

Speeding Report to Suffolk County Council

Request for a review of speed limits and road safety measures in Moulton

Introduction

Speeding in rural communities is a major concern which impacts on the safety and wellbeing of residents. In recent years responsibility for tackling rural speeding has largely been passed to local communities through the provision of VAS and the setting up of Community Speedwatch. Enforcement is rarely carried out by the Police or Suffolk Roadsafe and communities feel abandoned by the two organisations whose role is to protect and improve their quality of life.

Moulton Parish Council welcomes the new DFT guidelines **Setting Local Speed Limits** and *its vision is for a transport system that is an engine for economic growth but is also one that is greener and safer and improves the quality of life of in our communities*. In particular it welcomes the DFT guidance on tackling rural speeding, the danger it poses to vulnerable road users and the impact that it has on the day-to-day life of its residents and the acknowledgement that the concerns of residents should be considered and are in themselves a valid reason for bringing about change.

The guidelines aim to ensure improved quality of life for local communities and a better balance between road safety, accessibility and environmental objectives, especially in rural communities and Moulton Parish Council would like to work with Suffolk County Council to achieve this. The guidelines state:

The guidelines aim to achieve speed limits that better reflect the needs of all road users not just motorised vehicles.

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Background

There is a mounting bank of evidence that speeding kills. The DFT report states that in 2022 speeding on rural roads accounted for 57% of road deaths and 68% of car occupant deaths but only around 43% of vehicle traffic. 27% of deaths occurred on single carriageway roads. It is surprising therefore that so little funding or resources are put into tackling the problem by the Police and Suffolk County Council, in fact the experience in Moulton is quite the opposite with attempts by the Parish Council to engage with Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Police to tackle speeding being ignored.

The DFT guidelines state that as a general rule, for every 1mph reduction in average speed, collision frequency decreases by 5% (P7) and yet Suffolk County Council has created a Speed Policy which makes it very difficult for communities to achieve a reduction in speed limits. Moulton Parish Council supports the DFT's aspiration '*to encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport, cycling and walking more effective*' but this will only be achieved if residents feel safe.

The DFT guidelines state that mean speeds should be used as a basis for determining local speed limits not the 85th percentile currently used by Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Police with a threshold of 25% of vehicles having to be recorded exceeding 35mph in a 30mph zone before any action is taken. Moulton Parish Council asks how this practice conforms with the requirement to protect vulnerable road users and believes that setting such a high bar is in effect a way of ensuring that enforcement rarely has to take place. This may be a resourcing issue but this needs to be addressed urgently if rural communities are going to be made safer.

Moulton Parish Council has done everything it can to tackle speeding with the provision of VAS on all the main roads in the village, the setting up of Community Speedwatch, the installation of village gateways (as recommended in the DFT document) to remind drivers of the speed limit, and by attempting to engage with Suffolk County Council and the Police about the problem of speeding particularly near Moulton Primary School. The point has now been reached where more needs to be done to tackle the problem.

Moulton Parish Council's Proposals

Moulton Primary School

The school is located between two roads – School Road and Kennett/Chippenham Road (the B1085) which is a main road through the village. Although there are footways to the school, there is no safe crossing point for children to reach the school. At some point children living on the eastern side of the village who walk to school have to cross the busy main road where a high percentage of vehicles speed. When this was raised with Suffolk Roadsafes, their solution was to educate the children about how to cross the road safely. This is not acceptable. Primary school children have no perception of speed and are not able to make judgements about whether it is safe to cross. The result of speed surveys carried out in March 2022 by Suffolk County Council but paid for by Moulton Parish Council were as follows:

Kennett Road - northbound

Number of vehicles travelling over 30mph	5,320
Number of vehicles travelling over 35mph	3,709

Kennett Road - southbound

Number of vehicles travelling over 30mph	3,801
Number of vehicles travelling over 35mph	1,662

School Road - northbound

Number of vehicles travelling over 30mph	773
Number of vehicles travelling over 35mph	256

School Road - southbound

Number of vehicles travelling over 30mph	1,022
Number of vehicles travelling over 35mph	342

Chippenham Road - northbound

Number of vehicles travelling over 30mph	2,411
Number of vehicles travelling over 35mph	415

Chippenham Road - southbound

Number of vehicles travelling over 30mph	1,583
Number of vehicles travelling over 35mph	191

Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Police acknowledged that these results indicated that drivers were exceeding the speed limit, but with the exception of a visit from the Roadsafes van no further action was taken.

Moulton Parish Council proposes the following actions:

1. A 20mph limit on the roads near Moulton Primary School extending along Chippenham Road past Moulton Crossroads and along the Street and past Moulton Stores. This is the busiest part of the village and the section where vehicles and vulnerable road users mix most.
2. A 20mph limit along Bridge Street from the Packhorse Bridge to Moulton Crossroads as there is no footway on parts of this section and many vehicles use this road to access the Packhorse Inn and Moulton Village Hall. In addition at times the safety of vulnerable road users is compromised by inconsiderate and at times dangerous parking.
3. A 20mph speed limit for a short section of Newmarket Road to slow vehicles down as they approach Moulton Crossroads. This is an accident blackspot with 3 vehicles overshooting the junction and crashing into the wall opposite. Although an additional advanced Give Way sign has been paid for by Moulton Parish Council, reducing the speed of vehicles as they approach the junction would make it safer and especially for pedestrians crossing the road to access Moulton Stores and Moulton playing field.
4. Chicanes at all entrances to the village to slow traffic down as they enter the village.
5. 20mph roundels to remind drivers of the reduced limit.

