

Traffic Calming Schemes

It's taken a long time and a lot of work, especially by Kath Hudson, but everything needed for the traffic calming scheme (gates, signage, posts for the VAS) has been procured and should be with the contractor by next week. The contractor has to decide on the order he tackles the locations, the dates at each location, the exact position of the temporary lights etc. This involves a lot of paperwork but we have a provisional start date of 13th March – fingers crossed there are no more delays!

Several residents have kindly made donations towards the cost of the village gateways and the Parish Council is very grateful for their generosity. If you would also like to help towards these costs with a donation, however small, it would be very gratefully received. Please email clerk@stinchcombepc.co.uk if you would like to do so.

New Year, New Road Safety Policy

Gloucestershire's Current Road Safety Policy

Some of you might have joined in the consultation on Gloucestershire's Road Safety Policy a few months ago. The Parish Council and Stinchcombe Speed Watch both participated and a few of our comments are reflected in the final version of the policy.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/2116396/road-safety-policy.pdf>

I wish to make it clear that this article presents my own views and not necessarily those of the Parish Council or Stinchcombe Speed Watch.

Why did Gloucestershire need a new policy?

We are the 6th worst local authority in England for people being killed or seriously injured on the road. Between 2009-2011 and 2017-2019, the number increased by 27%. Compare this with the best performing authorities, which saw reductions of more than 50% over the same period.

A fundamental change

Gloucestershire is following the most successful authorities by adopting a Safe System approach. The underlying principles are:

- Humans make mistakes
- Humans are vulnerable to injury
- No death or serious injury is acceptable
- Responsibility is shared

The key aspiration is Vision Zero <https://visionzerouk.wordpress.com/> – the near elimination of all traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 2050, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all. The interim target is a 50% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on Gloucestershire's roads by 2032.

Doesn't sound that radical

It didn't to me either but look at the comparison between Vision Zero and the traditional approach to road safety.

TRADITIONAL	VISION ZERO
Traffic deaths are inevitable	Traffic deaths are preventable
Aim for perfect human behaviours	Integrate human failing into the approach
Prevent collisions	Prevent fatal and severe collisions
Individual responsibility	Systems approach
Saving lives is expensive	Saving lives is not expensive

The Strategy 2022 – 2032

Gloucestershire County Council sets out its strategy around nine themes:

1. Reduce fatalities, serious injuries, number, and severity of collisions, with a key focus on using data to prioritise our approach
2. Expand data and evidence base, including research, and monitoring of existing approaches
3. Develop toolkits and programmes to give communities the tools they need to promote and improve Road Safety in their area
4. Increase levels of safety for walking
5. Increase levels of safety for cycling
6. Improve collaboration between partners and stakeholders
7. Embed the Safe System approach

8. Promote the Vision Zero aspiration to Gloucestershire's public
9. Lead by example

What's our next-door neighbour doing?

High level strategies can sound all “motherhood and apple pie” so it's interesting to do some benchmarking against our neighbouring county, Oxfordshire. Road safety is a big subject, so forgive me if I home in on an aspect I consider relevant to Stinchcombe – the wider use of 20 mph limits.

The information about Oxfordshire mostly came from their presentation at the 20's Plenty Conference last October.
<https://www.20splenty.org/oxford20conf>

On the face of things, the two counties are similar:

- both have adopted a Safe System/Vision Zero approach
- both have set an interim target for reducing by 50% the number of people killed or seriously injured on their roads (2032 in Gloucestershire and 2030 in Oxfordshire)
- both are broadly in favour of 20 mph limits where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix.

At a more detailed level, there are important differences as summarised in the table.

	Gloucestershire	Oxfordshire
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How will 20 mph limits be rolled out?	No targets published. Onus on communities to make the case for a 20 mph limit.	Three year roll out plan: 2022/3 80 Towns and Parishes 2023/4 87 Towns and Parishes 2024/5 40 Towns and Parishes
What are the criteria for 20 mph limits	Applications to be prioritised against a list of eight criteria and must also be supported by an evidence base.	Can be requested in any 30 mph built-up area or 30 mph area with heavy foot or cycle traffic. No evidence of a speeding problem is required.
How is an application for a 20 mph limit made?	Not at all clear. The recently relaunched Community Approach to Road Safety (CARS) Toolkit does not make a single mention of 20 mph limits.	Online application process for town and parish councils to complete.
Who pays for the implementation of 20 mph limits?	Communities are expected to find the funding except where collision data and fatality/serious injury statistics show there is a road safety concern. In such cases Gloucestershire County Council will fully or partly fund from its road safety budget.	Oxfordshire County Council will pay for the new signs and any road lining works.

Final thoughts

It's great that Gloucestershire has adopted Vision Zero and has set itself ambitious targets for reducing fatalities and serious injuries. I wish they had made provision for an efficient and widespread roll out of 20 mph limits, like Oxfordshire (and Cornwall and Wales and many other places).

Can the same levels of reduction in fatalities and serious injuries be achieved with this more hands-off approach?

If there is community support, I would like to see 20 mph limits here in Stinchcombe. The 30 mph sections of Echo Lane and Wick Lane and all of "Church Lane" would be my top priorities. It is disappointing that the application procedure has not been defined and that more County-level funding is not available. That wouldn't stop me trying if I were convinced that a majority of villagers supported 20 mph limits in these locations. Please let me know what you think.

Kath