

Nettleden With Potten End Parish Council Highways Survey Results Analysis and Report

General notes:

Total number of respondents is 165. Survey responses to most questions were between 160-164 respondents. The only question to which response levels dropped below this was the final one - "Are there any other RURAL ROADS in the parish (outside of the villages) that you are particularly concerned about?" to which responses numbered 148.

Ratio of paper to online respondents:

There were two ways of completing the survey, online and on paper. The surveys differed slightly, particularly insofar as the demographic data was not included in the paper survey. **The split between online vs paper responses was 71% to 29%**, respectively.

Ratio of Parished to non-Parished respondents:

It can be assumed that almost all of paper respondents are in the parish, as those were distributed with the Church newsletter that only goes out within the parish. Based on this assumption the breakdown of **resident to non-resident is 92% to 8%**

Respondents as % of households/electors

Total number of households in the parish is 607, total electors is 1263. **Respondents as a percentage of households is therefore 27%¹, as a percentage of electors is 13%.**

In graphs below, results are shown in percentages for ease of reading. Underlying data available on request.

¹ Note that there may be multiple submissions from one household, so the household percentage may be overstated.

Question 1: How concerned are you about the safety of the roads in our village(s)?

I. Summary graph showing responses to this multiple choice question:



II. Comments - key findings:

Traffic Speeds: The most frequently cited concern was speed of traffic, which was mentioned in almost every comment. This included both references to traffic travelling too fast (above speed limit), and to the notion that the speed limit should be lower.

Aspects of the speeding issue that were repeatedly highlighted were:

- Dangers posed to pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians due to narrowness (or absence) of pavements
- Speeding in particular near school, danger posed to children
- Long straight stretches encouraging increase in speed

Parking issues: These were a constant theme, particularly around school pick-up/drop-off and the village store. Specifically, there was repeated mention of:

- Parked cars creating a hazard for children emerging between cars, and prompting dangerous overtaking
- Not enough parking in the village for school parents
- Use of pavements or grass verges for parking
- Parking on double yellows

The junction in the centre of the village: The junction of Church Rd, The Green, The Common and Water End Rd was mentioned repeatedly. In particular:

- The many accidents that occurred at this junction underscore how dangerous it is
- Cars are speeding along these roads, making accidents more likely
- The fact that this junction is right by the school heightens the danger it poses
- Visibility around this junction is bad

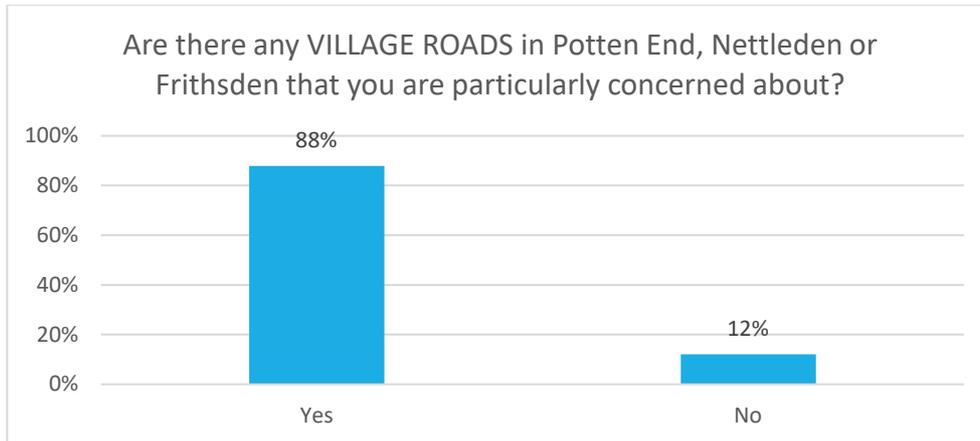
Traffic Volume: There were several references to perceived increases in traffic volume, and that much more of the traffic appears to be through-traffic.

- Several references to "rat-run" and "short-cut" between Berkhamsted and Hemel.

