

Warminster Highways matters

23rd January 2024

Speed

In isolation, the statistics included within the PCC presentation looked impressive but recently a traffic survey took place in Silver Street which showed that circa 400 drivers a day were exceeding the 30mph speed limit. Not enough is being done to tackle speeding.

Speeding is a matter for Police enforcement. The recent traffic survey results will be reviewed to see if they indicate enforcement is necessary. Alternatives might include use of Community Speed Watch and/or Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). Data from both can be fed into the police systems and help them consider the need for future enforcement.

Further details on Community Speed Watch can be found at:

<https://www.wiltshire.police.uk/article/782/Community-Speed-Watch>

Firstly, you recently installed traffic speed monitoring equipment on Silver Street. Could it be noted that this was fitted at approximately the same time as a road closure, which would have adversely affected the volume of traffic and subsequently the data accumulated on this monitoring equipment.

Secondly, has this data been collated and if so do we have any data results to report back? For example: How many vehicles were shown to be driving at speeds in excess of the prevailing 30mph speed limit over an average 24 hour period?

If not, when will this information be available to view?

The metro count was commissioned by Warminster Town Council to the traffic surveys team, the results have been passed to WTC . These show that for Silver Street (a 30mph speed restriction), the 85th percentile speed* was 27mph and the average (mean) speed was 23.1mph. 95.8% of drivers complied with the 30mph limit

*85th percentile is the speed at which 85% of drivers were at or below.

Warminster Town Council can be asked to consider whether to ask for another metro count

As a resident of Silver Street for four years. It is obvious to many residents and locals that the volume of traffic, and in particular heavy goods vehicles is high. We also recognise that there is a huge amount of speeding that goes on, on a daily basis. Both these two elements have an adverse effect. There is the physical safety issue and the health issue with air quality being adversely effected. We do know that reducing speed limits from 30 mph to 20 mph is proven to improve air quality and safety. Hence why so many locations within town centres nationwide have reduced speed limits. FYI – Vehicles move more smoothly with fewer accelerations and decelerations. The smoother driving styles reduce particulate emissions from tyre and brake wear, which still represents a significant cause of air pollution from zero-emission vehicles.

Is the 20mph town centre Speed limit something that would be considered to be implemented? This would surely fulfil green and environmental targets as well as improving road safety. A win win!

The Council has an adopted Policy on 20mph restrictions in line with DfT guidance. The primary requirement is that existing vehicle speeds must be 24mph or lower.

As a metro count has recently been completed, residents should consult with the town council whether they would support a 20mph limit or zone.

Going via the town council is essential as, under the LHFIG terms of reference, Parish councils must first endorse the request and many will be expected to contribute towards the overall cost. If the town council agree to your proposal, the request is sent to Wiltshire Council, and it will go on the agenda for discussion at the next LHFIG meeting.

You can find out more here about LHFIGs and the request form here:
<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/6149/Local-Highway-and-Footway-Improvement-Groups>

The road traffic survey took place and residents don't feel as if the speeding is acceptable to be tolerated, where is the line drawn? It is appreciated that there is only a certain budget and capability, however, there has to be a reality check from residents with the council held accountable to what residents are living with every day.

Please refer to the responses above.

Circa 400 people exceed the speed limit every day in Silver Street and the footways are narrow, with it not safe to walk on the streets. The criteria of the checks are of no relevance to the residents of this area and someone needs to question this and the total number of people speeding involved rather than a percentage.

Please refer to the responses above, The Council will continue to work with Warminster Town Council to investigate what can be done through the LHFIG approach.

Could you point me in the direction to look at requesting a review of the speed limit in West Parade & Pound St – I am a home owner living in Pound St and the speed the people drive up from Tesco at Broadway is worrying”

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I live in Warminster at the junction of Vicarage Street, West Street, and Pound Street.

