



Woodstock Safe Routes joins with communities across Oxfordshire to campaign for 20 mph speed limits in all residential and shopping streets.

It's frustrating. One minute we get a glimmer of hope that the authorities are listening and keen to help make our roads and pavements safer and the next our hopes are dashed. We just have to be stoical and dig in for the long term. Dig in for the long term because, as Mr Dylan said, "the times they are a-changin'"

Our hopes for a 20 mph speed limit on at least part of the A44 through Woodstock were dashed when the government announced that their "active travel" fund could not be used to fund 20 mph limits. Why? Surely, more than just about anything else, 20 mph speed limits encourage people to travel on foot, by bike, or in a wheelchair. The government's response (and it has to be said, that of Oxfordshire County Council) has generated anger and frustration well beyond Woodstock and we have recently joined forces with towns and villages across Oxfordshire to campaign for 20 mph as a default speed limit for all residential and shopping areas. We call the campaign "20s Plenty for Oxfordshire" and we are affiliated to the national charity "20s Plenty for Us"

<http://www.20splenty.org/> . Although supported by us, the group is not part of Sustainable Woodstock. It will shortly have its own website, Facebook and twitter sites so watch this space. We'll keep you informed. The launch of the campaign was marked with a press release that you can view here. The next step will be to write to every County Councillor and other key decision makers to ask them to support the implementation of 20 mph limits and to encourage their political parties to include 20 mph in the forthcoming party manifestos for the 2021 local elections. The group will also be contacting all towns and parishes across the County to encourage them to join the campaign.

On a happier note, we should all congratulate Blenheim of their recently agreed arrangement with the Marlborough School to allow students from Combe and Stonesfield to cycle through the park to school. This is a trial at present but it appears to be working well. It avoids students using the bus services with all the attendant infection risks associated with public transport and it adds real meat to Blenheim's long-term plans to facilitate more and better "connectivity" across all the villages around the Blenheim estate.

The Press Release: Read on



20's Plenty for Oxfordshire

calls on Oxfordshire County Council to adopt policies for widespread 20 mph speed limits to give a better quality of life for all towns and villages

Press release to:

7th October 2020

Oxford Mail and Times and all its associated outlets

Banbury Guardian

Radio Oxford and South TV

Henley Standard

Communities across Oxfordshire are joining forces to campaign for a speed limit of 20 mph for residential and shopping roads in towns and villages across the County. They are doing so under the banner of “20s Plenty for Oxfordshire”. An organising group representing communities from Goring to Watlington from Witney to Bicester was set up on 30th September. The campaign is in response to Oxfordshire County Council’s reluctance to respond to the demand for 20 mph speed limits that are increasingly being adopted throughout the UK.

Local 20 mph speed limits are supported by 70% of people,¹ improve road safety and reduce air pollution. A pedestrian hit by a car at 30 mph is seven times more likely to be killed than by a car moving at 20 mph. Already 21 million people in the UK live in a 20mph limit, so “20s Plenty for Oxfordshire” are asking Oxfordshire County Council to adopt 20 mph beyond just the City and a few other places. The government supports it. In February 2020 they signed up to the Stockholm declaration of transport ministers² that calls for 20mph limits to be more widely adopted. This was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly³ in August. Yet still, in Oxfordshire it seems it’s an uphill struggle to get 20 mph limits in place.

¹ “20mph Research Study Process and Impact Evaluation” - Headline Report November 2018 Report by Atkins, AECOM, and Professor Mike Maher (UCL)

² 20mph and 30km/h limits mandated by Global Ministers
A 20's Plenty for Us Press Release Feb 2020 http://www.20splenty.org/global_ministers_mandate_20mph

³ General Assembly of United Nations say 20's Plenty
20's Plenty for Us Press Release Sept 2020 http://www.20splenty.org/un_says_20splenty

Colin Carritt, a member of “20s Plenty for Oxfordshire”, and himself a former roads and traffic engineer, said, “I can’t understand why Oxfordshire hasn’t moved quicker towards a 20 mph default speed limit. Twenty five years ago the County Council went out on a limb and undertook a complete review of speed limits in all its towns and villages and introduced many more 30 limits. It was a massive success and was overwhelmingly supported by local communities. But times move on and it’s now clear that the limits need to be reduced to 20 mph. Active travel is the name of the game in these COVID times and there is a growing recognition that walking and cycling, especially for short local journeys or for that “first or final mile commute” improves health and well-being and reduces traffic congestion. But for cyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair users high speed traffic can be intimidating. A default 20mph speed won’t cost drivers any significant time and it will make our towns and villages better places to live and to work in. We invite town and parish communities as well as residents and all political parties to join our campaign by contacting the group at oxfordshire@20splentyforus.org.uk”

Cllr. Mark Walker, of Chipping Norton Town Council added, "As a Town Council we took the decision in 2019 to implement a 20mph zone in the centre of our busy town as a way of showing residents that we think all road users have a right to feel safe on our streets, whether cycling, walking or driving a car. We are reinforcing the benefits of 20s plenty during road safety week in November"

Goring resident Lexi Tinks said, “We're really keen to be a part of this campaign as it's imperative that we catch up with other villages and towns and reduce the speed of traffic. From cyclists to young children, the elderly and disabled, with a lower speed limit we can all enjoy the outdoors and our villages in a safe way.”

ENDS

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