

20's Plenty Gazette article Sept 2023 – responses

29 replies – 14 for/14 against 1 comment not really a vote

1. To decrease the speed anywhere in the village is a complete waste of time and money no one obeys the current limit, so it would be a waste of money better spent on repairing roads

2. I think the limit should be extended to every road in the village as too many drivers try to "race" down Church Street, Stocks Lane, Mill Street & West Road into Little Heath (very dangerous for walkers going that way which includes me and I have been nearly knocked over on more than one occasion).

3. 20mph should apply to all of Stocks Lane

4. My feelings on the subject are that signs can be ignored. If you want to genuinely slow traffic then speed humps are the way to go. These could also act as crossings. It's not possible to speed on Mill Street.

5. There are a number of factors here.

Firstly – the human one – people who drive to the limit because it is the limit, regardless of the conditions, in some cases 20mph is still too fast. 20 has been shown in many studies (Universities of Belfast, Cambridge, and Edinburgh) to offer no reduction in the number of accidents. It is a fact that collisions between human beings and vehicles are more likely survivable at lower speeds, but another argument is that human stupidity is often the cause for those incidents, and if people stopped walking in front of vehicles, regardless of their speed, there would be fewer deaths.

Secondly – pollution – local government studies have often been bent to show that there are lower emissions at 20pmh than at 30mph. While that is true in many cases, the issue is that at 20mph it takes 50% longer to travel the same distance, and since emissions are measured against time, that means there is a net increase in emissions.

The University of Oslo carried out a study with reference to the reduction in speeds on one of the city's main arterial roads, and it showed that the reduction in speed resulted in NO reduction in pollution, but the slower speeds commuted an increased cost per vehicle in terms of the additional time taken to cover the same distance. It's quite an interesting read : <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1361920919314002>

The Norwegians are a fair way ahead of us when it comes to pollution reduction, and we should learn from them and not from dogma.

So, a blanket 20mph zone – no.

Ares where 20mph may be of benefit : None – Church Street would be the one that stands out, but with traffic throttled down there due to the way people park, it's quite difficult to achieve 20mph anyway. Mill Street – again, self calming due to the parking.

What Gamlingay needs is it's roads maintaining, not signs used to paper over the cracks. If the County Council spent as much on the roads as it does on talking about them, we'd have much better highways. That's my opinion on the matter.

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6. We fully support the extension of the 20mph zone outside Gamlingay Village Primary school.

7. I would support the reduction of the speed limit to 20 mph on all roads within the village boundary.

8. Hi, I'm fully in favour of extending the 20mph outside the primary school, in fact I'd like to see it extended throughout the village. If Potton and Sandy can have this in place then surely our village could do likewise.

9. Hello,

All local authorities should have the powers to make roads outside schools a 20mph zone without consultation.

It is common sense for the section of road outside GVP that is already 20mph be extended at least up point that would protect the entrance to Poppyfields - especially as this section of road is dipped leading to drivers unwittingly (or purposefully) speeding up.

(Of course, since the development of Poppyfields a second chicane could also have been introduced the other side of the brook to the current one to match this logic.

However, if the whole section was 20mph then the current chicane could probably be removed.)

Connectedly, it is incredible that the resident opposite the school is allowed to continue to park a large van and other vehicles beside the junction - this is clearly shown as a major hazard on the bottom right picture on the front of the Gazette.

Additional traffic control measures would make the junction safer for pupils parents and school staff but also users of the community gym. (Continued siting of the gym within the school grounds only adds to traffic congestion of course but as it continues to be used by a small percentage of the community this is probably not that relevant to the traffic issue).

Of course different pots of money in the village must be used for different ends, which is why there is none available to restructure the junction outside the school but we have a lovely underused path to the farm shop instead.

Based on the entrenched rules and the historic lack of community cooperation I suspect it would be too much to suggest some smart joined up thinking regarding traffic in the rest of the village whereby ALL road humps be removed and replaced by a 20mph limit. The outdated humps are a hazard in themselves to ALL road users: cyclists, pedestrians, and motorised vehicles of ALL sizes and simply create inefficient driving going against the supposed green agenda of some. (Although I presume the increased rate of local shock absorber replacement must be making someone a tidy profit).

10. Dear Sirs,

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I refer to the article on the front page of November's Gazette requesting views on the above referenced subject.

