



P&D Meeting –18th January 2022

Agenda Item PD4032/22

Road Safety in Croxley Green

Introduction

The Community Plan survey in 2013 identified widespread support for speed control measures in Croxley Green. Some of the results of the survey are presented in Annex A.

Consequently the Neighbourhood Plan included an AIM 10 on Road Safety and Parking. An extract from the Plan is at Annex B.

The Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in December 2018 following a referendum in which about 26% of residents voted, of whom about 96% voted in favour. However the Parish Council hasn't developed a plan to progress this AIM.

Hertfordshire County Council has adopted a "Speed management Strategy" (November 2020) and subsequently approved a "20mph area delivery process"

This paper proposes a way forward, starting by confirming residents' views.

Discussion

I have had a number of conversations over the last year or so with residents who have complained about people speeding. My answer has always been it is an issue on the Parish Council's list, (i.e. it is in the Neighbourhood Plan) and that one option would be to extend 20mph speed limits. Most of the residents I have spoken to have agreed that it seems like a good idea to them.

Setting the speed limit on residential streets at 20mph was supported by a majority in the Community Plan survey. A lower speed limit sends a strong signal that these are, in fact, residential streets and traffic should proceed slowly and carefully along them giving due consideration to residents, pedestrians and cyclists. Although many drive considerably most of the time, a few do not. A lower speed limit is one way of demonstrating to them that a slower speed is appropriate.

I have been prompted to bring this up now when I recently saw that Hertfordshire County Councils Highways Committee endorsed their process for identifying, assessing, and ranking 20mph areas across the county on 14th September 2021 with a budget of £7m.

This is a technically complex subject, and one that raises strong views both for and against changing speed limits (one issue) and installing traffic calming measures (a separate issue). Some of the issues to be considered are summarised in Annex C

Cllr Gallagher has written some thoughts on traffic speed, road safety and the environment at Annex D

Annex E proposes the sort of open-ended questions we could use to invite resident's views on traffic speed.

If we agree to investigate this further, I want to ensure it is carried out in an open and transparent way so that the residents of Croxley Green are fully involved and support any measures or changes that are proposed by the traffic authority, Hertfordshire County Council.

Recommendations

1. To recommend the topic for discussion in full Council.
2. To invite residents' views on traffic speeds (and possibly other road safety issues) within Croxley Green through an informal survey of opinion
3. To invite TRDC and Herts CC to nominate an officer (or officers) to work with CGPC to investigate options and develop proposals

Cllr Chris Mitchell

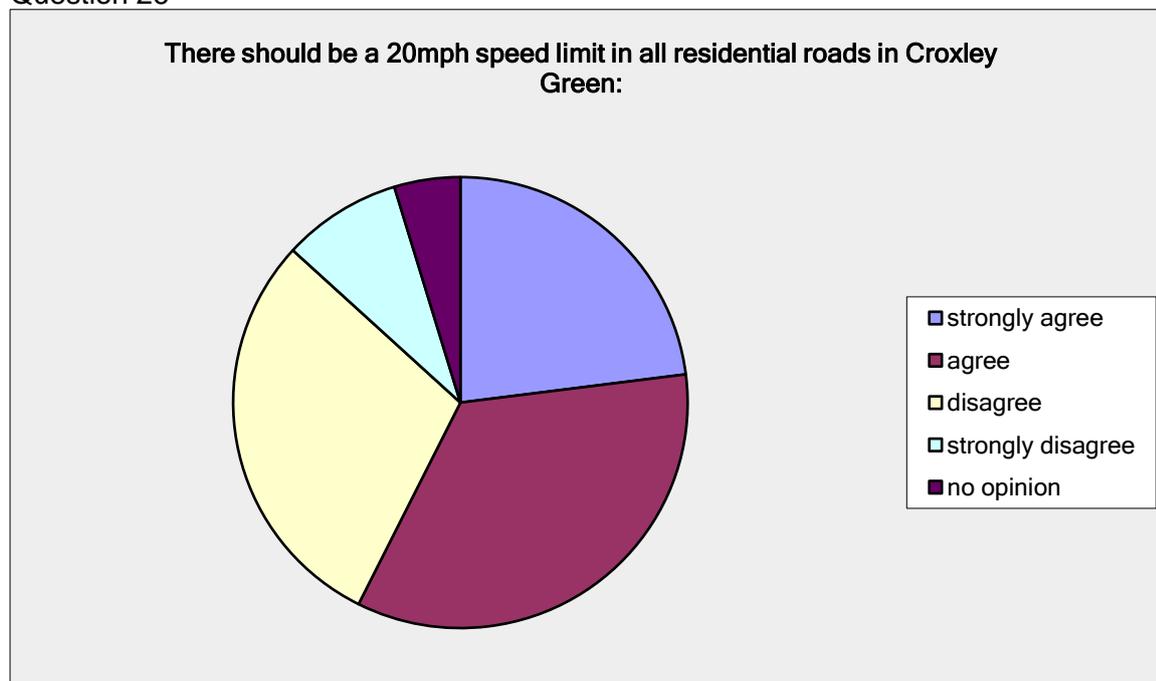
11 January 2022

Annex A – Extracts from Community Plan Survey Results (2013)

