

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF RUSHTON PARISH COUNCIL
held Via Zoom on Wednesday 24th June 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs. Mike Wilson, Emma Leslie, Suzanne Hinchcliffe, Eddie Shaw, Amy Markham.

In Attendance: Lindsey Worrall (Clerk), Graham Bennett **Apologies:** Paul Healey

The Zoom, meeting was Chaired throughout by Cllr. Mike Wilson.

Note:

Black Text was sent out by Mike before the meeting and was used during the meeting.

Red Text were the issues for discussion and decision.

Blue text are the minutes as recorded by Clerk Lindsey

Intro: During the past 10yrs of working on this subject, it would be easy to conclude that whatever we do, nothing seems to happen. However when you consider that 10yrs ago we had ‘unrestricted speed limits’ at Whalley Drive; Eaton Lane from the Village to Cotebrook; Beech Lane and no 20mph limits there has been progress.

I believe a lesson we have learnt is to be clear about what we want, not to ask for too much at once, get the attention of those in authority and don't give up:

1.0 What is our Problem?

- 1.1 Certainly during ‘lock-down’ many of us and other residents, have observed vehicles, cars and motorcycles, travelling at “**high speeds**” (**55mph and above in a 40mph limit**) along Eaton Lane, to and from the village on the Cotebrook side.
- 1.2 There are also concerns about the speed of traffic along Lower Lane, the road that has our Primary School on it.
- 1.3 Both of the above are magnified, particularly for pedestrians and cyclist by the fact that there are no pavements.
- 1.4 **My proposal is that we now focus on 1.1 and put our efforts into achieving a result. Question: Do we agree this as the major problem at the moment?**

Everyone present was asked to summarise what they believed the main road safety problems for the village were. Although numerous issues were raised including early morning vehicles speeding down Sapling Lane, vehicles accelerating up and down the Hill on Lower Lane, Eaton Lane being used a rat run to avoid the traffic lights in Tarpoley, everyone agreed that the first priority was the speed of vehicles on Eaton Lane. During lockdown there has been a clear and progressive worsening of vehicle behaviour and high speeds have occurred including a Motor Bike actually hitting a councillors tree outside the house and others exceeding 80mph. The time that the speeding appears to be at its worse is early in the morning, pre-commuter time and later in the afternoon.

2.0 Quantifying the Problem

Paul Healey (Paul lives on Eaton Lane and downloads the data from our “Vehicle Activated Sign” on Eaton Lane) has sent the figures for the period 1st June to 21st June with his observations:

In green from Paul: The table below gives the total number of vehicles in bands over 55mph for the first 3 weeks of June. Clearly this is a snapshot, and also only covers traffic heading towards the village. Excluding those times which are “grouped” – so before 8.00 etc – the time of interest appears to be from 16:00 to 19:00. Roughly one third of offenders are passing through (quickly) around these times

Covering June 1st to 21st.

	55 to 60	60 to 65	over 65	total	%
before 8:00	23	4	1	28	18.7
08:00	4			4	2.7
09:00	5			5	3.3
10:00	2			2	1.3
11:00		1	1	2	1.3
12:00	7	1		8	5.3
13:00	2		1	3	2.0
14:00	9			9	6.0
15:00	2	4		6	4.0
16:00	12	3	1	16	10.7
17:00	11	4		15	10.0
18:00	13	6		19	12.7
19:00	6	2	1	9	6.0
20:00 or later	13	7	4	24	16.0
total	109	32	9	150	

In other news, the traffic count this week again averages 700 vehicles per day heading to the village; this is roughly 75% of pre lockdown levels. The proportion of vehicles going over 40 mph remains fairly steady around 25% or so.

It has to be pointed out that there are roughly 7 “high speeders” per day on average (measured going in one direction); this equates to 1% of all traffic measured. The concern, of course, is the potentially significant result of any accident caused at that speed.

