

Resident's Campaign to Curb the Speed of Vehicles in the Village

Following a mail out to all residents of Newton regarding the excessive speed of many vehicles passing through the village, a total of 160 residents, representing 96 households, have now replied saying that they are concerned about speeding and wish to be part of the campaign. All would like to see permanent speed curbs installed.

At the last NPC Meeting on the 16th July, I was asked to consult with the other members of the campaign group, to come up with recommendations so that NPC can submit a claim for funds from Cambridge County Council, under the 'Local Highways Improvement Initiative' to finance any approved measures.

Subsequently a meeting was held in the Village Hall at 2000 hrs on Wednesday 23rd July at which there were 33 attendees plus County Councillor Tony Orgee. 24 people sent their apologies.

The reasons for speed calming measures on each road were discussed in detail together with the following speed calming options:

- 30 MPH sign to be moved further out.
- Speed bumps.
- Speed cushions.
- Chicanes.
- Gating.
- Rumble Strips.
- Chevrons.
- 30 MPH road roundels.

It was agreed, that to have a greater understanding of the problem, a census of traffic needed to be carried out during peak traffic times with a special note being taken of how many vehicles activated the VAS signs (Vehicle Activated 30 mph illuminated Sign). The census was taken from 0730 – 0930 hrs and from 1630 – 1830 hrs on Tuesday 19th August, the height of the holiday season when traffic is at its lightest and the census only recorded traffic entering the village. A summary now follows and a detailed report is available.

Total Vehicles entering the village - 1,515

Total for Fowlmere Road	- 601	Number Activating VAS	- 185	(30%)
Total for Cambridge Road	- 442	Number Activating VAS	- 221	(50%)
Total for Harston Road	- 265	Number Activating VAS	- 160	(60%)*

* In the first hour, 72% of vehicles entering on the Harston Road activated the VAS

Conclusion of the Traffic Census

On average 50% of all vehicles entering the village are activating the VAS and are therefore exceeding the speed limit and breaking the law. The % of vehicles activating the VAS sign appeared fairly consistent throughout each hour of the survey

By far the worst was **Harston Road where in the first hour 72% exceeded the speed limit** and the average for the four hours recorded being 60%. This may be accounted for by the short distance between the top of the hill (when the 30 MPH sign is first seen) and the actual sign, positioned by the first houses.

The busiest is Fowlmere Road where more than twice the traffic of Harston Road and 36% more traffic than Cambridge Road was recorded. .

The total for Whittlesford Road, where there is no VAS, was 207 vehicles.

The total for Town Street was 141 vehicles. However with Little Hands Nursery closed and many of the workers at Newton Hall away on holiday, we have estimated the traffic (inwards in the morning and outwards in the afternoon) would normally be between 250 and 300.

Recommendation of Speed Reduction Measures

Each of the five roads was discussed in turn and differing opinions were viewed as to the best measures. It was agreed that all roads should be considered and that we should produce a traffic plan for the whole village. However there was one measure in which there was complete agreement.

30 MPH Sign: We currently have four 30 MPH sign at the entrances or actually inside the village. In general it has been observed that vehicles do not even begin slowing down until they are actually at the sign and into the village. Since under current regulations, speed cameras need to be at least 0.2 mile from the nearest 30 MPH sign, *it is not possible to guarantee a successful prosecution for speeding in Newton as there is nowhere in the village 0.2 miles or over from the 30 MPH signs.* Any conviction could be overturned by an appeal! Also speed calming measures such as speed bumps or speed pads would have to be at some distance inside the 30MPH, sign towards the main junction and well inside the village, where traffic in any case has to stop or is beginning to slow. The meeting was therefore in complete agreement that we should apply to have the 30 MPH signs moved as follows.

Cambridge Road – 100 to 150 yards towards Cambridge

Harston Road – Move to the top of the hill on the Harston side of Eldorado Stables.

Whittleford Road – Move, staying within the village, to just beyond number 76 (Robert Norfolk's House), where the bridleway/farmtrack from New Farm Road converges on the Whittlesford Road.

Fowlmere Road – Move approximately 150yard towards the cricket pitch entrance.