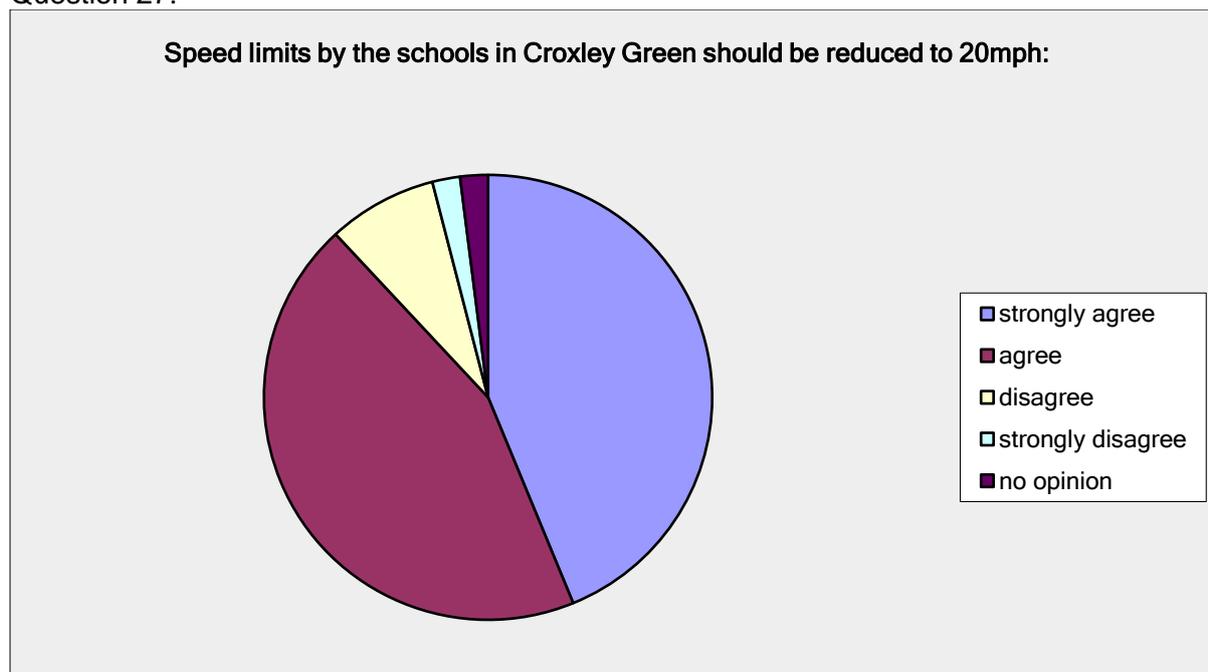
Question 23:

The following factors pose significant problems within Croxley Green:						
Answer Options	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	no opinion	Response Count
speeding traffic	442	514	271	17	87	1331
traffic congestion	521	531	203	9	68	1332
car parking - residential	424	510	284	13	98	1329
car parking - shops	445	504	286	13	77	1325
road and pedestrian safety	286	493	359	27	151	1316
answered question						1360
skipped question						33

Question 26



Question 27:



Question 39

The following factors would improve the traffic issues in Croxley Green:						
Answer Options	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	no opinion	Response Count
lower speed limits	314	449	385	66	112	1326
speed limit signage	255	570	310	55	134	1324
electronic speed indicators	267	493	326	67	152	1305
weight restrictions	330	511	216	34	223	1314
improved street lighting	183	334	504	58	238	1317
improved road signage	130	406	467	65	238	1306
increased expenditure on road maintenance	591	517	114	20	103	1345
<i>answered question</i>						1359
<i>skipped question</i>						34

Annex B – Extract from the Neighbourhood Plan (2018)

5.6 TRANSPORT, ROAD SAFETY AND PARKING

OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure the needs of those relying on public transport and pedestrians and cyclists are given priority over private vehicles
- Ensure there is adequate parking provision for those relying on cars for work or personal use
- Ensure that the increase in demand for parking is considered in any conversion proposal

It is important that everyone in the community – whether a car owner or not – is able to travel easily and safely within the Parish and that congestion is minimized for those visiting or passing through the area. With a continuing growth in the ownership of vehicles the demand for on street and off street parking requires constant monitoring if it is to be met without environmental damage.

