indicate their support for our application to reduce the existing speed limit. **A copy of the petition is in Appendix 4.**

In total 210 supporting signatures were collected over 9.5 hours. Not one person approached refused to sign, everyone was in wholehearted agreement with the petition.

Some typical comments:

*"These roads are very narrow and cars just don't slow down for walkers"*

*"I can't see why anyone would not want to sign this petition"*

*"These are country lanes, very narrow and unsuited to existing speeds, extraordinary dangerous, please don't wait for a bad accident to correct this"*

This represents just over **21 people per hour** walking past Swinbrook Village Hall over the collection period, this is equivalent to 1 person every 2 minutes and 50 seconds.

During the data collection period there were 2 incidents: The first was a collision between 2 cars, near the corner by Swinbrook Cottage. The second was more serious; a group of 4 adults, one of whom was carrying a very young infant in a chest sling, walked past. They were shocked and very angry having just been narrowly missed by a car driving past at very high speed; they were extremely keen to sign the petition.

A second survey was conducted in the form of unmanned petitions : over the month of May 13<sup>th</sup> to the end of June a further 243 supporting signatures were collected at the un-manned petitions in the entrance to The Swan Inn and Widford and Swinbrook Churches, these are popular destinations for visitors.

**There is therefore evidence of overwhelming support from visitors of a reduction in speed limit in Swinbrook and Widford. The raw data is available for inspection if required.**



## TRAFFIC SPEED SURVEYS IN SWINBROOK AND WIDFORD PARISH

In response to requests from Swinbrook PC, Oxford County Council (OCC) has carried out 2 Speed surveys, the first in 2016 and the second in 2017.

There follows an interpretation and opinion of the traffic speed data provided from these OCC Speed Monitoring exercises provided in response to the open invitation for comments (19<sup>th</sup> June 2017) from the Parish Council to local residents.

The Dept of Transport Guidelines (Circular 01/2013) "*Setting Local Speed Limits*" " has been used to inform this interpretation and is offered within the context of the nature of the village road and the additional survey evidence of the views of both residents and visitors.

The objective of the speed monitoring survey was explicit: it was not intended to evaluate whether or not there is a speeding issue through the village with drivers breaking the law with respect to the current speed limit of 30 mph, but was to provide data to evaluate whether or not a 20mph limit could be introduced (without the need for additional traffic calming measures) under Government issued DOT guidance.

### Data Interpretation for Swinbrook

#### OCC: First Speed Survey - May 2016

This initial speed survey (OCC:May 2016) has shown (despite the camera's location: one between a blind bend and a road junction, another on a blind bend) that 119 cars exceeded the 30mph speed limit over the 7 day trial and an average of 612 cars per day was recorded by one of the cameras.

#### OCC: Speed Survey - May 2017.

This data is from a camera located at: Court Cottage East and Court Cottage West. Please note this location is as shown in the above photograph 2.

- **The mean speed was 23.5/ 23.9mph (depending on direction of travel)**

**Comment:** Research from the DOT indicates that "*If the mean speed is around 24 mph introducing a 20 mph speed limit, even with signs alone, is likely to lead to general compliance with the new speed limit*" (DOT 2013)

- **Although a minority of cars were driving at excessive speed 85% of the cars were travelling at or below 29.8 mph**

**Comment:** The 85<sup>th</sup> % percentile data is within the current speed limit, this indicates that the majority of drivers comply with the statutory speed limit and are therefore perhaps more likely to also comply with a lower speed limit of 20mph

#### Additional data over the week of recording:

- 308 cars exceeded the 30mph speed limit, this is an average of 44 cars every day exceeding the 30mph speed limit.
- 35 cars travelled at speeds between 36 and 41 mph, 5 cars between 41 and 46 mph and one car between 46 and 51 mph

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**Comment:** 15% of cars are driving at excessive speeds. This is a single-track road with no footpath and restricted visibility, It is used by vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, families with young children, cyclists, horse riders and dog walkers.

There are also 4 drive way entrances at this point, all of the drive ways have very restricted visibility. Due to the narrowness of the lane it is not possible to leave and enter the driveways without making several manoeuvres

- Crucially the overall mean and 85<sup>th</sup> % percentile speed is within the range identified by DOT research as being conducive to driver compliance if a lower speed limit of 20mph is introduced.
- Therefore, according to the DOT guidelines the results of this speed monitoring exercise strongly support a case for reducing the present speed limit from 30 to 20 mph.)

To conclude, a review of the speed data collected indicates a minority of cars driving at speeds in excess of the legal limit. All of these were driving at a dangerous speed for the type of road.

