



INTRODUCTION

The Little Abington Community Speedwatch scheme officially began 24th September 2015 and has been running for seven full months.

Initial concerns regarding traffic speeds within the village and more particularly the route in and out along Bourn Bridge Road were raised in a letter to the Parish council in September 2014. In Feb 2015 this was further discussion at little Abington parish council meeting.

Following the decision by little Abington parish council to purchase the necessary speed watch equipment and attendance by several initial volunteers to police training the scheme got off to a positive start in September 2015.

Publicity was given to the new scheme via leafletting all properties in the village to raise awareness to residents of the start of the scheme and ask for volunteers. In addition regular updates are posted in The Abingtons and Hildersham News. Further on in November 2015 posters were placed on noticeboards and other places round the village to again raise awareness of the scheme.



Objectives

- Remind drivers that Little Abington is a 30 mph limit zone.
- Report vehicles exceeding 35 mph (or excess of 45 mph on A1307).
- Reduce the average speed of vehicles passing through Little Abington.

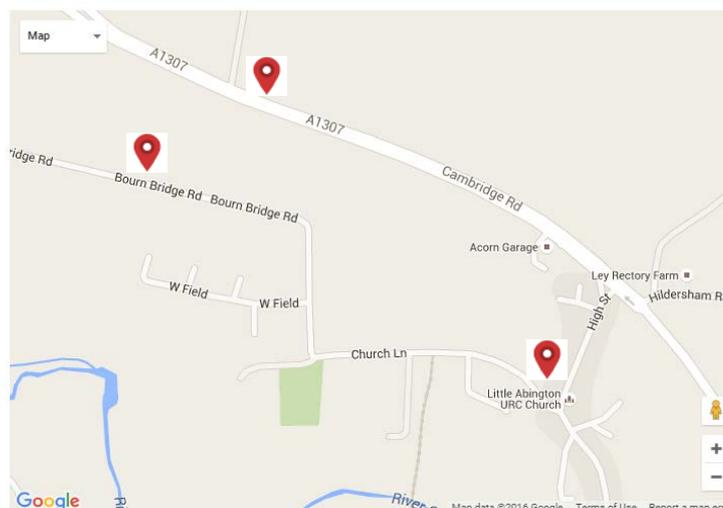
Training

Police Safety Officer Brian Robbins provided training sessions which were attended by volunteers at Camborne Police Station.

Locations

Three safe locations for observation were agreed with PC Brian Robbins:

- Bourn Bridge Road
- High Street (Pottery)
- A1307





Operations

A total of 42 one hour sessions have been carried out so far. These sessions have been covered by 6 volunteers at 3 locations within the village on different days of the week.

The results were recorded for later entry into the Police online system. The reports are checked for accuracy against DVLC files and letters are sent to the owners of vehicles by the Police with the aim of educating them to change their behaviour, reduce their speed and make the roads of Little Abington a safer place. Whilst drivers cannot be prosecuted on Speed Watch reports, repeat offenders could receive a visit from the Police to ask why they ignore speed limits.

The following is a summary of the findings from each of the locations.

BOURN BRIDGE ROAD (30mph)

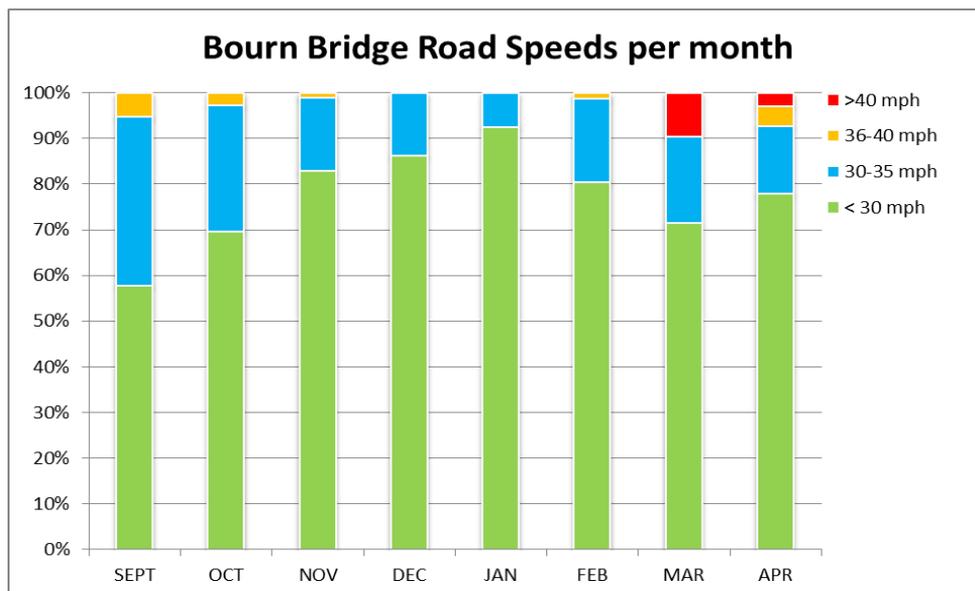
Westbound (out of village)

