



SUBJECT: PETITION – ROAD SAFETY CONCERNS AT PORTHYCARNE STREET/ABERGAVENNY ROAD, USK
MEETING: CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE
DATE: 22nd June 2016
DIVISIONS/WARD AFFECTED: Usk Town

1. PURPOSE

To advise members of the petition presented to Monmouthshire County Council requesting that the Council addresses road safety issues on Porthycarne Street/Abergavenny Road, Usk.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1.1 That members note the petition shown in appendix 1, and the actions taken to date, including the formation of a Speedwatch Group by local residents.
- 2.1.2 That further speed monitoring is undertaken before consideration of potential physical traffic improvements which would also need to be prioritisation alongside other proposed schemes throughout Monmouthshire.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1.1 A petition was presented to Monmouthshire County Council in January 2016 raising concerns about the speed of vehicles using Porthycarne Street/Abergavenny Road, Usk. It should be noted that this section of road has been subject to an ongoing review for the last 12-18 months.
- 3.1.2 In order to quantify speeds being used along the route 3 x automated traffic surveys were installed in February 2015. The results of this monitoring showed the average speeds of vehicles using the road were generally below 30mph with the exception of northbound speeds out of the built up environment being 32mph (Speed data attached in appendix 2).
- 3.1.3 In June 2015 local volunteers in conjunction with Gwent Police formed a community “speedwatch” group in order to address concerns regarding vehicles travelling at excessive speeds.. The group were trained by Gwent Police in the use of a handheld “speed gun” used to monitor vehicle speeds. As such, this group have undertaken extensive monitoring sessions over the last 12 months, resulting in recording 234 vehicles travelling at 35mph or over in a 7 month period. This number roughly equates to 8 vehicles per week where the average daily volume of vehicles is 1278.
- 3.1.4 Recently Gwent Police have adopted this road as a dedicated speed enforcement site and following a site assessment recorded the 85%tile speed as being 39mph and the average speed of 31mph.
- 3.1.5 Since receiving the petition, officers have been in discussion with members of the Speedwatch Group to discuss the points raised within the petition. The concerns raised may best be

summarised within a detailed response to an email from to a representative of the group and shown in appendix 3.

4. REASONS

- 4.1.1 The petition highlights concerns of residents within the Porthycarne Street/Abergavenny Road area. Following additional speed monitoring should the data indicate excessive speeds are being used that consideration be given to additional speed reduction measures.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The resource to consider additional road safety measures will be met from within the existing Traffic & Development budget.

6. CONSULTEES

Local Members, Town Council and the general public

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

8. AUTHOR

Paul Keeble - Traffic & Development Manager

9. CONTACT DETAILS

paulkeeble@monmouthshire.gov.uk etc

Appendix 1- Petition from Residents

Appendix 1 Petition

Paul Matthews (Chief Executive Officer)
Monmouthshire County Council
County Hall
The Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Usk Community Speedwatch Volunteers
c/o Tim Southern
4 Abergavenny Road
Usk
NP15 1SB
Date: 16th January 2016

RE: Excessive Speeding on Abergavenny Road, Usk

Dear Sir

Usk Community Speedwatch Volunteers are writing this letter to ask Monmouthshire County Council to carry out improvements in highway design to make pedestrian movements safer by reducing vehicle speeds. The town suffers from excessive speeding on some of its roads which has been recorded by residents from the town and this necessitates action to resolve the issue.

Usk Community Speedwatch formed in June 2015 with the aim of reducing traffic speeds in Usk town. The group has undertaken over 18 Speedwatch sessions and have found consistent speeding of vehicles in a built up area where residents have to cross the road on a regular basis. Further information can be found in **Annex 1**.

We are writing this letter because we believe it is time something is done to improve the situation with some urgency. The impact of Speedwatch volunteers will not last long term and can clearly be seen to have limited effect. An assessment of traffic management options is needed to identify solutions. Please see **Annex 2**.

Whilst our voluntary group is happy to play its part, '*Speedwatch*' can only have a limited effect on its own and additional solutions are needed in the long term. Our request for action to be taken by the Council, meets your Unitary Development Plan objective (Section: 9.12 MV11) – see **Annex 2**.

It also meets your objective of engaging and working with local communities in partnership. Our request clearly fits in with what you want to achieve and will provide for safer communities and improve and encourage walking to reduce reliance on cars and improve people's health.

