

Vehicle Activated Signs – VAS

A Little More about Vehicle Activated Signs

Yesterday a resident emailed me with some very sensible questions about Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS). I have, of course, replied directly to them. The questions and answers below may be of interest to some residents.

Would we need a VAS for each speeding hot spot?

No, the type under consideration can be moved from place to place. Slimbridge have one that they move between twenty locations. The number of locations in Stinchcombe would probably be less than this.

An advantage of varying the location is that drivers do not become so accustomed to the VAS that they no longer notice it.

How is the VAS powered?

Mains, battery and solar options are available. Rechargeable batteries might suit us best. They would need to be changed every 2 weeks.

Who would change the batteries and move the VAS?

[Speed Watch Group](#) volunteers working to risk-assessed procedures would carry out these tasks. Volunteers are also used in Slimbridge. They advise using 2-3 people because the

batteries are quite heavy. The VAS and accessories can easily be transported in the back of a car.

What data would be logged?

The data logger records the time and speed of every vehicle that passes the VAS. It logs the vehicles in both directions, not only the way the sign is facing. It does a similar job to human speed watch teams, but 24/7 and in all weathers.

How would the data be used?

The data would be downloaded to a phone or laptop. They would be processed using software supplied by the VAS manufacturer.

Vehicle registrations are not recorded so the data would not lead directly to prosecutions.

As with data from human speed watch sessions, they would help the Police prioritise enforcement activities.

What is the point if VAS don't identify speeders?

There is evidence that VAS speed reminders achieve reductions of between 2 mph and 6 mph in 85 percentile speed on 30 mph roads. The 85 percentile speed is the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles are travelling.

That might not sound like a big reduction but ...

- an average speed reduction of 1 mph reduces crash frequency by 5%
- a pedestrian hit at 30mph has a one in five chance of being killed compared with a one in three chance at 35mph.

These figures come from the road safety charity, [Brake](#)

Is there a risk of the VAS being damaged or stolen?

Yes, there is a risk which we would try to minimise. Slimbridge lock their VAS to a post. The price of the post is included in the estimate. The VAS would also be insured. My research indicates that this would cost about £100 per year.

How much operating experience is there locally?

Slimbridge purchased the [Morelock MSID Vario](#) and are pleased with it.

[Speed Feedback Signs](#)

There is considerable experience with using this model in Stroud District. The Stroud District Road Safety Group owned two, which they loaned out to members. With the Group's recent demise, they have been sold off to members.

Other speed feedback products are available!

Kath

Christmas Greetings the SWG

Slow! Ho! Ho! Merry Christmas from the Speed Watch Group

The Stinchcombe [Community Speed Watch Group](#) is [up and running](#) (or should that be slow jogging) with speed monitoring points on Taits Hill Rd and The Street.

Please email speedwatch@stinchcombpc.co.uk to request monitoring at other locations. As long as we can agree a safe site with the Police we will include them in next year's programme.

Stay safe over the festive period.

Kath

About the Speedwatch Group

A personal point of view

A couple of months ago I had a chance conversation with Don, a parishioner, who lives, like me, on Tait's Hill Road. We discussed the volume and speed of the traffic, both of which seemed to have increased in the past few years.

What to do?

I contacted the [Parish Council](#) and things took off from there. Kath Hudson has been extremely supportive and along with Trudy Chinn, Don, and myself we conducted traffic volume counts. There are approx 49,000 vehicles using Tait's Hill Road each week. Staggering isn't it?

The Next Step

The next step was to register us as a [Community Speed Watch group](#), which I have now done. There is an online training test, after which the local police force contact you and practical training in the [use of equipment](#) takes place.

We are now looking for **at least five other volunteers**. Training is given which consists of

- Health and safety, concerning both the public and volunteers.
- There is emphasis on data protection.
- The need to educate not enforce is paramount.
- The data, which is speed recorded above the speed limit, is fed back to the police.

It all sounds quite intimidating, in reality it's just common sense. It helped to give me a better understanding by watching YouTube videos of other speed watch groups in action, prior to the training.

So now we wait, governed by Corona virus and the availability of police officers to respond, I hope that will not be too long.

