

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL UPPER MEON VALLEY WARD PARISH REPORT – MAY 2025

We are in the middle of the Annual Parish Assembly season and it has been heartening to see some good turnouts in Parish Halls around the Ward. Whilst Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation don't necessarily hold everybody's attention for too long (!) there have also been many other speakers of great interest to communities, and we will try and share some ideas of what has worked well at these events in our next update.

GRANTS

In the middle of the current financial pressures in Hampshire there are still, nonetheless, some seams of community project funding that can be successfully mined. In particular, the UK Shared and Rural Prosperity Funds are currently open for applications through the City Council. Several of our Parishes have had success through this route in the past three year funding cycle and there is a list of funded projects on the web page to help focus your thoughts:

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/business/uk-shared-prosperity-fund>

Closing date for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is 27 May, with a couple of further weeks to 11 June for the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC) is supported by both WCC and HCC; it's also a partnership organisation in a new service called "My Home Made Better". This aims to take an holistic approach to helping homeowners find out why their properties may be losing heat in the winter and how they can lower energy bills. Rather than a simple "advice line", instead it links those with personal experience of improving home energy efficiency with those who would like to do more. More detail are at www.myhomemadebetter.org

Finally on grants, congratulations to Tichborne Park Cricket Club and West Meon Village Hall which have each recently been granted £1000 from the Winchester Small Grants Panel. The scheme will re-open later in the year – early preparation advised!

SPEED

Over the past year we have continued to work with our County Councillors to try and further the case for lower speed limits – not just 20 mph limits through villages but in some cases reducing the limit through villages from the national speed limit (a default limit of 60 mph on a single carriageway rural road without street lights) to 30 mph and, in another, trying to reduce from 40 mph to 30 mph. Progress is difficult as HCC insist on full cost recovery of any new speed scheme. The text below this update is a slightly edited version of a piece produced to help Upham's case a few months ago, but reproduced here in case it proves of wider interest.

Neil Bolton
Jerry Pett

SPEED LIMIT SCHEMES

The relevant document library is:

[DfT Circular 01/2013 Rev Mar 24 - Setting Local Speed Limits](#)

[HCC Policy on 20mph Speed limits - Jan 24](#)

[Local Speed Limit Schemes - Appraisal Tool](#)

A few key points:

- The key data points are the 85th Centile speed and the Mean speed. The point is that the mean speed usually equates to the 85th centile speed and is the speed that drivers should 'self-assess' as safe for the road at that particular point;
- The new (2024) HCC policy is explicitly targeted at new 20mph schemes and not '40 to 30' reductions;
- The HCC paper notes that the County only has a statutory duty to change speed limits where accident statistics demand action;
- New 20mph schemes will only be delivered through the Community Funded Initiative, ie full cost recovery - but, therefore, any Winchester Road [Upham] scheme therefore falls solely within the scope of the DfT circular;
- The DfT circular clearly states that the default speed limit through villages should be 30mph, and Lower Upham clearly (I think!) falls within its definition of a "village": 20 or more houses on both sides of the road within 600m (para 137);
- The use of the Appraisal Tool allows Highway Authorities to "make evidence-based decisions" - para 67 of the circular - that take into account accident stats and also calculates the potential return on investment.

The Appraisal Tool guidance itself runs to over 90 pages and was clearly conceived and written by a well-seasoned civil servant. Nonetheless, it's the tool that it seems will be the key to getting anything done. Populating *should*, of course, be the job of the Highways Authority – but we suspect that if we are to force HCC's hand you may have to populate it yourselves. (We'd be more than happy to help but think it might need a stout appetite from SIDs team for the amount of work that seems to be involved!)

The tool appears to provide greater clarity for decision makers than the previously extant guidance in DfT Circular 01/2006, which was cancelled by the 2013 iteration. We've tried in vain to find a copy of 01/2006 as there doesn't appear to be an archived copy on the gov.uk websites. But, luckily, it's widely quoted on other County Council websites. The [Shropshire CC guidance](#) derived from it is particularly useful. It shows (p4) that the default speed limit through a village where the mean/85th centile speed is 39mph or below should be 30mph. Moreover, its Appendix B gives guidance on how to collect the speed data to support the case. Note that it directs an automated speed count (ie pipe counter) over a minimum of a week in the centre of the village. The key passage:

Appendix B - Measuring average speeds

For the purposes of this policy average speed will be calculated as follows.

Measurements

The following speed measurements will be made:

- An automatic counter will measure speed over a full week at a location near the centre of the village where speeds are likely to be at their highest. The mean speed will be calculated.
- Short period speed measurement will be made with a speed gun at the entry points to the village (where any speed limit is likely to start), at a time of the day when speeds are likely to be at their highest. The mean speed at each entry point will be calculated.

Average speed

The average speed used to determine the appropriate limit will be that measured within the centre of the village and the average speed on entry will be used to determine appropriateness of potential buffer limits.

The last piece is highlighted only to reinforce what we said last evening: the team has, so far, collected the data that would be used to determine the need for an outer, buffer limit of 40mph beyond the 30mph limit, not for a 30mph limit around the Mortimers Lane/Upham Street junction.

There is, of course, a health warning associated with citing superseded guidance, but I'm pretty sure that the tool will only reinforce those limits - all the mood music from central government has supported greater road safety, even during the 'putting the motorist first' moves from early last year.

Our reading of all of this is that HCC would find it hard to ignore a solid case for a 30mph limit through Lower Upham based on current government guidance. But they are unlikely, voluntarily to contribute to the construction of that case, which will require some considerable effort. Perhaps worth testing the appetite for this at the APM?