

WRITTEN STATEMENTS RECEIVED

PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS (All speakers on all the items have 3 minutes except for County Councillors representing the relevant division who have 5 minutes)

ITEM 7 – SONNING COMMON – VILLAGE CENTRE – PROPOSED WAITING RESTRICTIONS

Cllr Jonny Bidgood – Chair Village Centre and Transport Working Party, Sonning Common Parish Council

As the Parish Councillor leading this application to OCC for additional parking restrictions in the village centre of Sonning Common I would like to state my full support of all the recommendations contained herein the Agenda.

I would also like to thank Mike Horton the technical officer from the parking team for his help throughout this process. From the moment he was involved he has been helpful and his advice, including a site visit where he was prepared to listen to our concerns and discuss in detail how these could be dealt with, has been exemplary. This has been invaluable to someone who has not been through this process before. We are looking forward to seeing the new additions in place and also the whole existing road markings being refreshed, as soon as is practicable. We will then be in a position to request civil enforcement to enable a safer environment for motorists and pedestrians and cyclists.

Thank you very much for your time.

ITEM 8 - OXFORD – THE PLAIN ROUNDABOUT AREA – PROPOSED NO LOADING AT ANY TIME RESTRICTIONS

Alexandra West, Bursar of Magdalen College School

I am representing Magdalen College School which is located on Cowley Place, adjacent to The Plain roundabout. 50% of our pupils walk, cycle or take public transport to school, but for the other 50% of pupils, those options are not viable given where they live. We therefore have twelve coaches which transport pupils from home to school every day during the academic terms, starting as far afield as Gerrards Cross, Brackley, Henley and Bourton-on-the Water. Currently these buses operate as part of the Oxford Schools' Bus Partnership, and from September they will be operated as a new partnership between MCS and Headington School. We are investing in this new partnership as part of our commitment to becoming a more sustainable school, in line with the City and County Council priorities. The new service will fit the needs of our parents and pupils better, and therefore the number of pupils using the service should increase. Currently it is used by 173 MCS pupils; our surveys suggest this could increase by 50-75% next year, which would be excellent progress in the school's drive to become more sustainable. I am sure this is obvious, but the coaches reduce congestion on The Plain, by preventing hundreds of journeys that would otherwise have to be made by car.

Having convenient and safe loading and unloading locations for the school bus service are crucial to the success of the new bus partnership. The buses have to stop in or around the Plain. We use public bus stops on the Iffley Road for those that come that way, but others which approach from other directions stop outside Sainsburys or use the area outside our Junior School, opposite Sainsburys. The current loading/unloading locations in Iffley Road and outside Sainsburys seem unaffected by the proposed new restrictions. But prohibiting the occasional use of the area outside our Junior School on the west side of the Plain would cause us difficulties. We support the rest of the proposals as they would improve the safety of the Plain- particularly around St Clements.

Peter Barnett, CoHSAT

I am the one in the consultation responses that was very nearly taken out on my bike by a Magdalen parent diving for a parking spot outside the Ballroom to drop their child off; a less confident cyclist could well have been in serious trouble.

If these spaces are to be retained, even for off-peak use, then there should be lockable bollards, with keys only to local businesses, college and school, as suggested by a local councillor.

The problem will be, that without bollards, these spaces will still be used for short term car parking and school pick up and drop off, especially during peak times; these are the times when there are higher cycle and pedestrian flows and vehicle parking here can create extra visibility problems as pointed out in several consultation responses.

Quite honestly lockable bollards would be an improvement for businesses. Almost every time I have been through the Plain there are cars parked there, not delivery vehicles; sometimes cars double parked.

Ideally remove these loading bays altogether, but if they must be retained, at least in the medium term, because of the requirement for a public inquiry if removed, then the parking spaces should be shortened and end at least 3 meters earlier before Cowley Road to prevent hiding pedestrians and awkward roundabout entry manoeuvres.