AIM 10: Road Safety and control of parking

The Parish Council will work with Herts CC and TRDC to prepare an Action Plan to

- **Extend 20mph speed limit zones within the Parish**
- **Promote other traffic speed restrictions**
- **Discourage parking on pavements**
- **Improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists**
- **Encourage “car clubs” and similar schemes for traffic reduction**

5.6.1 Pedestrian casualties are significantly reduced in accidents where vehicles are travelling at less than 20mph rather than 30mph. The Parish Council aims to extend 20mph limits throughout the Parish including speed reduction measures where necessary. Parking on pavements can cause obstructions for those with young children and push chairs, the elderly and those with disabilities.

5.6.2 The road works carried out in 2016 on Community Way combining traffic speed abatement and pedestrian safeguarding measures is an example of an excellent response by TRDC to a previously hazardous situation.

Annex C – Some of the issues to be considered

Hertfordshire County Council has published its Speed Management Strategy (November 2020) which provides the context for setting lower speed limits within Hertfordshire.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) publishes a Road Safety Factsheet titled “20mph zones and Speed Limits Factsheet”. The current version was published in November 2020.

Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 “Setting local speed limits” defines 20mph zones and 20mph speed limits.

20mph speed limits are areas where the speed limit has been reduced to 20mph but there are NO PHYSICAL MEASURES to reduce vehicle speeds within the area. Drivers are alerted to the speed limit by signs at the boundary and repeater signs within the area. This approach has been adopted on Cophorne Road (privately maintained).

20mph speed zones use traffic calming measures such as speed humps, chicanes, road narrowing and planting to physically and visually reinforce the signs. This approach has been adopted on New Road (public highway).

The guidance explains which approach would be appropriate and is likely to be successful in different road conditions. Four of the key points in the guidance are:

- Speed limits should be evidence-led and self-explaining and seek to reinforce people’s assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance.
- Speed limits should be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed.
- Traffic authorities set local speed limits in situations where local needs and conditions suggest a speed limit which is lower than the national speed limit.
- Traffic authorities are asked to keep their speed limits under review with changing circumstances, and to consider the introduction of more 20 mph limits and zones, over time, in urban areas and built-up village streets that are primarily residential, to ensure greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

As well as the benefit in reducing the number and severity of accidents, and particularly those involving vulnerable road users (pedestrians and cyclists), RoSPA identifies other benefits including:

- Increases in walking and cycling within the area
- Improvements in quality of life indicators such as
 - Health improvements
 - Community cohesion and
 - Better air quality

Our local Traffic Authority is Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).

HCC has committed £7m towards developing 20mph zones across the whole county, but it has to be locally driven. According to plans approved by a meeting of the HCC Highways and Transport cabinet panel on September 14 2021 60 per cent of the county’s road network, including urban and rural areas, could be eligible.

The process for each scheme – including public engagement and the application of Traffic Regulation Orders – is likely to take in excess of 12 months. Prioritisation will take into account factors such as whether there is a school, whether the area has previously been identified and whether it contains an ‘air quality management area’. It will also consider the

number of properties within the proposed area, the proportion of narrow footways and poorer outdoor environments, based on factors such as air quality and proximity to green space.

However traffic speed monitoring surveys may be needed to check that any roads proposed for 20mph speed limits meet the criteria set out in DfT Circular 1/2013.

Annex D – Comments on traffic speed, road safety and the environment

Freedom

Some commentators have drawn a distinction between two types of freedom:

- Freedom to and
- Freedom from.

This may seem a strange place to start, but it lies at the heart of the matter.

For example, we have a **freedom TO** drive our cars anywhere we wish on the public highway. But that freedom is hedged around by restrictions. For example the car must be roadworthy, licensed and insured. The driver must be qualified and obey the rules of the road including speed limits.

These restrictions are intended to protect others peoples' **freedom FROM** harm. Harm such as unsafe road vehicles or dangerous driving.

The whole issue of road safety and traffic speed limits is bound up with balancing these two types of freedom, and balancing between different groups of people or between people who are doing different things.

Road Safety

The essence of road safety lies in people taking responsibility for their own actions. Taking care for themselves, and for others. And this, in turn, depends on people being taught and learning how to behave sensibly and responsibly as pedestrians, cyclists or drivers.

