August 2020

The Chair, Chris Jessop has written to John Howell MP and the CEO of Oxfordshire County Council.

September 2019

We are also continuing to engage actively with the County Council on implementing
the new lower speed limit in Crays Pond. Of course, these things tend to take
longer than ideal, and I would ask for your patience. As I am sure you will appreciate,
there is a process we need to follow before starting works, including an effective
tendering process to ensure that we get best value for our spend. We will however
keep you posted on progress and expand where appropriate on the details of the
key initiatives within this newsletter and on our website and Facebook page.

January 2019

Forties or why us?
As background to the Councils efforts to reduce the speed limit I thought it
worthwhile to research the history of the 40 mph speed limit and the consequences
for Crays Pond residents.
Prior to 1930 the national speed limit was 20 mph, with the 1930 Road
Traffic Act speed limits for cars was done away with entirely, then on the
18th March 1935 with a new Act and after five years of having completely
derestricted roads and much carnage, the British government introduced a
30 mph speed limit in built-up areas. For over twenty years, 30 mph had
been the only road speed limit in the British Isles, although during the war
years a 20 mph limit was applied at night.
Built-up areas were defined as roads having continuous street lighting in
the approaches to towns and villages. The practice continued after the
war, by the mid-1950s British towns and cities had developed significantly
compared to 30 years earlier. Main roads were of much higher standard,
and it was clear that, while the speed limit on these roads remained at 30
mph, speeds of around 40 mph were commonplace without any particular
safety problem.
Rather than enforce inappropriate 30 limits, the government regularised
the situation by introducing a new speed limit of 40 mph on suitable thoroughfares.
This was only intended for high-quality outer-suburban roads,
although it could also be applied to other roads with suitable characteristics,
I have not been able to confirm the exact date when 40 mph limits
were introduced but evidence suggests its is through the Road Traffic Act
1956. The 70 mph for motorways took effect on the 22nd December 1965.
In the early part of the 90’s, the then Conservative government withdrew
the requirement for local highway authorities to gain the approval of the
Department of Transport before changes to main road speed limits. This in
effect gave them the freedom to act without a consistency requirement.
In consequence the change of 40 mph limits has not always been done in
a fair and dependable manner. It has been suggested that highway authorities
have generally not fully assessed their roads to see which what
benefits would ensue, less accidents, lower pollution, and 10% less noise
with a lower limits. They have responded in a piecemeal manner to proven
fatalities and major accidents and complaints from local residents, shunts
and minor accidents being seemingly under reported because of insurance
penalties for the participants, hence these important factors are discounted
by local road authorities when deciding new limits.

November 2018

Traffic speed control at Crays Pond
A considerable number of people in the parish have expressed concern
about the speed of traffic in Crays Pond. This has been discussed at length
within the Parish Council and we believe that it would be appropriate to
seek a reduction of the speed limit within the village from 40mph to
30mph to reduce risk to our residents and other road users.
The Parish Council is now planning to discuss with the County Council
their support in adopting the reduced speed limit. For completeness, the
funding of this change will have to be borne by the parish and is likely to
be in the order of £5,000 all in.
We feel that there are strong arguments for this reduction. They include:
the national policy for the default speed limit in villages is 30mph; that
Crays Pond seems to be an anomaly given that all other villages locally
have a 30mph limit; the environment is dangerous given the staggered
junction, limited road visibility at the junction, lack of pavements and
poor street lighting; the type of people in and around this location who
could be particularly vulnerable, including a large number of children, the
elderly, a busy school, cyclists and horses; and finally, the not infrequent
incidents that already occur at the junction.
The Parish Council would welcome any views on the subject and in particular,
would like to hear from any residents who do not feel that this is
an appropriate initiative to be taking.