

'20s Plenty' Report

Following an invite from Bellerby PC to support the national 20mph speed limit in residential areas, leaflets were distributed to residential properties in West Witton and Swinithwaite in January and February 2022 advising residents of the '20s Plenty' campaign. The leaflet explained that there was no guarantee that the campaign would succeed but residents' views would be appreciated to help the Parish Council decide on whether to add our support to what is now at the time of writing over 100 other PCs across North Yorkshire. The leaflet was also displayed in the village shop and on the PC website.

18 responses were received via email. Of those, 4 were not in favour of the campaign, or felt it was unnecessary or were unconvinced of its chance of success, with the rest agreeing that in principle the campaign would be beneficial.

Across all responses there were some very valid points made, with those not in favour raising some alternative ideas for consideration..

In the interests of completeness, I attach the contents of each email but have withheld the details of the person that sent it. I have retained all original emails for scrutiny if required.

It can be seen that some have spent a good deal of time deliberating the pros and cons and it is obviously a topic that is taken seriously.

This report and its contents are provided to help the PC decide on its position regarding support of the campaign. This report will be added to the Parish Council website for anyone to read.

Neil Dutton March 20th 2022

14 Comments in favour

"I'm broadly supportive of traffic calming, while recognising that we do live on an A road of importance to regional and agricultural travel. If you are counting heads, include me. The act of signing a 20 MPH limit is a long way short of achieving this goal, since we currently have a 30 MPH limit and recent surveying has shown that to be regularly flouted, especially at both ends of the village. I'll be interested to see what the effect of a speed-sensing 'slow down' sign at Holgate will be (but I'm not holding my breath). Obviously it is unrealistic to expect regular Police speed checks, and the road is problematic enough without adding chicanes, road humps or other structural measures within the central part of the village. I'm unsighted to any research on the topic, but at a personal level I am influenced by signage that 'makes it personal'. Examples include speed-sensing signs with 'Smily face – thank you' for under 30MPH (or whatever) and 'Glum face- Slow down' for speeders, seen in Collingham. I went through a Shropshire village that said "We live here, please keep us safe' above 30MPH signs. Living at the western end of the village I feel there are two principal groups of offenders here:

a. East-bound motorcyclists, accelerating to climb the rise to the village and continuing the acceleration into the final curve into Main Street. At weekends it is common to see groups of motorcycles entering the village substantially above what is safe, let alone legal.

b. West-bound light vehicles. There seems to be a tendency for light vehicles (i.e. not LGV), having got through the delays in the centre of the village to accelerate out of the village. LGVs are wary of the curve at Wynbury House.

As there is only an informal 'refuge' pavement from Green Hill to Wynbury House, both types of speeding are a hazard to pedestrians and joining traffic. Given that the main offenders are motorcycles and light vehicles, a series of low road ridges on the rise to the village name & 30MPH signs would be effective in forcing drivers to slow, without impairing LGVs or agricultural vehicles. Larger speed humps would be rapidly destroyed by LGV traffic. These low ridges are used on motorway exit ramps and presumably are robust to cope with heavy use."

"In response to the note re the speed limit in West Witton, I would respectfully suggest that we opt for a twenty mph limit. This would slow more of the traffic to a safer level and would likely make the traffic flow through the village a little quieter and smoother, allowing greater opportunity for overtaking the increasing number of parked cars along the main road."

"Regarding the 20's Plenty Campaign - We suspect that from the third paragraph of your letter the County Council will not support a 20mph limit on the grounds that you cannot drive from one end of West Witton to the other at over 30mph due to the parking of cars on the road. Notwithstanding this and living at the eastern end of the village we have a vested interest in the speed of vehicles at this end. We do feel that something needs to be done there and would support any initiative put forward to either enforce the current speed limit or to reduce it to 20mph."

"We support for the 20's plenty campaign, and while we really cant see it happening here in WW for many reasons, some of which you have already identified, we think that the PC SHOULD support it if only to add to the voices of concern. The louder we shout the harder it is for NYCC to ignore us. Thank you for everything you are doing towards this. I am still of the opinion that we should go out early doors and video these lorries and cars that whizz through the village at night and early morning and get away with it."

"We are in support of the campaign to reduce the speed limit through WW to 20mph. The main area for speeding, as you know, is the stretch from Grassgill to the Playing field entrance towards Leyburn whether the vehicles are entering the village or leaving it. However, 20mph will seem very slow along this stretch of the village. Vehicles making their way through the village are generally slowed by the parked vehicles. I would imagine that there is also a problem beyond the Heifer to the west past Chantry. HGVs doing 30mph can seem to be travelling much

faster and a 20mph limit would make the village safer and feel safer for pedestrians against the massive trucks. Having a wall against the path for much of the main street gives very little room against larger vehicles.”