The rules of the road, set out in the Highway Code, including speed limits, are there as a framework within people can act considerately.

Unfortunately there are a few people who are determined to act less considerately or responsibly than others and many people who occasionally don't act as carefully and responsibly as they should. Therefore there is a need for two sorts of action to guide and encourage them.

One set is about road design and layout. Roads should be designed, laid out and signed so that a reasonably experienced person can "read" them and understand what is expected of them. Whether as a pedestrian, a cyclist or a motorist.

The other is about enforcement. This can be physical enforcement like the crash barriers down a central reservation to stop vehicles crossing over, or the kerbs at a road edge to guide vehicles away from the footway, or the road humps and speed cushions to deter speeding. Or it can be policing enforcement, for example using cameras to detect excessive speed or traffic police to observe dangerous driving.

Traffic speed

Research has shown that the severity of accidents is linked to collision speed. There are three stages in stopping a vehicle. The first is comprehension – the driver (or the automatic control system) has to realise the need to stop and decide to apply the brakes. The second is deceleration as the brakes gradually bring the vehicle to a halt. The third is impact, when the brakes haven't managed to stop the vehicle before collision. We generally try to avoid the third stage, if possible.

There is a pretty standard reaction time for most motorists, usually a couple of seconds. The distance travelled depends on speed, the faster you are going, the further you travel in two seconds.

The braking systems on modern cars are much better than they used to be, including stronger brakes, better tyre design, and anti-lock systems. Even so, the distance required to bring the vehicle to rest (stopping distance) depends on the speed and, because it is deceleration, the distance travelled is more than proportional to the speed.

The Highway Code quotes “typical” stopping distances for a vehicle in good condition on a road in good condition with an alert driver as:

Speed (mph)	20	30	40	50	60	70
Distance (metres)	12	23	36	53	73	96
Car lengths	3	6	9	13	18	24

The distance to stop from 30mph is almost twice as much as from 20mph. At 40mph it is three times as far.

The consequence of collision (impact) depends on the speed at the time of impact. Because of the two second reaction time, a car doing 20mph will have travelled half the stopping distance (6m) before the driver applies the brakes and still be going at 20mph. And at 30mph, will have travelled more than one third of the stopping distance (9m) and still be going at 30mph before the driver applies the brakes.

Road safety (accident) statistics

The UK is one of the safest places in the world as measured by road accident statistics.

According to the Department for Transport, Great Britain is currently the fourth safest country, measured by deaths as a percentage of population, after Norway, Sweden and Iceland. Nearly three times better than New Zealand and more than five times better than the United States of America (for example).

Hertfordshire County Council compiles road accident statistics and used to provide data to the Croxley Green Road Safety Group which closed some years ago. Responsibility was transferred to the Parish Council (P&D).

Road traffic accidents are sporadic – they vary from time to time and place to place. The records can be used to identify particular trends, or places, where action might be taken to help to reduce the incidence. The difficulty, in a relatively small area like Croxley Green, is that the variability is usually too great to identify anything specific that can be done. One of the reasons for the demise of the local Road Safety Group was that they couldn't find anything particular in the accident records that would merit specific action.

In general, the pattern of accidents locally follows the national pattern. Accidents are more frequent

- where there is more traffic, because there are more opportunities for an accident,
- at places where there is traffic conflict, for example at road junctions and at places where there are significant numbers of people crossing the road,
- and more severe at places where traffic is moving faster, either because the speed limit is higher, or because drivers judge a higher speed is appropriate.

Road accident statistics in Croxley Green

The accident pattern in Croxley Green is pretty much what one would expect. More accidents on the busier roads and typically at places where there is “conflict” between different road users, i.e. at road junctions and pedestrian crossings.

It’s possible to view some of the accidents that have been reported in Croxley Green over recent years on a website: <https://www.crashmap.co.uk/Search> and type in Croxley Green.

Guy Parks has commented:

“Looking at the statistics (2014 to 20) on the link the vast majority of accidents appear to be on the Watford Road, The Green and Baldwins Lane. The only other roads with more than one incident are New Road (2 near the station end) and Links Way (4 – speeding to the golf club?) and Little Green Lane (3), Malvern Way (2). There are 7 further accidents, no more than one per road.

Determining whether Croxley Green is safer (or less safe) than other places is very difficult because each road network has particular characteristics, and the local traffic has particular characteristics, which would have to be matched between areas or for which due allowance would have to be made in the calculation. It could be done, but it would need detailed study by an experienced road traffic accident statistician and might, in the end, simply prove that Croxley Green wasn’t exceptional in any way.

