



Update for Tring West

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County Councillor
Nick Hollinghurst

Family-Friendly Neighbourhoods

More Social, More Active - Cleaner, Safer, Quieter, Calmer - Improved Wellbeing

Dear Residents,

Do you have the impression that there are more cars on the roads these days?

Do have the feeling that people seem to be driving faster?

If you have, then you are right. *Recent statistics back you up.*

20 mph Speed Limits

With other areas interested and with a number of successful 20 mph Speed Limits elsewhere in Hertfordshire and Dacorum, e.g. Berkhamsted High Street, it was decided to see if such a limit would be appropriate to Tring. A preliminary consultation was very favourable. Originally they were to be speed limits without any "humps or bumps" - only signs.

However, a problem arose immediately with Christchurch Road, which is crossed by children going to and from Goldfield, Tring and Bishop Wood Schools. The long, straight section passes one of the entrances to Goldfield School and a bit further on there is a crossing patrol for Bishop Wood - although a number of Tring School pupils cross Christchurch Road independently to walk down Friars Walk.

The traffic speeds along Christchurch Road are quite fast and the police refuse to agree to the 20 mph speed limits unless some traffic calming measures are installed. They did agree that no traffic calming would be needed at the top section if we installed an SID - and this was done.

Meanwhile, every time speeds in Christchurch Road were checked they were faster than the time before, and now exceed police guidelines for 20 mph limits. We have lost our argument with the police and will have to install traffic calming measures or abandon the scheme.

This means 5 speed humps along Christchurch Road. They will be of a new design, right across the width of the road though with spaces at the sides for cycles to pass easily, shallower and broader than earlier designs and with smoother profiles. They will be reminders to drivers that they are in a 20 mph area - rather than being so obtrusive as to make speeds above 20 mph impossible.

At the last consultation, this issue provoked a number of objections from Christchurch Road. It would be a great pity if this happened again and led to the abandonment of 5 years work.

So what are we trying to achieve?

To improve the quality of life and the environment in residential and retail areas in Tring by encouraging a more considerate use of cars and vans.

A 20mph speed limit encourages people to be more careful and aware of others, especially of other residents and children, when driving around their neighbourhoods. 20mph limits work, because they are popular and are treated with a high level of respect.

20's Plenty



Where People Live

Working Well Elsewhere

Already over 15 million people live in areas where this policy has been adopted. In those communities people have decided that "20's Plenty Where People Live" and have changed their behaviour to drive slower in streets where people live, shop, walk or cycle.

The desirability and effectiveness of these 20mph limits has now been extensively reviewed in the recent (Nov 2018) **Atkins Report** for the Department for Transport (<https://tinyurl.com/yaamwdvb>). This endorses 20mph limits as best practice and the right speed limit for areas where vehicles mix with pedestrians and cyclists. Tring High Street and the residential areas in the west of Tring contain a relatively high proportion of young families and clearly meet this criterion.



Compliance

All reports criticise police reluctance to actively control vehicle speeds in 20mph limits, despite having power to do so. Even so, in residential areas **without** traffic calming 47% of drivers complied. This is not much different to the 53% compliance in 30mph limits - where there are often active controls. However, in the 20mph streets *70% of drivers travelled at less than 24mph*.

Measurements have shown that even in signage-only schemes, where speeds are below 20mph to start with, a 1mph reduction is still measurable and with pre-scheme speeds of 25mph or higher - as in Christchurch Road - traffic calming routinely achieves reductions of around 7mph.

Even with imperfect compliance these are useful speed reductions and significant contributions to road safety. Lower speeds of course make accidents less likely - and less serious if one does occur.

Air Quality

Lower speeds definitely reduce air pollution overall. Drivers can drive more smoothly at lower speeds and this cuts fuel consumption. A study of 30kph (19mph) zones in Germany found 12% less fuel was used as drivers changed gear less and braked less. Brake pad dust and tyre particles are additionally reduced for all types of vehicles.

Although there is a small increase in NO_x and CO₂ when petrol vehicles travel at 20mph rather than 30mph, the opposite is true with diesel, where emissions are lower at 20mph. Given the much larger quantities of emissions from diesel engines, 20mph zones result in overall lower levels of NO_x, PM₁₀ and the more dangerous PM_{2.5} particles.

Public Health

Lower speeds encourage more people to be active and walk or cycle. Reduced traffic speeds and noise make people feel safer for themselves and their children, and more confident about walking around and crossing roads. Footfall in shopping areas and socialisation between families in residential areas both increase. In Edinburgh, research into trials of 20mph limits found that the proportion of children cycling to school rose from 4% to 12%.

Research in Sweden found that noise decreased between 2 and 4dB for cars when speeds were reduced from 50kph (32mph) to 30kph (19 mph). Excessive traffic noise has been linked to disrupted sleep and even heart disease.

Endorsements

RoSPA, Public Health England and now the Atkin Report all support these 20mph limits and this particular scheme has the approval of the Town Council. Post implementation surveys showed that 78% of residents are pleased with the new lower limits.

If you support the introduction of 20mph limits locally, then please participate in the final round of consultation later this month and express your clear support for the proposals.

Yours sincerely,

County Councillor Nick Hollinghurst