Finally, I note with concern that recent changes to The Plain following Ling Felce's death would not actually make any difference if such incident were to occur today, since no changes, not even minor changes, were made to the St Clement's entry to The Plain. Accepting the possible restrictions imposed by roadway width that make a wand segregated cycle lane difficult, it should still be possible to put up signs and symbols to alert drivers to the presence of cyclists on the approach to and on The Plain; something like this might just have saved Ling Felce's life.

So, TSRGD 950 cycle route ahead warning signs; large TSRGD 1057 cycle symbols on the road on the approach; TSRGD 602 Give Way signs, which are on Cowley Road but not St Clement's; why? The County Council have plans in the pipeline for a bus and cycle lane on the St Clement's approach to The Plain, but this stops well short of the roundabout. Please take the earliest opportunity to put additional signs and symbols on the approach to and on The Plain to alert drivers to the presence of cyclists. Think Vision Zero; Think Safe Roads.

GENERAL STATEMENT ON 20MPH SPEED LIMITS AND VISION ZERO

Peter Barnett, CoHSAT

I would like to make two points; the first on 20 mph speed limits and Vision Zero and the second on the Vision Zero mindset and culture.

First, well done with the 20-mph programme. The single most effective part of the Safe System approach for Vision Zero, adopted the world over, is Safe Speeds through speed limit reduction.

But an important aspect of Safe Roads in the Safe System approach to Vision Zero, is that roads are self-explaining. This is the idea that a traffic environment should elicit safe behaviour simply by its design. It is one of the most important strategies to slow speeds and make streets safe for everyone. Speed limit reduction on its own certainly helps a bit, but design techniques like roundabouts, speed humps, chicanes, medians, and road diets are all proven solutions to slowing speeds and making streets safe; they also improve the credibility of the speed limit and thus reduce speeds. We must build roads and roadways that prioritise safety over speed.

With limited funds, a lot can be done with just paint, colour and bollards, much as the Council have done with cycling infrastructure. There is a wealth of material out there advising on the most effective methods; for example, a TRL report from 2005, prepared for the DfT, on - 'Psychological' traffic calming: Report TRL641.

And now the Vision Zero mindset; The Highways meeting on the 23 February, approved 20 mph limits in Chilton but did not reduce the limit for Lower Road which remained at 40 mph.

Both the Parish Council and the local councillor had asked for Lower Road to become 30 mph, with the Councillor saying it was a primary active travel route without segregation or separation. Officer judgement was that the 40-mph limit was a reasonable compromise to allow drivers to make progress into Chilton.

This is a 484 metre stretch of road which would take 9 seconds longer at 30mph than 40; this still allows for progress; so would 20 mph, being only 27 seconds longer. Is the loss of a few seconds really an issue when active travel can and should be supported and encouraged? Active Travel; Vision Zero; Safe Speeds. I hope that this will be reconsidered as a matter of urgency.

But for me, it shows that old ways of thinking that prioritise motor vehicles still persist and this must change for Vision Zero to progress. Vision Zero is a new way of doing things; a new culture; a new mindset.

ITEM 9 - ABINGDON – PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMIT AND ASSOCIATED SPEED LIMIT BUFFERS

Robin Tucker – Co-Chair, CoHSAT

I apologise that I cannot be present, as I am in another meeting to develop understanding in this Council of walking, wheeling and cycling and their role in supporting the Council's objectives on congestion, health, equality and climate change.

With Botley Road closed, we see again how fragile a congested motoring-based transport system is, despite its huge financial and societal cost financially. With just one artery closed, traffic on other routes grinds to a halt, with extra problems from crashes each day. We must do more to enable people to use active travel and public transport that do not cause these damaging problems to people and the vital functions of the city.

Reducing speed limits is one of the ways to achieve this. By making street environments safer and more attractive, it encourages people to walk and cycle more often, and maybe walk to the bus stop. They are less likely to be injured or killed in a collision too. We are pleased that Oxfordshire is leading the way among English counties.