Since August, there have been two accidents whereby cars have crashed into residential buildings. Ambulances were called on both occasions, and on the second occasion, four passengers needed hospital treatment. On this past Saturday, there was another collision just outside my house - no services were called, vehicles exchanged details. That's three collisions in a relatively short space of time. It is my belief - shared by many of the bystanders at the two house collisions - that speeding is a real problem on this stretch of road. Indeed, only a few days after the incident in November 2023, my husband witness a near-fatal incident on the pedestrian crossing outside Warminster School, Vicarage Street, whereby a father had to pull his children from the path of a speeding vehicle (not only speeding, but going through red lights). We had contractors at our house in October. They live locally, so they are very well acquainted with local driving conditions and behaviour. At one point, having been out to their vehicle to collect equipment, they came inside and commented how shocked they were to see vehicles, in their words, "chicaning" between rows of parked cars on either side of the road in West Street. It's not just us. This particular stretch of road is the route for school drop-off and pick-up for three schools: Princecroft School (albeit further on Pound St, many pupils walk this route to access it); Warminster School and The Minster School. If the November incident had been 24 hours later, it could easily have been a bloodbath. The responsibility of the authorities must be to ensure that schools are in safe driving areas.

There is no incentive for drivers to drive according to the conditions, i.e. taking into account the schools or pedestrians. As this route heads directly to, and directly from, the A36, there is a residual mindset in leaving or approaching a faster speed limit, with nothing to stop drivers using that speed limit - which they plainly do, all too frequently. It is not just this stretch of road, I believe that authorities need to act quickly throughout the town. I was terrified by an incident on Saturday, 11th November: I started crossing on the Zebra crossing towards Ewell St when a white car sped towards me from Silver St roundabout and had to brake sharply not to hit me.

As I entered Vicarage St from Ewell St: One car travelling up Vicarage St towards West St at "normal speed" - car came from behind me, at much greater speed, tried to overtake the original car, realised this would be impossible due to parked cars, braked sharply, managed to slow barely a metre behind the original car. Due to the speeds of other cars on the road at the same time, it was possible to ascertain that these particular vehicles were travelling beyond the speed limit (it was not simply perception). I believe it is imperative that the authorities consider the well-being of residents and the communities at all three schools, and implement strategies to deter excessive speed and encouraging drivers to use speeds appropriate for the conditions. I believe that a 20mph limit is a starting point. The only effective measure to reduce speed and curtail speeding drivers is physical speed restrictions, such as "speed humps" which work effectively along Grovelands Way. Nothing stops a speeding driver unless they think they might damage their car. I urge the authorities to take action. It feels as if the attitude of authorities in

this part of Wiltshire is that you don't count, as a road-user, unless you are behind the wheel of a vehicle, and it certainly feels like it will take a fatality before any action is taken. My question is: can you please act before this happens?

The process for requesting a traffic survey to assess volumes of traffic and speeds is outlined above.

The results of the survey will dictate if action is required to address any recorded speeding issues and, as also outlined above, options include the use of Community Speed Watch and SIDs.

As speeding is a moving vehicle offence, the enforcement authority is the Police and not the Council.

Following the serious road traffic accident at the corner of Vicarage Road and Emwell Street on Sunday 29th October 2023 and the results of the recent traffic monitoring survey conducted between 7th and 13th December 2023 that showed the law is broken by a motorist driving in excess of the posted 30mph speed limit in Silver Street on average every 2.5 minutes, will Wiltshire Council give urgent consideration to forming a working group to consider, in cooperation with local residents' representatives and Warminster Town Council, what Highways related improvements are required in Warminster town centre in the vicinity of the Obelisk in order to make it a less unsafe and unpleasant environment for local residents, business owners, cyclists and pedestrians?"

Please refer to the responses given above.

The Council will be happy to work with the Town Council on possible actions through the LHFIG approach.

"It is accepted that a 20 mph speed limit is the difference between someone feeling safe walking and cycling, and not. The chance of surviving if hit by a driver increases from 50% at 30mph to 90% at 20mph, as well as improving fuel consumption and reducing air and noise pollution. Given the results of the SMART Transport Hub traffic survey undertaken by Wiltshire Council between 7th and 13th December 2023 that confirmed in excess of 400 non-compliant vehicle drivers every day in Silver Street, is Wiltshire Council able to assure local residents, pedestrians, business owners and cyclists that they are perfectly safe in going about their everyday business?"