The overall mean speed is within the range identified by DOT research as being conducive to driver compliance if a lower speed limit of 20mph is introduced. According to the DOT guidelines the results of this speed monitoring exercise strongly support a case for reducing the present speed limit from 30 to 20 mph.

### OVERALL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper presents a strong case for reducing the speed limits in the village by clarifying a context for Swinbrook and Widford and the nature of the community. It also draws on evidence from surveys of the attitudes of residents and visitors and provides some analysis of recent OCC speed test results.

We believe that the introduction of a 20 mph limit in Swinbrook and a 30 mph limit in the centre of Widford will encourage more considerate, careful and hence safer driving and provide important information to drivers about the nature of the road.

Data from the 2 local surveys (Residents and Visitors) indicates the majority of residents, tourists and local visitors recognise that the current speed and volume of traffic through these lanes pose a risk to the safety of unprotected, vulnerable road users. By adding their names to this proposal they appeal to the authorities to reduce the speed and help to keep them safe. While there is no guarantee that all drivers will drive responsibly, these speed reductions will help to improve driver awareness and we ask that this request be recognised, in keeping with WHO recommendations, as a Duty of Care to all who use these lanes.

### REFERENCES:

1. *Setting Local Speed Limits* DOT Circular 01/2013
2. *Managing Speed* WHO 2017  
<http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/254760/1/WHO-NMH-NVI-17.7-eng.pdf?ua=1>

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Feb 16<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Acknowledgements:** We should like to acknowledge the incredible support and enthusiasm received from so many of our neighbours and parishioners over the past 2 years.

## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX 1: SWARD AIMS

Aims:

1. To create a safer environment and improve the quality of life in the community
2. To encourage walking, cycling, horse riding and the considerate use of the road as a shared facility
3. To create a sense of ownership of the scheme and encourage responsible driving
4. To discourage use of the road as a "rat run"

APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHS

SWINBROOK







WIDFORD







**APPENDIX 3:**

**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE SWINBROOK AND WIDFORD RESIDENTS' SURVEY**



## A CAMPAIGN FOR SAFER LANES



August 2016

### Introduction and Background

Parishioners have reported their concerns about the speed and aggressive attitudes of certain drivers traveling through our villages to the Parish Council (PC) over many years. There is recent evidence of drivers failing to exercise appropriate judgement with regard to their speed whilst negotiating the specific road conditions in the parish, of cars exceeding the speed limit on a daily basis, being driven recklessly past pedestrians and causing damage to stone walls and road-side verges. There have also been several reported accidents and incidents; one of these, near the crossroads by the cricket club, resulted in a car overturning and required the attendance of the emergency services.

At the Village Traffic Meeting on May 25<sup>th</sup>, following the support and encouragement offered by Anthony Kirkwood (Assistant Principal Engineer, Traffic Safety and Accident Prevention, Oxford CC) and Neil Owen (Oxfordshire County Councillor) three key proposals and options were discussed. These proposals now need to be considered for further action.

Both of the guest County officials indicated that our parish needs to respond urgently to the increasing traffic volume and to consider the options for safer and calmer roads.

### Aims

The aim of this survey was to seek the opinion of a large representative sample of parishioners as to whether they agree or disagree with the three proposals and to provide a summary of the data for the PC so they can act in the best interests of our community and with respect for the views expressed.

### Methods

The three key proposals from the Traffic Meeting were presented in writing or by personal communication as follows:

1. Are you supportive of the proposal as discussed on the 25th, *that Swinbrook and Widford Parish Council should move forward with an application for a 20 mph speed limit to replace the current 30 mph limit through the village?* A copy of the rationale for this proposal (as presented during the meeting on May 25<sup>th</sup>) was provided.
2. Are you supportive that this proposal *be supplemented with an application to additionally reduce the speed down from 60mph to 40 mph on all other village approach roads (e.g from the A40, from Burford via*

*Widford and past South Lawn from the A361)?*

3. Finally, are you supportive that the Parish Council also *put together a plan whereby Swinbrook may be designated as an official "Shared Use" lane at some time in the future?* This would fall under a Department of Transport use order, known as a "Quiet Lane" policy and is described in detail by the CPRE via the attached link.

[www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/download/378](http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/download/378)

Data collection was initially undertaken by sending individual e-mails to everyone on the PC email list during early June. PC members were not included in the initial request as it was recognized they would be able to express the views of their own households by nature of their positions on the committee.

As this is not intended to be a referendum, for practical reasons and to be fair to those households for whom the PC contact list only included one occupant, it was decided to summarise the data by household.

The number of households responding to the initial email by the end of June was extremely high (over 70% response); this is an indication of how strongly residents feel about the issues. However, in order to be as thorough as possible, repeated efforts were made throughout July and early August to seek a response from all previous non-respondents and to make contact with a number of additional households who were not represented on the original PC email list. The decision was also made to include the views of all PC members during this "second wave" approach.