But 20mph zones can impact bus operations, and buses are vital to our transport future too, so we needed to ensure bus services were not damaged. Sitting down to discuss it with the bus companies, we found that they shared a lot of the same thinking, and working through the data and maps we were able to suggest a route to the most benefits with the least downsides. Once again, co-production shows its benefits.

We support the 20mph proposals for Abingdon, Cumnor, Faringdon, Forest Hill, Shotover, Shrivenham, Steventon and Wootton.

We raise one question, for Abingdon, Drayton Road, on whether the 20mph limit should start near the Hartwell garage or just south of Mill Road.

Looking at today's other proposals:

We support the Didcot station area parking measures. These streets are frequently used by local people walking and cycling to the station, and reducing non-residential parking will make this safer and more attractive.

We support the No loading measures for The Plain in Oxford. With a recent death and 50 collisions in 5 years, this is the most dangerous junction in Oxford. It is also a

major pinch point for traffic of all kinds. It seems perverse to allow loading in peak times on an A-Road roundabout known for its dangers and traffic congestion.

Paula Lopez, Town Clerk, Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Abingdon Town Council was approached by Oxford Bus Company to review the requested 20mph speed limit across the town as the bus company was concerned that the proposed change might impact on its services.

Oxford Bus Company has confirmed its support for reduced speed limits but is keen to ensure that its services can continue to be delivered at the same level.

A meeting between Oxford Bus Company and Abingdon Town Council 20pmh Working Group took place which was attended by councillor members of the group and some residents.

At this meeting it was agreed to propose to yourself and Oxfordshire County Council that the transition between 30mph and 20mph should happen at the locations below on the main arterial routes into Abingdon and would request that this be taken into account when considering the implementation of the 20mph speed limits in Abingdon, we understand that you are due to make a decision on this shortly.

- Oxford Road
Transition at the junction with Northcourt Road. This change would be subject to an action on Abingdon Town Council to relocate the bus stop on the northbound side from its current location north of the junction to a location south of it. This change was requested by the bus company as it would improve space on the pavement.
- Radley Road
Transition to 20mph limit at the mini roundabout where Daisy Bank joins Radley Road. The town council understands that the existing cycle route from Radley into Abingdon is due to be upgraded by Pye Homes such that a 3m wide shared path from Radley to the cinder track cycle path will be installed which would segregate cyclists from cars.
- A415 Bridge St
Transition to 20mph at the junction with the car park entrance on Thames Street.
- Drayton Road
Transition to 20mph somewhere between the junction with Saxton Road and in line with Gainsborough Green, which does not join with Drayton Road.
- Ock Street
20mph throughout.
- Marcham Road

Proposals for a 20mph transition at the roundabout junction with Colwell Drive are not disputed.

- Faringdon Road
20mph throughout
- Wootton Road
Transition at the junction with Northcourt Road.

Cllr Neil Fawcett

Firstly, I am very surprised that the officers have again come up with recommendations for you which do not reflect the consensus position that had been agreed between local councillors, active travel groups and the bus companies and that there was, once again, no consultation with local County Councillors about these recommendations.

Myself and the Town Council's starting position was that the whole of Abingdon, inside the perimeter road, should be 20 mph.

We then engaged positively with the bus companies and, in a spirit of compromise, accepted some changes in order to get the scheme through.

In that context, I was happy to accept the consensus position that emerged.

However the officers have now made recommendations which are different to that consensus. In the case of the Drayton Road in my division, they make no sense at all.

I won't comment in detail on their proposals for Oxford Road as it is not my division. My view is that the consensus that we came to, that the Oxford Road junction with Northcourt Road was the right place to start the 20 mph zone was fine. If it can't be done for technical reasons then they should move it north, not south.

I will comment in detail on the recommendation for Drayton Road.

The consensus we came to was that the 20 mph limit should start south of the Mill Road min-roundabout junction. This allowed the buses to travel up to 30mph up the long straight section of Drayton Road which has decent visibility and service roads down each side which are well used by cyclists.