A total of 22 sessions of Speedwatch have occurred in this location covering all days of the week and various different times. This road is currently a 30 mph zone. Speeds recorded have ranged up to 50 mph, with up to 37% of drivers travelling over the 30 mph limit on specific occasions. Up to 6% of drivers have been reported to the police for speeds in excess of 35 mph.

"Speeds recorded have ranged up to 50 mph with up to 37% of drivers travelling over the 30 mph limit"

The total average speed calculated for this location is 27 mph during Speedwatch activity. The range of speeds recorded is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Bourn Bridge Road recorded speeds per month





Eastbound (coming into the village)

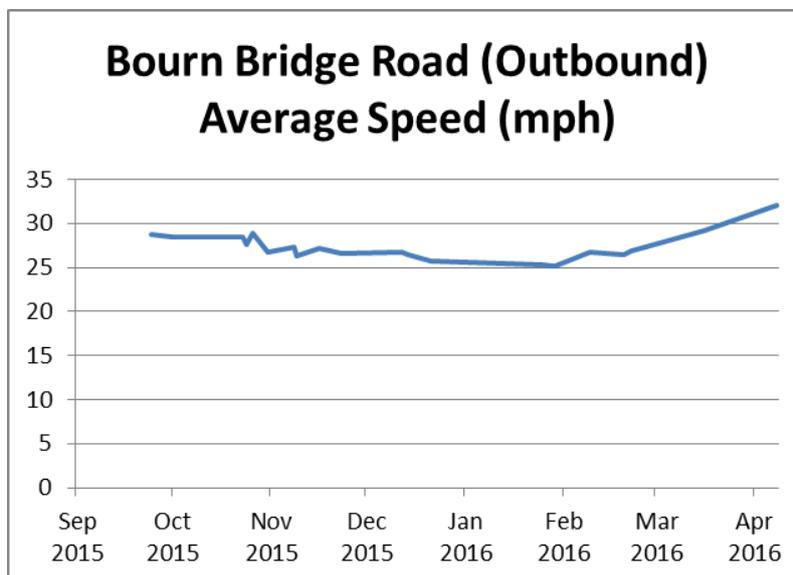
A total of 10 sessions of Speedwatch have occurred covering Mondays, Tuesdays, Friday and Sunday both early morning and later afternoon. Speeds recorded have ranged up to 37 mph, with up to 57% of drivers travelling over the 30 mph limit on specific occasions. Up to 6% of drivers have been reported to the police for speeds in excess of 35mph. The total average speed calculated for this location is 27 mph during Speedwatch activity.

Summary

Bourn Bridge Road was the subject of most of the initial Speedwatch activity due to high traffic volumes at peak times and at weekends. The road is a small village road that narrows as it leads out across fields where traffic can pass safely only at very slow speeds. At the point where the road narrows national speed limit signs are in place facing drivers exiting the village. On the reverse, 30 mph signs are in place warning drivers they are entering a built up area. The location of the signage is a cause for concern as there is no 'buffer' zone warning drivers to slow down before entering a residential area and consequently the overly large national speed limit signs tend to encourage drivers to speed out of the village when they are in a 30 mph zone. This road has been the subject of concern from local residents as it is deceptively dangerous and is mistaken as a quiet village road but one that can quickly become a high speed road without warning. The road is used by children playing & cycling, dog walkers & horse riders and the road has one very narrow footpath that runs on one side of the road only.

The Speedwatch program over the course of seven months brought about an initial noticeable reduction in recorded speed from September 2015 to January 2016. However since January speeds have been on the increase (**Figure 1 & Figure 2**) with one driver recorded at 50 mph. In terms of east versus west bound there is a small difference in speeding habits (37% & 57% respectively) but this may be due to the greater amount of data generated west bound (out of village) as the concern here is drivers are already in a 30 mph zone and should not be speeding.