We would be grateful if you would respond to this letter by **16th February 2016** and,

1 – confirm whether MCC is willing to carry out a full assessment of traffic management options and clearly state what the Council can do to address our concerns, improve safety and reduce vehicle speeds on Abergavenny Road / Porthycarne Street, and in Usk town.

2 – clarify what budget the Council has allocated for highway improvements in the Usk area in the coming financial year (2016/17).

We have attached a petition showing **100% support** for action to be taken from the residents of Abergavenny Road.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Usk Community Speedwatch Volunteers

Cc Paul Keeble (MCC - Highways Department) – sent by email
Christian Schmidt (MCC – Highways LDP) – sent by email
Usk Town Council – sent by email
Cllr Brian Strong – copy attached
Steve Parsons (Gwent Police – Community Speedwatch) – sent by email

Encs **Annex 1** – Usk Speedwatch background & findings
Annex 2 - Solutions going forwards and UDP Objectives
Abergavenny Road Residents Petition

Annex 1

Background – why action was needed

The group was set up by residents of the town in partnership with the Gwent Police Speedwatch initiative. We all have the common purpose of making the town safer for people of all ages to walk and cross the road. This will also have a positive impact of increasing footfall in the town and reducing reliance on cars.

The group formed because many residents were concerned about the danger that speeding vehicles pose and the flagrant disregard of legal speed limits. We are made up of volunteers with a wide variety of ages, backgrounds and professions.

When we first formed, residents of Abergavenny Road made up the majority of volunteers but this has since grown to 13 members in total from across the town. Abergavenny Road has been the initial focus of the group although we are aware of other areas where similar problems with speeding have already been identified.

Abergavenny Road itself is a long straight road flanked by residential housing. The majority of housing is found on the opposite side from the footway and so there is a need to cross the road every time people leave their house which can be many times a day. This differs from many other areas where improvements or controls have been put in place. Many of the houses have school children or elderly people and it is for this reason that we want to see improvements made to the road to make it safer.

Speedwatch sessions last for an average of 1 hour and have taken place every week since July 2015. During this time, we have gathered evidence of excessive speeding which we believe demonstrates that action is needed to address the problem.

Speedwatch Findings

The group have recorded 234 vehicles travelling over 35mph or over. This information has been passed to the Police who write letters to the drivers to inform them of their actions and of the need to reduce their speed. 57 cars have been recorded at speeds in excess of 40mph and several vehicles have travelled at speeds in excess of 50mph, and one was recorded at 60mph.

This recorded speeding has taken place despite repeater signs showing that it is a Speedwatch area, despite large signs informing drivers that Speedwatch volunteers are operating, and despite volunteers wearing high visibility jackets, in line with Gwent Police guidance and training. Drivers have often been seen warning others of our presence and yet many vehicles continue to excessively speed.

The volunteers are disappointed that there is still a disregard of speed limits in the area and we are of the view that further work is necessary to reduce speeding in the longer term. We are aware that decisions on investment in traffic calming measures are often based on injury or fatality data. However, we must remember that residents in the area (eg. parents) have modified their behaviour owing to the dangers presented within three feet of their gates. Many parents involved with the group do not allow their young children to cross alone and have to supervise them whenever they go out. This shouldn't be the case and young and old should feel safe to cross their road when carrying out their daily lives.

The Speedwatch programme is a good joint initiative between the local community and the Police to try and reduce speeds and make people aware of their actions. However, long term solutions are needed, and there is a need for a highways assessment identifying the range of options available to design out excessive speeding to encourage drivers to reduce speeds.

In the long term, the cost to Gwent police of coordinating Speedwatch groups, paying for equipment, sending letters etc. is likely to cost far more than some of the highway improvements we suggest.

Annex 2

Going Forwards – Solutions needed

Improvements in highway design could include staggered speed reminders on approaches, speed displays, constrictions in the road, raised plateaus, single lane under bridge, removal of centre lines, widening of footway etc.). We are aware of design improvements which do not pose significant environmental challenges in terms of pollution and refer you to the 'Traffic in Villages – Safety and Civility for Rural Roads' toolkit for communities produced by Dorset AONB Partnership for modern approaches to highway design.

As regards the outcome of assessment, we appreciate that some options may be costly whilst others may not. Once we know what options there are, the group would be keen to help achieve improvements wherever we can. Whilst we would like some priority to be given to Abergavenny Road, we appreciate that this needs to fit in with a long term vision for the town.