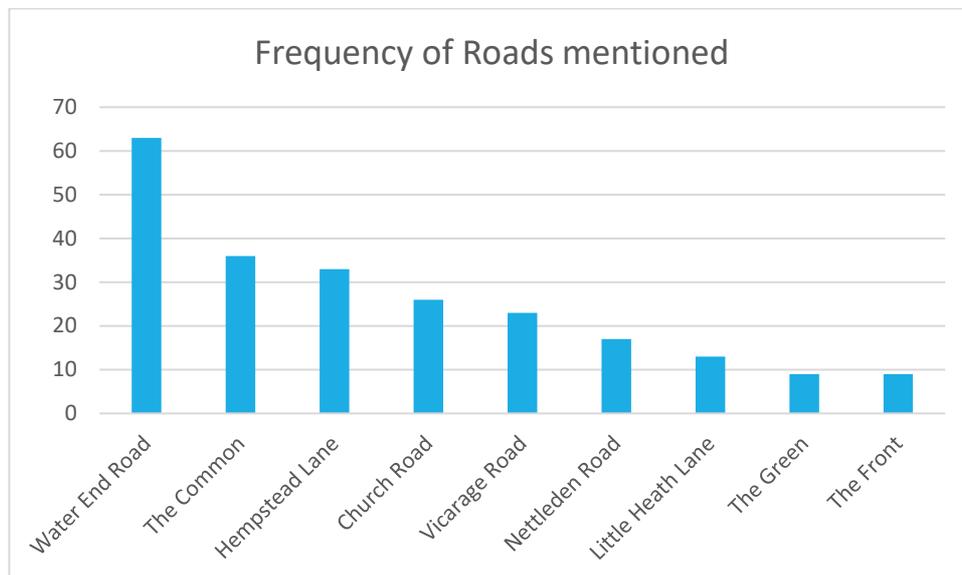
General observations that the speed of traffic on the roads posed a very real danger to other users, including walkers, runners, horse-riders, children and dog walkers. There was a collective sense that this should not be the case in a rural village.

Question 2 - Are there any Village Roads in Potten End, Nettleden or Frithsden that you are particularly concerned about?

I. Summary graph showing responses to this multiple choice question:



II. Bar chart showing frequency of roads mentioned in follow-up question:

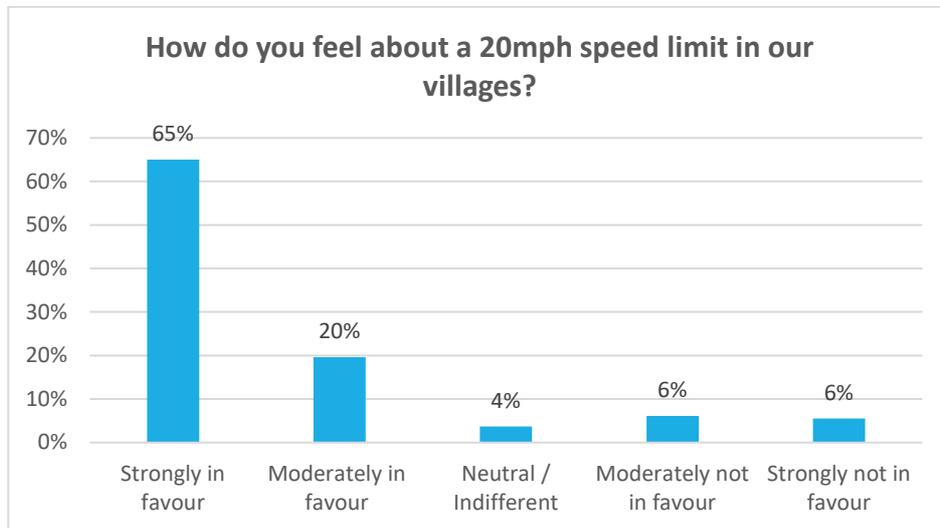


III. Comments - key findings:

- As with the first question, the most consistently mentioned issue was that of traffic speed and the danger is posed.
- The danger for school and pre-school children was emphasised time and again.

Question 3 - How do you feel about a 20mph speed limit in our villages?

I. Summary of responses to multiple choice question:



II. Comments - key findings:

Comments were generally **very supportive**, reflecting the 85% strongly or moderately in favour in the multiple-choice question.

The most common comment was around the need for **supplementary measures** - and in particular, **enforcement** - to ensure it works.

