

Stutton Road Safety Review

Findings with regard to speeding and speed limits

Introduction

The village of Stutton has one B class road passing through it from East to West. About half the length of this road has residential houses either side, plus two pubs, one primary school, the village Community Shop, Community Hall a Hairdresser and a Veterinary Surgeon along its length. There are several nonclassified roads leading off to areas of housing. The B road is subject to a 30 mph speed limit for the majority of its length. This road serves to give access to villagers housing but is also one of only two roads giving access to all other villages on the Shotley Peninsula to the East and leads to A class routes and Manningtree Railway Station and the large town of Ipswich to the West. The main road through the village is therefore a combination of serving the “place” of Stutton and strategic movement of all types of vehicles through the village.

Stutton has one smaller part of the road in the vicinity of the school as a “School Safety Zone” with associated 20 mph advisory signs and associated signage and road markings.

Official Highways survey - evidence

The Parish funded an official speed and volume survey in June 2025 for a 7 day period in two locations and in two directions. This was conducted by Suffolk Highways. (**See Appendix 1**). In summary the surveys showed 85% of traffic within 30-33 mph and mean speeds ranging from 26 to 27 mph. This led to the Parish Council concluding at the time that there was not a significant speeding issue along the road. In the words of Suffolk Highways Community Liaison Engineer, Joshua White who reviewed this data as part of this review “This doesn’t indicate an issue with compliance in these locations.”

Speed Indicator Display - evidence

In addition to the official Speed Survey evidence can be drawn from the Speed Indicator Display (SID). This can be mounted in three different authorised locations near the Telephone exchange on Holbrook Road, near the Community Hall in Manningtree Road and near the Gardeners Arms Pub in Manningtree Road. The devices tell approaching drivers their speed and if at 30 mph or below the display is green and if above 30 mph the display is red with the words “slow down”. The system was purchased in 2017 and does have faults with the time recording but it is not economical to repair. The system also records average speed of vehicles per hour. Data has proved hard to interpret but examples include average speeds on weekdays (April 2026) between 8am and 6 pm at The Gardeners Arms of 33.5 – 34.9 mph. Also, at the Telephone Exchange (June 2026) between 8am and 6pm of 33.8 – 34.9. Because historic data has been lost we rely on

memory of those managing the device but these speeds are significantly lower than those recorded between 2017 – 2022 which were typically around 37 mph.

Community Speedwatch - evidence

Another source of data about speeding is the Community Speed Watch (CSW). Perhaps the primary aim of CSW is to be a very visible reminder that drivers are passing through a community where the residents want more safety and less speed. It does back that up with letters from the Police highlighting the dangers of excessive speed and the risk of enforcement and points on the licence for those who continue to flout the law. It does, however, provide some useful data about trends. CSW has operated in Stutton since 2009 although it effectively lapsed between 2020 and 2024. There are currently a group of 16 volunteers who deploy as a team of three for an hour long session at various approved locations. A device is pointed at an approaching car and if the speed is above 35 mph a member of the team manually records the speed and registration number. It follows that the cars not above 35 mph are not recorded making average speeds impossible to calculate. However, anecdotally, volunteers speak of how in the early days it was almost impossible to keep up with recording the numbers of vehicles speeding but in 2025 / 2026 it is occasionally the case that in a whole one hour session not a single offending driver is found. As all sessions have always been for an hour one can draw an inference from how the average numbers per session has changed. Taking the latest year when CSW was active there was an average of 5.7 vehicles reported per session compared with 4.6 in 2025 indicating that “speeding” is reducing. Of course, it is almost impossible to know why speeding is decreasing and whether some, most or all is attributable to CSW. There is a theory that as more and more cars are fitted with Automatic Speed Limiters then more and more people are using them to remove the stress of potential licence points or fines. It is hard to compare Stutton CSW with other schemes but there is evidence of its current activity where it is ranked 5th out of some 80 schemes in Suffolk in terms of the numbers of sessions it holds.

20 mph policy

The question of whether a 20 mph limit throughout the village has been raised and has been considered in this review. Where a request for a 20 mph speed limit comes from a village or community itself rather than from the County Highways there are several matters that must be achieved. First of all, it has to comply with the new policy introduced at the beginning of 2026 and has to be evidenced by County led volume and speed checks. There is also a requirement for a positive consultation with the community and support from a County Councillor. There has to be the opportunity for the Police to object and then a 20mph system is designed by Suffolk Highways officers and then implemented. All of these steps involve costs and are likely to have to come from the Town or Parish Council themselves. Clearly there is the possibility of spending money on speed surveys, consultation and design and still the scheme is not

implemented. It is for this reason that the policy strongly recommends working with the Suffolk Highways Community Engineers from the very start, which this project has done.