Our request meets objectives set out in MCC's UDP which states:

'Traffic management and calming measures will be implemented where appropriate to reduce traffic speeds and congestion, improve road safety, protect amenity, assist pedestrians (especially elderly and young people), cyclists and disabled people, reduce community severance, and facilitate on-street car parking and public transport.'

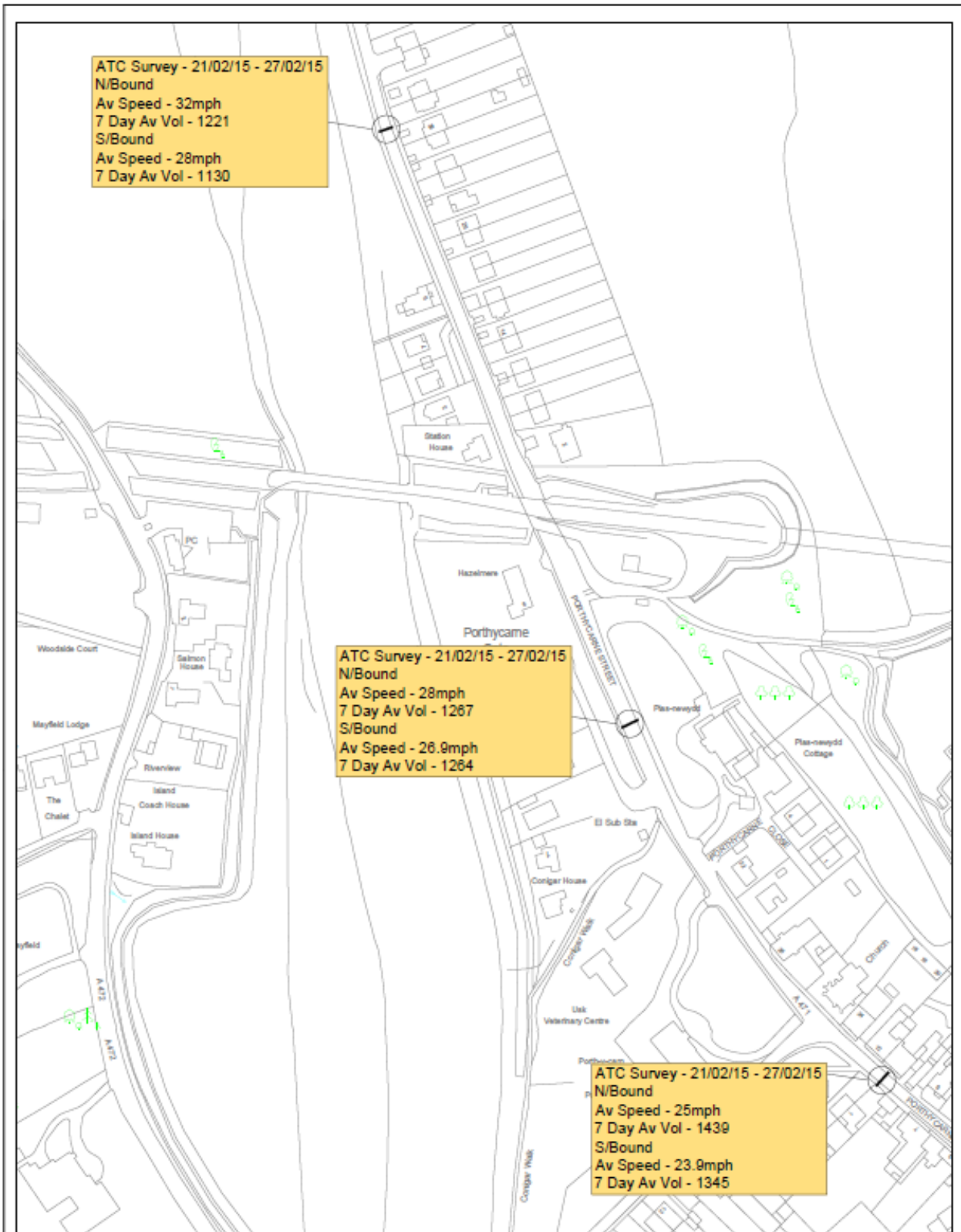
ABERGAVENTNY ROAD - JANUARY 2016 - I SUPPORT THE USK SPEEDWAY
 PERMANENT SPEED CALMING ACTION ON ABERGAVENTNY ROAD IN USK