- Many were of the view that without enforcement, we might as well not bother.
- Signs, road markings and speed cameras were all suggesting repeatedly
- Beyond enforcement, many suggested traffic calming measures such as chicanes or speed bumps (although these divide opinion as the next question shows)

There was **some scepticism** around whether it could really work

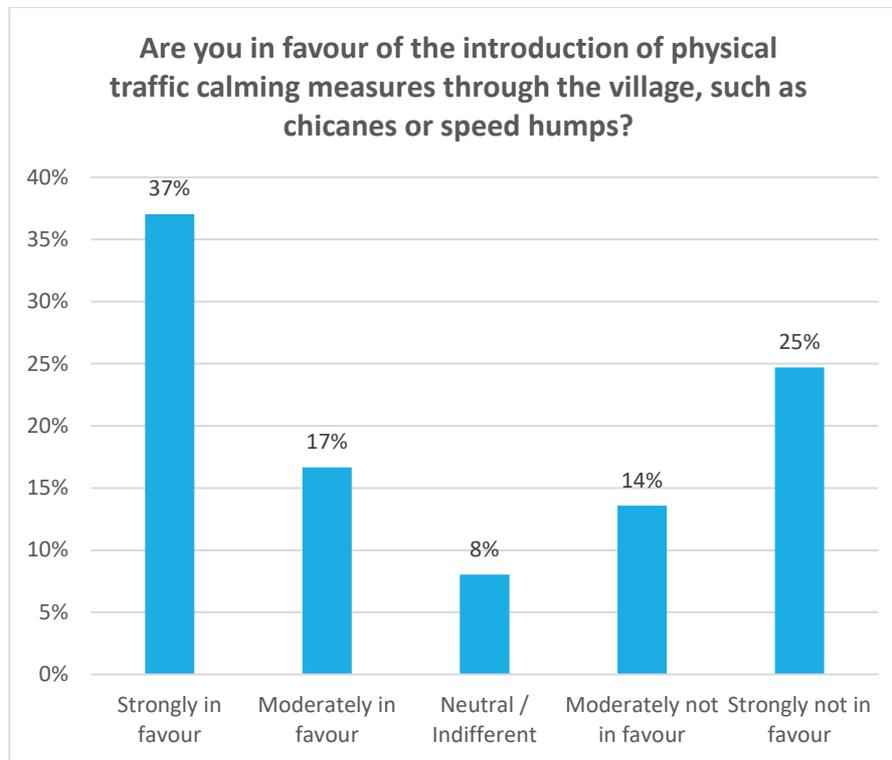
- If drivers don't adhere to 30 why would they adhere to 20?
- Without enforcement it will never work
- It will cause road rage and dangerous overtaking

Some pointed out that one of the additional benefits of this scheme would be to **deter commuters** using it as a 'rat-run'.

A few comments felt it was too slow, suggesting perhaps 25mph as a compromise.

Question 4 - Are you in favour of the introduction of physical traffic calming measures through the village, such as chicanes or speed humps?

I. Summary graph showing responses to this multiple-choice question:



II. Comments - key findings:

As the graph above demonstrates, opinion is divided on this question, with over 60% of respondents feeling very strongly either in favour or against.

For those who were in favour, the main themes were:

