

Successful Speedwatch Introduction – Volunteers needed

Cllr. Joe Pattison in giving feedback to the Soham and East Panel on 2nd July 2008, outlined that the team of volunteers had agreed to be involved in the Speedwatch pilot mainly on the basis that 'speed kills'. He stressed that more volunteers are needed.

In selecting which equipment should be used, there was an advantage to using a display screen (rather than a gun) for educative reasons. A crucial aspect of the pilot was the effective use of publicity to inform local people of the detail and purposes of the pilot. Articles appeared in the Ely Weekly News and the Cambridge Evening News and a feature on 'Look East' (on BBC1).

The first use of equipment by the volunteer team after their training had been at Mereside. This indicated that there was a great deal of speeding in excess of 37mph (in a 30 mph zone).

The volunteer team worked in different locations at different times of the day -early in the morning, at lunchtime and at the end of the day, just after the rush hour (which slows traffic naturally). By mid-June, 29 sampling checks had been made in the towns and villages within the area, recording 2105 vehicles in 30 mph speed restricted zones. 14% of those vehicles were travelling between 33-37mph, while in addition a further 10% were travelling 37-40. 67 vehicles were travelling 41-45mph, 20 vehicles between 46 -50 mph and 4 vehicles over 51 mph. In all, 298 vehicles (14%) were driving in excess of 37 mph, which overall indicates that approx one in three drivers was speeding in a 30 mph zone (this included all types of vehicles and all ages of drivers) !

High proportions of speeding were identified in Mereside (Soham), in Chippenham Road, Snailwell and in North Street, Wicken.

Observations from the Speedwatch team are;

- Easy to set up and operate
- High visibility to speeding motorist
- Positive response from the local community
- No restrictions (cf. police) on where to operate
- Educational effect stops all speeding
- Clear identification of 'hotspots' and times, so that police can target their enforcement campaigns
- Follow-up letter to the 298 speeding motorists: very effective (in showing 'teeth') 10% of these have received speeding tickets.

In conclusion, Cllr. Pattison highlighted the need for more volunteers from each village and parish, so that checks can continue to be made on a regular basis. The checks have an impact in reducing the speed of traffic on both sides of the road.

From the experience of the pilot, it was advocated that equipment should be purchased, volunteers be identified and trained and the scheme to be operated as soon as possible. Training will be given on the equipment and how and where to set it up. This is expected to take place in October 2008.

The issue of speeding was identified as a particular problem in three areas, but it is a feature in all five Panels.

Would you like to get involved? Please contact Mrs Jackie Hughes, 01638 552376, kennettvillage@bopenworld.com