



ACOL PARISH COUNCIL

*Cllr. Richard Steel
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22 February, 2025

Matthew Scott, PCC
Kent Police HQ
Sutton Road
Maidstone
ME15 9BZ

Dear Mr Scott

Kent Police & KCC Highways Speed Limit Evaluation Criteria

I am writing to complain about Kent Police's lack of support for 20-mph limits, their evaluation criteria, and undue influence over KCC Highways decision making.

I have been Acol's Speedwatch Coordinator for 8 years and in that time have dedicated significant time and resources to its operation and frequently promoted the scheme in our wider (Thanet) community.

However, when I learned, last month, that based on our Speedwatch results the Police would not support the 20-mph zone proposed by KCC Highways, I suspended our community's participation. I have since discussed the matter with Acol Parish Council, which has endorsed my decision.

The December meeting of Acol PC had agreed the extents, drawn-up by KCC Highways, of a proposed 20-mph zone in our village and, following that decision, I wrote to Highways asking that they proceed to the next stage, which I had been given to understand was cost estimation. I received a reply, on 8th January, saying "...part of our consultation process means that we must consult Kent Police and Speedwatch. Having run the proposed 20mph extents for Acol past them, they have said that **'based on the Speedwatch results, they would not support the scheme'**".

I was astonished to learn that our village's participation in Speedwatch apparently meant that our long held, widely supported, ambition for a 20-mph speed limit through Acol could be thwarted.

The Kent Police Community Speedwatch Manager has insisted that our participation in no way disadvantages us in any determination of a 20-mph limit for our village - but

we are the only community in Thanet that currently participates in the scheme and, therefore, the only community providing data that can be used (without any reference to us) in such decision making.

Furthermore, the basis of the decision to not support our proposed scheme is, I believe, fundamentally flawed. The data relates only to the <5% of vehicles that were speeding as they entered our village (my own monitoring suggests that the Speedwatch Team's interpretation overstated the case) and mean speeds through the village centre, as evidenced by HADMS monitoring by KCC Highways, were at a very low level, which is why they drew-up the extents of the proposed 20-mph zone for our consideration.

The main concern should be the safety of the community of Acol, in a village with narrow, poorly lit streets used as rat-runs, with practically no pedestrian provision and an above average over 65 years old population (38%). The community has consistently shown that it is convinced of the need for a 20-mph scheme, not least in last year's Household Survey. The results from Wales demonstrate that literally hundreds of lives are being saved in their adoption of a 20-mph speed limit, and Scotland is also now well on the way to implementing a nationwide 20-mph limit, as are other countries (30-kph) throughout Europe.

We now have very serious misgivings about the operation of the Speedwatch scheme and will want to see a fundamental review of its objectives, policies, management, and the way in which its data is used before we contemplate any further involvement.

Following this development, KCC Highways has undertaken further speed monitoring, and we await the results with keen interest.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Steel', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Steel
Chair, Acol Parish Council