

Community Speed Watch in Worcestershire

Introduction:

West Mercia Police use a wide range of education, enforcement and campaigns to address the concerns around speeding. One of these is the Community Speed Watch scheme which provides members of the public with the opportunity to play an active role in road safety and making their communities safer in partnership with the Police. The scheme aims to encourage drivers to think about the speed at which they drive and is not aimed at the prosecution of drivers.

The scheme is coordinated by the Safer Roads Partnership under a clear force policy and operated by volunteers who select when they carry out their monitoring sessions. The offending vehicle details are recorded by the team of three on the road side and this information is submitted back to the Speed Watch Coordinator, Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Admin volunteers who arrange for advisory letters to be sent to the registered keepers or for an officer to visit the driver in person and offer them words of advice relating to their driving behaviour. West Mercia has a total of 29 groups.

Worcestershire current groups and overview:

10 operational groups: Bishampton, Bournheath, Crowle, Cookhill, Eckington, Fladbury, Lenchwick, Martley, Ryall and Tibberton.

Crowle are West Mercia Police's pilot scheme and have been active since April 2014.

Hanley Swan and Welland are recruiting their teams following an offer to join the scheme. West Mercia Police require a minimum of six people to form a group with one person nominated as the group coordinator. Alongside this, the Safer Neighbourhood Team nominate a liaison officer for each group who acts as a point of contact for the groups.

Equipment:

Each team is fully trained by the force Community Speed Watch Coordinator's and are provided with their own radar device, high visibility jackets and community speed watch signs. The funding for the scheme is secured through the West Mercia Police budgets and there is no cost to the volunteers or Parish Councils. All of the current radar devices are assigned to speed watch groups and there was a need to acquire more equipment. Ten Bushnell radars have been purchased to continue the expansion of the scheme with five of the devices already offered to new groups.

Future developments of the scheme:

The plans for the future are to continue the expansion of speed watch across West Mercia. We have engaged with the speed watch groups to participate in national speed related campaigns throughout the year as appropriate. January 2019 saw a two week speed campaign

where the Community Speed Watch efforts saw a total of 58 offending vehicles recorded. In addition to these campaigns the group Coordinators are also given the opportunity to be involved in a ride out with a Patrol Officer. This ride out also gave the participants an insight into speed enforcement by Police Officers.

Constraints to groups:

The prime constraint to community speed watch groups is the ongoing recruitment of volunteers. Each group operates with three people at all times in accordance with West Mercia force policy. Group numbers can drop for a variety of reasons and those with smaller teams rely on a core number of people to keep them monitoring on a regular basis. We continue recruitment on a full time basis and training sessions are available for new members.

Coordinator meetings:

July and August 2019 will see the annual county based coordinator meetings. This is an opportunity for each group's coordinator to meet up, share best practices and discuss the scheme across their county with the Safer Roads Partnership, Police and Crime Commissioners Ambassadors and Safer Neighbourhood Teams. The dates of the meetings are currently being arranged to suit the group coordinators.

The ten current groups across Worcestershire have a total of 76 volunteers trained to participate in the scheme. Training sessions are available for new members who join the scheme and are carried out in their villages with each person being provided with an information booklet covering their specific village. The information booklet contains, photos of their approved sites, contact details for the force Coordinator and Safer Neighbourhood Team, operating instructions for the radar device, a copy of the safety code of conduct and the site specific risk assessment for their scheme. We are also supported by two administration support volunteers who process the letters.

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