



STONEY MIDDLETON

Speed Reduction Proposal

November, 2020

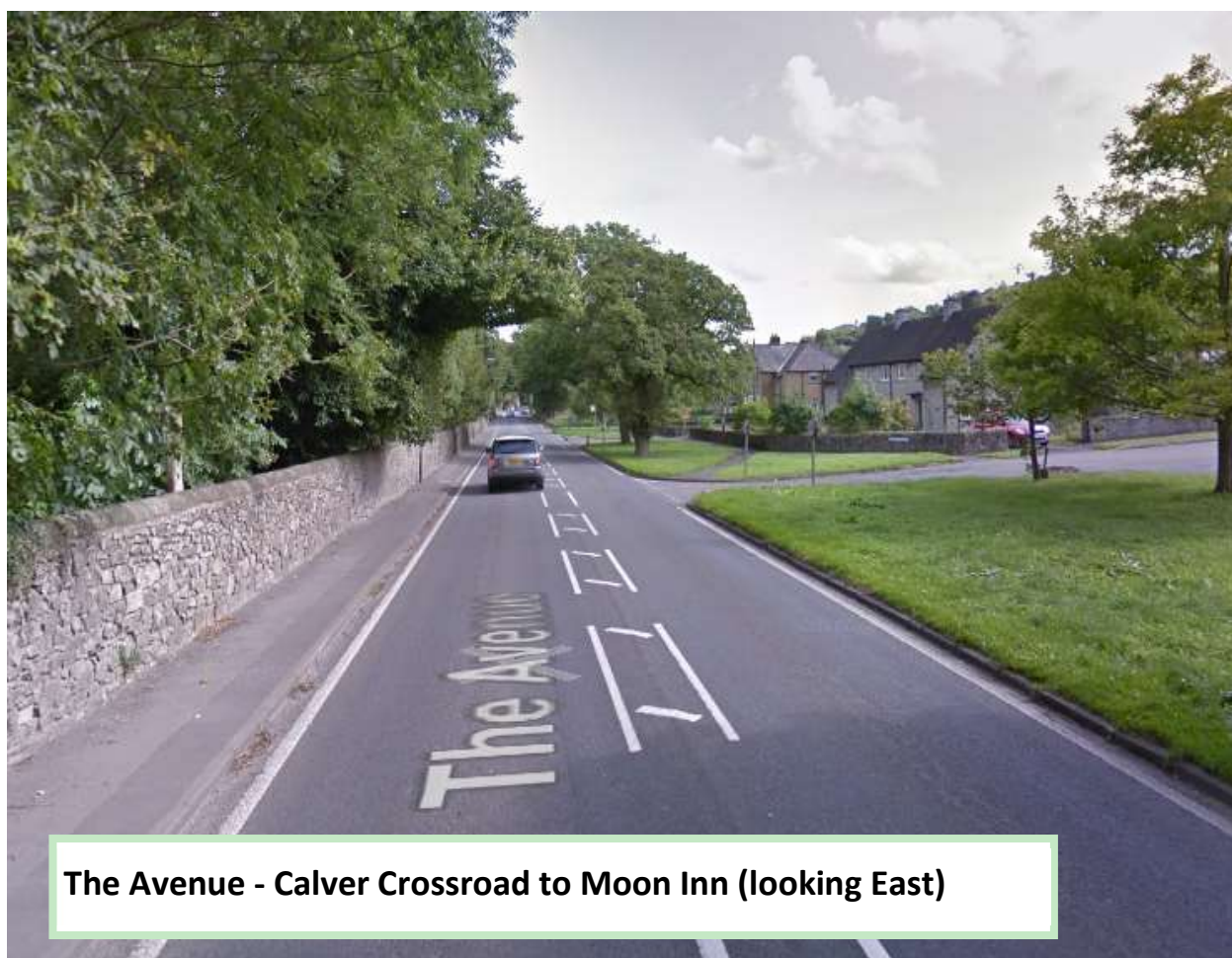
Submission for the introduction of reduced speed limits on the A623 through Stoney Middleton.