From that point northwards, however, the area gets busy with two roundabouts, several entrances on to Drayton Road, two lots of older persons accommodation, a pedestrian crossing and the side entrance to Caldecott School (which serves the Tithe Farm estate to the west of Drayton Road).

The pavements in this section are narrow and have a high footfall. There are no service roads here.

So I cannot understand why the officers are recommending to move the start of the 20 mph zone to north of the Hartwell garage. It makes no sense at all and there is no real advantage to the buses which will be slowing down for the roundabouts and bus stops anyway.

I would therefore urge you to agree that the start of the 20 mph zone on Drayton Road should be immediately south of the Saxton Road junction.

ITEM 10 - CUMNOR – PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMIT AND ASSOCIATED SPEED LIMIT BUFFERS

Tom Christophers – Cumnor Parish Chairman (written submission)

I write to you on behalf of Cumnor Parish Council in support of Agenda Item 10 in general but would like to make specific mention of the reduction in speed proposal in Cumnor village from 30mph to 20mph.

We as a council note the overwhelming support for the 20mph Cumnor proposal from the online consultation. 74% in support confirms what we as a parish council have been hearing from our community for a number of years now and also reflects the views and support from our District and County Councillors (Cllrs Jenner, Roberts and Ash).

We were concerned in February 2023 to see the recommendation to defer a decision pending further discussions to assess the acceptability of reduced proposals that meet the needs of all parties from the Corporate Director, Environment and Place.

We say this as the only real objection as such comes from Thames Travel regarding the stretch of road running Abingdon Road (at the A420 exit / entry points), Glebe Road and Oxford Road before the A420 flyover bridge.

To quote from the supporting papers, the objection was around:

"It is important that buses are able to make progress where it is safe for them to do so. Unlike a private motorist that may typically go along the road once in each direction in a day, buses operate along the above roads up to 67 times a day in each direction and so the impact is that much greater. Slowing journeys makes bus services less attractive to passengers and would serve to encourage negative modal shift from public transport to private motor vehicles, which is contrary to the council's policies. Ultimately if journey times become too great, either, extra bus and driver resource needs to be added to maintain the same level of service (i.e. increased cost for no increased revenue) or alternatively timetables need to be trimmed so that they can be operated with the existing resource (i.e. reduced revenue from the same operating cost). This could lead to services becoming financially unsustainable and so could lead to service reductions."

and from the Corporate Director, Environment and Place that the proposal should:

"...meet the needs of the bus operator and pose no threat to the operational viability of services."

I think what was missed in February is that this stretch of road only corresponds to 0.3 miles (or 0.4 miles for one bus route from Besselsleigh).

The Abingdon Road stretch from A420 slip road entry and exit to the Glebe flyover bridge is 0.4 miles coming off the A420 from Rockley; and, 0.3 miles from the flyover to the exit to the A420 heading to Oxford (and vice versa). Both these journeys for the S9 and 33 buses going to and from Oxford at the current 30mph in perfect driving conditions with no stopping for passengers would take:

S9 coming from Rockley to Oxford - 48 seconds
S9 going to Besselsleigh from Oxford - 36 seconds
33 going to Oxford from Wootton - 36 seconds
33 going to Wootton from Oxford - 36 seconds

By moving to 20mph the times would change to:

S9 coming from Rockley to Oxford - 72 seconds (an increase of 24 seconds)
S9 going to Besselsleigh from Oxford - 54 seconds (an increase of 18 seconds)
33 going to Oxford from Wootton - 54 seconds (an increase of 18 seconds)
33 going to Wootton from Oxford - 54 seconds (an increase of 18 seconds)

I'm not sure the brevity of the distance was taken into account by either bus company or Corporate Director and thus the implication that services would become potentially unviable may have been wrongly arrived at.

We don't believe the concerns are valid when put against a bus journey increase of 18 seconds and 24 seconds respectively across the entirety of each bus journey from their starting and end points in Wantage, Oxford and Wallingford that are in total 111 minutes (Oxford - Wallingford and Wallingford - Oxford) and 52 minutes (Oxford - Wantage and Wantage to Oxford).

