



**Gloucestershire**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

Stan Waddington

County Councillor for  
Nailsworth & Minchinhampton

Lead Cabinet Member  
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SW/mc

1<sup>st</sup> February 2010

Mrs Julie Shirley  
Pitchcombe Parish Council  
60 Hawk Close  
Abbeylea  
Gloucester  
GL4 4WE

Dear Mrs Shirley,

#### **Pitchcombe Road Safety**

I am now in a position to respond to your recent correspondence, following a briefing from Gloucestershire Highways.

Figures which Officers have supplied endorse your concerns over safety issues but although the accident record on the stretches of road in question means they qualify as countywide "hot spots", their ranking is not high enough to justify the sort of major safety scheme we would like to see for the A46/A4173 junction and surrounds. The latest figures show the A46 from Pitchcombe – Painswick ranked at 85 in the list, with the Stroud – Pitchcombe stretch as 135 and the A4173 between Pitchcombe – Edge as 140<sup>th</sup>.

With these figures in mind, Gloucestershire Highways are proposing some lower cost short-term safety improvements, proposing a new Vehicle Activated Sign on the Painswick approach and additional anti-skid treatment in the vicinity of the junction, when the road markings are renewed (hopefully in the summer). I appreciate that this is not the level of investment you would wish, but it is seen as the most cost-effective given the accident record and the pressure on funding countywide.

Looking to the future, there may be scope for a reduction in the speed limit along this road. I certainly share your views on the confusing messages which the variations in speed limits give local and passing motorists and this is one issue being considered in a countywide review of speed limits on A and B roads across the whole Country, which we are currently undertaking following national guidance. Amongst other things, this will identify areas across Gloucestershire where speed limit change will bring clear safety benefits and when complete will form the basis for prioritisation of change, such as reduction of 50 mph to 40 in places, as well as places where existing lower limits may not now be justified.

From time to time, local communities ask for reductions on A and B road limits, but I am reluctant to make any commitments until our review is complete, as that will give us countywide priorities for change. An important element of the review will be discussions on the outcomes with the local Police, through our new County Road Safety Partnership, given the pivotal role the Police play in enforcement. I have discussed with Officers their timetable for this review, which involves substantial amounts of detailed analysis to comply with the Government advice. As Steve Norgate's letter to you shows, such advice is often quite prescriptive and detailed, but I hope that later in the year we will have more definite information on the speed limit review. This will be passed on to the local Stakeholder Manager, John Kay, who has been closely involved in looking into the local safety issues.

As I know you will understand, I cannot be more specific about any timetables about any of the proposed work, until we have assessed the extent of winter damage to the network. This will include how much funding and officer time will have to be diverted to deal with the obvious safety problems which the past month or so have left us with. However, I would hope that by Easter we should have a clearer picture and will be able to confirm some of the timings for the work I have mentioned earlier.

Yours sincerely



Stan Waddington  
Cabinet Member - Environment

## PITCHCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

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Cllr S Waddington  
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Minchinhampton  
Gloucestershire  
GL6 9EG

13<sup>th</sup> January 2010

Dear Cllr Waddington

### **Pitchcombe Road Safety**

Pitchcombe Parish Council formally requests your help and assistance with respect to "Pitchcombe Case for a reduction in the speed limit on the A46 & A4173" a copy was posted to your offices on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 2009, subsequently the Parish Council has received a response from Mr Steve Norgate, Gloucestershire Constabulary, via Highways offices of Mr Glen Dooley rejecting the request. As you would expect the Parish Council are most disappointed that our case has been rejected as we considered that a reduction in the speed limit on the A46 & A4173 to 40mph was the most cost effective solution to Pitchcombe road safety issues.

As you are aware the Parish Council has worked with Jason Humm and his team (and their predecessors) over the past 5 years to explore all options to improve road safety on the A46 & A4173 passing through Pitchcombe. The junction at Pitchcombe has received particular attention with consideration given for a roundabout, traffic lights, alternative junction layouts, and removal of carriageway road surface to improve visibility on the A46 southbound (this I believe you initiated). Unfortunately, following various engineering studies, all of these solutions were rejected. Subsequently, at a meeting with Jason Humm and his team on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2009, it was agreed that Pitchcombe Parish Council should generate a case for speed limit reduction for submission to Mr Steve Norgate as this was considered to be the only remaining cost effective solution. Highways also agreed to improve some road signage and make road surface improvements. At this meeting the Parish Council believed that it had the support of the Highways Department and would take our case forward.

With respect to Mr Norgate's response to our case (see attached), we do not believe he has addressed the issues raised in our document and has quoted DfT Circular 01/2006 which we are familiar with. DfT Circular are guidelines and the issues raised in our case take due account of this document. Mr Norgate has failed to address the following issues and concerns raised in our case:

1. As stated above no solution can be found to improve the junction layout.
2. Visibility is a major problem at the junction due to the brow of the hill southbound on A46.
3. Majority of Pitchcombe residents live off the A46/A4173 and all road entry/exits onto these main roads require considerable caution due to poor visibility

4. The variation in speed limits over such a short distance does not make sense and causes confusion:

On the A4173 between Brookthorpe 30mph, Edge 40mph, Pitchcombe 50mph and Rock Mill 40mph .On the A46 between Painswick 30mph, Pitchcombe 50mph, Rock Mill 40mph. The distances between these various sections of roads are a mile or less and we believe confuses, frustrates, or invites vehicles to increase speed upon reaching the Pitchcombe sections.

There is a precedent for implementing a 40mph speed limit on the Pitchcombe section of the A46/A4173, as the A46 section from Stroud to Nailsworth is 40mph, this section of road is far less onerous.


During the past 3 months numerous accidents have occurred prior to the recent bad weather conditions:

- A major accident occurred on the A4173 near Wragg Castle Lane on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2009, a vehicle overturned all 3 emergency services were called out.
- A major accident occurred on the A46 near Pincot Lane involving 3 vehicles on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2009; again emergency services were called out.
- A two vehicle collision occurred at the junction at the junction on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2009.
- Two vehicles left the A46 prior to the junction travelling towards Stroud ending up in the field just past Cotswold House (this appears to be a regular event according to the owners of the field), this occurred in November 2009.

There have in the past years been accidents causing death and serious injury, admittedly not in recent years, however Pitchcombe Parish Council consider it is just a matter of time until further fatalities occurs on these sections of the roads as the accidents referred to above are a regular occurrence, a reduction in the speed limit may just prevent this. Your help and assistance in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

The Parish Council have deferred sending this letter as we appreciate your attention and priorities have been focussed on the bad weather impacting Gloucestershire highways, however we would appreciate a early response.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Julie Shirley  
Parish Clerk

Enc.

Copied to: Duncan Jordan, Environment Group Director, GCC  
Jason Humm, Area Manager, GCC  
John Kay, Stakeholder Manager, GCC