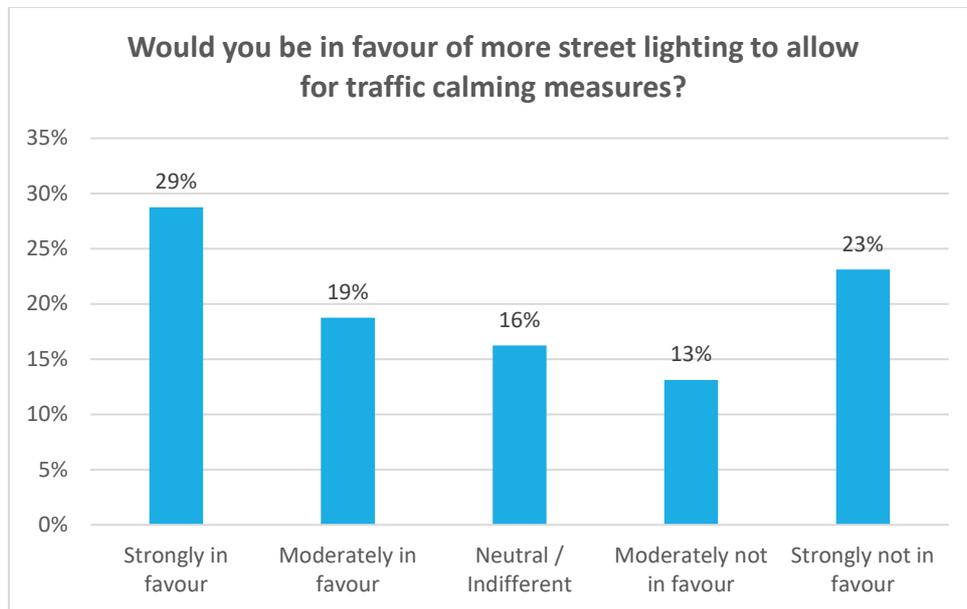
- Often they emphasised that they were in favour of chicanes, but *not* of speed bumps.
- Most needed on the main and straight roads where cars were most likely to pick up speed
- Before and after the junction with the school

For those against, the main themes were:

- Such measures are very damaging to cars, which would hurt the residents of the village the most
- cause noise and air pollution because they prompt severe braking and then quick acceleration.
- Would require signage and street lighting which would further damage the aesthetics of the village
- Can be dangerous on narrow roads

Question 5 - Would you be in favour of more street lighting to allow for traffic calming measures?

I. Summary graph showing responses to this multiple choice question:



II. Comments - key findings:

As with the physical traffic calming measures, opinion was very divided on this question.

For those in favour of street lighting, the key themes were:

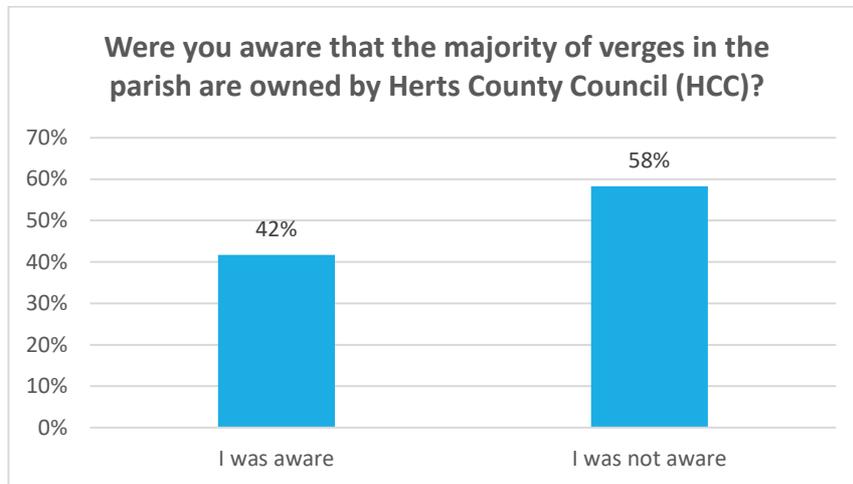
- Necessary to enable traffic calming which is critical - but should only be positioned where required for this purpose
- Added advantage of making it safer to walk around the village in the dark - avoidance of trips and falls or not being seen by an oncoming vehicle
- Potten End in general needs more lighting - should be positioned beyond just near speed bumps
- Should only use very focused LED lamps that will have minimal effect on light pollution

For those against, the main themes were:

- Inappropriate for a rural village - ruin the country environment
- Light pollution and additional energy costs
- Not eco-friendly
- Would encourage drivers to speed up even more

