

Agenda Item 10

Report to Council: 1st May 2025

20 mph scheme

Background:

On August 6th 2024 the Traffic Regulation Order for the proposed Lavenham Speed Reduction Scheme was approved by Suffolk County Council. The detailed design and the TRO are attached as Appendices.

On 23rd December 2024 Suffolk County Council issued a quote for of £24,065.46 + VAT at 2024/25 prices. The quote will be revised for 2025/26 prices.

Discussion amongst Councillors in February 2025 led to a consensus emerging that Council needed to carefully consider the signage implications (see Appendix A) and should discuss this at a well-advertised Council Meeting in the Spring when the weather would be more conducive to a good attendance from Members of the Public.

Flyers were put on all Village Notice Boards and published on Facebook on 11th April 2025.

Scheme Detail:

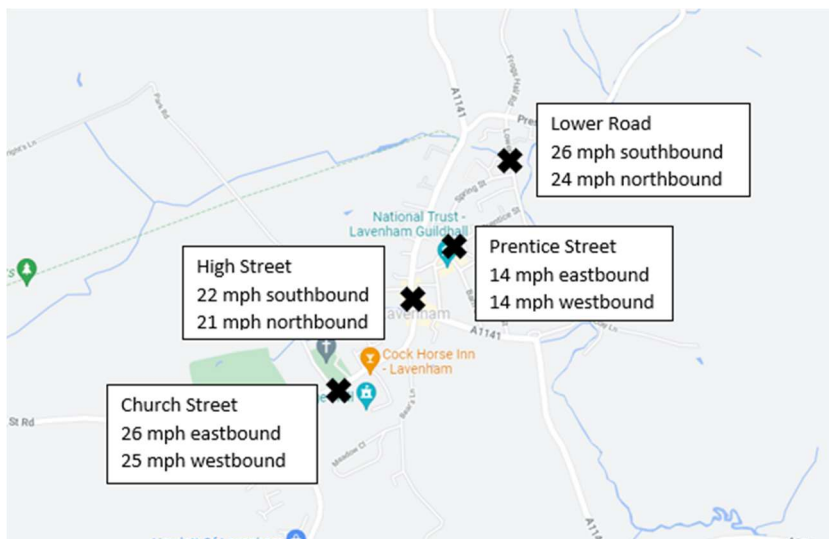
Suffolk County Council rules only permit a scheme to be introduced where the current mean speed is not significantly in excess of 24 mph.

To establish the streets where the scheme could possibly go Suffolk Highways deployed measuring equipment in four locations for a week in May 2021 and the results were:

- a) On Church St. Mean speed 25/26mph with 15% of vehicles above 30mph
- b) On High St. Mean speed 21/22mph with 15% of vehicles above 27/28 mph
- c) On Prentice St. Mean speed 14mph with 15% of vehicles at above 18 mph
- d) On Lower Rd. Mean speed 24/26mph with 15% of vehicles travel above 30/33 mph.

On Prentice St we know that over 85% of vehicles are travelling at less than 18mph and that the number exceeding 20mph by any significant margin is very small.

On the other streets we know that currently about 15% of vehicles go above 30 mph with the average vehicle going about 25mph.



LAVENHAM PARISH COUNCIL:

Speeds and Speed Compliance elsewhere in the Village:

	Melford Rd at Harwood Outwards Sid Hit Average	Melford Rd at Harwood Inwards SID. Hit Average	Melford Rd at Artesian Close inwards Police	Melford Rd at Artesian Close Outwards Police	Sudbury Rd 1st hit	Sudbury Rd 2nd hit	Sudbury Rd Reverse
less than 30	22%	18%	66%	55%	67%	88%	68%
30-35	40%	39%	23%	21%	27%	10%	27%
35-40	24%	25%	10%	15%	5%	1%	4%
41-50	13%	16%	1%	9%	1%	0%	1%
51-60	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
60+	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
30 to 35 or less	62%	57%	89%	76%	94%	99%	95%
Mean Speed	33	34	30	30	29	25	29

Signage and enforcement:

Helen Beresford from Suffolk Highways wrote on 22nd February 2024 in response to Parish Council questions concerning the signage:

‘If the 20mph repeater signs are spaced at distances greater than 300m, then the speed limit cannot be enforced. We know that the police do not routinely enforce 20mph speed limits and for this reason they ask that we design them to be self-enforcing. However, if there was a regular issue with excessive speeding, for example if a vehicle was reportedly driving through the village daily at 70mph, then the police may be willing to carry out enforcement, as long as the repeater signs are at the agreed spacing’.

Zones as compared to Speed Limits:

Helen Beresford from Suffolk Highways wrote on 22nd February 2024 in response to Parish Council questions concerning the signage:

“20mph zones” require traffic calming measures such as road narrowing, road humps, repeater signs or repeater roundels on the road. These need to be placed at least every 50m. Terminal signs are also needed to indicate the beginning and the end of the zone.

“20mph speed limits” require terminal signs to mark the beginning and the end of the speed limit, and repeater signs at least every 300m, and do not require traffic calming measures.

20mph zones are typically more dependent on physical features, which weren’t originally considered an option for Lavenham due to the likely associated costs. Additionally, as Lavenham is a Conservation Area, it could be difficult to incorporate physical speed reduction measures that actually achieve the desired speed reduction, whilst also being acceptable to conservation officers, public transport operators, emergency services, Road Haulage Association, SCC Asset Managers, residents, tourists and cyclists. Furthermore, a 20mph zone could mean even more signs are needed than in the current design, to ensure that no section of road is further than 50m from a traffic calming feature, as there may not be scope for alternative measures in some locations. Roundels on the road alone may not be enough to see a reduction in speeds. They also require more maintenance than signs as they wear away and could be considered visually intrusive in a sensitive location such as Lavenham.