“I felt that I should look at problems and desired outcomes to understand what 20mph might do. As I see it, the problems are several fold:

1. Regardless of parked vehicles in the village, some traffic runs through at excessive speed. Perhaps some data on this would help
2. The village road is narrow and, where cars are parked, they can act as chicanes that reduce traffic speed but can also create bottlenecks where people travel too close behind others and/or fail to give way.
3. In bottlenecks, traffic has been seen to mount the pavement in order to pass.....a clear danger.
4. Volumes of traffic in the village are high in summer and all of the above serve to create occasional impasses.
5. Pathways are very narrow and uneven in several parts of the village. This leads to traffic being in very close proximity to pedestrians. Some vehicles are very large, heavy and have momentum as well as large wing mirrors that over-reach the pavement. People have been clipped by mirrors.
6. Outside of the areas of constriction (largely both ends of the village), much traffic fails to slow down enough or sufficiently early and speeds up before leaving the restricted zone.

Dangers are as follows:

1. Speed itself is a danger in constricted space with narrow, uneven, pavements; both to pedestrians and the likelihood of collision with parked vehicles.
2. Impatience is common when bottlenecks occur. This leads to erratic behaviour and poor decision making.
3. The draught and spray from passing traffic, especially large vehicles, is buffeting to pedestrians and dangerous in narrow uneven areas of paving.
4. The obvious dangers from mounting pavements.
5. Noise from vehicles speeding through the village.

So, desired outcomes would be to reduce the dangers to pedestrians, reduce noise and reduce the risk of collisions.

Lowering the speed limit will not impact on all of these issues as constriction and bottlenecks can only be cured by moving traffic out of the village. My guess is that someone will need to get killed before that gets considered sensibly. However, reducing speed to 20 mph will

1. Reduce closing speeds
2. Reduce the likelihood of serious accident
3. Reduce draught and spray
4. Improve ability to re-act as dangers present themselves
5. Reduce noise levels

Reducing the speed limit will not exacerbate any of the problems and will ameliorate the impact of others. In short, it can do no harm and can only do good.”

“Responding to your recent 'Flyer' reference restriction on Speed through the Village of West Witton I would initially confirm my support to any initiative that addresses Road Safety throughout the Dales with Speed of travel being the catalyst for the majority RTA's that occur

Whilst NYCC have apparently distanced themselves from effective 'Policing' of the 20's Plenty initiative with 'Cost' also being a restrictive driver perhaps we should look closer to home in respect of how Residents Park their Cars Roadside throughout the Village of West Witton

A recent personal early evening experience on my way to the 'Heifer' brought this to light with local Residents Vehicles (not Holiday Visitors has I am sure this will be an initial response by local inhabitants) being parked part or fully on the pavement causing serious obstruction to Pedestrians, particularly those using mobility aids, with instances of me catching Doors Mirrors and being forced to walk on the Highway, vehicles are being illegally parked facing the wrong way against the flow of traffic and properties with off road parking available to them choosing not to use it

West Witton is not alone facing these Village Parking Issues but we need to start somewhere with local action plans to address this 'Poor' and 'Illegal' parking behaviour which would be low cost to implement, relatively easy to police and improve the Road Safety throughout the Village

Without any doubt the Speed of vehicles needs addressing throughout the Dales but the chances of a vehicle surpassing 30mph through West Witton due to the current parking behaviour appears unlikely and if all vehicles where parked legally roadside this would help with Traffic Management and contribute to reducing speed whilst enhancing Pedestrian Road Safety.”

“My thoughts on this matter are that I'm fully supportive of a reduction to 20 MPH in residential streets, towns & villages. Behind this decision are a number of, I feel, valid reasons & would be happy to expand on this if required. I really do hope the Campaign is a success as I think it would definitely be a positive move in more places than it could have a negative effect.”

“We would like to support the 20's plenty campaign. We notice all the time that vehicles are speeding past our windows. I think maybe a lot of vehicles don't slow down until they get to the main bulk of the village with houses on both sides and parked cars. The worst culprits are the huge wagons, maybe they build up a head of steam on the straight stretch before the village?? We often cross the road to walk the dogs down the lane towards the river and you do have to gauge the speed of the traffic. If they are only going 30 there's plenty of time to cross, but this often isn't the case. It will be interesting to see if the new sign at the playing field will make a difference.”

“We are supportive of the 20 mile an hour speed limit.”

“Thanks for your letter regarding the 20mph speed limit through the Village and I agree that this is seriously needed through West Witton. It is not only the lorries and cars that are a problem, the motorbikes are a nightmare every weekend!! The speed they go through here and the pollution is alarming. I am pleased to support this campaign.”

