

REPORT ON SPEEDING IN HALSTOCK AND MEASURES TO CONTROL SPEED

Context

Halstock, as a village community, is bisected by a north-south 'main' road (C37) currently restricted to a speed limit of 30 mph between its northern and southern limits. Beyond this, to the north, there is a 40 mph 'buffer zone', but a similar zone does not exist at the southern boundary.

During daytime hours, but especially at the morning and evening 'drive-time' periods, this road is used by significant numbers of non-resident drivers - assumed to be mainly commuters - many travelling between Beaminster/Bridport and Yeovil. Others travel to and from work in Halstock and Halstock Leigh and there are the inevitable delivery drivers. All this aside from local resident drivers.

Within the village there are limited footpaths so, in several sections, throughout the day, the roadway itself is used by pedestrians (many elderly), by dog-walkers and also horses, who share the highway with cars, vans, tractors and an increasing number of HGVs. The road is also part of National Cycle Network Route 26.

Regarding traffic volumes, during morning and evening commuting hours, an average of 140 vehicles per hour passes through the village centre, and that number can reach as high as 200 per hour at times. (Source: Halstock Community Speed Watch data).

Measuring the problem of speeding in Halstock

In October/November 2020, a week-long, round-the-clock, automatic traffic count was carried out in Halstock, paid for by the Parish Council, at two sites on the C37, both adjacent to the start points of the two principal 30mph limit signs.

Over the 7-day period this provided the following average speeds:

Halstock North

- Northbound traffic: 36.7 mph
- Southbound traffic: 32.3 mph

Halstock South

- Northbound traffic: 34.8 mph
- Southbound traffic: 39.1 mph

Nationally, motorists are permitted to drive within a tolerance of up to 34 mph in a 30 mph limit, i.e. 30mph + 10% + 1mph. (This allows for fluctuations in speedometer accuracy). **From the above figures it is evident that average speeds at these sites exceeded this tolerance in three out of the four cases.**

Note: this traffic count was conducted at the time of the second Covid-19 lockdown, when levels of commuter traffic in particular, were low due to the sharp increase in working from home.

Community Speed Watch Data

CSW has been carried out in Halstock since 2017 and is provided entirely by volunteers in association with Dorset Police. It should be recognised however, that the purpose of Speed Watch is not to provide accurate data about ongoing speeds, but only those monitored during brief and irregular periods. To provide more, another up-to-date Automatic Traffic Count will be needed.

Rather, CSW is essentially a deterrent to speeding drivers who cannot predict if a team of speed-monitors will be in place on any particular day. No penalties or prosecutions result directly from Speed Watch.

The very fact that CSW volunteers are required to be at least three in number at any one time and to wear hi-vis jackets, supports this principle of deterrence.

Speed Indicator Devices (SIDS)

It is an accepted fact that the majority of speeding drivers do so negligently and unintentionally. SIDS are known to be particularly effective by employing a flashing screen to inform all drivers of their current speed and prompting those who are speeding unthinkingly to slow down and comply with the limit. Without doubt, the majority of offenders driving through Halstock fall into this category.

SIDS will not deter the determined and deliberate speeder, **but there is good evidence that they can significantly reduce the proportion of speeding vehicles (see Appendix).**

Obtaining SIDS for Halstock

The previously mentioned Traffic Count in 2020 was part of a bid by the Parish Council to obtain permission from Dorset Highways to purchase and operate SIDS at the most relevant locations in Halstock (and, at that time, also one location in Corscombe). The bid was unsuccessful because the average speeds thresholds recorded in the traffic count did not meet the criteria for a SID at that time.

RECOMMENDATION

Since the 2020 traffic count a number of circumstances have changed:

- There is anecdotal evidence that traffic volumes have increased post-covid.
- Halstock CSW data suggest that speeding traffic is still an issue, with a top speed of 50 mph recorded in the 30 mph zone, and speeds of 40 mph and over regularly recorded.
- Dorset Council procedures have changed; traffic count data is now used by Officers to work with the community on proportionate and appropriate measures to tackle speeding. Whilst a SID can still be obtained if the threshold is reached, there are a range of other measures that can be implemented if this threshold is not met (These could include signage, road markings or other measures to alter driver-behaviour).

Therefore Halstock CSW request funding for a second radar traffic count to be conducted by Dorset Council. The purpose of this exercise is to obtain data on traffic speeds and to use this to determine appropriate measures to tackle speeding traffic. Halstock CSW would recommend this count is conducted at 2 locations in Halstock that have been certified by the Police as appropriate to measure and tackle speed.

Tony Hill/ Diane Howell for Halstock Community Speed Watch

July 2024

APPENDIX

Costings (all costs exclude VAT)

Radar Speed Count: £295 for 1 location; £200 for each subsequent location

SID:

Unit cost £2595

Solar panel £275

Bracket £55

Installation £300-500

Examples of effectiveness of SID (Data from Dorset Council):

1. A350 - Fontmell Magna

7-Day Average Summary

	Pre SID	After SID Programme Established in Village			
		No SID	Diff.	With SID	Diff.
7-Day Average Volume	1534	1666		1694	
85%ile (mph)	37.1	34.2	-2.9	31.7	-5.4
Mean (mph)	30.7	29.4	-1.3	28.3	-2.4
Veh. Less Than 30mph	529	985	456	1204	675
Veh. Greater Than 35mph	209	210	1	116	-93
Veh. Greater Than 40mph	85	67	-18	36	-49

2. Leigh Road, Wimborne

85%ile Speed (The speed at which 85% of traffic is at or below)

Before SID – 37.9mph With SID – 34.2mph (reduction of 3.7mph)

Vehicles Travelling above 40mph (average number of vehicles per day)

Before SID – 490 (8%) With SID – 187 (3%)

Vehicles Travelling above ACPO (10%+2mph of posted limit 35mph)

Before SID – 32.9% With SID – 12.3%

Before SID – 1996 With SID – 794

3. Dorchester Road, Wool