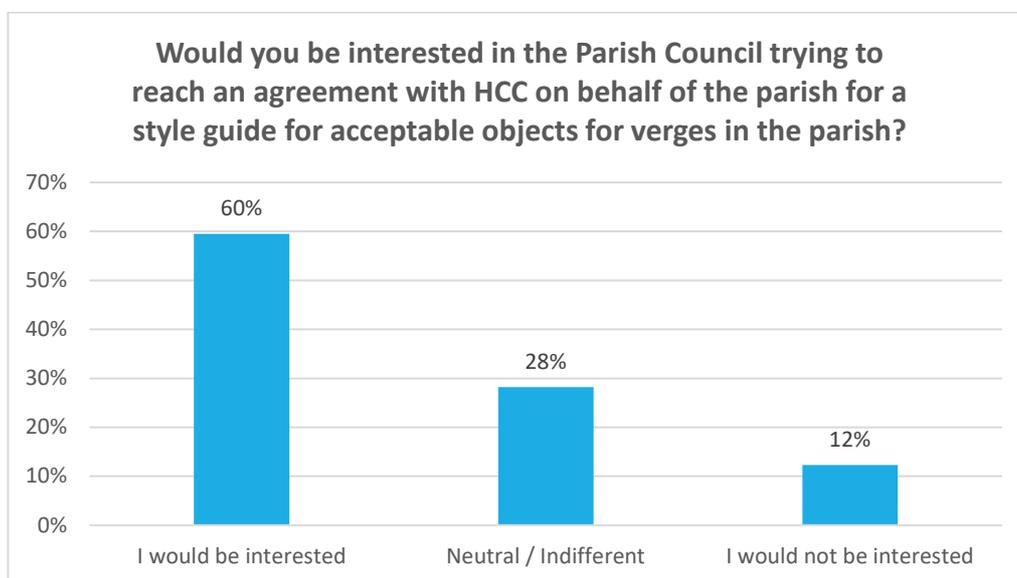
Question 6 - Were you aware that the majority of verges in the parish are owned by Herts County Council (HCC)?

I. Summary graph showing responses to this multiple-choice question:



Question 7 - Would you be interested in the Parish Council trying to reach an agreement with HCC on behalf of the parish for a style guide for acceptable objects for verges in the parish?

I. Summary graph showing responses to this multiple choice question:



II. Comments - key findings:

Whilst the graph above suggests strong support for a style guide, the comments reveal a much **more mixed picture**. It is clear that not all respondents were sufficiently informed about the matter to answer the question in a substantive way.

There was **a lot of sympathy for householders** who put time, effort and expense to keep the verges tidy, and some resentment that HCC should get involved, when they do not maintain any aspect of the verges otherwise.

It was recognised by many respondents that without the obstacles, the **verges inevitably get churned up by vehicles**, especially HGVs. This is unsightly and a slip hazard, and it is understandable and desirable that householders take steps to avoid this. Several welcomed the idea of a style guide that would allow them to erect something which they have not done until now out of fear of legal liability.

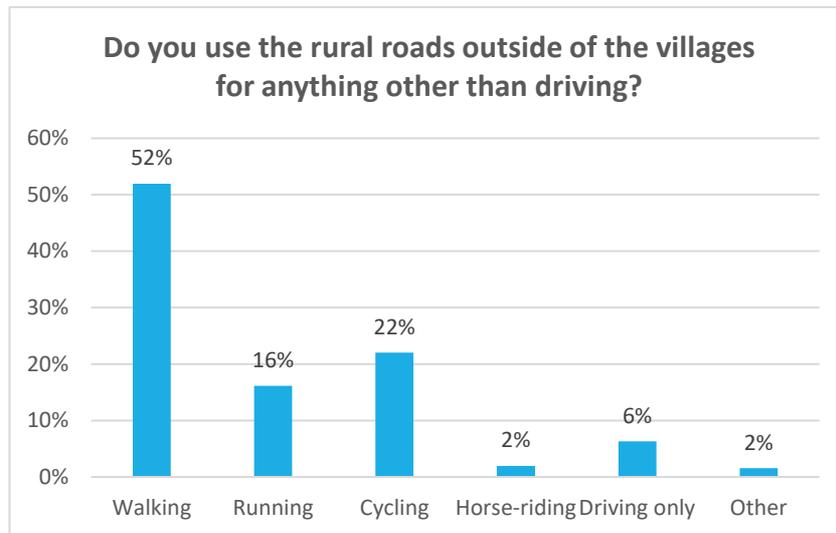
However, there was also **criticism of the obstacles**, especially from the perspective of pedestrians who may trip over them in the dark, or are pushed into the middle of the road as the verge-pavement is blocked. There was also the observation that the verges are there to constitute highway overflow (when cars need to pass each other, for example), and that the obstacles inhibit that. Remarks included that if it was not the householder's land they simply shouldn't be able to put up obstacles, and that the highway was for roads not verges.