Please see responses given above regarding 20mph limits or zones

12 years ago, Wiltshire Council took the decision not to continue to use speed cameras, which have since laid dormant. Is there a plan to use them again as there could be huge revenue benefits, for example Dorset have used cameras on mass and speeding levels have reduced.

The cameras mentioned are static speed cameras which carried risks of sudden braking by drivers and cannot make use of advances in technology. Officers are not supportive of static speed cameras as evidence shows drivers tend to slow down when they are seen and then return to speeding thereafter. Additionally, the fines levied do not necessarily come in full to the council so costs (to purchase, install and maintain) were not met.

Recently at a road safety conference there was a demonstration of an AI camera system which was able to take photos of offenders using mobile phones and not wearing seatbelts – 2 of the ‘fatal 5’ issues alongside speeding, drink and drugs and distraction. Wiltshire Police is interested in trialling such technology; however, such technology comes at a cost. Communities are encouraged to use Community Speed Watch and SIDs, which are effective for education as well as recording problems with speeding with data able to be fed into the police, who can then target problem areas for enforcement.

In Corsley, there is a problem with speeding and the Parish Council have been trying for several years to get the 40mph speed limit reduced. Numerous speed surveys have been conducted with Wiltshire Council however the results are always under the threshold to act. Two years ago, the parish got a SID, which consistently shows 25% of road users travelling at 40mph and one road user in particular travelling at 90mph. The criteria used by Wiltshire Council measures speed and the number of vehicles but only considers the top percentage of speeding vehicles and not the slow-moving ones. Why does Wiltshire Council have to use this national formula?

It is a Wiltshire Council’s policy to use the DfT guidelines, which have been built over years of experience and are used to support consistency. However, these guidelines have many facets within them and there is an opportunity to pay attention to more elements than we typically do currently, which may open up options for lower speed limits in a few cases. Work is being conducted to look at how Department for Transport guidelines can be used to their wider extent which may enable us to get closer to the perspective of local people whilst remaining consistent and safe. The 90mph recording maybe a technical blip in the SID monitoring. But in any case, assessments are done using mean averages; there will always be some who ignore limits.

Warminster has seen an increase in building, which has seen more cars on the road as well as HGVs. Places such as Southampton have reduced their central speed limit to 20mph to reduce the effects on air quality. Is this something that Warminster could look at for air quality reasons and is there any funding towards electrical charging points within the town?

Please see earlier responses re 20mph limits.

If it is acceptable to have traffic calming in George Street, what is the rationale for refusing to have it in Silver Street?

The George Street scheme was installed many years ago in recognition that the area is predominantly a retail street. The measures installed were enhanced pedestrian

crossing features to allow safe movements to take place rather than traffic calming features. Silver street is entirely different in character than George Street and as such would not be treated in the same way.

Gratitude was placed towards the Cabinet Member and officers for attending the meeting. It was questioned how long it would take for a speed assessment to take place and lead to change?

Typically, it takes 18 months for a speed limit assessment to take place and then lead to change. When the weather improves and officers have more time, there is an intention to look at how this process is managed and see if it can be speeded up.

Freight

In Chapmanslade, the RTP process is going ahead, and the three villages thank the Council for their on-going work with the freight problems. The previous RTP had the same challenges which were listed within the presentation made by officers. Will these areas remain challenges or what will Wiltshire Council do to make them results?

When comparing the challenges in the RTP to urban areas in Bath and Bristol, the challenges faced will broadly speaking always be similar. There will however be other impacts on these such as cargo and climate. Some of the challenges will remain, however there will be variants based on the work which can be done based on the data behind them. Work on electric vehicle charging and carbon production will present significant issues for the Local Transport Plan and the toolkit produced will aim to work towards them.