This document looks at the current style and usage of the A623 from Calver Cross Roads, through Stoney Middleton village (The Avenue and The Dale) to the junction of the B6521 to Eyam with the objective of reducing the current 50, 40 and 30 MPH speed limits to 40, 30 and 20 MPH respectively.

The document will look at a range of individual issues over some 2.39 kilometres of highway which collectively demonstrate the unique nature of Stoney Middleton and the urgent need for a reduction in speed limits.

Background:

National guidance for setting local speed limits is set out in Department of Transport Circular 01/2013 'Setting Local Speed Limits'. In addition, Department of Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/04 'Village Speed Limits' gives further information on how limits should be applied in villages.



The Avenue - Calver Crossroad to Moon Inn (looking East)

Circular 01/2013 states the following objectives:

- Achieving local speed limits that better reflect the needs of all road users, not just motorised vehicles
- Speed management strategies that seek to protect local community life
- 30mph speed limit should be the norm in villages (in accordance with Government policy)

The circular identifies the importance of factors such as road geometry and engineering, composition of road users and road environment including levels of roadside development.

Transport Advisory Leaflet 1/04 indicates:

Generally, a rule of 20 or more houses over a length of 600m will define a village for a 30mph limit unless the character of the village is different. The leaflet also indicates that extra allowance should be made for other key buildings, such as a church, shop or school.

This document will demonstrate that the A623 through Stoney Middleton satisfies the collective tests needed to ensure the provision of reduced speed limits.

Stoney Middleton is a village split by the volume, size and excessive speed of vehicles using the A623

The speed limit from Calver Crossroads in Calver towards Stoney Middleton is 40 MPH up to the narrowest part of the village, just before The Moon Inn.

At this point the topography and nature of the built environment, including the width of the A623, which narrows significantly are key considerations.

The speed limit reduces to 30 MPH and this limit continues through to the far side of the Lover's Leap lay-by.

Nevertheless, the current 40 and 30 MPH speed limits and absence of a safe pedestrian crossing reflects the emphasis upon the needs of vehicle users over and above the needs of residents/pedestrians and local community life.

To access village amenities, residents and visitors are required to negotiate consistently fast-flowing traffic along the A623, which is particularly hazardous for pedestrians.

There are important village amenities located on opposite sides of the road:

South Side	North Side
Playing field (football pitch) <i>Also proposed site for a community building</i>	Hairdressers
Children's play area & tennis court	St Martin's Church
Community allotments	Boot factory
Community orchard	The Wesleyan Reform Chapel
The Moon Inn	Fish and Chip shop
2 Butchers' shops	Indian restaurant
Village School	Commercial laundry
Various business workplaces	Garage
<i>Proposed site for a Heritage Centre/cafe</i>	Access to village trails, climbing and caving

The village population is spread along both sides the A623 so it is necessary for all residents to cross the road at some point to access the full range of facilities and to do simple things like catch a bus to school or post a letter.

Consequently, taking into account the above interactive elements and the different safety risks associated with crossing both along The Avenue and The Dale, a reduction in the speed limits is wholly justifiable, even taking into account that a 20 MPH zone is unusual on a classified A road.

Analysis of route from Calver Crossroads along The Avenue to just before The Moon Inn

