

Broadwas and Cotheridge Parish Council

Report for item 24/56.

Re Road Safety and Speeding.

1. Background and general points

1.1 Councillors will be aware that following the sending of a letter (see draft minutes of meeting held on 17th July 2024), replies have been received and circulated.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to summarise the above replies and data that has been supplied in order for the Parish Council to consider its response.

1.3 The principle areas of concern relate to 2 stretches of the A44 as it passes through the Parish, namely through Cotheridge (between HillTop and the Lightfoot Lane. And through Broadwas (village boundaries and run up in each direction (east and west).

1.4 Parishioners and the Parish Council have for many years reported and raised their concerns re speeding, as well as in the case of the Cotheridge stretch the number of accidents and incidents. The Cotheridge stretch is governed by the national speed limit i.e 60mph. Broadwas village has a 30mph limit with a 20mph school zone limit that operates at certain times of the day. Both the east and western approaches are at the national speed limit, and in both cases the reduction from this limit to 30mph is on a bend.

1.5 The A44 is a primary route feeding of the M5 and from Worcester into central Wales, and therefore carries at peak times a volume of holiday traffic, motorbikes and HGV's. (The former are primarily made up of delivery lorries, agricultural vehicles, horse transport and HGV's carrying aggregates to the many developments in the Worcester and West Midlands area). In addition the A44 serves as a main route for emergency service vehicles. There are also movements of wide loads reflecting the various mobile home/caravan and lodge sites that are located along

and near to the A44. The A44 is also used by cyclists, which in turn demonstrates the importance of the area and other destinations in terms of tourism, sports and leisure.

1.6 The Parish Council will note and be grateful for the data supplied by the County Council, and welcomes the commitments of the Police and the County Council to continue to collect and share data, so that future discussions can be as evidence based as possible.

1.7 In considering the supplied data Parish Councillors may wish to consider and note the following.

1.7.1 As noted in the data supplied, it is indicative and further will always be limited by when, how and for how long it is collected.

1.7.2 The Parish Council is aware that West Mercia Safety Team also sites a mobile camera unit at various points on the A44, it is not presently clear whether the supplied data includes this.

1.7.4 The Parish Council will note and understand that the relevant authorities need to use a number of benchmarks in order to determine how best to respond. Compliance with speed limits being one of these thresholds. Another threshold would for example be serious and reported traffic accidents and incidents, including any fatalities and or serious injuries.

1.7.5 For many parishioners, their thresholds for concern relate to their lived experience, and the Parish Council therefore supports the need for all concerned to give equal weighting to this lived experience in terms of nuisance, noise pollution, environmental pollution and overall feelings of safety and security.

1.7.6 It is to be hoped that longer term data is accessible, as this would help to quantify and qualify an understanding of the concerns. It is a matter of recorded concern for example that reported incidents in particular on the A44 Cotheridge stretch, do not always appear to have been recorded by the respective authorities. The Parish Council is therefore committed to supporting

and working with these authorities to ensure that there is a reliable record and that information is shared effectively between agencies.

2. Initial response to the data supplied:

2.1 The Parish Council does not presently have access to specialist and technical support in terms of a full analysis and understanding of the data supplied, however the Parish Council may wish to consider the following

2.2 A 44 Cotheridge - For the period 5/8/24 - 12/8/24 (Monday to Thursday) Total daily volume (aggregate of west and east bound measurements I.e vehicles) was 5546. The mean average speed was 40-44 mph. The 85th%ile speed figure was 48 mph (west bound) and 46mph (east bound). It is understood that the 85th %ile speed is what many countries set speed limits using the "85th percentile", an idea that means that the top speed of 85% of the vehicles on a road should be considered legal. Using it as a basis for a speed limit has clear benefits: the limit has been set by popular opinion of drivers, so it should be based on the judgement and experience of a broad cross-section of the motoring public, and it ends up requiring little enforcement action as the vast majority of drivers will naturally comply with it. (Source roads.org.uk)

2.3 Data was also supplied for the further stretch labelled Hilltop conducted between 5/8/24 and 12/08/24. This identifies broadly similar findings. However the Parish Council may wish to scrutinise this data further.

2.4 Therefore subject to further discussion and or advice, it may be important to explore what conclusions can be drawn from this data. However in the letter dated 23.8.24 from WCC (S Gilmour) does not feel that this stretch of the A44 merits a speed limit lower than the present one I.e 60 mph.

2.5 Councillors may want to reflect on this position as it is contrary to the expectations of the parishioners who have shared their concerns.

2.6 Councillors will note that it has been hoped there would be support for a reduced speed limit for this stretch of the A44, the instillation of further signage and or other measures that can help drivers manage their speed such as road markings, road narrowing and APNR and or Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS). Ultimately the Parish Council may be dependent on the support and permission of the County Council for any further measures, however in terms of prevention and encouraging a proactive response the Parish Council may feel that some or all of the above measures, need exploring. The Parish Council may also want to explore and better understand whether or not a reduction in the speed limit would have a beneficial effect given that the data indicates most drivers comply with the limit. I.e if the limit was reduced to 50mph would this result in a further fall in average speeds?

2.7 A 44 Broadwas - The shared data was collected between 7/8/24 and 14/8/24 (Wednesday to Monday). This indicates a mean average speed of 40 mph on a daily volume 4993 vehicles. The 85th %ile figure was 50mph westbound and 51mph eastbound.

2.8 However it is disappointing to note that the survey does not relate to the area of concern, but rather to stretch of the A44 where the 60mph limit applies. (After the turning to Little and Broad Green, from the East and before the 30mph zone.

2.8 It therefore appears that as yet there has not been an opportunity for the County Council and its partners to address the concerns raised regarding Broadwas.

3. Summary and next steps?

3.1 The Parish Council is grateful for the response of all those it wrote to and for the production of data in respect of its concerns regarding the A44 as it passes through Cotheridge. The Parish Council is encouraged that the key agencies i.e the County Council and the Police have signalled their commitment to develop a meaningful dialogue with the Parish Council.

3.2 The Parish Council is disappointed that as yet it has not been possible to draw on data in relation to the A44 as it passes through Broadwas. The Parish Council should consider re stating this request directly and through the elected representatives at County and District levels.

3.3 In regard to the present response for Cotheridge the Parish Council should consider whether it is satisfied or content with this. In effect it appears the County Council is signalling that it is not prepared to take any action.

3.4 For both stretches of the A44, the Parish Council should consider whether per se the indicative position of the respective agencies, is good enough. It is not unreasonable for the Parish Councillors to expect those who have expertise and authority to come forward with a more comprehensive, proactive and preventative set of proposals. Whilst it is understandable that any organisation has to exercise thresholds for when it does or does not act, there has as yet not been any indication that the respective agencies are prepared to consider a more holistic and effective approach to addressing the concerns raised.

3.5 The Parish Council in addition to further representations and requests, should consider how best to further engage parishioners.

R Burrows

Chair

2.9.24