It was agreed that Mike would ask Paul to dig a little deeper into the figures for this period to look at pre 8am and if possible, 8pm to 10pm

3.0 Project Objective

To significantly reduce the number of motorists exceeding 55mph on Eaton Lane which has a 40mph speed limit. **Question: should this be “exceeding 50mph”**

Everyone agreed that to the initial objective should be to address those driving at 55mph and over.

4.0 Choices of Approach

4.1 Changing the Speed Limits

There appears to be little merit in this as the target drivers are ignoring the current 40 limit. Lowering it would have little effect and the chances of achieving this through the “rules” of the “Highways Dept” are close to Zero.

It was agreed that Lindsey would continue to get clarification from Dave Reeves (Road Safety Management Highways), as to what is possible including the correct placement of the 20mph signs.

4.2 Appealing to Drivers Conscience

This could be previously shown “calming village gateway entrance features” ; Notices”; hazard signs / coloured road surfaces etc.

It was agreed to continue this initiative started by Emma & Mike and Graham Bennett with wife Sue have agreed to help out with this. Calming measures could include welcoming entrances to the village with planters and gates at the Eaton signs.

4.3 Adding “physical re-strainers”

This could be speed humps; raised coloured tarmac area”; “narrow priority” one way segments; surface speed markings

It was agreed to keep in touch with Highways who have said that these issues, although not current policy, are being reviewed. Physical options could include, placing raised tarmac on the road which creates no noise compared to speed humps which are noisy for residents.

4.4 Period of S.I.D Monitoring

This would be the equipment triggered by the driver to show his speed on a monitor. Manned by trained local residents and if a PCSO is present then a warning letter can be sent.

It was agreed that this method, tried before by the Parish Council, does not have a great effect on drivers as no follow up is included.

4.5 Community Speed Watch

Web shows that Cheshire Police are supporting this initiative. I have contacted Christleton who introduced this last February. Requires volunteers; training and a speed gun (borrowed or purchased circa £130).

It was agreed that setting up a Community Speed Watch Group should be looked at. Under Community Speed Watch the Registration can be recorded of a speeding vehicle and a warning letter sent by the police to those over the limit. If repeat offenders are found the evidence can be forwarded to the Constabulary who can issue fines.

4.6 Enforcement

This can be by a temporary/permanent “Radar Speed Trap”; occasional presence of the Police Radar Van; Police with Speed cameras.

It was strongly agreed that current conversations with the Police should be pursued as it cannot be that Speed Limits in a rural village cannot be enforced. Mike will continue communications with PC Phillip Monks and if necessary go further with the Chief Constable and or Police Commissioner.

4.6 “Out of the Box” Thinking

Another option?? “Cycling through Covid”, see below

5.0 Meeting Objective & Summary:

To agree on the Problem

To agree on the Project Objective

To decide on the “Choice of Approach”

The Problem and Project Objective were felt to have been agreed, as was the priority of the Approaches discussed

Summary: Choice of the Approach

- 1) Enforcement by Police, either regular or for a two-week period.
If Paul can get more information to narrow down the data further, eg majority of morning speeding offences occur between 6-8 or 6-9am and afternoon this would greatly help. Mike to chase.
- 2) Parallel to enforcement the option of a Community Speed Watch Group (ideally with 12 volunteers to help run the group) will be looked into.
- 3) Appeal to the drivers conscious, at the entrances to the village place planters and attached gates to the signposts to emphasise to motorists that they are entering a small rural village.
- 4) Physical restraints to be monitored and considered if required
- 5) Position of Speed Limits (mainly the 20's) to be followed up.
- 6) “Cycling through Covid”, a National Initiative to make roads safer in the future for cyclists, will be looked into.

Next Meeting

Depending on progress with the Police etc, if felt necessary a follow up meeting will be held in the next 2 weeks.

Mike thanked all participants for giving up their time for this meeting and being so positive about the future.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7:42pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____