We hope that provides better clarity and that we can highlight the oddity of seeking to defer in February 2023 a motion to reduce speed for safety and environmental reasons over 18 to 24 second increases in bus routes that represent in reality 0.3% of the total journey time for the 33 bus and 0.8% of the total journey time for the S9 bus.

In comparison, the similar North Hinksey motion (also from February 2023 that includes roads also in Cumnor Parish) constituted 6.2 miles of bus route (#400 - both ways, 63 - both ways and 4A bus services). In perfect conditions these 6.2 miles would take a total of 12 minutes and 24 seconds to travel at 30mph. These road speed limits were reduced to 20mph in the February 2023 meeting, adding on a total of six minutes and 12 seconds to bus journeys overall; however, the bus companies submitted no objections to the motion.

We noted with interest that subsequently the county council has passed similar speed reduction motions in Benson, Charlbury, East Hanney, North Aston, Sydenham, Uffington, Watlington, West Hanney and West Challow, in some cases despite similar objections from bus companies.

This speed reduction is something that our community has been fighting for and lobbying us (and our District and County Councillors) to support, for a good while. The news that the motion had been pushed back was difficult to send back to our community and may have caused a loss in faith in democratic processes from the constituents who we all serve. We hope that this faith can be restored by passing this motion as recommended by the Corporate Director, Environment and Place this time round.

Cllr Judy Roberts

As you can see from the consultation, there is overwhelming local support for this change. The comments from the Thames Travel bus company needed further exploration as it seemed inconsistent to the parish that no objection has been raised for the North Hinksey scheme but the Cumnor one had received an objection. Most of our major highways routes feed into North Hinksey area so if it was acceptable there, why not in Cumnor.

It appears from paragraph 17 that the only place where 30 mph will be retained, should this proposal be accepted today, will be a short section of the A420 slip road through to Kennilworth Road. Although there are residents that live on that section there are major safety hazards that affect other areas of Cumnor and it is important that these changes should be implemented sooner rather than later to help manage these areas.

There is a one way system in the centre of Cumnor village that goes past the Cumnor Primary school. On a regular basis waste and other large Heavy Goods Vehicles travel up this section at 30 or more mph which at school drop off and pick up times is really dangerous. We have many cyclists who in anticipation of the much needed Eynsham to Farmoor to Botley cycle path, regularly use this route along the B4044 to access the City. At several points buses can only just pass each other and do encroach over the marked on-road cycle lane where there is one, which definitely does not meet LTN1/20 regulations.

The central road through Farmoor is currently at 40 mph and the flow of traffic is regulated by the payment of the toll at the Swinford bridge. The local children have to use public buses now to get to school since the school buses were stopped. This does require crossing the road either in the morning or evening depending on which secondary school they attend but there is never enough time between the cars coming through to cross safely and this is also true for the elderly residents. Reducing the speed will make it so much safer to cross.

In all these areas it is really important that we get a speed reduction to keep our active travellers safer.

Nobody likes to compromise but I can see from both the bus passengers and driver's point of view going from a 50 mph area to 20mph area directly may make their journey uncomfortable. If this is the only change that is required, on balance, it seems acceptable if we can get the lowered speed limits implemented across the Parish of Cumnor.

The main bus routes will all be at 30 mph or greater except for the very centre of the village and this should encourage greater use of the buses as they will be able to keep to timetable.

I support the changes to a lower speed limit and accept the small amendment made to the A420 slip road area.

ITEM 11 - FARINGDON – PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMIT AND ASSOCIATED SPEED LIMIT BUFFERS

Mark Harrison

We commend the bus companies for the recent improvements in services on the S6 and 67 routes

Recent informal (Garmin) monitoring shows buses rarely average as much 20 mph (this excludes the time spent stationary)

- Re-site existing bus stops to spread them more evenly and eliminate a few in the process
- Fewer bus stops could result in a more equitable distribution for passengers
- Perhaps the community bus could be incorporated to provide less abled passengers to intersect the S6 and 67 for a limited number of the services during the day

Remove the loop the S6 takes through the Faringdon Market Place and relocate the main stop to Marlborough Street outside the old Post Office and the other commercial buildings adjacent to it

- This is a bottleneck as buses often wait for quite a few minutes when arriving early.

