

Speed Profile Report for Parish Council Meeting on 6th June 2023

This report is based on the vehicle speed data that has been collected for:

- a) A272 westbound vehicles: The data was collected at the Speed Indicator Device (SID) site located adjacent to Wilderness Wood; it covers two periods - 14.12.2021 to 29.03.2022 and 07.06.2022 to 30.08.2022, a total of 187 days.
- b) A272 eastbound vehicles: The data was collected at the new SID site adjacent to St Mark's Church; it covers one period – 20.03.2023 to 30.05.2023, a total of 60 days.

Both sets of data record the speed of vehicles shortly after they have entered the 30 mph speed limit zone through the village. However, vehicles travelling westward will have entered this zone having passed through a 50 mph zone and then a 40 mph zone. This is in contrast to vehicles approaching from Buxted where the zones change from 60 mph down to 30 mph in one step.

(a) A272 westbound (Wilderness Wood site) 14th Dec. 2021 to 29th March 2022 and 7th June 2022 to 30th August 2022

Range	0-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+	Totals
Vehicles	67280	134936	158878	109249	44757	11569	2493	510	114	26	529812
%	12.70	25.47	29.99	20.62	8.45	2.18	0.47	0.10	0.02	0.00	100.00
All vehicles: Over 30 mph = 61.83% and over 35 mph = 31.84%											

(b) A272 eastbound (Church site) 20th March 2023 to 30th May 2023

Range	0-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+	Totals
Vehicles	32039	55683	58933	47114	23556	6321	1441	310	76	18	225491
%	14.21	24.69	26.14	20.89	10.45	2.80	0.64	0.14	0.03	0.01	100.00
All vehicles: Over 30 mph = 61.10% and over 35 mph = 34.95%											

A number of conclusions may be drawn from this data:

- (1) Despite the speed calming effect of the SID, the majority of vehicles are travelling in excess of the 30 mph speed limit.
- (2) There is a very significant difference between vehicles travelling in excess of 40 mph in the two directions; 11.22% westbound and 14.07% eastbound where there is no graduated reduction in speed limits. This is of particular concern as a footpath crosses the A272 at the lower end of the burial ground – a footpath used, amongst others, by St Marks School children accessing the school's facility, 'SMILE Meadow' (one and three quarter acres of land in Waste Wood acquired by the School in 2009).
- (3) The majority of drivers pay little or no notice of the mandatory speed limits put in place for the safety of all, including the drivers themselves.

So what might be done to improve the situation? The Parish Council is recommended to review the following suggestions:

- (a) Putting the case once again for changes to speed limit zoning to the west of the Village on the A272 to mirror the graduated zoning that already exists on the approach to the Village from the Heathfield side. Annex A to this report includes a draft letter in support of such a proposal (generated by ChatGPT) and some possible ‘tweaks’.
- (b) The SID support pole recently placed adjacent to St Mark’s Church might also accommodate a School Warning Sign’. This would be a matter for East Sussex Highways and could be raised at the forthcoming SLR (Strengthening Local relationships) meeting.
- (c) GovUK advice on speed calming [see [Traffic Calming \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/gov.uk/guidance/traffic-calming)] contains a number of other possibilities:
- A 20 mph zone in the centre of the village which according to research might reduce average vehicle speeds by 3 to 8 mph. However, such zones are normally reserved for stretches of carriageway with a history of child accidents and it is unlikely that East Sussex Highways would agree this.
 - Road humps/narrowing/chicanes: There are many examples of the use of these measures (e.g. through Maresfield), but not to my knowledge on an A road.
 - Rumble devises: This is, I believe, worthy of closer consideration – see for example on Top Road west of Sharpethorne to the junction with the B2028 where this measure is used in several places.
 - Road markings such as Speed Roundels, coloured sections and changes to surface texture (it could be argued that the Village already has the latter due to potholes and surface degradation?!).

This is not an exhaustive list and Councillors may have other suggestions.

Finally I would wish to register my thanks to Steve Godfrey for his continuing support and help with all matters related to speed calming in the Village.

2nd June 2023
Peter Weston

Draft letter in support of improved speed restriction zones approaching Hadlow Down from the Buxted side.

