

**WARBLETON PARISH COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH (CSW) BRIEFING
25th January 2024**

INTRODUCTION

Everyone, including the Police, Highways, CSW, villagers and we hope the PC, all acknowledge that RG has become a speeding hotspot which is born out by the statistics we have gathered over the 5 years we have been operating.

Tonight's invitation, which we were pleased to accept, was to brief the PC on our village CSW group operations and include a county wide/nation wide CSW overview.

Steve O'Connell, who is the CSW Coordinator for Sussex, has kindly given up his time to give you the big picture and then I will talk about our group operations after which we can take questions.

HQ CSW

Steve O'Connell

WARBLETON CSW GROUP

Over 5 years ago, because a number of parishioners were thoroughly fed up with the increased speeding through the village, and as the Police could not help on a regular basis, we set up a CSW group with kit borrowed from Steve. CSW is viewed by the police as the best option available to villages serious about tackling a speeding problem .

After a few weeks, at a PC meeting, I briefed the PC on CSW and, as a result, the PC decided to buy a set of kit, which I now hold. This consists of a handheld radar device, calibrated before each session, a vehicle counter and 4 hi Vis vests. It cost about £400.

During each CSW session, booked on the CSW website and on a site surveyed and designated by Steve, we record the:

- Reg No
- Make
- Colour
- Speed
- Direction

of all vehicles travelling at 36mph or over, who are already at 20% above the speed limit.

In a one hour session, depending on the time and day, we can record anything from 20-55 vehicles speeding, with often 40% at over 40mph. Speeding vehicles can represent 25% of passing traffic. As an example, yesterday we recorded 36 speeding vehicles in an hour with 45% over 40mph.

At the end of each session, the results are uploaded to the CSW website and

recorded data destroyed. We play no further part in processing the data which is then handled by Steve and the Police .We now wear a body-cam to protect us from abuse.

Initially we had 15 volunteers split into 2 groups in RG and BSG

We also started with 4 designated sites in RG focusing on one way traffic , but because of the increased dangers of parked cars we now have one site recording both ways

We try to vary the timings of a session so as not to engage with the same drivers

Initially we ran, on average 3-4 x 1-2 hour sessions a week

After 2 years, due to ill health, the BSG group folded.

We are now down to 4 volunteers in RG and I will return to this later

At the start we were recording 5k vehicles a year and over the last 5 the years we have recorded c 18k vehicles which indicates that there would be c 16.5k non reoffenders but bearing in mind that we are only roadside for a very small fraction of the day/week/year you can imagine the real total of vehicles speeding through the village – unwarned, we estimate over 60% of all vehicles break the speed limit – probably about 450 a day.

Now we record c1k vehicles a year

We understand that the Traffic survey commissioned in 2022 is still to be evaluated by the PC. As the Chairman will recall , when I was a Parish Councillor, we spoke to Ian Johnston, the Highways official on the Green and he unofficially confirmed that the statistics the survey revealed are:

- That the mean speed of 32mph indicates that the 30mph limit is about right
- However, the 85 percentile speed of 39mph indicates that the road is not doing it's job in encouraging drivers to keep to the limit.

Extra measures are therefore required and we ask the PC to consider these , although we accept that without an accident involving death or serious injury, Highways are unlikely to consider most of them although they are visible in other villages:

- Graduated speed reduction (50-40-30) on approaches to village
- Physical barriers – chicanes
- Better controls/markings for the accident hotspot at the junction of the Green/Rookery Lane/Bodle St Rd
- 30mph signs moved further away from Green in the northern approaches
- 30mph roundels on appropriate clear road spaces within the zone
- Provision of a Speed Indicator Device (SID) of the 30+ “Slow Down/-30 “Thank You” type that you see in many surrounding villages. This would be provided by the PC and not reliant on Highways except for licencing if necessary. Of interest, the excellent SIDs installed in Hadlow Down were partly funded by village “Crowd Funding”.
- Re-locating of confusing de-restriction signs at Back Lane
- Perhaps a 20mph limit round Green to protect the pub/shop/OH.

We understand that the PC rejected the idea of speed roundels in the village at

the 26th September meeting and later in the discussion period perhaps we could cover this further

Questions for Steve or me or Cathy or any of the past or present CSW Group?

CONCLUSION

Before we go, I have a question for the PC

We know that not everyone likes CSW – but nobody can give a good, rational, sensible reason why.

There have been recent Articles in the Times on CSW and the Times ran a survey which indicated that :

- 66% were in favour of CSW – a large number but
- 33% were not – also a significant percentage – but interestingly the majority of these were not anti volunteer CSW groups but believed that this was a job for the Police – and we would agree. We would love to see an increased Police presence in the village handing out fines and points to offending drivers which seems to be the real deterrent.

We also know from the Council Minutes of the 26th September that Council support for CSW is divided.

Over last 5 years we have, in our attempts to improve road safety in the village, endured long hours in inclement weather suffering abuse from drivers, some of whom are or were in positions of authority in the village and this has been one of the major factors in the reduction in numbers of volunteers.

We see our job as both reminding and advising drivers that there is a speed limit in the village and collecting data to prove that we have a significant problem

We believe that we have the support of the parishioners, walkers, dog walkers horse riders and cyclists, who often ask why we are not out more often and without their support and that of Steve and Cathy, our excellent PCSO, who regularly joins us roadside, we would probably have packed it all in some time ago because in the past 5 years we have not received one word of support, encouragement or, indeed thanks from the PC.

So Chairman, my questions to you are twofold – does our CSW group have 100%, unequivocal support of all your councillors and are you going to consider introducing permanent speeding deterrents and road safety measures in Rushlake Green?

And if the answers to both are no – could we ask - why not?

Michael Smythe
CSW Coordinator

25th January 2024