Figure 2. Average Recorded Speed on Bourn Bridge Road





ABINGTON POTTERY (30 mph)

A total of 6 sessions of Speedwatch have occurred covering Mondays, Tuesday and Saturday both early morning and mid-morning. The total average speed calculated over the 6 sessions was 27 mph (during speed watch activity). 29% of drivers were recorded over the 30 mph limit on specific occasions and 13% of drivers have been reported to the police for speeds in excess of 35mph. The highest speed recorded was 38 mph.

Note: The first session at this location took place ‘inbound’ to the village but due to little traffic all other sessions were conducted ‘outbound’ from the village. The ‘inbound’ session recorded speeds up to 32 mph and 16% of drivers travelling over the 30mph limit. No drivers were reported to the police.

Summary

The Pottery was a location monitored initially ‘inbound’ to the village as most reports were of vehicles speeding in off the A1307.

With only a handful of monitoring sessions taken place at this location in the outbound direction it is too early to make any assessment. However, even though the average speeds at this location is 27 mph (as per Bourn Bridge Road) the data is more concentrated around that figure implying that most drivers could be speeding more readily in the absence of Speedwatch.

A1307 EAST BOUND (Towards Haverhill) 40mph

A1307 east bound is a 40 mph location where speed monitoring equipment is already permanently in place recording traffic speeds in the westerly direction towards Cambridge. A total of 4 sessions of speed watch have occurred east bound covering Saturday and Sunday’s mid-morning but due to the volumes of traffic and the difficulty in accurately recording every vehicle registration plate, only speeds of 45 mph and over were recorded. Even then, reading of vehicle number plates was difficult and consequently a number of speeding vehicles have not been reported due to inaccurate number plates or vehicle colour/make.

“Up to 28% of drivers were travelling over 45 mph on specific occasions”

The total number of vehicles passing was 1,616 where up to 28% of drivers were travelling over 45 mph on specific occasions and speeds up to 60 mph were recorded with an average reportable speed of 49mph.

Summary

The A1307 was a location chosen to supplement the speed monitoring already in place for traffic flow towards Cambridge. However, traffic flow on this road tends to be of high volume and of higher speed (40mph) making the task of accurately recording all vehicle details as well as log speeds near impossible for volunteers. Hence, monitoring vehicles travelling at



45mph and above was deemed the better option as these are reportable and at the same time record the total number of vehicles passing in each session.

With only a handful of monitoring taken place at this location it is too early to make any assessment of the impact speed watch has. The only meaningful data to be extracted is for those vehicles recorded at 45 mph and over where the average speed was 49mph and the highest speed recorded was 60mph.

With more practice we hope to improve recording vehicle details more accurately to ensure the figures better reflect the vehicle speeds in this location.

POLICE SUPPORT

The scheme is fully supported by the Cambridgeshire Police Speedwatch coordinating team. Sgt. Paul Jenkins attended one early morning session on Bourn Bridge Road and ticketed one driver at 41mph. During the same session a driver was also logged at 38mph.

As a matter of point Sgt. Jenkins commented that the national speed limits signs are probably the main reason for encouraging drivers to speed and that village roads like Bourn Bridge Road are the most dangerous.

“Sgt. Paul Jenkins attended one early morning session on Bourn Bridge Road and ticketed one driver at 41mph”

Further sessions with Sgt. Jenkins are planned to bolster the message to drivers that speeding on our village roads is not acceptable.





CONCLUSION

The Little Abington Community Speedwatch scheme has been successfully running for seven full months. There has been encouragement from passers-by who have voiced their support for the scheme. However, there have been a few incidents of passers-by voicing quite strongly their disapproval, sometimes in quite an aggressive manner.

As a general observation, during the Speedwatch sessions drivers are slowing down and breaking when they see the high visibility vests and therefore the data collected may not be representative of actual speeds. It is anticipated that the actual figures are far higher.

From the data gathered to date there is evidence that Speedwatch had an initial impact with some reduction in speed recorded in sessions from September 2015 to January 2016. However, since January speeds have been on the increase (Figure 1 & Figure 2) and unacceptable speeding was evident even when the sessions are highly visible and in the presence of a Police officer.

Speedwatch therefore is not a solution to issues of speeding but a means to raise awareness of the issue that supplements consideration towards more permanent measures such as the positioning of signage, additional signage, traffic calming schemes or an overall reduction of the limit in the village to 20 mph, as has been the case for many local villages.

With more volunteers (although it has been difficult to recruit) it is planned to continue the scheme and carry out more frequent operations.