Some felt the grass verges themselves should be removed, and replaced with flowers or more hedges.

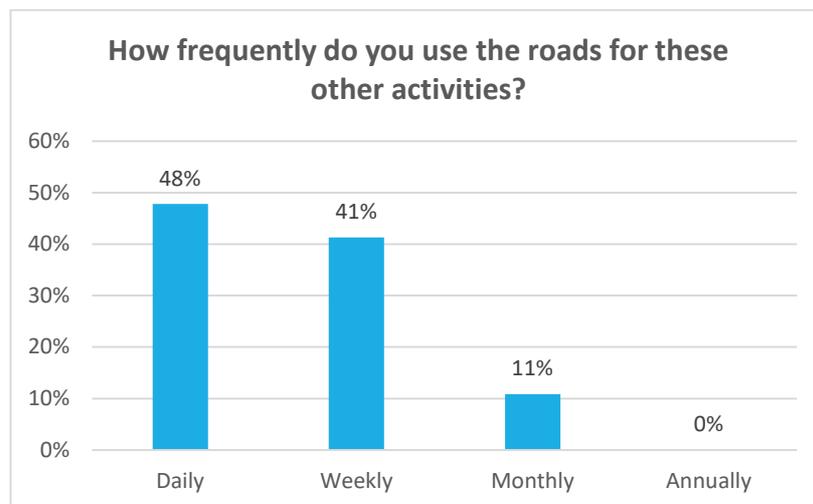
A few respondents remarked that they generally **did not consider this a priority** and that the Parish Council should focus their efforts on road safety.

Unfortunately, there were no comments as to what such a style guide might involve, and therefore it should probably be further consulted on before any final decisions are taken.

Question 8 - Do you use the rural roads outside of the villages for anything other than driving?



Question 9 - How frequently do you use the roads for these other activities?

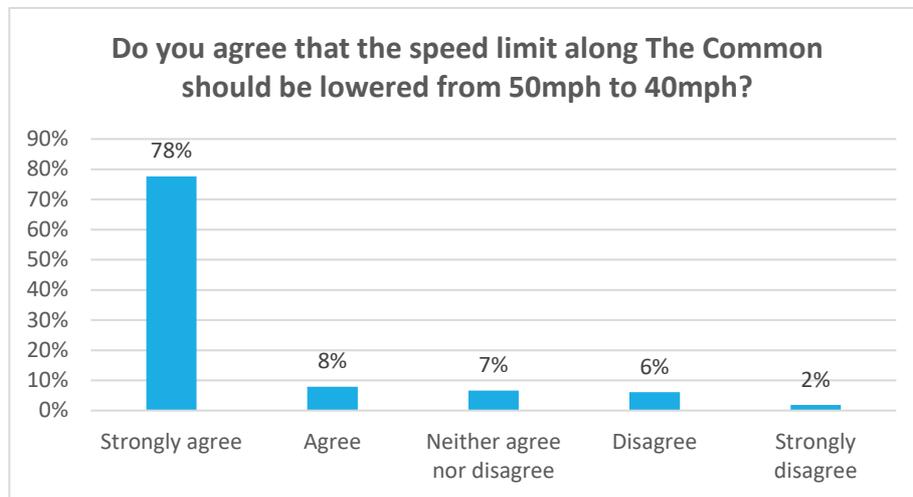


Rural road usage - key observations:

- A large majority of residents use the rural roads (outside of the village) for recreational activities, on a daily or weekly basis
- The majority of these roads do not have pavements and are narrow, windy, have hedges along their edges decreasing visibility.

Question 10 - Do you agree that the speed limit along The Common should be lowered from 50mph to 40mph?