Cambridge Road – The highest number of vehicles activating the VAS were recorded on this road. The long straight unhindered approach encourages speeding although a children's playground is within 100yards of the 30 MPH sign. Other areas of concern are the school drop off point by the village hall, the blind bend at the junction by the Queen's Head and crossing traffic from the Whittlesford Road and Town Street.

Attendees at the meeting were asked to raise hands for different proposed measures and the results were that both Rumble Strips and Speed Tables/Bumps/Speed Cushions were the preferred methods. However on investigation it was found that Rumble Strips are not recommended. (See note below from Surrey County Council.)

We are therefore recommending that in conjunction with moving the 30 MPH sign, Speed Cushions are installed 20 or 30 yards before the first houses. This will allow buses, emergency vehicles and transport with wide wheel bases to pass through without discomfort.

Harston Road - The highest % of vehicles activating the VAS were recorded on this road. A straight approach road and the short distance (about 150 yds) from initial sight and actual position of the 30 MPH sign has resulted in few vehicles even reducing their speed until the VAS signal flashes. Additionally many drivers, entering Harston from Foxton at peak hours and in a hurry, divert off to Newton and then double back up the Cambridge Road back to Harston to avoid the continual jams in Harston High Street. A footpath exists on only one side of the road and because of the speeding traffic cars often park on the footpath causing pedestrians including mothers with prams to walk in the road to get past. Another hazard is the poor line of sight for resident's vehicles when coming out from their driveways onto the road. The school bus also drops children off on the Harston Road outside the village hall.

The campaign members are therefore recommending that in conjunction with moving the 30 MPH sign, Speed Cushions are installed 20 or 30 yards before the first houses. This will allow buses, emergency vehicles and transport with wide wheel bases to pass through without discomfort.

Fowlmere Road - The 30 MPH sign is on a sharp bend with no line of sight into the village making it dangerous for people crossing the road at this point or vehicles coming out of the gateway on the bend. Vehicles speeding out of the village are possibly a greater problem than those entering.

We therefore recommend the moving of the 30 MPH sign to just by the cricket pitch and Gating installed before 'The Cottage' on the bend as you enter the village.

Rumble Strips

Experience elsewhere suggest that these result at best in only marginal speed reduction and this is outweighed by the environmental cost in terms of noise and vibration. Some drivers perceive the noise and vibration effect to be reduced at faster speeds and accelerate accordingly. Conversely, a lesser number pass over them very slowly and this diversity in adopted speed is a potential hazard. The DfT have stated that some authorities do not permit the use of rumble strips within 200m of any residential property but the noise generated can travel much further depending on local circumstances and particularly at night. Due to the lack of speed reduction effect and generated noise, rumble strips are not recommended as a speed reduction measure in traffic calming schemes.

Whittlesford Road - On the half mile between the village sign just before the first house (Tim Wolfendale) and the 30 MPH sign there are three blind bends and one bend with partial sight. There are no pavements, few street lights and no verges for much of the way that could be used by pedestrians. Six houses are outside the 30 MPH sign where the standard 60 MPH limit applies.

We therefore recommend the moving of the 30 MPH sign approximately 200 yards further out to a position that would take in a further three houses. This should slow the traffic round the last blind bend and provide greater safety to pedestrians walking on the road. In addition the 30 MPH Roundels need repainting and Dragons Teeth Markings are recommended prior to the new position of 30 MPH sign.

Town Street - This is dead end road which retains a lot of old world village atmosphere. It is used as a recreational area with children playing in the road and on scooters and cycles. Additionally, it is a favourite route for many walkers (many with dogs) gaining access to the various rural footpaths across the fields and to Foxton. There is no dedicated footpath in Town Street (just a white line on one side of the road) and occasionally livestock is taken across the road.

Barn conversions for industrial use, the various businesses located at Newton Hall and Little Hands Nursery has resulted in dramatically increased traffic on this road. In term time the Nursery alone generated approximately 70 separate two way trips by mothers often rushed and preoccupied with dropping of their child and getting to work or returning home on time.

The meeting recommends the re-zoning of this road to 20 MPH.

Clive Bradbury
On behalf of Newton Speed Curb Campaign