Suffolk County Policy – as it applies to Stutton

The new 20 mph Suffolk County policy introduced in early 2026 is readily available on the internet. It has been studied by the project team and advice on interpretation has been gained from Suffolk Highways. In this report we have focused on the obstacles to introducing such a scheme as if its introduction is not likely to be achievable then it would be foolish to spend a very limited Parish Council budget on something that is impossible. The policy itself refers to focusing on “place” rather than reducing existing collisions. Because only accidents classed as serious injury or fatal are recorded there is only one collision officially recorded in the last five years. That was caused by a driver pulling out in front of a cyclist and was not speed related. It is of course acknowledged that there have been other collisions during the last five years. The policy refers to B roads only being suitable where the primary function is “place” rather than strategic movement which does not apply to Stutton. The Community Liaison Engineer has stated that with the village being on a B class road it is unlikely that a new 20mph limit could be installed without significant traffic calming features being installed and significant evidence to support this. The Police can object to schemes on an individual basis and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and maintained locally by Suffolk Police, recommend 24 mph as the existing speed average as the threshold for signed only limits. This clearly does not apply to Stutton. This would mean an objection from the Police would be highly likely without significant traffic calming measures. The policy makes clear that reducing the speed limit will not result in any likelihood of additional enforcement. The policy requires any scheme to have the approval of the Parish Council following “area wide consultation”. This is a bit of an unknown question. It would require some type of survey (at a cost) and it may well produce the result that the majority of respondents would be against a lower speed limit anyway which would make any scheme proposal fail.

Limited 20 mph zone in the vicinity of the school

This question is trickier because we do not have any specific evidence of speed **within** the existing 20 mph advisory zone. This would have to be commissioned from Suffolk Highways and paid for (£400) by the Parish Council. However, we do have evidence from our own observations at the school during dropping off and picking up times. **(See Appendix 2)** These found that due to a combination of congestion at this busy period and the double bend from the Manningtree Road approach, then speed was not the issue. In the morning session it was assessed that seldom did vehicles exceed 20 mph and in the afternoon all vehicles appeared to be below 30 mph with some vehicles appearing to exceed 20mph. What was apparent was a risk to pedestrians crossing

roads due to parked cars. The 20 mph advisory is signed as a School Safety Zone and supported by SLOW markings on the road, SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR with zig-zags in yellow and some H markings to prevent parking. There is evidence that some of these signs are “tired” and need renewing and extending. There is also scope for better clarity of signs, such as removing the 30 mph repeater signs from within the 20 mph zone which are contradictory and considering flashing lights when pedestrians are known to be present in greater numbers. A public consultation would be required to be funded and design and implementation costs met if a mandatory 20 mph scheme were introduced. Clearly maintaining the current advisory limit would avoid these costs and limited funds could be used to further improve and “target harden” the school safety zone.

Findings

The findings of this section of the Road Safety Review dealing solely with speeding and speed limits are:

1. Speeding is not evidenced to be a significant issue in Stutton
2. Available evidence suggests that speeding is reducing
3. The introduction of a village wide 20 mph limit is not justified by the evidence and would not be likely to be supported by Suffolk County Highways or the Police and monies spent to try and achieve such a limit are highly likely to be wasted.
4. The existing 20 mph zone near the school should remain as advisory as attempting to make it a mandatory may well fail and the costs are not justified by the benefit gained.
5. The existing 20 mph advisory zone and signage in general should be augmented and improved to both “target harden” the school safety zone and prevent or reduce parking behaviour which in itself is causing risk.

Recommendations to be considered formally at Stutton Parish Council meeting of the 10th August 2026

The project team recommend that the Parish Council approves and adopts these finding and task the project team to now identify actual improvements to be made in the vicinity of the school and identify road safety risks in other parts of the village together with potential solutions or improvements.

Project team

Parish Councillors – Mike Hems, Chris Leach and John Pallant

Community Speed Watch – Siobhain Bruneau for present time and for previous experience – Ian Flower

School representation from Jo Hazlewood of the Board of Governors, Lucy Seager as Administrator and Anne Clarke as ex Head Teacher.