Clamp down on obstructive illegal parking along the bus route

Cllr Bethia Thomas

Dear Cllr Gant,

Last month I wrote to you to support the application for the 20MPH scheme in Faringdon. Faringdon is a small market town, and many are concerned about the safety of our roads. Recently a resident has petitioned the town council to make them aware of the problems parents are having crossing the main road to walk to school and slower speeds would definitely be welcomed here.

Since the February meeting where your decision was deferred, I know you have seen at least one submission from residents from Faringdon supporting the application for 20MPH Zone throughout the town, and I know others support it, as do Faringdon Town Council. We were all very disappointed that it was delayed but hope you are still committed to the scheme for our town.

ITEM 14 – STEVENTON – PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMIT AND ASSOCIATED SPEED LIMIT BUFFERS

Louise Brockman – resident

I have been a resident of Steventon for over 21 years. I live on Steventon Hill. In this time there has been a very noticeable increase in the volume of traffic – especially the size and weight of the vehicles, with a much higher number of larger vehicles.

The pavements in Steventon are narrow in places – it feels very unsafe at times when walking along paths only one metre wide with speeding vehicles driving past. Slowing the traffic down will help to make pedestrians feel safer and you would hope ultimately - to be safer. Wing mirrors of large vehicles can be head height, and if travelling at higher speeds can feel like they would cause a lot of damage!

The noise and vibrations from the many lorries that drive through the village is noticeable inside the houses on Steventon Hill, the High Street, and the Drayton and Hanney Roads. Slowing the vehicles down would help to reduce this nuisance. The lorries and buses that are travelling slower are quieter with less vibrations – this is very easily observed on a daily basis. Vibrations can be felt throughout residences – in our own house bottles and jars in the kitchen at the back of the house have been known to chink together audibly as large vehicles have passed outside.

The speed limits in the village currently go from 40mph entering the via the Hill, to the 20mph zone for the centralised bridge, and back up to 30mph by Station Yard. This causes confusion with drivers. Having a blanket 20mph limit in the village will help to clarify the speed limit to motorists, and will hopefully mean that they are more likely to stick to them. The 20mph zone due to the weakened bridge is required for safety reasons and is not going to be changed in the near future from what we are being told by the Council.

I am a member of Steventon Community Speedwatch group. My husband is also a member of the group along with a further 12 people. We are an active Speedwatch group regularly monitoring in the 20, 30 and 40 mph zones in the village. This group was formed by local residents that over the past few years had collectively got fed up with the speed of vehicles travelling through the village along with the associated danger, noise and vibrations. We are approaching our 1000th reported speeding motorist since 4th July 2022 – just under 10 months. In this number we have reported vehicles of all types to the Police for speeding – motorbikes, cars, vans, buses and lorries – both small and large.

The sheer number of vehicles using the villages roads is extraordinary – many visitors unfamiliar with the village comment on the amount of traffic using the villages roads. A traffic survey carried out in May 2021 showed over 10,000 vehicles a day using the High Street.

I believe that lowering the speed of these thousands of vehicles a day will make the village safer, quieter and more pleasant to live in. I also believe that it will encourage more people to walk around the village – I know people who wouldn't consider walking over the bridge and up the hill to our house, and choose to drive on safety grounds saying that they do not feel safe walking on either side of the road. It will reduce the vibrations felt by many residents (day and night) and reduce the noise pollution. Looking into whether a 20mph reduces air pollution, I found that there is evidence from studies that there are clear benefits to driving style and associated particulate emissions. Research has found that vehicles moved more smoothly, with fewer accelerations and decelerations, than in 30mph zones, reducing particulate emissions from tyre and brake wear.