



6th January 2022

FAO:

Councillors Carl Les, Gareth Dadd, Derek Bastiman, David Chance, Michael Harrison, Andrew Lee, Don Mackenzie, Patrick Mulligan, Janet Sanderson, Greg White.

Messrs Karl Battersby, Stuart Carlton, Gary Fielding, Richard Flinton, Barry Khan, Richard Webb.
Ms Melanie Carr

cc. Councillor Andrew Brown, Cononley Speed Watch Group, 20s Plenty Campaign.

Dear all

**NYCC Review of 20mph Speed Limit Policy: Cononley's 20mph zone
NYCC Executive Meeting, Tuesday 11th January 2022**

In May 2007, a 20mph zone including speed tables and signage featuring artwork of Cononley Primary School children were introduced in Cononley "...in a bid to stop drivers speeding through the village and using it as a rat run" (Craven Herald, 12th May 2007).

Almost fifteen years later, Cononley's community is still trying to stop drivers speeding through the village and using it as a rat run. During this time the village has almost doubled in size with infill housing and four new housing estates extending the village footprint. The 20mph zone however remains as it was in 2007 and is no longer fit for purpose.

The 20mph zone excludes over 200 houses including the main entrance to Cononley's popular playing field & children's play park. Since 2007, the volume of rat-run traffic has significantly increased as commuters avoid alternative congested routes. As a result, concerned parents do not encourage their children to walk or cycle independently, and elderly or vulnerable road users are discouraged from enjoying daily exercise.

In response, Cononley has initiated its own additional measures such as Community Speed Watch (at police-approved sites on five roads) and raised funds to purchase a Vehicle Activated Sign (NYCC's revised VAS Ownership Policy) and install Gateways (AJ1 Project Road Safety + Locality Funding) in order to reinforce the 'slow down' message to drivers.

We understand that a revised 20mph speed limit policy is currently going through its approval process following a review by a task group set up by the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

We question why Parish Councils and Speed Watch Groups were not invited to contribute to this review, particularly when Parish Councils operate at the heart of the community and are involved in schemes and initiatives to address residents' concerns about road safety?

Cononley Speed Watch is one of 82 speed watch groups across North Yorkshire. On average, 6% of vehicles monitored by volunteers in Cononley travel above the speed limit. Weekly speed watch deployments are essential to reinforce the message to drivers and North Yorkshire Police Traffic Bureau recognises that Cononley has one of the highest repeat offending rates.

Surely therefore the findings and recommendations of this review don't fully reflect the views of communities where relentless speeding adversely affects residents' mental wellbeing and their quality of life?



Below is a six month picture of speed data from the 20mph VAS on Crosshills Road which monitors traffic travelling through the village. In isolation, a 20mph zone is not sufficient to keep speeds at 24mph or below. The VAS has proved to be an essential element in the battle against speeding and to reinforce the 20mph zone. Disappointingly, 72% of drivers are, on average, speeding above 20mph, however the VAS is effective in keeping average speed levels to 21mph.

VAS Speed Data - Cononley Sports Club, Crosshills Road (20mph) 2021							
	May (2 weeks)	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	December
% doing 0-20mph	26.9%	24.3%	30.1%	30.4%	25.3%	26.9%	28.7%
% doing 20-25mph	56.4%	56.1%	52.6%	55.8%	56.3%	56.5%	55.4%
% doing 25+mph	16.7%	19.6%	17.3%	13.8%	18.4%	16.6%	15.8%
Total % doing >20mph	73.1%	75.7%	69.9%	69.6%	74.7%	73.1%	71.3%
average speed mph	21.3	21.7	21	20.9	21.5	21.3	21.2
highest speed mph	46.1	67.6	48.2	42.4	47.3	40.2	44.8
total vehicles	10141	20457	14709	16589	20571	20726	20230

Yet, as outlined on page 1, there are areas of Cononley’s residential community that still sit within a 30mph zone where drivers repeatedly speed above the limit with only speed watch volunteers to occasionally act as a deterrent.

We understand the proposed revised policy seeks to offer greater flexibility with a focus on place and community. With this in mind, we trust Karl Battersby will, as quoted in the Craven Herald’s 29th December article, talk to our community to consider options to allay road safety concerns?

To pre-empt this conversation, and in line with the flexibility and focus of the proposed new policy, we ask that you review the 20mph zone for Cononley – not just to improve road safety, but to encourage a shift to more active travel such as walking from home to school or cycling from home to the playing field. Using S106 funding, the playing field will be developed this year to include more cycle-based play features to encourage children to cycle and hone their skills and confidence.

We request please that you consider the following two options:

1. Extend the 20mph zone to keep our children safe on Cononley Lane/Main Street

Over 200 homes are excluded from Cononley’s current 20mph zone. These homes reside along Cononley Lane and Main Street and many are occupied by families with children attending the local primary school, using local public transport to travel to nearby secondary schools or spending time at the playing field during weekends and after school.

The railway crossing is a hot spot for speeding due to drivers hurrying to avoid the barriers, particularly when cutting through the village. Worryingly the railway crossing is just 120 metres from the main entrance to the playing field and rat-runners are often travelling in excess of 30mph to avoid being stuck at the barriers. The highest volume of traffic and highest number of speeding drivers is observed between the hours of 4pm-6pm which is the time when children should be playing outside and enjoying time at the park.

We request that the 30mph speed limit on Cononley Lane is replaced with 20mph, starting just before the entrance to the housing at Airedale Ings and continues along Cononley Lane, includes the



entrance to the playing field until it meets the existing 20mph zone in the centre of the village on Main Street, opposite Moorfoot Lane (map enclosed).

There is no data to suggest the 20mph zone must stay as it is. As Mr Battersby states “a 20mph speed limit must be right for the location”. A 20mph limit is absolutely right for the entrance to the busy village playing field and children’s play park. It is also right that the 20mph zone is extended along Cononley Lane to include 200 houses and to maximise the opportunity to encourage active travel choices as it links to the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and towpath.

2. Replace 30mph with 20mph on all roads leading into the village.

There are numerous areas in the village with no or inadequate pavements leaving pedestrians to share road space with vehicles. This is particularly dangerous at the bend where Cononley Road meets Crosshills Road, at the bend where Woodside Lane meets Skipton Road and where Netherghyll Lane meets Main Street. These are stretches of road without pavements and which have seen a significant rise in traffic levels and speeds since 2007.

A default 20mph zone which replaces the existing 30mph speed limits across the whole of the village will encourage more considerate driving, reduce speeds overall and allow more vulnerable road users to share the space with confidence.

Following Cononley Parish Council’s support to the 20s Plenty Campaign, recent feedback from residents and speed watch volunteers feel very strongly that an extension to the 20mph zone is long overdue if we are to discourage dangerous driving through the village and reduce the risk to pedestrians, cyclists, vulnerable road users and children.

Lower vehicle speeds create a safer, quieter and cleaner environment which encourages children to walk or cycle to school and to the playing field/play park. It is widely acknowledged that active travel improves physical and mental health, independence, and greater confidence on our roads. As a Parish Council we have a duty of care to ensure the safety and well-being of our residents. Through its own initiatives and dedicated volunteers, Cononley is geared up to reinforce the ‘slow down’ message to drivers, however it requires the appropriate NYCC road safety policies to be in place to support this.

We ask therefore that, as an action of the 11th January 2022 20mph policy change meeting, you consider our requests and commit to engage with Cononley Parish Council in order to implement these much-needed changes.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Kath Clark
Cononley Parish Council