It would be good to know what problem/risk this proposed extension is seeking to solve/mitigate. Indeed what problem is the existing restriction seeking to solve/mitigate? The article appears to infer it is about slowing traffic past the primary school but there is no hard evidence/data available that I can see that supports this other than some intuitive 'feeling' on the part of those proposing it. If data is available on vehicle speeds etc. then such data should be published in support of any proposal. This data should also provide hard empirical evidence that the existing restriction has, indeed, reduced speeds and increased safety otherwise extension of it is just a waste of public finances.

The further extension/restriction can only be to mitigate risk at school opening and closing times. However, I doubt very much whether vehicle speeds actually exceed 20mph in the vicinity of the school at these times as the roads around the school become almost gridlocked at these times due to the parking, a large proportion of which is inconsiderate, whilst parents drop off and pick up their offspring. Indeed, if safety was really a concern then it should have formed part of the approval for the primary school in the first place but the topic was raised but studiously ignored during that process. Furthermore, safety cannot possibly be that much of a concern otherwise the car park at the eco hub would be made available to help ensure the safety of the children but, as I understand it, the car park is denied to parents dropping off and picking up.

In summary, unless the road layout and parking facilities are improved in the adjoining roads – Stocks Lane, Blythe Way, Church Lane & Station Road or at the school itself then not only has the existing restriction already been a waste of public resources but extending it will exacerbate such a profligate approach.

11. Hi,

There is no need to extend the 20mph zone in Gamlingay, unless there is a history of road traffic collisions. Extending the zone just for the sake of extending the zone is meaningless and a waste of money.

12. Good evening

With reference to the recent article in the Gazette in reference to the 20 mph speed limit outside Gamlingay Village primary. I would like to put my views forward against the 20mph.

1. During school time it is difficult to travel around this village at more than 10 miles an hour. There are so many vehicles waiting to pick up children or dropping off and so many obstacles.
2. Use the money for road repairs that are urgently needed and for clearing drains in Mill Street.
3. Cleaning the streets in Mill Street where so much hay has been distributed in the street that when you open the door the straw/hay is blown into the house, and your car is covered in the substance.
4. The speed limit is not required, and who would enforce it. To get the Police to the village is hard enough.

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5. Build a by-pass

6. Use that £150,000 wisely.

13. Hi

Well I have to say Yes and No to that. What with speed bumps and pot holes it is impossible to do even 20 mph without serious damage to your cars' suspension and/or tyres. Some of us like to drive smaller cars, why should we have to drive larger polluting SUVs to live here? Plus there is the on road parking which hasn't improved by allowing more building of homes in the village. By all means spend money on improving safety around school but do something to improve the through put of traffic in the village. If you walk along Mill road for instance, it is impossible to walk facing the traffic. Because of, on road parking, traffic in both directions has to drive on the left hand or right hand side of the road at different points of the road.

14. Dear Councillors,

I read the article on the front of this month's Gazette, and I'd like to voice my support for a 20mph limit in Gamlingay. My suggestion is that we apply for the whole of the village to be reduced to 20mph, replacing all of the 30 signs at the entrances to our village.

The Gazette article suggests that were we to apply for funding, we should be able to demonstrate some criteria. I submit that we meet these criteria wholly:

A known safety issue. Gamlingay is a historic village with narrow footpaths: pedestrians have no choice but to walk close to the road, and on the road in some places. The main road through the village has limited visibility since buildings are very close to the road. Clearly the road has been designated a safety issue in the past, and speed bumps have been installed: driving over these at 30mph is definitely unsafe!

Increase safety for vulnerable road users. The primary school serves the whole village, children walk across the entire village on their way to school. The 20 zone in the last few meters does nothing to increase their safety for the remainder of their journey. Elderly and mobility-restricted people need to be able to access the surgery, pharmacy, library and Eco Hub on Stocks Lane / Church St.

Increase active travel modes. By lowering the speed limit, we can encourage walking and cycling through the village to access the school, surgery, pharmacy, churches, shops and pubs. The current 20mph zone only protects pedestrians and cyclists for the last few yards of their journey to a few of these destinations.

I see no reason to maintain a 30 limit anywhere in the village. A 30 limit serves no purpose to us: it's not as though it keeps traffic moving in high throughput areas! Thirty has been the national default for decades, and it is the wrong default for our village. Were the situation reversed, and the default were 20, who could possibly support an increase to 30mph?

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15. Yes – extend to Honey Hill/Stocks Lane but not speed bumps. More considerate driving at 20mph would make it safer.

