

Community Speed Watch – Worcestershire Update

October 2022 – West Mercia Police Road Safety

Context

In November 2021, members of staff from West Mercia Police Road Safety attended Worcestershire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board to discuss how the County Council can support its councillors to empower communities to manage speeding.

Alongside councillors and senior officers from West Mercia Police, discussions included the force's Community Speed Watch (CSW) programme and the process involved in setting up new CSW schemes. Following this meeting, it was determined that it was an appropriate time to relaunch the CSW programme within West Mercia.

This report aims to provide an overview of the work undertaken since the meeting in order to relaunch Community Speed Watch in February 2022 and ongoing work since then.

Introduction

Community Speed Watch (CSW) schemes are coordinated by the police but managed and run by volunteers in the community. The scheme enables local people to take an active role in road safety and make their community safer.

CSW was launched in West Mercia in 2014 and has gone from strength to strength with almost 50 active groups across the force area.

With the Local Policing Community Charter firmly embedded, it is clear that speeding remains a key concern for our communities.

In late 2021, it was deemed timely to relaunch CSW; taking on board comments made during the November meeting as well as refreshing the force's CSW policy and procedure and ensuring roles and responsibilities involved in setting up a CSW scheme are clear and understood by all parties involved.

Overview of CSW

The aim of CSW is NOT to catch as many speeding drivers as possible. It aims to encourage motorists to drive at a safe and appropriate speed, reduce speed in areas of concern, re-educate drivers about the dangers of speeding and address concerns from local residents about cars speeding through their neighbourhood.

There are a number of criteria which must be met before a scheme will be established:

- Speeding must have been identified as a community priority.
- Active speed enforcement operations must not already be underway in the area by West Mercia Police.
- There must be at least six volunteers in each CSW scheme.
- Speed checks must be conducted by at least three volunteers.
 - The area must have a 30 or 40 MPH speed restriction

Schemes are evaluated to ensure they are having a positive impact on vehicle speed, driver behaviour and community reassurance.

Review of CSW

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken by the Road Safety Team since November 2021 to review the Community Speed Watch programme.

Some of this initial work involved reviewing the CSW Force Policy and Force Procedure documents, ensuring both are up-to-date and reflect current working practices.

A key element of the CSW review has involved providing clarity around the roles and responsibilities of setting up new schemes, including the Road Safety Team, the two Force Community Speed Watch Coordinators within the Road Safety Team and local Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs). While links between the Road Safety

Team and SNTs have always been strong, there has understandably been much movement of staff within SNTs in the eight years since CSW launched so it was an ideal opportunity to communicate key messages, both internally and externally.

Relaunch – Feb 2022

In February 2022, Community Speed Watch was relaunched internally by the Chief Superintendent for Local Policing, by way of an email briefing to all Local Policing Area Superintendents for dissemination to SNTs.

Additional internal communications included:

- CSW article in **N2K**, the force's internal digital newsletter.
- CSW article published on force **intranet news** page, with a prominent link from the intranet homepage.
- CSW policy and procedure documents uploaded to an '**SNT Toolkit**' – a dedicated intranet resource for SNTs, providing guidance on dealing with speeding concerns.

External communications took place the following week and included:

- **CSW press release** published via the force website ([click here](#) to read).
- Press release distributed forcewide via **Neighbourhood Matters**, the force community messaging service (over 13,000 subscribers at the time).
- Promotion of CSW messages via **@WMerciaRoads social media** channels – Twitter and Instagram.
- Refresh of the Community Speed Watch **Volunteers Guide leaflet**.
- SNTs were encouraged to follow-up messages on **Neighbourhood Matters** with more targeted articles within their own local communities, giving examples of local schemes.

Further work to date

Since the roll-out in February, work to develop CSW further has been ongoing and has included:

- Relaunch of the bi-annual force **Community Speed Watch newsletter**. Issue 1 was distributed in April 2022, and Issue 2 is due for distribution imminently (October 2022).
- Introduction of a **6-monthly external communications update** – including promotion of any new schemes or good results via media, social media and Neighbourhood Matters. (Next update due Oct/Nov 2022, in line with newsletter distribution).
- Development of a '**Roles & Responsibilities**' leaflet – outlining the tasks involved in setting up a new CSW scheme. This aide memoir provides clarity to SNTs and helps local communities understand what to expect and by whom.
- Development of a CSW **volunteers poster** – for distribution within local communities to encourage volunteers to get involved. This was developed specifically in response to certain areas across the force who were struggling to recruit enough volunteers to fit the criteria for CSW.
- The Force Community Speed Watch Coordinator for Worcestershire has held **meetings with SNT inspectors, sergeants and officers** across the county to further reinforce accountability of roles, and this joint working approach is working very well.
- **Collation of month on month CSW activity** and summary data provided at relevant road safety and roads policing strategic and tactical meetings.

Community Speed Watch in Worcestershire

In Worcestershire, there are currently 14 active Community Speed Watch groups, operating at 34 site locations in total. Of these 14 groups, one is currently on hold.

40 volunteers in Worcestershire have received CSW training in the last months (27 south, 13 north).

CSW Group	Number of locations	North / South Worcestershire	Notes
Bournheath	4	North	
Redditch	6	North	
Wilden Lane, Stourport	1	North	Launched in 2022
Bishampton	3	South	
Cookhill	1	South	
Crowle	3	South	On hold. Working to identify new Group Coordinator
Eckington	1	South	
Fladbury	2	South	
Honeybourne	4	South	Launched in 2022
Lenchwick	2	South	
Martley	2	South	
Ryall	1	South	
Tibberton	1	South	
Wellend	3	South	

To provide a comparison to 12 months ago before the re-launch, there were 13 operational CSW groups in Worcestershire in October 2021, of which four were on hold.

New Sites in Progress

There are currently six new groups being processed for Worcestershire, at different stages of set-up including volunteer training or force vetting: Cropthorne, Kinnersley, Peopleton, Drakes Broughton, Swinton Lane in Worcester and Spennels, Kidderminster.

Anna Southall
Engagement & Campaigns Manager,
West Mercia Police Road Safety.