

***Delegated Decisions by Cabinet
Member for Highway Management***

7 September 2023

Written Statements Received

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Agenda Item 15

ITEM 15 Wantage

"I'm speaking today in support of the "20 is plenty" scheme in Wantage. Our town has the opportunity to transform its streets, making them more inviting for pedestrians, mobility scooter users, powered wheelchair users, and cyclists. This change will not only be beneficial for these groups but also yield broader advantages for our community.

Let's consider the positive impact that reducing the speed limit can have on our town. According to a government research paper from November 2018, lowering the speed limit creates a perceptible shift in our streets, making them feel friendlier and safer for cyclists and pedestrians. Imagine strolling down the road without the constant worry of speeding cars – it's a step towards a more inclusive and welcoming community.

On the other hand, maintaining the current speed limits may leave our streets less inviting, with a continued risk of accidents and collisions. The evidence from the same government study highlights that reducing speed limits can indeed lead to a decrease in the number of road traffic accidents. This is a compelling reason to move away from the status quo and embrace change.

In early 2022, Wantage Town Council sought the input of our residents through a survey on the "20 is plenty" scheme, and the results are telling. Among the 390 residents who responded, the majority expressed a clear desire for the implementation of "20 is plenty" across our town.

This response from our community indicates a shared vision of making Wantage a safer and more pleasant place to live and travel through. By supporting "20 is plenty," we are collectively moving towards creating an environment where our residents can feel safer and more at ease on our streets.

Failing to heed the wishes of our community may risk alienating those who seek a safer and more welcoming town. We would be moving away from the desires and needs of our residents, potentially jeopardizing our sense of community and shared responsibility.

Personally, I believe it's crucial to encourage a reduction in car use. The potential benefits of the "20 is plenty" scheme are substantial:

An increase in road safety, ensuring our loved ones can walk and cycle without fear.

An uptick in active travel, promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing congestion.

A perception of a more pleasant environment, enhancing our town's overall quality of life.

These advantages far outweigh the downsides, which are minor in comparison—a slight increase in journey time for motorists. When we consider the potential to save lives and create a more vibrant community, this small trade-off seems trivial.

I sincerely hope that you will support and approve the "20 is plenty" scheme this evening. By doing so, we can collectively move towards a safer, more inclusive, and vibrant Wantage that benefits us all.

Thank you."

Thanks Erik Johnson, Chair of Planning

Agenda Item 24

HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT – THURSDAY 7th SEPTEMBER – ITEM 24 STANDLAKE

I thought it appropriate to address the meeting in my capacity as Chair of Standlake Parish Council and a co-ordinator (and founder) of the Standlake & Brighthampton Speedwatch Group.

The Parish Council is pleased to read it is RECOMMENDED to approve the 20mph limits in Standlake and Brighthampton as advertised.

I consider it worthwhile providing some further background to how the 20mph plan was arrived at. A meeting was held with OCC in April 2022 and after subsequent dialogue, a request for input from residents was published in August 2022. This was promoted through our normal channels namely the Parish Council Web Site, Standlake People Facebook page and Standlake News and the Parish Council Notice Board opposite the Village Shop and Post Office. Furthermore, Parish Council Meeting Minutes are available on the Parish Council Web Site and a printed copy is put on the Parish Council Notice Board.

Some 46 responses were received which is approx. 8% of the dwellings in the village. Further input was also received from the Speedwatch Group. In summary, the findings were 20mph would be welcomed on – Brighthampton Road from the ‘Golden Balls’ junction (as it is still referred to by many) heading to Aston with the zone being extended beyond the village gates; High Street including Woodlands and Manor Crescent; Rack End with the zone being extended beyond the Village Hall to the ‘straight mile’ junction; Church End to The Downs which includes the Church and School. Regarding the A415 Abingdon Road, from the feedback received there was no desire to see a 20mph zone along this stretch as it was felt it would lead to more aggressive driving and who would enforce it. This view was also echoed regarding The Downs. This was the majority view for respondents.

A paper was prepared for the Parish Council February 2023 meeting summarising the findings. The paper was discussed at length and agreed that the paper was broadly in line with the findings of OCC. It was agreed the paper should be put to OCC. It should be stressed there was, and is no desire, to split the village on speeding but the Parish Council has taken a pragmatic and practical approach and supporting the majority view from residents who responded.

This has now resulted in the Public Consultation exercise being led by OCC which again gave residents chance to put their views forward but directly to OCC. The Parish Council also promoted the Public Consultation through its normal channels as detailed.

Please be assured that safety is paramount but this needs to be taken into consideration with measures that could lead to more aggressive and dangerous driving styles. Plus as mentioned previously, the question needs to be asked who is going to enforce the speed limits? We are fortunate to have a very active Speedwatch Group and in the 18 months since the group was formed [supported by the Parish Council] over 2,000 letters will have been sent by Thames Valley Police to offenders. Feedback received from residents at the Village Coronation Event and the FOSS [Friends of Standlake School] Fete shows a lot of support and also belief that Speedwatch is making a difference. In addition, input from the Speedwatch Group and Parish Council led to the road layout on A415 / Witney Road / Aston Road junction being changed following an accident.

The Parish Council continues to work with OCC regarding other considerations and is supported by our County Councillor. Although frustrating, it is recognised budgetary constraints at Parish and County levels means some things will be delayed or not move forward; for example, Average Speed Cameras are cost prohibitive and cannot be funded through external sources. However, a meeting has been arranged for later this month to consider:

- SID devices on the A415 Abingdon Road indicating speed/smiley face etc as Kingston Bagpuize etc.
- Pedestrian Crossing/Safe Refuge points – by the garage, The Orchard, between ‘Goldens Balls’ junction and leaving the village heading towards Witney (again a notorious overtaking place so would slow traffic);
- Double white lines from the ‘Golden Balls’ junction on the A415 until past the village gates.
- Downs Road: make this a 40mph or 50mph zone – currently coming come from the A415 heading to the village the limit goes from 50mph to 60mph then 30mph entering the village which makes no sense.
- Chicanes (as per Bampton) coming into the village on Aston Road and Downs Road at the very least.

In summary, it is hoped the recommendations on the table are approved today demonstrating a pragmatic approach for Standlake and Brighthampton.

Brian Parnham

Chair – Standlake Parish Council