Residents of Maiden Bradley are grateful for the engagement of the Council regarding the freight issues and look forward towards the end of the year. Over the last year, HGVs have increased in height and length which must have led to a weight increase. B roads are not built for these so this will undoubtedly lead to more accidents and repairs. How are Wiltshire Council preparing for this increase?

Part of the solution is ensuring that the right vehicles are on the right roads. The Council acknowledges the need for action here, and has recently met with MPs, affected villagers and representatives from the quarrying/haulage industries to discuss our intention to work towards implementation of an area wide weight restriction

The Freight Strategy will be an important document within the 4th Local Transport Plan currently in development and is the mechanism through which the challenges of weight and size relative to our roads will be considered.

We're grateful for the ongoing and positive dialogue with WC about HGV impacts on our village and look forward to hearing developments regarding a weight limit this year.

In that context, we would like to note that we have seen over the last year how the HGV's have increased in size, height, length, and number of axles. This means there must be a concomitant weight increase.

We understand that a B road, such as the B3092 which passes through our village, is not built or maintained to accommodate vehicles of this weight so will undoubtedly result in more road repairs and accidents, as evidenced in 2023. How is Wiltshire Council prepared to address this?

Please see the response above

There is supposed to be a 7.5 tonne heavy goods vehicle limit in the town. It is quite clear to me and to other residents that this is constantly being breached – there is no way that the volume of HGV traffic coming down Silver Street and through the town centre is servicing the permitted needs of local businesses. How is the 7.5 tonne limit monitored, and how many prosecutions have there been in the last five years for contraventions of it?

Enforcement of the weight limit is the responsibility of the Police. The Council have however applied to the Department for Transport for authorisation to take on enforcement using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology for a number of “moving vehicle offences”, including environmental weight limits. A response is due by the end of March.

ANPR technology does however come at a cost of around £20,000 per camera, however the Council is keen to invest in cameras which can be moved to multiple locations.

Use of ANPR will also feature in the LTP4

We're grateful for the ongoing and positive dialogue about reducing the weight limits of HGVs to prevent overweight freight using the western Wiltshire villages in lieu of the strategic freight routes.

We note that in the current LTP the following key challenges are outlined:

- **Traffic congestion, particularly during peak hours, which can have adverse implications for the movement of goods and freight by road.**
- **Wiltshire generates relatively little freight compared to that which passes through the county.**
- **Given its rural nature, there is a tension between meeting the needs of industry and commerce to transport freight, and the resulting environmental and social effects.**
- **Reliance on road-based freight movements has implications for inappropriate route choice. This can result in adverse impacts on rural roads such as verge erosion and can cause intimidation within residential areas.**
- **There is a need to try and encourage the switch of freight from road to rail. However, nearly all rail freight movements will need a road-based movement at either end of the journey and will impact on the highway network to varying degrees.**

We wonder therefore with the Core Strategy placing emphasis upon reducing the carbon footprint; the protection of the natural, historical and rural nature of our county and the well-being and health of its residents, how you think the next Local Transport Plan will manage to address the challenges outlined with

a view to putting the wellbeing of Wiltshire's communities first ahead of freight?

These challenges remain live today. Balancing the needs of communities (who themselves rely on local freight for key services) with wider freight issues will require a strategy that will aim to minimise congestion, pollution and disruption to local communities.

The Council is reviewing its freight strategy as part of LTP4 and which will be the subject of wide consultation later this year.

Is there a plan to start to have enforcement checks on heavy vehicle drivers to check if they are exceeding the 7.5tonne weight restriction within Warminster town centre?

Perry Payne who represents the Police & Crime Commissioner agreed to take the issue away for investigation.

See the response above re the use of ANPR technology

It has been heard that weight limits can only be enforced when someone is able to observe a vehicle pass all the way through a weight limited area, however they might be using the route for access. How could a camera be used to evidence this?

Cameras can be sited along the route with a weight restriction to time the entry and exit of a vehicle. If a journey was to take a longer period than expected simply travelling through, this would suggest that a vehicle had stopped for access and would therefore be exempt.

