Speed Reduction Decision

In last month's Observer you may have read that we had finally received a response to our Traffic Speed Reduction Report. This had given permission for 20mph in a significant part of the village but had rejected any extension of 30mph limits and the much wished for 40 mph on the Ixworth Road from West Street into the village. This was a change the Parish Council was extremely keen to see through in response to community and residents wishes.

Community wishes or policy?

The Parish Council with the support of our County Councillor sought a review of the decision. However, the decision was upheld by Suffolk County Council Highways who acknowledged the strong views of the community and the efforts that had gone into the process but concluded that the 30 and 40 mph changes applied for would contravene their policy.

What led up to the decision?

Initially we proposed more extensive speed limit changes but were advised that these would definitely not be approved. In April 2025 we therefore settled on a compromise proposal which we were led to believe could meet the policy. This modified the community wishes significantly but was taken forward as a pragmatic way to achieve some improvements as overwhelmingly desired by residents. The application process cost approximately £1000 which was paid more than 12 months ago by the Parish Council and followed a series of speed surveys around the village.

In July 2026 we eventually received a reply approving all 20mph for The Street, Wattisfield Road, Townhouse Road, Palmer Street and Grove Road where there is residential development. We were delighted with this outcome but very disappointed by the refusal to allow permission for any alterations to 30mph or to introduce 40mph on the Ixworth Road through West Street. We were particularly disappointed by this response which appears to have rigidly prioritised elements of policy over community wishes.

What more can be done?

Members of the Parish Council and Community Traffic Group must now pursue other measures which may help to reduce traffic speeds for Finningham Road and West Street. Individual measures such as additional Speed Indicator Device, road markings and signage are all relatively expensive and the costs of all measures including implementing speed limit changes must be met locally.

We remain very grateful to local businesses, Clarkes and Ashwells, as well as Gardens Weekend who have already funded village gate entrances for Summer Road and Badwell Road which are ready for installation as well as new village signage. Mid Suffolk District Council, who have no responsibility for Highways, have also contributed financially to buying an additional SID for the village and for an extra village gate for Finningham Road to be created over the coming months.

Finally, the Parish Council and the Community Traffic Group intend to continue to campaign for changes to the Speed Limit policies with regard to 30 and 40mph so that in future this can be revisited.

Where can I see the full response from the County Council?

The full response to our request for a review of the decision by the Head of Transport Strategy can be found on the village website: https://www.walsham-le-willows.org/news/