Burton Community Speed Watch Team

Annual Report 2021/22

1. Background

In 2011 the Nettleton Parish Plan survey reported that ‘*90% of the respondents who live in Burton say that traffic drives too fast on the road through Burton (B4039).*’ In 2014 A Metrocount automated traffic survey was carried out in the Street for a week. This showed that in that one week 2265 cars (15%) exceeded 38.5 mph – more than 300 cars every day. Following this a Community Speed Watch (CSW) team of volunteers from the village was trained by Wiltshire police.

In the scheme, a small group observes traffic using a speed monitor provided by Wiltshire Police. The details of any vehicle going over 35mph (or 46mph in a 40mph limit) are recorded, and forwarded to the police. The registered vehicle owner receives a letter after the first and second offences; this is escalated to a formal police visit after a third offence, or if the speed exceeds 45mph (or 60mph in a 40mph limit) on any occasion.

1. Last year’s activities and results

Following authorisation by Wiltshire Police and familiarisation with revised reporting arrangements, the Burton speed watch team restarted activities in early June 2021.

In October we recruited two new team members and they underwent CSW training. There was also a change of team leader, with Judith Bird standing down. Since that time, we have tried to achieve two one-hour sessions each week with a team of three or preferably four for each session.

In total for the year ending 31 March there were 32 sessions with 6612 passing cars. 174 cars were reported to the police for exceeding the reporting threshold (35mph for a 30 limit; 46mph for a 40 limit). This is 2.6% of passing cars, an average of 5 cars each session. It is notable that in 31 out of the 32 sessions at least one car was exceeding 40 mph. in the year 9 cars were reported for exceeding 45mph.

A notable feature is the behaviour of some drivers when they pass a team in session, who show their contempt for the work of the team by driving aggressively when they have gone past the team – little realising that the speed monitor works just as well for cars going away from the team as towards it.

1. Looking forward

In the short term it would be helpful to increase the number of trained volunteers. Firstly, with two or three more volunteers it will be possible to increase to three sessions per week with individual team members still doing only two hours per week. Secondly the team loses members from time to time for various reasons.

Wiltshire police are now much more active in supporting Community Speed Watch, having recently appointed a County CSW coordinator; promoting communications through a Team Leader’s WhatsApp Group and linking CSW teams to the existing Community Policing Team structure. The Burton CSW team are participating in these communication channels.

One topic which is live in the CSW community is the possible use of Auto Speed Watch. This is a new type of automatic speed camera with a supporting service that process the data to match it against DVLA records, and transmit the data to the police, thus reducing the volunteer workload considerably. It enables frequent offending cars and hot-spot times to be identified. The full introduction of Auto Speed Watch will create a vast increase in speed watch data presented to the police, and because of the changes this is likely to entail, the possible introduction is still very much a subject for discussion. If it becomes possible to introduce this in Burton, it should achieve a very significant reduction in traffic speeds.

Alistair Caie

May 2022