I. Summary graph showing responses to this multiple-choice question:



II. Comments - key findings:

The **support for this policy was emphatic and resounding**. Main themes were:

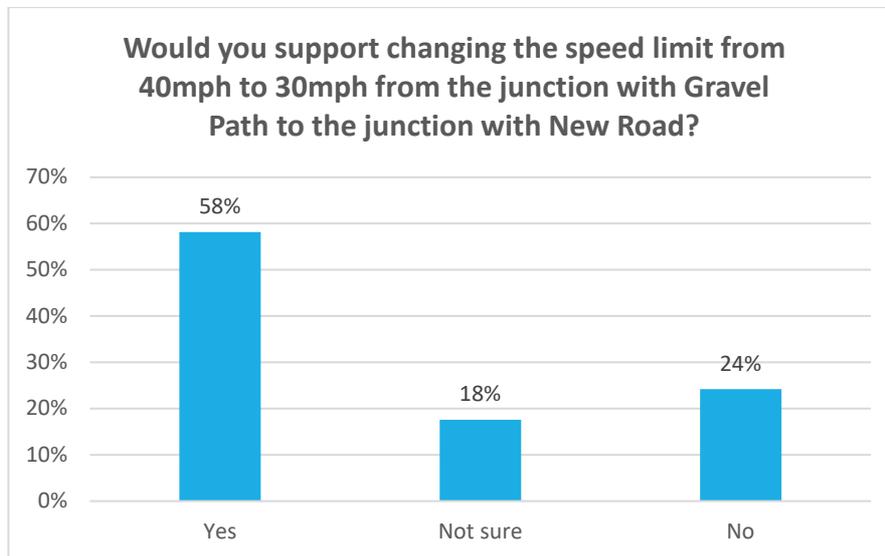
- Should go even further and drop it to 30 mph
- Frequent deer passing on the road
- Many respondents pointed out that they already travel at 40 along this stretch
- Frequent pedestrians walking on the pavement alongside which is very narrow, and having large vehicles and HGV's passing at 50mph is very unsettling.
- A reduction to 40 mph would help with vehicles entering the village when they should be slowing down to 30mph
- The junction at the top of Gravel Path is dangerous and needs to be approached at much lower speeds
- history of collisions and accidents

However there were a few **dissenting opinions**, which pointed out that:

- The money had been spent on the pavement to ensure pedestrians would be safe
- There was no history of collisions or accidents
- Does not seem an issue or a priority.

Question 11 - Would you support changing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph from the junction with Gravel Path to the junction with New Road?

I. Summary graph showing responses to this multiple-choice question:



II. Comments - key findings:

Whilst there was support for this change, it was more muted and many respondents questioned the need for this.

For those in favour, the arguments focused on:

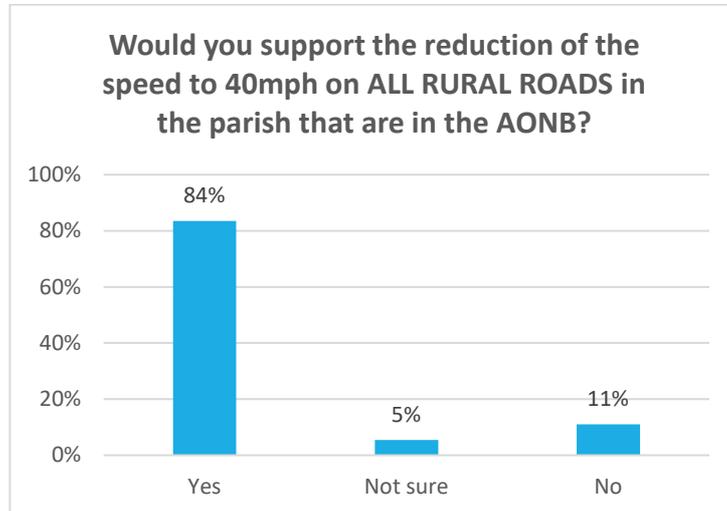
- Safety of golfers crossing the road, and of the residents of Castle Village
- Several roads from which other cars join traffic
- No pavement on the road.

Those opposed, or unsure, made the following observations:

- No obvious need for it - "fine as it is"
- Visibility is very good along that road
- Not a priority, other roads are more important
- Fewer observed walkers, so it would be just for the golfers.
- No evidence of any collisions or accidents.

Question 12 - Would you support the reduction of the speed to 40mph on ALL RURAL ROADS in the parish that are in the AONB?