APPENDIX 1

Speed and volume surveys finding June 2025

Holbrook Road, near where footpath emerges from Stutton Close (week begins 21 June 2025)

EASTBOUND (TOWARDS HOLBROOK)

Mean speed 27 mph

85% within 32 mph

Volume a.m. peak Mon – Fri 0800 - 0900

Volume a.m. peak Sat 1100-1200

Volume p.m. peak Sun 0900-1000

Volume p.m. peak Mon – Fri 1600-1700

Volume p.m. peak Sat 1300-1400

Volume p.m. peak Sun 1300-1400

WESTBOUND (TOWARDS MANNINGTREE)

Mean speed 26mph

85% within 30mph

Volume a.m. peak Mon – Fri 0800-0900

Volume a.m. peak Sat 1000-1100

Volume a.m. peak 1100-1200

Volume p.m. peak Mon – Fri 1600-1700

Volume p.m. peak Sat 1700-1800

Volume p.m. peak Sun 1700-1800



Manningtree Rd, near junction with Bentley Lane, week begins 11th June 2025

EASTBOUND (TOWARDS HOLBROOK)

Mean speed 26 mph

85% within 33mph

Volume a.m. peak Mon – Fri 0800-0900

Volume a.m. peak Sat 0800-0900

Volume a.m. peak Sun 1100-1200

Volume p.m. peak Mon – Fri 1700-1800

Volume p.m. peak Sat 1300-1400

Volume p.m. peak Sun 1300-1400

WESTBOUND (TOWARDS MANNINGTREE)

Mean speed 27mph

85% within 32mph

Volume a.m. peak Mon – Fri 0800-0900

Volume a.m. peak Sat 100-1100

Volume a.m. peak Sun 1100-1200

Volume p.m. peak Mon – Fri 1600-1700

Volume p.m. peak Sat 1600-1700

Volume p.m. peak Sun 1700-1800



APPENDIX 2

Road safety observations outside Stutton Primary School by Mike and Jane Hems.

Tuesday 21st April 2026

0750 – 0900 (Dry, bright, sunny day)

Generally traffic flow was busy with congestion where cars had to wait for other cars to clear obstructions before proceeding. Larger vehicles such as buses and lorries also added to congestion as they negotiated a way through. Speeds were low, definitely below 30 mph and seldom did vehicles appear to exceed 20 mph.

Several cars stopping and parking outside the Old Shop to drop off children caused difficulty for pedestrians crossing at the top of Church Road with pedestrians being forced to emerge onto the road from between parked cars or cross next to the main road, both of which create unnecessary risk. In addition, cars travelling East turned into Church Road parked in the junction on the off side and after dropping of their child used the junction to turn around, again causing unnecessary risk. **White painted markings or yellow no parking lines would deter dangerous parking outside of the Old Shop. Parents should be given advice about the risks their actions cause to pedestrians.**

Generally, the white lines and “keep clear school” yellow markings were well observed although both would be likely to be more effective if repainted. Cars parked outside The Old Mission Hall caused a visual obstruction for staff cars entering or exiting the car park. One such car was there throughout the observations and did not appear to be someone dropping off a child. **The white lines could be extended to the school vehicular gate or replaced by yellow no parking lines.**

The lay-by outside the front of the school was well used but one space was taken up throughout the observations by a white van (this vehicle is believed to be owned by a Teachers Assistant (TA) and is reportedly parked there frequently.) Some parents seemed to unnecessarily take their children out of their car on the road side rather than the pavement side. One parent used the open school gateway to turn their vehicle around meaning they were reversing across the pavement and a parent with a child on the pavement had to pull their child away from the reversing car. **The individual TA should be persuaded to park elsewhere. All school staff should be persuaded not to park in this lay-by during dropping off and collecting times to allow the lay-by to**

be used by parents. Parents should be given advice and instruction about safety, including their children exiting on the pavement side and not using the gateway to turn their vehicle around.

1445 – 1530 (Dry, bright, sunny day)

Traffic was light with only occasional congestion when drivers had to negotiate parked cars. No issues with speed. All vehicles appeared to be below 30 mph and some vehicles appeared to exceed 20 mph.

The same issues as in the morning occurred outside the Old Shop and the Old Mission Hall. The white van remained, taking up one of the lay-by places and during the observations was driven away by a person, presumably staff, who came out of the school.

No new issues were raised