What we hope for

I was asked what we hoped to achieve. I suppose the answer has to be to save lives, educate, and hopefully create a calmer environment which is beneficial to all.

For me personally, I have always been active in the wider community, scouting, over many years, school governor, and at present [League of friends at The Vale Hospital](#). I had also just started to help with art therapy for the stroke patients when the Corona virus stopped us in our tracks.

Let's make a difference, however small.

Ava Walker

Speed Watch Update

Serious Accident

On 24th October there was a [serious accident on Tait's Hill Rd](#) that put two people in hospital. Our sympathies go out to the victims and their families. The accident highlights road safety concerns in Stinchcombe. Here is an update on progress since the recent article in Enews.

Feedback from the Survey

Thank you to the people that complete the speeding survey. Especially to the dozen who asked to go on the mailing list.

All but one of you were worried about speeding on one or more roads. Everyone was in favour of having a new Speed Watch Group.

Many respondents made additional comments.

- Most say speeding is prevalent with many motorists ignoring limits.
- Long-term residents felt the problem had got worse over the years.
- Some think drivers may simply be unaware of their speed.
- Several residents of Tait's Hill Rd feel
 - unsafe pulling out of their own drive,
 - cutting their hedge or grass verge or
 - crossing the road.
 - One worried about children walking to the bus stop.

Veterans of previous speed monitoring initiatives consider that support from the Police was inadequate. They are

frustrated that all their hard work came to nothing ... apart from a strip of red tarmac according to one.

Suggestions included

- Speed cameras,
- Vehicle activated signs that display your speed,
- '20 is Plenty' signs
- Traffic calming measures in the residential areas and
- Awareness raising.

First Meeting of the Speed Watch Group

Everyone on the mailing list and the Parish Council were invited to a virtual meeting on 28th October. Eight people attended and had a productive session.

We will be registering a new group with [Community Speed Watch](#) very soon. There is already a volunteer to train as Co-ordinator. We are getting up to speed (pardon the pun) on several topics, including sources of funding and the Auto SpeedWatch system.

Our [next virtual meeting will be at 7pm on Thursday 19th November](#). It's not too late to join in – [email Kath Hudon](#) for an invitation.

Widening the Net

Not everyone gets Enews so the survey will be repeated in the Stinchcombe News. Sorry if you've already seen it, but we need to reach as many people as we can. Keeping this sort of group going relies on having enough active members.

What is a minute worth?

Speeding on our roads: what is a minute worth?

About one minute is typically all we save if we break the speed limit on our trip to Dursley, Wotton or Berkeley. What are the negative consequences? Some Tait's Hill Road residents say that **speeding traffic is badly affecting their lives**. And they feel that **the problem is getting worse**.

Facts on speed and its consequences

- In 2018 over 7,000 people were injured and 186 were killed in Great Britain in crashes involving someone speeding
- Two-thirds of all crashes in which people are killed or injured happen on roads with a speed limit of 30mph or less
- Driving at only 5 mph above the 30 mph limit increases your stopping distance by 6.4 m or 21 ft even in good conditions
- If average speeds reduce by only 1 mph, the accident rate falls by about 5%
- Driving at 40 mph rather than 30 mph increases the risk of pedestrians suffering fatal injuries in a collision from 40% to 80%
- A belief that our roads are too dangerous due to traffic speed and volume is the main barrier to more people cycling
- Reducing speeds by 6 mph in built-up areas cuts noise by

up to 40%

- Lower speeds generally reduce air pollution.

Tackling Speeding in Stinchcombe

Our previous Community Speed Watch group fizzled out a few years ago. The Parish Council supports a new group if enough residents are actively involved.

There are various ways to get involved and you don't necessarily need to stand at the roadside.

This is a longstanding problem that is not easy to solve, but we can work together to make a difference.

Stinchcombe Speeding Survey

Use our one minute [Stinchcombe Speeding Survey](#) to tell us what you think about speeding in our parish.

Prefer pen and paper?

We want to hear from as many residents as possible. A version of this article and the survey will be included in the November issue of the Stinchcombe News.