

Minutes of the Public Meeting held on 30th May 2023 at 7pm

Meeting held to discuss the extension of 30mph speed limit along Lower Farm Road.

In Attendance: RPC Vice-Chair – A. Williams
Speed Indicator Board Co-Ordinator Peter Watson
Cllr K.Oakes
Ringshall Parish Council Clerk – L. Luther
27 members of the public

Apologies: Cllr C.Payne

Cllr A. Williams introduced the meeting and advised attendees that the meeting was part of the process that is required in order to potentially have the 30mph zone extended further along the road, past Broad View Farm. A questionnaire was distributed to all residents on Lower Farm Road in order to gain understanding and knowledge as to the views of residents and support that would be given to the project. The process for the proposed zone extension required the Parish Council to demonstrate that the residents had been consulted and invited to present and discuss their comments, opinions and experiences on the matter.

Cllr Williams advised that Peter Watson, the Speed Indicator Board Co-ordinator for Ringshall would provide a summary of the information on driver speeds through the village, as obtained from the SID(Speed Indicator Board) unit over the past year. Following that, Cllr Oakes would advise further details on the process that would need to be undertaken if the extension proposal was to be considered by Suffolk County Council Highways Department.

Peter Watson reported on the figures downloaded from the Speed indicator Board and stated that Perception Versus reality was a significant issue to consider when discussing speeding vehicles, as it can often feel like vehicles are speeding when in reality they are not – but there is no technology in place to support this notion, with data, at the moment.

Peter Watson explained how the Speed Indicator Board worked, and that it was installed in 2021 and operates to record the date, time and direction of the vehicles travelling past it, and that it can also record the same data in 'SPY' mode, when it appears to be turned off (The screen is blank).

The lowest weekly volume of traffic recorded travelling through the village was 2824 vehicles and the highest was 13,000 vehicles.

The lowest high speed recorded facing the sign were between 44-68 mph.

The maximum high speeds recorded behind the sign were between 47 and 83 mph. (so travelling in the opposite direction to that which the board is facing, with the presumption that

the board is not recording the speed of your vehicle.) The 83mph was recorded at 11.50am heading towards the direction of the school).

The maximum percentage of drivers speeding in a week was recorded to be 41% - the lowest was 8%.

Peter Watson has passed additional observations to Martin Kinsey at Wattisham, who can use the information to enforce disciplinary action where necessary.

Cllr K. Oakes gave a presentation on the process of the extension of 30mph limit. Document attached. Melanie Hall, a colleague of Cllr Oakes prepared an assessment of the area and identified the likelihood of the proposal's validity.

Points made by Cllr Oakes included the following:

- There were no recorded injury accidents between 1st March 2018 and 1st March 2023.
- Overall, the evaluation is that it does not meet the criteria for an extension of the 30mph zone.
- However, Cllr Oakes has stated that she would be willing to support an extension of the 30mph zone by 150metres, which takes the zone to the end of the new bungalows that have been built in the village.
- This will incur a Traffic Regulation Order, which costs £5,000 and will be part of the process.
- Overall, the project will cost in the region of £6,500 including the installation of new white roundels.

Cllr Oakes reported that she does not have the jurisdiction to change Highways Policy, which currently means the zone cannot currently be extended beyond the proposed 150metres and that this would have to be considered by County Council Cabinet.

Cllr Oakes has offered to apply for use of the ANPR machine for Ringshall to help with enforcement.

Residents asked questions and made the following comments at this point:

- 1) How long ago was the current traffic policy set down? Cllr Oakes advised the previous policy had been reviewed in 2014.
- 2) When will the policy be reviewed, if it was last reviewed in 2014.
- 3) Why was the speed limit not reviewed when the new bungalows were built?
- 4) The main issue is enforcement here, it does not matter what the limit is, if no enforcement is happening or seen to be happening, then speeding will continue to be an issue.
- 5) Residents feel vulnerable walking along the 60mph part of lower farm road where there is no footpath.

- 6) At the time of the planning application, it is Mid-Suffolk who approve the planning, and Suffolk Highways are only consulted and do not have a direct part in the decision-making process for planning applications. CIL money goes to Mid Suffolk, not SCC.
- 7) Wattisham have helped the issue, where they discipline staff who have been found to be speeding through the village, they have revoked car pass privileges to those that have been observed speeding through the village.
- 8) All of Suffolk must abide by the same rules, but the point in case here is that Ringshall is not a 'standard' village, being next to the base – surely that should allow for some flexibility on the rules?
- 9) It is not only the speeding through the village that is an issue, but the noise that the vehicles make.
- 10) It has been noted that vehicles are revving their engines outside certain residents' houses and appear to be demonstrating their disgust and in turn, causing residents to feel intimidated.
- 11) Residents in the village are experiencing anxiety and mental health issues as a direct result of this anti-social behaviour.
- 12) Peter Watson shared that he had been threatened on more than one occasion and told that what he is doing is illegal. The facts are that what he has done is perfectly legal, as he is only collecting information which is already in the public domain.
- 13) Residents asked if there were other routes into Wattisham base that could be used instead of Ringshall?
- 14) At least 35% of speeders are noted to be registered with the base.
- 15) Residents observed that Next Generation driving school use Lower Farm Road in both directions, when Martin Kinsey reported that HGVs are meant to follow a specific route and should only be travelling through Ringshall in one direction.

Cllr A. Williams concluded the meeting by explaining that it was not a democratic process, but in the interests of seeking level of feeling – he asked for a show of hands to gauge the general level of support for the proposal of extending the 30mph speed limit. The general consensus was that everyone in the room supported the proposal to extend the 30mph speed limit.

The meeting closed at 8pm.