

Yoxford Parish Council

Yoxford Village Hall
Old High Road
Yoxford
Suffolk
IP17 3HN

County Councillor Richard Smith
Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste
Suffolk County Council
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP1 2BX

October 25th 2023

Dear Councillor Smith

Healthier, cleaner, safer: setting a 20mph default speed limit

You will be aware that at its meeting of October 5th 2023, Yoxford Parish Council discussed and passed a motion which supported a call to Suffolk County Council to:

- review its policy for road speed limits to facilitate changes which are more in line with current trends and rather than, for example, the historic 30mph set in 1935 within the Road Traffic Act of 1934
- to implement a 20mph speed limit in Yoxford.

At said meeting, Council directed me to contact you on its behalf to ask for your consideration and support.

Regarded as global best practice, the UK government committed itself to 20mph speed limits by signing the 2020 Stockholm Declaration.

The benefits of 20mph are clear: better for children, elderly, pedestrians, cyclists and for the disabled. 20mph reduces road casualties and emissions, makes it more likely that people will walk or cycle and has almost no effect on journey times for those in motor vehicles.

The speed of traffic through our Suffolk towns and villages is about achieving a balance between the need of traffic to pass through, and the need for a safe and pleasant environment for people who live and work there. At the moment the balance is completely in favour of the vehicles. In Yoxford, vehicles have right of way everywhere, travel at speeds no human can run, cause accidents, near misses, anxiety and a generally unpleasant living environment. In that context, on behalf of the village, Yoxford Parish Council's requests are modest. To reiterate, it asks

1. Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner to do more to tackle speeding in our Suffolk towns and villages,
2. Suffolk County Council to review and rewrite its 20mph speed limit policy,
3. Suffolk County Council to look much more favourably on requests for 20mph speed limits and make budget available for their introduction.

Suffolk County Council's current 20mph policy makes it almost impossible for a 20mph limit to be introduced anywhere where there is support. The policy excludes A and B roads and places where the current average speed is greater than 24mph. Yoxford Parish Council believes this is wrong. The criteria for assessing a request for a 20mph limit should be:

1. Is there strong local support?
2. Do the road or roads have characteristics that warrant a 20mph limit? Things like a school, on road parking, narrow roads, narrow pavements, no pavements, passing trade for local businesses and amenities, significant cyclist and pedestrian activity (especially from vulnerable groups), houses close to the road, concealed entrances, poor line of sight and so on.

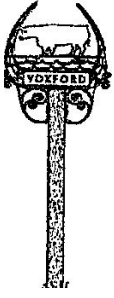
Even where Suffolk County Council considers a 20mph scheme, its current policy often requires high-cost engineering solutions, which effectively prevent many Parish Councils from implementing 20mph. A signed-only wide-area scheme combined with education is better, easier and more cost-effective for all.

The restriction on A and B roads should be removed. The restriction based on current average speeds should also be removed. The current speed of traffic should be used to decide the additional traffic calming measures required to implement a 20mph limit, but it is not relevant to deciding whether a 20mph limit is required.

According to the Department for Transport, four billion vehicle miles were travelled on roads in Suffolk in 2022, a one billion increase since 1993. Furthermore, the department's data shows that in 2018 there were a total of 1,463 road traffic accidents across the county, ranging in severity. That equates to around four every day – one every six hours – in a county with a population of just over 700,000! Statistics such as these, along with our own anecdotal knowledge that near misses are on the increase in our village, indicate that a review of policy is overdue.

You'll be aware that the amount of peer reviewed and grey research of the impact of limits of 20mph remains small. However, in August 2018's evidence review, *"The state of the evidence on 20mph speed limits with regards to road safety, active travel and air pollution impacts. A Literature Review of the Evidence"* by Dr Adrian L Davis FFPH of Adrian Davis Associates, Consultant on Transport & Health Bristol, UK, Council notes with interest that, "There is now evidence from 20mph implementation within the UK which finds a statistically significant reduction in casualties compared to background levels. Importantly, such findings triangulate with the evidence on speed reduction and collision reduction. The fact that for each average 1mph speed reduction in an urban area there is a 6% reduction in collisions fits well with the findings from the UK studies reported here." (Section 5/P34).

In addition, in Imperial College London's research into the impact of speed limit reduction for Transport for London, its report states that, *"Imperial College London's research...suggests they have no net negative impact on exhaust emissions. Results indicated clear benefits to driving style and associated particulate emissions. The research found that vehicles moved more smoothly, with fewer accelerations and decelerations, than in 30mph zones, reducing particulate emissions from tyre and brake wear. We have undertaken an Environmental Evaluation and are satisfied that the lowering of speeds will not have an adverse impact on the environment or air quality. The Environmental Evaluation recommendation was that no air quality modelling was therefore required."*



Yoxford Parish Council

Yoxford Village Hall
Old High Road
Yoxford
Suffolk
IP17 3HN

As our County Councillor, we know that you are committed to the welfare and safety of the people you serve and so ask for your support to make Yoxford's roads safer by working with other decision makers and officers of Suffolk County Council to review current policy and make it easier for communities like ours to secure a safer speed limit of 20mph.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With my thanks and kind regards,

Trudy Charles
Parish Clerk and RFO to, and on behalf of Yoxford Parish Council

cc: District Councillors Julia Ewart and Paul Ashton