House number	Name
1	S. Edmunds
2	M. P. CANSLEY T C/F
3	UNOCCUPIED
4	T + S Southern
5	FABO OLSEN
6	P + M DAVEN
7	JANE POWHALL NO. 7
8	Roma Webford
9	Alex Brown
10	Malta + Anna Harris
11	DNE
12	EJ. Holbrough
13	DNE
14	REBECCA ELLIOTT
15	DNE
16	Sally Hodson
17	DNE
18	Hel Warburton (Hampshire)
19	DNE
20	A. J. Owens
21	DNE
22	RICK IRELAND
23	DNE
24	PAUL DAINEC
25	DNE

House number	Name
44	DR. JOHN C. R. McHARG
45	DNE
46	DR. GUIDO DRAGO
47	DNE
48	C LIND WALL
49	DNE
50	M. SWEET

'DNE' DOES NOT EXIST

Appendix 2



 ROGER HOGBINS HEAD OF INFRASTRUCTURE, NETWORKS AND SUSTAINABILITY	Job Title Traffic Management Programme 2014/15	Rev No. GK	Date 13/01/15	Description 1610-1	Drawn PK	Checked PK
	Drawing Title B4598 Porthycarne St, ATC Data	Scale NTS	Date 13/01/15	Drawing No. 1610-1	Drawn PK	Checked PK

Appendix 3: Extract taken from email sent to Speedwatch Group 10th March 2016

In advance of today's meeting I thought it would help if I try to answer some of your points below:

- An update from you following your report of our letter to the Central Area Committee – I have asked for this to be included on the agenda for the next meeting
- What evidence is required for MCC to prioritise areas for traffic calming? Over what period of time is the evidence required? Who then makes the decision on prioritisation? What is currently on the 'Forward Plan' of a similar nature? Is it the 'Forward Plan for Individual Cabinet Member Decisions' that would relate to any future traffic calming scheme? – we have a forward programme of schemes which is rolled over from the original Road Safety Programme however with limited budgets we are often only able to deliver with the help of WG grant, which similar to MCC, the assessment is based upon criteria such as accident data, volume of traffic, pedestrian and other non-motorised vehicle users of the highway, existing speeds etc. These factors are then considered by the traffic team who undertake a risk assessment in order to prioritised schemes. Similarly the traffic engineer has a small budget allocation for addressing small scale traffic matters such as providing a new warning sign etc.
- Would it be possible for traffic calming (if determined necessary etc) on Porthycarne Street/Abergavenny Road, to be funded by S106/Community Infrastructure Levy under the 'Highway Improvements - Usk traffic relief, environmental and road safety improvements' or 'Road Safety Capital Schemes' projects? If so, what are the timescales for delivery of these projects? CIL is the pooling of contributions from developments county wide and aimed at funding larger transport schemes however s106 could be used to fund local improvements if they are directly related to the proposed development.
- How is a traffic calming scheme developed and what consultation takes place? – the traffic engineer would develop a scheme based upon current guidance and experience. Consultation is often carried out and is mandatory for those schemes which require the making of a traffic order.
- We already know that the 85th percentile is 39mph and that highway design should encourage the average speed of traffic to be 'at or below' the actual posted speed limit. The speed camera van and Speedwatch volunteers time amounts to c. 2 hours a week and it's highly unlikely that these two mechanisms alone will make the order of change required. How does this information have a bearing on the counties prioritisation for works? the guidance "setting local speed limits specifies that the average not 85percentile speed limit should be used to assess sites. the fact that GoSafe have identified this location as an active camera site is to be welcomed and offers an opportunity to achieve a better compliance of the posted speed limit. MCC very much supports the speedwatch volunteer scheme and would welcome working with such groups and Gwent Police to help address the concerns of the community. The fact that Porthycarne St is an active camera site will allow all parties to monitor speeds and assess the effectiveness of the camera and if appropriate consider if further measures are required to address excessive speeds where they exist.
- Perhaps you could explain how MCC has responded to Welsh Governments 'Setting Local Speed limits in Wales' and how this document and MCC documents can help us gain a shared understanding of the issues and scope for resolving a problem that so many residents are concerned about. MCC, along with Gwent Police who are the enforcing authority, use "setting local speeds" to assess speeding and consider if further action should be required.

Finally, MCC speed monitoring data shows that the average speeds along Porthycarne St/ Abergavenny Road are below 30mph. Therefore as this site is now an active camera site, it will be interesting to see from future speed data if the speed camera van and the speedwatch group activity has an impact upon driver behaviour and results in a further reduction of speeds within this locality.

I hope that this note is helpful.