16. Good Morning

In response to the article in the November Gazette,

I very strongly feel that the 20MPH Zone desperately needs extending.
I believe it should cover all of Church Lane and all of Stocks lane.

I have witnessed so many vehicles travelling at over the current limit of 30MPH, I feel this is not helped by the fact there are no Speed limit signs along Stocks lane certainly the stretch from Mill Hill to the Junction of Church lane. There was a road painted sign but that has all but disappeared.

The road is busy with School buses, school Children being dropped off and picked up from school as an alternative entrance to Gamlingay primary and young families using the Butts Play ground.

We also have the Eco Hub which hosts many clubs and events and the Doctors Surgery which often has elderly patients crossing the road.

We have so many HGVs that also use this road, it can be difficult to pass with residential parking along stocks lane. I am amazed there has not been any serious accidents in my time here, sadly I feel it is only a matter of time though.

17.

Having read the article in the gazette I feel I need some clarification before making a decision I understand where the current 20mph applies but what exactly does the phrase do you support extending the 20 mph zone outside GVP mean - are you asking which areas should be considered for 20 mph or if I just answer yes - that appears they could just pop up anywhere - once again it's how things are worded as to what answers may be given ! I fully agree with 20mph zones outside schools but I think it would also be useful if children/ parents were road and parking aware in the first place !

18.

Support extension of 20mph as far as possible – whole village would be good. Also thinks the pavement on Waresley Road by Jannnah corner is dangerous – a railing around it is needed to protect pedestrians from stepping into the road.

19. Email
Dear Clerk

As requested I am emailing my views on the extension on a 20 mile an hour zone around the village.

20's Plenty Gazette article Sept 2023 – responses

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Just before I give my thoughts I would like to confirm I drive, ride a push bike and walk around the village. I also drive through the Gransdens every morning where they have made the village 20. If a specific area is 20 you know there is a reason for it and being a limited area can focus accordingly, but a blanket 20 is distracting, spending more time watching your speed rather than the road, I consider a false economy. It also makes parents complacent with regards to their children's safety, I know driving a car is dangerous but pedestrians, cyclists we all have a responsibility to use the roads/paths with care.

With regards to Gamlingay, what would be the reasoning behind a blanket 20, has there been fatalities or injury's recently?

On a slightly different note, some of the worse driving I see is around school pick up and drop off time, maybe rather than a whole 20, resource could be put into educating parents to car share or walking to school with their children, or even a car park. Trying to drive past the school is more dangerous from parked cars and parents trying to get their children in cars, even with the road being 20!

As you can see I object to an extension of the 20 mile an hour.

20. email

Hi, No I am not in favour of establishing a 20mph zone in Gamlingay - I agree that it should be around school zones but other than that absolutely NO!

One problem I'd like to raise is the increasing amount of vehicles partially parked on pavements with no thought of pedestrians - sometimes whilst out walking around our village I see all 4 wheels of a vehicle parked on a pavement - it shows total lack of thought for others, especially people in wheelchairs and mothers with buggies.

Actually I challenged a female driver of a red car parked down Station Road on the path, (she was obviously waiting to collect her children from school). When asked why she had to park in such a manner her response was 'that she always parked there' and clearly she had no thought of others and wasn't going to change her actions! There are so many people exactly like her, they are only interested in what's happening to them.

Church Street is now a nightmare, with people parking on both sides of the road (sometimes parking on the pavement) which causes problematic situations.

21. email

I do not agree with additional 20mph restriction throughout the village, in the school area I understand. But the bigger problem around the school and around Gamlingay are vehicles parking in positions creating serious hazards for pedestrians. This includes parking on paths, corners and even driving onto grassed areas - this is becoming more and more of a problem because once one person does it and nothing is done, other people see it as perfectly okay and do likewise.

22. email

Please see below my thoughts on a 20 mile an hour extension:

From my point of view, what is the safety data behind this, have there been any accidents which could have been avoided due to speed?

With all the speed calming in the village, does the village need a 20 mile an hour?

It is every one's responsibility whether walking, cycling or driving so why is the emphasis on drivers? Why not educate pedestrians alike?

Modern cars are far safer than they use to be so a reduction should not be required as the braking is far better, along with anti collision on some cars.

20's Plenty Gazette article Sept 2023 – responses

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surely a better resource would be to fix the condition of the roads, as it is more difficult to watch for pedestrians when you are watching for potholes, that are like craters. Even driving at less than 30 we have had to have repairs done at our cost, 20 wouldn't make that any better.