I. Summary graph showing responses to this multiple-choice question:



II. Comments - key findings:

Overall, there was strong support for this policy.

Key themes among those in support:

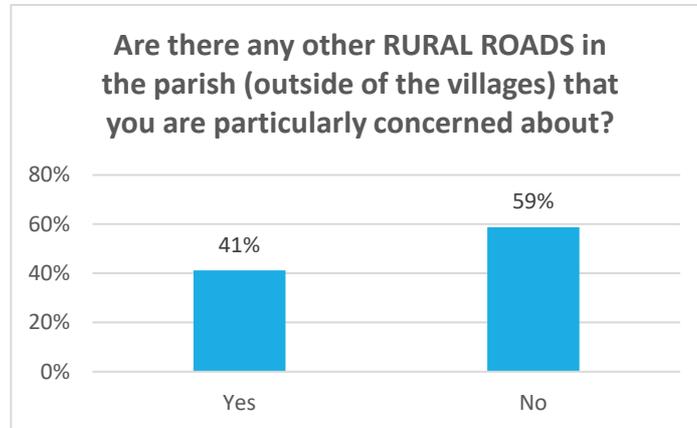
- The roads are narrow and windy
- Hedges, especially in summer, can restrict visibility
- The safety of other roads users should be paramount - cars need to share the road equally
- Safer roads might encourage even more alternative road users (promoting physical exercise)
- Frequent deer crossings
- Speed limit could be even lower
- Nettleden Road in particular was mentioned

However, there were also dissenting opinions:

- No justification for such a reduction - "Blanket nannyng"
- Would require more signage which would be unsightly
- Without enforcement it will be ignored

Question 13 - Are there any other RURAL ROADS in the parish (outside of the villages) that you are particularly concerned about?

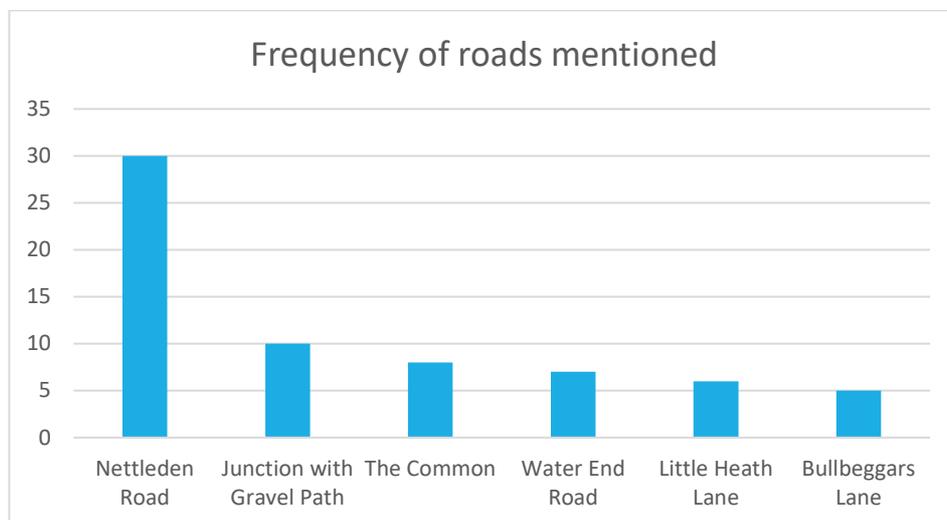
I. Summary graph showing responses to this multiple-choice question:



II. Comments - key findings:

The graph above reflects that there were far fewer respondents that wanted to raise particular rural roads about which they were concerned, compared to roads in villages.

Of those that did, the following shows the most frequently mentioned roads:



Nettleden Road was singled out most often, for the following reasons:

- Speed of traffic along roads with many cyclists and frequent bends
- The entire stretch from Gravel Path junction through to Nettleden has many sharp corners and no footpath
- Junction with Vicarage Road is dangerous
- Very little visibility of pedestrians in road

- The corner by the donkey sanctuary - narrow, sharp bend and frequent near misses with on-coming traffic in the middle of the road.
- narrowness of road, difficulty in two cars passing each other

Finally, there were several comments about **hedge growth along rural lanes** which made narrow roads even narrower, impeded visibility and tripped up cyclists.