

## Traffic Calming and Road Safety Working Group

### Progress Report and Recommendations, September 2024

This report captures all the information gathered following Porlock Parish Council's endorsement of the Working Group's initial set of recommendations. Further recommendations are highlighted in **bold, red type** in this document.

#### Traffic Speed Data and Implications for Further 20 mph Limits or a 20 mph Zone

The following information has been provided by the Somerset Highways Traffic Management Team, based on monitoring of sat navs and mobile phones in vehicles (see table below).

It isn't possible to get a 20 mph limit established where the average road speed is greater than  $20 + 10\% + 2 = 24$  mph. The rationale is that 20 mph signs are unlikely to have much impact where the average traffic speed exceeds 24 mph, which also risks damaging the credibility of 20 mph limits in general. Paradoxically, this means it is only possible to put in place 20 mph limits where the average traffic speed is already close to (or below) that limit. Since Porlock has many natural 'traffic calming' features such as narrow roads, bottlenecks, bends and associated congestion, our average road speeds are naturally low and that is why it has been possible to establish the current 20 mph limits in the village.

With this in mind and looking at the average speed data in the table below, it would be possible to extend the 20 mph limits in some areas (for example Bossington Lane, Old Lane, Redway, Doverhay and Parsons Street). However given that average traffic speeds are already relatively low in these locations, any further benefit would have to be offset against the cost of installing additional 20 mph limits, which would have to be borne by the Parish Council.

| Location                                                         | Average Speed Recorded | Current Speed Limit |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Bay Road                                                         | 13.6                   | 20                  |
| Sparkhayes Lane                                                  | 12.0                   | 20                  |
| Villes Lane                                                      | 14.0                   | 20                  |
| Meadowhayes Road                                                 | 10.3                   | 20                  |
| Parks View                                                       | 11.8                   | 20                  |
| Bossington Lane                                                  | 15.0                   | 30                  |
| Old Lane                                                         | 16.4                   | 30                  |
| Minehead Road between Hacketty Way and Dunster Steep             | 29.8                   | 30                  |
| Dunster Steep (westbound)                                        | 19.4                   | 20                  |
| Doverhay                                                         | 10.0                   | 20                  |
| Doverhay                                                         | 10.3                   | 30                  |
| Parsons Street                                                   | 13.4                   | 20                  |
| Parsons Street                                                   | 12.3                   | 30                  |
| Redway                                                           | 14.0                   | 20                  |
| Redway                                                           | 19.5                   | 30                  |
| High Street                                                      | 11.8                   | 20                  |
| West End                                                         | 11.0                   | 20                  |
| Porlock Weir Road (east end: Splatt Barn and High Bank cottages) | 28.2                   | 30                  |
| West Porlock                                                     | 24.3                   | 30                  |

| Possible Action                                                                        | Approx. Cost            | Advantages                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Disadvantages                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Extend 20 mph limit along Bossington Lane, Old Lane, Doverhay, Parsons Street, Redway. | => £10,000 <sup>1</sup> | Further awareness of speed limits via road signs and/or road markings. Possible reduction of vehicle speeds.                                                                                               | Additional road signs, with limited benefit given the data in the table above. Relatively high cost vs. benefit ?                                                                                                                                                             |
| Establish a formal 20 mph zone in Porlock.                                             | => £10,000 <sup>1</sup> | Reduction in number of speed limit signs. Further awareness of speed limits. Possible traffic speed reduction via other traffic calming elements required in a 20 mph zone. These are required every 200m. | As yet unknown impact of other traffic calming elements required for a 20 mph zone. This maybe low impact as Porlock already has a number of natural traffic calming features (narrow roads, bottlenecks, bends and associated congestion. Relatively high cost vs. benefit ? |

Note 1: Firmer cost estimates are being calculated by the Traffic Management Team, but are not available at the time of writing. However it is known that the cost would be at least £10,000.

In terms of process, this would involve advertising a Traffic Regulation Order and dealing with any objections, and the Police would also need to support any potential changes in speed limit. **As a result, it is not recommended that further 20 mph limits or a 20 mph zone be established at this time.**

### Other Traffic Speed Reducing Approaches

- Police speed checks
  - Our PCSO has advised that the Specials are unlikely to do formal speed checks as resources are stretched and their priority is in areas with known speeding issues; the Porlock traffic data do not support them working here.
  - Our PCSO has agreed do informal speed checks from time to time to help raise awareness. These won't be enforceable or frequent, again due to limited resources and other priorities.
- Community speed watch group
  - There appears to be little appetite for this, given the experience of those who were involved with the previous campaign.
- Speed Indicator Device (SID)
  - There are no devices available for loan from Somerset Council or local Parish Councils at this time.
  - We aren't eligible for the Avon & Somerset Police grant for an SID, as our data indicates we don't have a speeding issue.
  - The Parish Council could purchase their own SID and use it in an ongoing speed awareness campaign. The cost of an SID is in the range £2,500 – 3,500 and Chapter 8 training is typically £50 per person.