Therefore any road safety initiative or intervention in Croxley Green can only be based either on the national pattern of accidents, or on a strong local opinion about a particular issue.

For example, the pedestrian crossings in Croxley Green have all been converted from the traditional “zebra” design, which relies on drivers taking responsibility and giving way, to one of the traffic light controlled options, at which drivers (and pedestrians) are directed when to cross. Possibly because accident statistics have shown that the light controlled crossings are safer than the simple “zebra” crossing.

20mph speed limits and the environment

The essence of reducing the speed limit to 20mph is to make the road network a safer environment for so called “vulnerable” road users including pedestrians and cyclists.

National statistics show that roads with 20mph speed limits have, on average, fewer and less severe accidents than those with 30mph speed limits.

And part of the purpose of having the lower speed limits is to encourage people to walk or cycle, rather than to use cars for short trips. Making the roads safer for children walking to school and increasing the public’s perception of them as a safe environment.

Many of the roads in Croxley Green are of the sort that could be considered, under the Government’s policy guidelines set out in Department for Transport Circular 1/2013, for the lower speed limit suitable for roads that are mainly residential.

At present there is no evidence of public desire for a lower speed limit, or of a widespread pattern of accidents that would immediately justify the reduction. However there is concern about speeding on some roads, at some times and by some drivers.

Reducing traffic speeds has also been shown to improve quality of life indicators such as better air quality, health improvements and community cohesion. These are all part of the strategic intent we have set ourselves as a Parish Council:

"The Parish Council works to enhance the well-being of the residents of Croxley Green"

We have also been considering how we might reduce carbon emissions. Transport, particularly in private motor cars, is one of the main emitters of carbon dioxide within our community. One way of reducing emissions is to encourage people to make shorter journeys on foot. Lower traffic speeds tend to encourage the switch, even if only marginally.

We have also discussed the problems around schools due to parents or carers bringing children to school and collecting them by car and the congestion that causes. Lower traffic speeds encourage people to consider the alternatives.

Signing a road at 20mph may have only a marginal effect on many drivers who already drive considerately and at an appropriate speed in residential areas. But it also sets a community expectation of slower driving on residential streets which encourages others to moderate their speed. It also provides a lower threshold for speed enforcement, whether by automatic signs (smiley faces), speed cameras or the police.

Thus a 20mph speed limit does reduce the freedom of a motorist to drive at speed. But it also increases the freedom of others from intimidation by motor vehicles including noise (which is reduced at lower speeds) and the freedom to use the streets as part of the public realm.

Role of the Parish Council

The highway authority for local roads is Hertfordshire County Council. That includes all aspects of the management, design and maintenance of the local public road network. (Highways Act 1980)

The traffic authority is also Hertfordshire County Council. (Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984). HCC has delegated responsibility for control of parking to Three Rivers District Council. As traffic authority HCC is responsible for setting the speed limits on local roads through Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

The Parish Council has no legal responsibility (or duty) for the public roads within Croxley Green. However it is elected to speak on behalf of the residents on matters of concern to the residents.

Andrew Gallagher
10th January 2022

Annex E – Consulting local residents

The first step should be to invite views. The Community Plan Survey was conducted nearly 10 years ago, many people will have left Croxley Green since then, others will have come to live here and people's opinions may well have changed over the years.

If a majority are against introducing speed restrictions, then the Parish Council can retire the Aim in the Neighbourhood Plan.

If there is a majority on a particular road or street, then the Parish Council could explore the possibilities further with HCC and TRDC and help them develop a scheme for public consultation.

Residents' views could be gathered through a brief questionnaire using Survey Monkey (or similar) with an option to request a paper copy from the Parish Council advertised through social media, notices and Parish Council publications.

The questionnaire would need a brief, simple explanation why the Parish Council is inviting residents' views.

The questions should be simple and open ended as there is no specific approach or scheme being proposed.

A list of possible questions follows:

Q1 Name and address (to avoid duplication and ensure we are gathering residents' views from within Croxley Green)

Q2 Do you think there is a problem with vehicles travelling too fast ON YOUR STREET? (OFTEN/SOMETIMES/RARELY)

Q3 Do you consider the current speed limit of 30mph ON YOUR STREET the right speed limit? (YES/NO)

Q3a If NO do you think it should be higher (40mph) or lower (20mph)? (HIGHER/LOWER)

Q4 Are there any other roads or streets in Croxley Green where you consider there is a problem with vehicles generally travelling too fast? (YES/NO)

Q4a If YES please list the specific roads where traffic generally travels too fast.

There could also be questions about walking, safe routes to school, and safe crossing places, following up on the questions asked in the Community Plan Survey