To save some money on the cost of ANPR cameras, it could be possible to only have one camera to monitor weight limits as this camera could be used to check a driver's digital card for a time and motion through the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA).

The benefit of the ANPR technology is its simplicity but as AI systems become more widely available this type of check may be possible.

Could the Wiltshire Council Planning and Highways departments work closer together? For example, if large houses apply for infill applications in their gardens, Wiltshire Council can permit such developments with conditions and can then look to developers to consider the surrounding roads. Recently a large, detached house was knocked down and replaced by three new builds, with rubble and building materials having to be taken down a road which has now become a mess with potholes.

In the budget being taken to Full Council in February, extra money has been proposed to fund more enforcement officers within the planning function as it is recognised more work is required to ensure conditions are met such as highway reinstatements.

Planning and Highways teams do work closely and sit on the same office floor. The Council is bound by planning law with regard to conditions passing appropriateness tests, and applications can be taken to appeal if deemed to be unfair, incurring additional costs. There is a provision within the Highways Act which enables the recovery of costs of undue damage to roads, but it does require the Council to prove that damage has been directly caused by a particular developer.

With the sad loss of Jane Hunt last year on a Wiltshire Road, does the Transport Team understand the number of horses on lanes, as Corsley has 12 stables and almost weekly there are reports of near misses and people driving badly around horses, bikes, and pedestrians.

The Council is aware of this being a rural county and the main issue here is driver behaviour. The Council must balance a range of users on the roads and must make sure people take responsible for their actions, with the Council committed to communication and education. The Police have run an Operation Close Pass, which involved a horse walking up and down an area, such that if anyone drove past in an aggressive manner the Police pulled them over for investigation. The issue with such an operation is that the rider is at risk and as there are no Police horses in Wiltshire, it costs £1,000 a day to loan a horse.

In the last year there have been complaints about a Parish Steward, with Wiltshire Council aware of the complaints. It was stated that the job of the Parish Steward is critical to the reputation of the Highways Authority in villages. It was expressed that senior officers investigate these complaints and the individual.

Concerns with delivery of Parish Steward duties should be raised with the Parish Council who will know who to contact at Wiltshire Council.

When can residents expect gullies to be emptied after flooding?

There is a schedule of maintenance with gullies on A roads and in known 'hot spots' to be emptied annually and the rest emptied every three years. If reports come in via MyWilts, these are prioritised to get tankers out as efficiently as possible.

How long does it take for a streetlight to be repaired?

Street light repairs are generally undertaken within 8 to 12 weeks. However simple repairs such as a replacement fuse are undertaken more quickly whilst repairs requiring purchase of new materials may take longer due to supply chain lead in times. Some repairs cannot be undertaken by the Council, such as supply cable faults, as these have to be done by Scottish & Southern Electricity. Timescales for these vary according to availability of resource within SSE.

Road Maintenance Budget 2023/24. How much was budgeted to be spent on contracts for

- a) Road Resurfacing b) Patching c) Filling potholes. How much was budgeted to be spent on admin for road maintenance eg:- setting out contracts , checking roads that needed priority, etc

Details of the Councils Highways Maintenance budgets are published on the website on an annual basis. The 2023/24 programme can be found at <https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1905>

For year 2023/24 how much has been spent on the following to the end of December 2023 in the Warminster area? a) Road resurfacing b) Patching c) Filling potholes.

Spend in Warminster on Road Resurfacing (April 23-Dec 24) = **£799,677.96**,
Reactive/Programmed Patching (Tarmac) = **£71,477.34**
Pothole Gang **£37,547.65**
Hand Patch Gangs = **£13,302.46**
Mechanical Patching (Bobcat Planer) = **£20,287.58**
Spray Injection Patching = **£17,406.42**
Parish Stewards = **£50,534.98**
Total = £1,010,234.38

Can clarity be provided on the filling of potholes on estate roads.

The filling of potholes on estate roads depends on whether the roads are adopted or not. If the road is adopted, then potholes can be reported and will be prioritised for attention in line with the Highways Safety Intervention Manual

Parking

Proposal for new Loading Bay in The Close, Warminster.