The deadline for receiving responses for this report was set as August 20<sup>th</sup> 2016, to provide sufficient time for all new contacts to respond but without further delaying this project unduly. It was decided that a brief summary report should be distributed to the PC members by the end of August, so that work can start on the proposals during autumn 2016. Any responses received after this date will be forwarded to the traffic sub-committee.

## **Results**

A more detailed report including the rationale and background to this survey, plus a comprehensive overview of specific comments and requests received from all respondents, is in preparation. Further details will be presented to the PC when these findings are discussed with us at the first suitable PC meeting.

### Sample size

- No. of households contacted in June (based on the PC email list at that time) = 39
- Total no. of households contacted by early August = 53
- Total no. of households responded by August 20<sup>th</sup> = 45 (i.e. 85 % of those contacted)

### Data Analysis

A total of 43 households responded to the specific questions and provided answers from themselves - or on behalf of their households - and are therefore included in this analysis. Only one of these households indicated a small difference of opinion within their household and this is captured below in the Results section.

A further two households responded but have not (as yet) specifically answered the questions, therefore although both have stated they would support measures for safer lanes, their data has not been included in the present analysis.

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*The number of households who either agree or disagree with each of the three proposals is as follows:*

### **Proposal 1 (20mph)**

Yes = 37 households (86%)

No = 6 households (14%)

### **Proposal 2 (60 mph down to 40mph)**

Yes = 40 (93 %)

No = 3 (7%)

### **Proposal 3 (Quiet Lane)**

Yes = 36 (84 %)

No = 7 (16 %)

Two of the respondents who voted “ No” to a 20 mph limit advised that whilst they felt they could not support the costs and time associated with fighting for a 20mph limit, both stated that they **would** support other measures to encourage the traffic to drive slowly and more considerately through the village; they both suggested a 20’s Plenty Campaign because this could be set up more swiftly.

Several of the respondents who voted “ Yes” to a 20 mph limit suggested that this limit should start at Claybutts and extend to just beyond Payne’s Farm. Two of the “Yes” respondents highlighted that the 20 mph limit might not be necessary throughout the entire length of the village.

The majority of respondents from Widford suggested that a 30 mph (or even a 20 mph) would be most appropriate for the stretch of the main road that passes close to the houses in Widford.

One household reported support of Proposal 2 from one respondent but ambivalence on Proposal 2 from the second respondent.

The many reasons given for the “ Yes “ responses focus on serious concerns about the safety of residents, visitors and notably children in our villages, the need to remind drivers of the risks their vehicles pose to people who live here and to encourage drivers to be more responsible and respectful of our community. In addition there is a strong sense that we need to protect this very special environment from the impact of advancing urban surrounds.

The main reasons cited for the “No “ Responses are as follows:

Costs and possible impact on The Parish Precept

The respondent did not see any problem with speeding or driving behaviour through the village

“One would potentially be criminalized on a regular basis whilst traveling above the new speed limits”

The measure would not be effective and the police would not be supportive

A Quiet Lane would be difficult to implement and would not be practical; several respondents expressed concern that Swinbrook would not meet the required criteria

“Car drivers who need to should be allowed to drive through the village, residents should not control the road “

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Interestingly when the data is reviewed by distribution across the Parish, residents living in the centre of the village in either Swinbrook or Widford were more likely to vote “ Yes” which suggests, perhaps not surprisingly, that residents who witness the every day near-misses and other incidents when walking or driving out of their homes into the lane, appear to be the most motivated for change.

The PC members did not vote in quite the same way as the parishioners, largely due to the PC concerns with the practicalities and unknown factors regarding the Quiet Lane concept.

### **Conclusions**

A clear majority of the households who have responded have voted in favour of all three proposals. Steps should be taken therefore to investigate and implement these changes as swiftly as possible.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the clear majority from this large representative sample, the PC should undertake the necessary steps to implement Proposals 1 and 2 in the immediate future and to initiate a parallel plan to research the opportunity for a Quiet Lane, perhaps starting by consulting with other communities who have already achieved this status.

We understand that implementing these proposals will involve a lot of work, will be extremely challenging and will inevitably need a highly committed team to negotiate and drive things forward.

17. Based on feedback received, we would like to suggest that a Safer Lanes Sub-Committee be formed and should be led by at least 1 (or ideally 2) of those PC members who are the most committed to this cause, together with the Parish Clerk and an appropriate number of other volunteers from the parish.
18. The sub-committee should consider all residents' concerns and the feedback received, particularly concerning the unique nature of our lanes.
19. Parishioners have suggested many other useful and constructive initiatives during the survey process and these could be considered immediately. Certain ideas could be implemented rapidly, without any changes to the speed limit or the status of the lane. These are included in Appendix 1.