“I’m a horse rider and in my experience encountering a car going at 30 mph in a built up area, or narrow lane, is too fast to move the horse safely out of the way. Also some horses may be frightened and spook which can have bad consequences. The implementation of a 20 mph speed limit in villages will also make life safer for parents with children getting from a to b on foot or cycles. Strongly support and its short sighted of the NYCC not to support this also. If 20 mph speed limits were established in these areas eventually drivers would acclimatise to it. Investment in the scheme would undoubtedly result in expense saved by the NHS in treating road traffic accident victims.”

“I'm in full support of this campaign. Thank you to the parish council for pursuing this.”

“We think 20 mph may address the impact of significant number of vehicles that exceed the current speed limit”

4 comments unnecessary/ unconvinced / not in favour

“We are strongly against introducing a 20mph speed limit in West Witton for the following reasons:

1. It is unnecessary, the number of cars parked in Main Street means that most of the time you can't even proceed at 20mph as you have to keep stopping.
2. Why bring in a speed limit that is unenforceable?
3. In the unlikely event that the road is clear it is very frustrating to have to drive at 20mph on an empty road, particularly if there is nobody about.
4. I don't believe there is a significant benefit in reducing pollution by reducing your speed by 10mph as claimed, where is the proof?
5. Significant safety benefits?? How many people have been killed or injured in West Witton in the last fifty years?? Probably none, so where are the 'significant safety benefits'?
6. Spend the money on filling in potholes not on more road signs that are unsightly.
7. Reference your recent speed survey, the fact that many vehicles exceeded 30mph on entering the village, from what is a fast stretch of road doesn't mean that they were doing more

than 30 when they were in the vicinity of Grassgill and proceeded through the village at over 30mph, particularly in view of the parking.

“I for one would be happy if folks could actually stick to 30 mph. The matrix board should help - the one in Aysgarth does. Some of our most guilty culprits are locals, especially the colossal farm vehicles at busy times on the farming calendar, they're whizzing through today! Living in a farming community it's very difficult pointing the finger at farm vehicles but when they're out they're speedy- apart from John Hunter! If you check back through the Playing Field minutes books to the 80/90s you'll be able to see the communication between the village and the Highways dept. begging for assistance with speed awareness/ control. I believe the man in charge, Mr Woodford, once referred to us as 'the bloody West Witton ladies' we were the bane of his life!! We were told then that until a child died or was seriously injured there was nothing they could do apart from the children playing sign!”

“We remain unconvinced regarding the effectiveness of supporting this proposed campaign. There is anecdotal evidence from the 20splentys own website that for a 20 mph speed limit to be fully effective that additional traffic calming measures have to be adopted. These would potentially cause even more traffic chaos in the village. We are of the view that more rigorous enforcement of the current limit would be money better spent rather than this campaign. NYCC's own comments are perhaps the most telling.” Quote from 20splenty website - For residual compliance issues, inexpensive traffic calming – signs, lines, staggered parking bays, planters etc – are often sufficient.

I am not in favour of a 20 mph limit. If people will not obey 30mph why will they obey a 20mph? Additionally I do not buy the noise and pollution argument...quite the opposite! If I am riding my bike or driving my car at 20mph I will be in 2nd gear,if at 30 mph I will be in 3rd gear ,so the noise and pollution will be similar in both cases,however at 20mph it will take 50% longer to get through the village.So 20 mph limit is somewhat self-defeating on those grounds. I would support 20 mph where there are loads of children,such as by a school.That is not the case in West Witton.....maybe a flashing 20mph sign 15 mins either side of the school-bus leaving and returning times. I can suggest some possibilities to encourage compliance to a 30 limit.West Witton has one standard round 30mph sign ,coming straight out of a national speed limit long clear straight.One suggestion would be a short 40mph from the bottom of the recently improved layby.Alternatively many villages with 30mph limits have a number of advanced warnings of an upcoming 30mph .In many cases this is with barred signs indicating 3,2 and 1 bar before limit starts (not sure if these are hundreds of yards or tenths of miles) Alternatively rumble strips in advance of reduced limits,painting a large “30” in the road ,or a different coloured tarmac usually red or beige with 30 written on it. I guess the village is divided on the noise issue.I,and many of my friends actually enjoy the noise of motorcycle engines ,however I know there are certain individuals in the village keen to let everyone know of their opposite view!

Another suggestion would be a reduced width chicane to reduce speed of vehicles going through the village, however in my opinion with number of residents who have no off-street parking, tradesmans vans, parcel deliveries, post office and removal vans, those width restrictors are generally provided at no cost!

ENDS