Warminster Foodbank are moving from their current premises, Dewey House, to The Athenaeum Centre in mid February 2024. The Foodbank houses thousands of food and household items, their volunteers collect and purchase significant quantities each week. To drop these items off to an accessible rear door at the Athenaeum will be challenging without a short stay Loading Bay in place. The Close already has on-street parking, an option being that a section of it is altered to become a Loading Bay for one vehicle

Suggestions of this nature are suitable for funding through the LHFIG route outlined in a previous question

Volunteer Car Parking in Wiltshire Council Car Parks

The Athenaeum Centre houses Chat Cafes that are run and managed by Open Door, a successful, local Voluntary Group. <https://opendoorwarminster.org/> Open Door now operate 3 Chat Cafes every week, totally free for visitors, to support those who are lonely, isolated, caring for others, affected by Cancer or Grieving the loss of someone or something (relationship, job etc). For example, the Thursday morning Friendship Group receives around 35 visitors every week who are supported by 8 volunteers. Some of the visitors travel from Chippenham, Westbury and Tisbury such is their popularity!

Volunteers are incurring financial costs in Wiltshire Council Car Parks that are unmanageable in the currently economic climate. For example, a 4 hour stay in the Western Car Park is £2.60, which when multiplied by 2 days per week is £5.20, £270.40 annually or £22.53 per month.

Car parking costs are also incurred by volunteers who give their time to The Athenaeum Centre Box Office or Ushers assisting with (daytime) weekend Shows. Volunteering has numerous benefits to the health of local communities, both individually and collectively. The one area that would make such a difference to Volunteers is free Car Parking, only for that duration and no more. For instance, Sue volunteers at the Chat Cafe on Thursday and Friday mornings between 9am and 12.30pm. Perhaps she could be thanked and appreciated with a WC Parking Card for those days and times?

The Council recognises the good works from numerous groups within the community. Whether this is care providers, NHS workers, volunteers, health screening services, community events etc. The council's parking charges are set to support the local communities, with rates based on encouraging the right parking behaviours and to ensure fairness. Financial support for local community activities, charities etc. is best undertaken through other means including grants made available through Area Boards, with consideration of all the factors involved.

Emwell Street - We have so many issues with parking and dangerous driving along this small, one way road. I don't know where to start to fill you in but the most fundamental and first priority is the safety of the primary (and secondary) children who try to navigate this very narrow pavement on one side of this busy small street. At parts there pavement is less than a metre wide and so a few hundred people are trying to share this pavement whilst cars race by, double park, illegally park, leave engines running or turn into car park next to pub to drop children off.

I have had to help numerous vehicles reverse on to Sambourne Road as they can't get through and cars leave engines running and so the little children who do take the schools advise to walk, are breathing in these fumes. Ideally I would very much like to speak with you (or whoever you deem could help) to discuss this matter more thoroughly so you understand our concerns I know this was raised in a previous council meeting plus I've seen the recorded video. Councils basically dismiss that there is an issue of :

- A) parking for residence**
- B) safety for children**
- C) consideration of the environment and residents**

Attached are some photos of how there are no parking spaces for us residents, videos of vehicles having to reverse as they can't get through, photos of the school run) photos of people leaving engines running (which is illegal) and a photo of barriers where a car had driven into a wall. Just to highlight that the vehicle hit the wall EXACTLY opposite the exit where PRIMARY school children leave. Also to mention, residents have told me that years ago a child was killed by a vehicle at this exact spot coming out of that school.

Even with speed bumps, cars speed down this street and there is no speed limit sign.

If there are vehicles obstructing the highway or speeding then this needs to be reported to the police.

The issues in and around the school would fall under the “Taking Action on School Journeys” remit. Primary schools are encouraged to have a School Travel Plan which if up to date can raise these issues and the Council will help review options to improve the situation. A number of parking permits for the nearby Western Car Park have been given to the school to pass on for parents to use to try and reduce the number of cars parking in Emwell Street.