

Notes from a meeting held in Shenstone Library at 10:30 on Friday 10th February 2022 to discuss various options for traffic monitoring and control.

Attendees: PCSO Andrea Horsnall, Michelle Shaker (SSRP), Cllr Mick Cox, Cllr Neil Perry, Cllr Phil Whitehouse, Cllr David Salter.

Current monitoring and enforcement measures include Community Speed Watch, SSRP Camera Vans, Police hand held radar operations and, by way of driver information and notice; wheelie-bin stickers and 30 repeater signs in camera van zones. We only have one Speed Activated Display (SAD) in our area, which is on Birmingham Road near St John's Hill in Shenstone.

Michelle Shaker provided charts of recent figures from the latest Camera Van statistics and a list of recorded RTA's of which there were 7 incidents, only one of which was speed related.

The '20's Plenty' initiative was briefly discussed but it was made clear that Staffordshire Police's policy is that they would not enforce such zones, and that SCC are also not in favour. Therefore, implementation of the programme is highly unlikely. It was generally agreed that targeted zones would be far more beneficial than blanket application but only if enforcement of them could be negotiated.

Discussion turned to the possible reinstatement of Speed Indication Devices (SID's) (SSRP no longer provide these), the Parish Council are at liberty to provide them with sanction from SCC in respect of their locations. It would be feasible to utilise the existing approved sites around the villages that were previously used by SSRP for their portable units.

Although often ignored by drivers, all modern SID's digitally record the time, date and speed of every triggering but do so without identification of the vehicle. That data can be processed by Parish Councils and can help to identify times and zones where enforcement programmes would be best carried out. However, the general efficacy of traditional SID's, which simply display the speed of a vehicle, was questioned, with preference shown for the use of Automatic Number-Plate Recognition (ANPR) units which display the Vehicle Registration Number (VRN) of offending vehicles. Because compiling and investigating the data which conventional ANPR cameras gather is both time consuming and expensive, and can only be carried out by the police, it was suggested that investigations are made into whether units which can recognise and display the VRN without recording that data are available, at a more affordable price than those which do.

An alternative option might be to fund a police operative to do the data management on behalf of the Parish Council.

It was agreed that reports of speeding are not always particularly reliable because perception can be deceptive from the observer's perspective. The suggestion was made that there should be an easy method for anyone to submit CCTV and particularly Dash-Cam footage in evidence of dangerous driving or speeding. Andrea stated that the facility effectively already exists using the 101 or on-line system of reporting crime. Every call or submission creates a unique log number which will be manually investigated and assessed, if the reporter states that they have video evidence, that fact will be recorded and referred to during the investigation. It was suggested that it might be worth publicising how anyone with such evidence can submit it for investigation.

It was advised that discussions with the Chief Constable should be held prior to publishing such an initiative and also for the feasibility of funding a police run data processing scheme.

Conversation turned to 'direct action' namely Community Speed Watch (CSW) and the need for more volunteers. It was suggested that at its next meeting of SCAR a push for volunteers should be made and that those interested might form the nucleus for a public meeting where Andrea and Michelle could make a full presentation about the scheme and how to join it. This meeting could be facilitated by the Parish Council and Members could even perhaps lead by example by 'signing up' themselves if they felt able.

The areas which are designated for CSW are eligible to have warning signs installed but there is a cost. The purchase price of the signs is not excessive but, because of their siting, installation can be expensive because it has to be carried out by a Highways Approved Engineer, usually contracted through AMEY. This led to a suggestion that investigation should be made to see if perhaps the Lengthsman could gain such qualification, not just to enable the fitting of these signs but to support other work on roadsides and verges ensuring they are safely and lawfully carried out.

AOB included;

- The request from residents and parents for a crossing patrol in Little Aston at the junction of Walsall Road and Forge Lane. Andrea will approach the school headmistress and promote a survey.
- It was realised that there are no CSW sites in Little Aston. The area between Chester Road, Blake Street and Rosemary Hill Road will be investigated for potential locations. Evidence from the camera van in the area proves that there is a need for more information gathering. Also, if sites are sanctioned, the afore mentioned CSW signs could be installed in the area as further deterrent.
- The question of possible funding from SSRP to support some of the discussed initiatives was raised. It was confirmed that, although a few years ago, over £2m was in a 'pot' raised by the activities of the camera van, it had recently been shared around other departments and there is now no funding available.
- Now that the repositioned gateway at the southern entrance to Shenstone has been in place for well over the statutory 6 months 'settling in' period, consideration will be taken in respect of speed enforcement for approaching north bound vehicles as well as those coming through the village.
- The ongoing concern about the safety of pedestrians crossing the very busy cross-roads at Blake Street, Little Aston Lane was raised. Although there are reports that the traffic lights themselves may be due for replacement soon, it was agreed that the simple solution of an extended 'all red period' would be a low cost, quickly achievable solution and have no impact on the only nearby light controlled junction at the top of Rosemary Hill Road.

The meeting closed at 12:10 with all agreeing that it was very worthwhile and productive.