DFT guidelines state that *‘traffic authorities should only introduce 20mh limits and zones in the right places with local support in urban areas and built up village streets that are primarily residential.’*

Moulton Parish Council believes that this criteria has been met. Moulton Parish Council carried out a speed survey in February 2024 to find out if residents would support a 20mph speed limit at the village centre. The results were as follows:

Questions	Yes	No	Not sure
Do you think speeding is a problem in Moulton?	81	10	
Are there any specific roads in Moulton where you feel speeding is a concern?	See below		
Would you support a 20mph speed limit near Moulton Primary School along the Street to Church Road and for a short section of Newmarket Road?	76	15	1
Would you support chicanes at the village entrances?	71	9	2
Would you support a community effort to raise additional funds to change the speed limit and install chicanes?	73	16	
Do you have any additional comments about speeding in Moulton?			
Surveys returned	90		

- 90% of residents who responded believe there is a speeding problem in Moulton.
- 84% of residents who responded supported a 20mph speed limit near the primary school and village centre.
- 81% of residents who responded supported chicanes at the village entrances.

Fear of traffic can affect people’s quality of life in villages as evidenced in our speed survey. The DFT guidelines recognise that although 30mph should be the norm but it may also be appropriate to consider 20mph zones or limits in built up streets that are primarily residential in nature or where pedestrian and cycle movements are high, where there is a safety case and local support. Moulton Parish Council believes that this section of the village meets these criteria.

Cost

DFT guidelines state that *‘many of the costs and benefits of a speed limit reduction do not have a monetary value but should still be considered. These include conditions and facilities for vulnerable*

road users' Moulton Parish Council accepts that it might be required to fund any measures agreed by Suffolk County Council. The DFT guidelines state that *traffic authorities may find it efficient to produce speed limit orders for 20mph zones or limits or to introduce speed limit changes as a result of rural speed limit review, where these cover several roads, through one order covering all the roads covered by the new speed limit.'* Producing one Traffic Regulation Order to cover the areas requested by Moulton Parish Council would significantly reduce the cost.

Moulton Road

Moulton Parish Council submitted a previous request for the speed limit along Moulton Road to be reduced. This was rejected by Suffolk County Council, however Moulton Parish Council would like this decision to be reviewed to take into account the DFT guidelines which state that concerns of residents should be considered. This did not happen and only the views of the Police were taken into account.

In the report submitted to Suffolk County Council, Moulton Parish Council put forward the case that 60mph is too fast for a road which is part of a National Cycle Route, in this case National Cycle Route 51. Moulton road is a fast, straight road and a 60mph does not reflect the vulnerability of cyclists and pedestrians who use the road to link the local footpath network. As stated in paragraph 33 of the DFT report 33 *'fear of traffic can affect people's quality of life and the needs of vulnerable road users must be fully taken into account to encourage these modes of travel and improve their safety.'* *Speed management strategies should seek to protect community life*

Concerns from residents about the safety of vulnerable road users were ignored and no case was put forward by Suffolk Council to show how maintaining a 60mph speed limit was in the best interests of vulnerable road users. The response by Suffolk County Council focused solely on the needs of motorists. The DFT recommendation is that 40mph should be considered where there are many bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, a strong environmental or landscape reason or where there are a considerable number of vulnerable road users. The guidelines also state that *'a speed limit of 40mph may be considered for roads with a predominantly local, access or recreational function or if they form part of a recommended route for vulnerable road users.'* The fact that Moulton Road is part of the National Cycle Route makes it incompatible with a 60mph and more suited to a 40mph limit. A reduced speed limit would send a message to drivers that there are potential hazards along the road. Signs advising drivers that the road is part of a National Cycle Route may also help.

Gazeley Road

Gazeley Road is a narrow, single track road which is also part of National Cycle Route 51 and the Three Churches Walk. It has no footway and there is not enough room for two vehicles to pass. This puts vulnerable road users at risk. As detailed above DFT guidelines state that a speed limit of 40mph may be considered for roads with a predominantly local, access or recreational function or if they form part of a recommended route for vulnerable road users. Moulton Parish Council requests a reduction in the speed limit along Gazeley Road to make it safer for the recreational users along the route.

Chicanes at the village entrances

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/04 says that chicanes might be considered more appropriate in villages especially where road humps are deemed inappropriate. Moulton PC has installed gateways but these do not slow traffic down sufficiently and we believe other physical measures are needed. We would like to install chicanes at all the village entrances, starting with near the Primary School, to try and slow traffic down as it comes into the village.