1) Letter generated by ChatGPT:

Subject: Request to Reduce Speed Limit on A Road for Enhanced Safety in [Village Name]

[Your Name] [Your Address] [City, Postcode] [Date]

[Recipient's Name] [Recipient's Position/Title] [Department/Agency Name] [Address] [City, Postcode]

Dear [Recipient's Name],

I am writing to express my deep concern about the current speed limit on [A Road] that runs through [Village Name]. As a resident and active member of the community, I am witnessing an alarming number of accidents and near-misses due to excessive speed on this road.

With the increasing population and the growth of residential areas in our village, it has become evident that the existing speed limit of [current speed limit] is no longer adequate to ensure the safety of both motorists and pedestrians. The high volume of traffic, combined with the layout of the road, poses a significant risk to our community members, especially children, elderly individuals, and those using active modes of transportation such as cyclists and pedestrians.

I kindly request that the relevant authorities consider reducing the speed limit on [A Road] to [proposed speed limit]. This reduction in speed would contribute to creating a safer environment and help prevent accidents, injuries, and loss of life in our village. By implementing a lower speed limit, we can encourage responsible driving behaviour and improve the overall safety for everyone using the road.

I would like to highlight the following reasons supporting the need for a reduced speed limit:

1. **Increased Vulnerability:** The road passes through densely populated areas, including schools, residential neighbourhoods, and local amenities. Lowering the speed limit would acknowledge the vulnerability of pedestrians and cyclists and prioritize their safety.
2. **Improved Road Crossing Safety:** Lower speeds make it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross the road, especially at designated crossings. This will encourage more people to walk or cycle, promoting a healthier and more active lifestyle.
3. **Enhanced Road Safety Culture:** Reducing the speed limit would send a clear message to motorists that safety is a priority in our community. It would encourage responsible driving behaviour, reduce the risk of accidents caused by speeding, and foster a safer road culture.
4. **Mitigation of Noise Pollution:** High-speed traffic generates significant noise pollution, affecting the quality of life for residents along [A Road]. A lower speed limit would contribute to reducing noise levels and promoting a more peaceful and harmonious living environment.

I understand that changing the speed limit requires a thorough assessment and consideration of various factors such as road design, traffic patterns, and accident data. I urge you to conduct a comprehensive review of these factors and consult with the local community to assess the feasibility and potential impact of reducing the speed limit.

Additionally, I would be more than willing to support any initiatives or participate in community consultations aimed at enhancing road safety in our village. Together, we can work towards creating a safer environment for all residents and road users.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I sincerely hope that you will give due consideration to our request and take the necessary steps to reduce the speed limit on [A Road]. Your commitment to road safety will undoubtedly have a positive and lasting impact on our community.

Yours faithfully,

[Your Name]

2) Possible amendments to this draft letter:

Extending the 30mph speed limit further outside a village can be justified for the following reasons

Consistent safety measures: Extending the 30mph speed limit outside the village ensures consistency in road safety measures. By maintaining a lower speed limit beyond the village boundaries, drivers are encouraged to maintain reduced speeds consistently, minimizing the risk of accidents caused by sudden speed changes. This approach helps create a safer road environment for all road users.

Seamless transition: Extending the 30mph limit outside the village ensures a smooth and seamless transition for drivers traveling from the village area to the surrounding areas. Sudden changes in speed limits can create confusion and lead to abrupt braking or acceleration, increasing the risk of rear-end collisions or other traffic incidents. By extending the 30mph zone, drivers can maintain a consistent speed throughout their journey, enhancing overall safety and traffic flow.

Encouraging responsible driving behaviour: Extending the 30mph limit outside the village sends a clear message to drivers that responsible and cautious driving is expected beyond the village boundaries. This helps to instil a culture of safe driving practices and reminds drivers to be mindful of their speed and surroundings. Consistently enforcing a lower speed limit can contribute to reducing reckless driving behaviours and enhancing overall road safety.

Mitigating potential hazards: Extending the 30mph speed limit further outside the village takes into account potential hazards or vulnerable road users that may exist beyond the village. For example, there might be residential areas, commercial establishments, pedestrian crossings, or other areas with increased pedestrian activity outside the village. By maintaining a lower speed limit, drivers have more time to react to potential hazards, improving safety for both pedestrians and drivers.

Environmental considerations: Extending the 30mph speed limit outside the village can also have environmental benefits. Lower speeds generally result in reduced fuel consumption and lower emissions. By encouraging drivers to maintain a lower speed, especially in areas where there might be natural landscapes, wildlife habitats, or sensitive ecosystems, the impact on the environment can be minimized.