### **Costs**

One concern raised by the PC is that the cost of implementing changes to the speed limit will result in an increase in The Parish Precept. We would like to suggest that the Traffic Sub-committee should be able to raise funds towards these costs, to be managed by the PC members on this committee, so as to ensure minimal impact on The Parish Precept; more than £3250.00 has already been pledged in spontaneous donations during the survey process without our asking as yet for any contributions.

### **Acknowledgements:**

I should very much like to acknowledge the important contribution made to the completion of this survey by Mr Michael Bloor and the assistance I have received from others, including Eliza Bell, Sue and Robin Meech, Johanna Butt and Eileen Boothroyd in order to make contact with so many of our parishioners.

**Christine Standen August 2016**

**Actions for immediate consideration and implementation - no changes required to the current status of our Parish lanes**

### **1. Improvements are needed to road signage**

Many respondents have commented on this need. Currently the signage in the Parish does not provide appropriate information for drivers. There are no warnings to drivers that they should expect to see walkers, children, horses or cyclists on our lanes - and appropriate guidance is lacking for drivers that they are entering a single-track village lane with passing spaces and blind bends. There is also minimal information to advise that Swinbrook is unsuitable for HGVs / information with regard to weight limit.

In Widford there are no signs at all to indicate that drivers are entering a village and this needs to be addressed.

Therefore the parish needs to consider the use of appropriate signage, especially for those drivers who are unfamiliar with our lanes, to help them to drive more considerately. We understand that a careful balance needs to be struck - and that councils are trying to reduce the clutter of road signage, particular in urban areas where it can cause distraction and confusion - but signage to provide warnings and to improve road safety **for both driver and pedestrian** should be paramount. **Almost two-thirds of all fatal road traffic accidents in Britain occur on rural roads (DOT 2015)** and the Guild of Experienced Motorists' guidance indicates that signage and other local "clues" are important keys to ensure safe driving in rural areas.

### **2. Implement a "20's Plenty" Campaign**

Many respondents were supportive of a "20's Plenty" campaign as seen in Gloucestershire; their main reasons include the fact that a change to the speed limits will take a long time and this campaign would be a way to start to improve the environment immediately. It was also suggested that parishioners could start to drive at 20 mph ASAP.

### **3. Re-build the eroded verges and introduce specific passing spaces**

Signage required for Swinbrook as a single-track lane with passing spaces. Repair the erosion of the verges and return the lane to a single track by re-instating the damaged verges. Many parishioners offered to contribute to this themselves, have provided information and costs for the import of suitable soil, and several have offered to physically work on any such project - including one of our most senior parishioners who has offered to use a pickaxe and a paintbrush to help to make our roads a safer place.

## APPENDIX 4 VISITORS' PETITION



## Petition for Safer Lanes in the Swinbrook & Widford Parish



### To keep our lanes safe for walkers, cyclists and riders

For the Attention of Anthony Kirkwood, Oxfordshire County Council (O.C.C.)

We, the undersigned, petition Oxfordshire Council to reduce the speed of vehicles traveling the lanes through Swinbrook and Widford in order to improve road safety for the many hundreds of vulnerable road users and tourists who walk, cycle or ride along these popular rural lanes every week.

#### We call upon O.C.C. to:

1. Reduce the speed limit through the village of Swinbrook to 20 mph (currently 30mph)
2. Reduce the speed limit through the village of Widford to 30 mph (currently 60 mph)
3. Reduce the speed limits on the narrow /single track country lanes approaching the village from 60 mph to 40 mph.

#### Background to this Petition:

Parishioners and visitors have reported their concerns about the speed and attitudes of certain drivers traveling through our villages over many years. There is now evidence of cars exceeding the speed limit on a daily basis, being driven recklessly past pedestrians, cyclists and horses – and of drivers failing to exercise appropriate judgement with regard to their speed whilst negotiating these narrow, single-track roads and blind bends. There have been several reported accidents and incidents; one of these, near the crossroads by the cricket club, resulted in a car overturning and required the attendance of the emergency services.

The lanes through our villages form part of a popular, recommended route for walkers of all ages, notably for families with small children and dog-walkers. Many residents and visitors walk along these lovely lanes every day - and due to the absence of footpaths all pedestrians, children and animals share the road with vehicles. The lanes are also part of a very popular Cotswolds Cycle Route.

## CMDE11

This petition is being conducted as part of the Parish Campaign for Safer Lanes and is sponsored by the Swinbrook and Widford Action Group for Responsible Driving (SWARD). Please return sheets to Lisa Harrop (Parish Clerk)