- PC Dan Cox shared some helpful information about SIDs at the July Highways subgroup meeting. SIDs are a good reminder to drivers to reduce their speed and they work in 90% of cases. There is also evidence of compliance within the areas they have been used, and it has also reduced the need for Community Speed Watch groups, which were reliant on volunteers.

**It is recommended to budget up to £4,000 for a mobile SID and training. It is suggested to conduct the relatively low cost training first, in case other material information comes to light in the training. Training could be for PPC Clerk, 1 or 2 councillors and 1 or 2 working group members.**

## **Other Road Safety Approaches**

- Dunster Steep
    - The Parish Council has been in communication with the landowner at Dunster Steep, who is now cutting the hedge back harder (to the dry stone wall) to keep the 'virtual footpath' as wide as possible.
    - The Parish Council has requested Somerset Highways to repaint the white lines defining the 'virtual footpath' to make it more visible. This has been agreed and a work order has been issued to the Highways contractor, although no date is known for the work at present.
    - There has been no progress with the Somerset Improvements Team regarding widening the virtual footpath (see further below). As below, we may need to consider an alternative route for exploring this further.
  - White Lines, Parsons Street
    - Highways have issued a work order to its contractor, and they are awaiting a date from the contractor for the work to be done. The situation will then be monitored and if there is no improvement, yellow lines will be considered (white lines are not enforceable). Highways are aware, and would appear to be supportive of yellow lines if they are found to be necessary.
  - One Way Road, Sparkhayes Lane/Meadowhayes Road
    - The feedback from the parish consultation indicated this was not a popular idea, and would also be complex and expensive to implement.
    - However, progress has been made regarding changing road signs to help manage the flow of traffic.
      - a) At the junction of the A39 and Meadowhayes Road, signs will be changed so campsite traffic is only directed along Meadowhayes Road and not along the High Street. This is now in hand with the Highways Traffic Management Team, at no cost to the Parish Council.
      - b) For traffic coming from the west end of the High Street, the signs at the Sparkhayes Lane junction (Piggy in the Middle) can be altered. This would direct only pedestrians to the campsite via Sparkhayes Lane, and would direct traffic down the High Street to Meadowhayes Road. Highways are supportive of this and the cost would have to be borne by the Parish Council.
- It is recommended that Council budgets up to £750 for the cost of these signs.**
- Exploring ways of influencing traffic speed on the Porlock Weir road, and in West Porlock
    - Now that the traffic speed data has been collected and indicates no average speed issue, the best approach might be the purchase of an SID, as above.
  - Explore establishing safer pedestrian routes between Porlock and the Weir
    - This is now in the Council's Community Plan, though no action has been taken as yet.

## Parking

- Contact Somerset Parking Services and request more 15 minute free parking spaces in Doverhay and Central car parks
  - This is being considered as part of a county-wide review of parking, given all the District Councils had different practices. However given the Somerset Council financial emergency and decisions already being taken around Somerset, it is unlikely that our request will be successful.
  - Exford Parish Council has maintained free parking by effectively paying Somerset Council for free spaces so that Somerset's income isn't affected. **A member of the working group has knowledge of the discussion between Exford PC and Somerset Council and it is recommended that Porlock PC follows the same approach. In parallel with this, it is also recommended to set up a working group to create a proposal for greater promotion of our car parks and rebranding of central car park. This proposal would then be presented to council for adoption.**

## Somerset Improvements Team

Historically this team existed to make non-highways related road improvements in parishes and an annual budget existed for such work. However from this financial year onwards, there is no such budget, probably related to the Somerset Council financial emergency. Indeed at present Somerset's main focus is on maintaining statutory services only, and more and more is being devolved to Parish Councils. The Improvements Team still operates but is snowed under with similar work to what we are requesting, and is currently trying to work out a model of how they support Parishes by charging the work to those Parishes. Contact has been made with the team but as yet there hasn't been any progress, and it isn't clear when that will change. The following recommendations are affected by this:

- Understand the requirements for establishing a pedestrian crossing and explore whether one or two 'informal' pedestrian crossings could be located on the High Street
- Explore the requirements for establishing protected parking on the High Street outside Spar to give some pedestrian refuge
- Improve accessibility in the High Street for people with restricted mobility and users of wheel chairs, push chairs and mobility scooters, such as dropped kerbs.

**It is recommended that the working group works with the council to establish what the implications and associated costs would be for the council to progress this work with a contractor, independent of the Improvements Team. Since the cost of any such improvement would have to be borne by council, any proposed work would have to be prioritised with any potential 20 mph speed limit work.**