23. Just to offer some feedback after seeing the piece in The Gazette. The Parish Council is quoted as saying £150,000 would cover the cost of eight new zones. How it costs nearly £19,000 to put up some signs and paint road markings is beyond belief, but while I'm happy for 20mph zones to be introduced wherever necessary, speed radar signs are far more effective at nudging drivers to slow down. There are three in Everton, yet Gamlingay doesn't seem to have any at the moment, or perhaps one that I haven't seen recently, as it moves around constantly.

On Church End, where cars and tractors regularly exceed the 30mph speed limit; reducing it to a notional 20mph will, I think, have negligible effect without enforcement. I'd rather have a permanent radar speed sign – I believe they cost around £1,500.

24. No, do not extend the 20 mph zone beyond Gamlingay Village Primary.

Speed restriction beyond Church Lane does not appear to be an effective option to implement in Gamlingay and should therefore not be considered for implementation.

25.

Please could I lend my voice in support of an extension of the 20mph zone east along Station Road. As others have pointed out, it isn't the whole solution to the problems along there (and actually speeding is NOT the primary issue on that part of the road). However, I don't see that it could possibly do any harm, and additionally it would be a further flag to drivers that they need to take care along this stretch.

I'd add that a more effective change to the road rules along this stretch would be additional double yellows on both sides of the road to create acceptable visibility and safe crossing points for children and families walking to school - in particular for those approaching from the direction of the church, who have to contend with poor pavements, parked cars and traffic from three directions. But I appreciate that the funding in question is not for that!

26. With reference to the covering page article in the Gazette November 2023 '*Is 20 Plenty*'.

My views / opinions:

Focused 20 mph limits are a good idea if strictly focused into small key areas. and enforced.

Blanket / large area 20mph limits just cause:

1 frustration,

2 a different form of poor driving because a significant number of drivers are then concentrating on the difficult to achieve speed limit over an extended time so distracting them away from paying attention to their surroundings - pedestrians, cyclists etc.

20's Plenty Gazette article Sept 2023 – responses

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3 an increase in air pollution with engines in lower gears for now an extended time – modern cars are not designed for running at or efficient at 20mph.

A 20 mph limit will not deter the most dangerous driver ie the reckless, driver who is speeding / not paying attention.

I would propose / prefer as a way forward:

1 20 mph limit outside of the school gates / along that road – cemetery to the bridge

2 Do not put 20mph limits in the rest of the village

If money is to be spent on improving safety, it needs to go on improving the 'drop off pick up' situation at the school presently it is dangerous chaos, with cars parked randomly / tightly along the roads, large vehicles accessing the industrial estate, and a junction in the middle of it.

Yes a short 20 mph limit - but build a long bay down the front of the school that has a 10 or 20 minutes time limit on it and enforce it. Then add No parking areas so there is clear road around the entrance's / main pedestrian crossing areas / opposite the new parking bay , this will ease the random chaos, put some order into the busy times of the day and make it safer.

27 and 28.

We just wanted to add two Yes votes to 20 is plenty and to extending the 20 mph zone in Gamlingay.

20mph zones can save lives.

support the proposal based on the potential for lowering particulate emissions and energy use reduction.

"So, the mechanics and physics are quite clear. Smoother driving to a lower limit will always require less energy, less fuel and produce fewer emissions than repeatedly accelerating to a higher limit."

https://www.20splenty.org/do_emission_increase

29. Dear council,

When children are going to or from school, therefore "in danger", there is such parking chaos than any vehicle attempting to drive along that part of Station Rd would be hard pressed to do 10 mph, never mind 20mph.

When the children are not being dropped off or picked up there are few if any cars parked on the roadside and traffic can proceed reasonably safely. The existing chicanes slow the traffic quite effectively.

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Flashing speed awareness signs have proven to be effective in getting drivers to slow down. If members of the community really want to slow traffic on Station Rd then they should be willing to take part in organising the placing and replacing of such signs.

Gamlingay Speed Watch runs effective exercises in 30mph and 40mph limited areas, but I understand SpeedWatch cannot operate in areas where the limit is 20mph. Therefore making this change would potentially be counter-productive.

People who ignore speed limits are going to ignore them whether they are 20mph or 30mph. They'll drive as fast as they feel physically able ("safe") to. A 20mph sign will not change their behavior, however a speeding ticket or warning letter very possibly will.

If we want to limit drivers' speed anywhere in the village, SpeedWatch and Traffic Calming Measures would seem to be the most effective way forward.