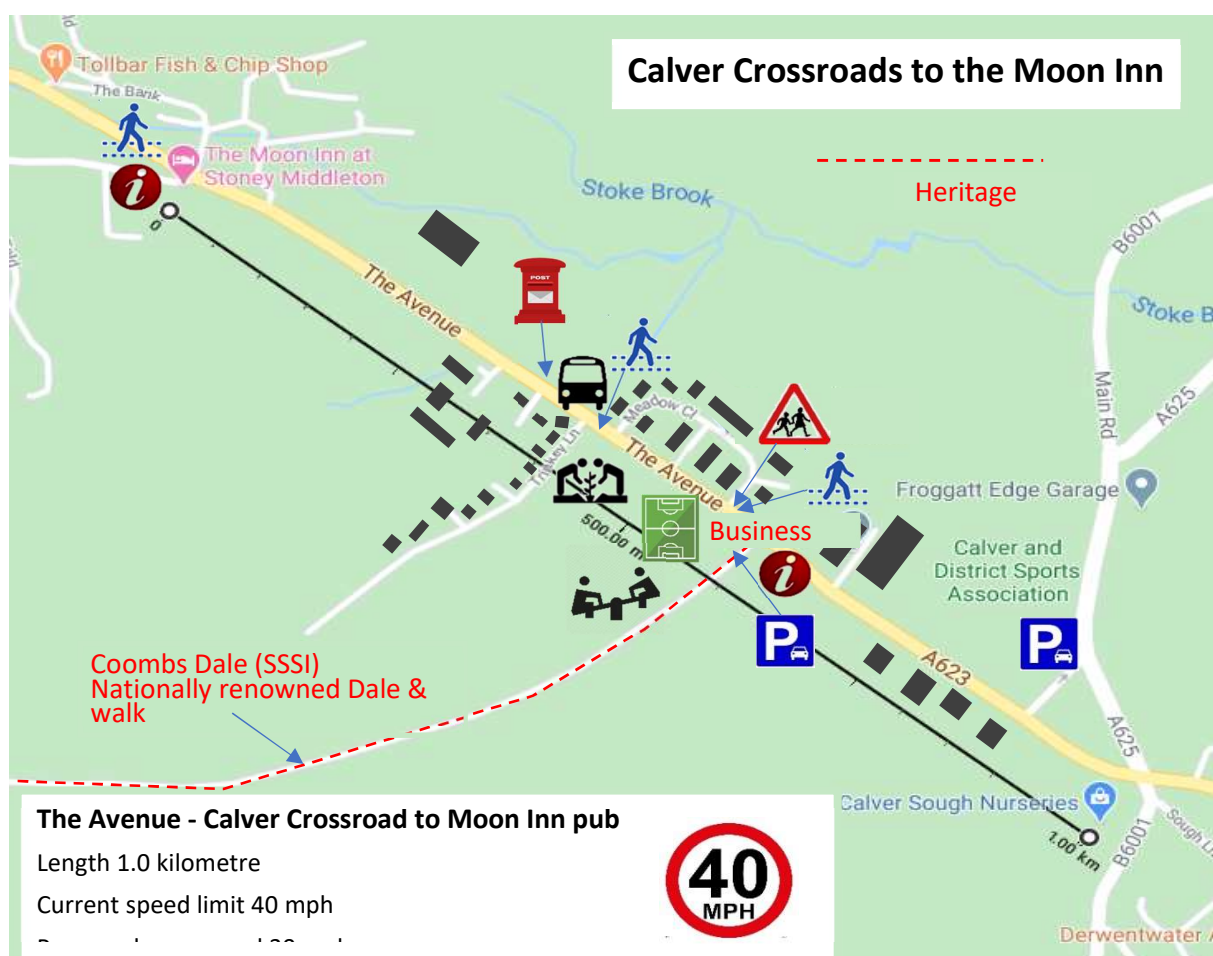
The first 400m of the route, to the Coombs Dale turning is in Calver Parish.

From the Crossroads, the right-hand side of the route is typified by narrow pavements (average width 1.45 meters) when assessed against Inclusive Mobility (2002) that advises that ideally the width of a footway should be 1.8 metres to facilitate two people in wheelchairs to pass each other comfortably.

The narrowness of the pavement along such a busy road is intimidating to pedestrians who are forced to be very close to the busy road and within touching distance of vehicles including a high volume of LGV's some of which exceed the 40 MPH speed limit.

The situation on the left-hand side is significantly worse with a lack of pavements in places and dangerously narrow and unusable pavements in others (70 cm wide). Unsuitable pavements, the lack of central refuges and the lack of a pedestrian crossing form the basis of this submission.

Travelling West from the Calver Crossroads, along the left-hand side of the A623, up to the 30 MPH limit there are:



- 4 family sized houses with roadside access and egress; and
- Gated access to two fields; before
- The turning into Coombs Dale/Stoney Middleton Playing field.

Coombs Dale is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a popular bridleway and walk with vehicular access to fields and for maintenance and inspection of the Dale, waterways and industrial workings.

The playing field can be accessed on foot via a concessionary footpath and also via a stile on the A623 adjacent to Meadow Close. There is also a car park for about 20 vehicles. The car park is very well used by residents and visitors accessing playing field facilities and also the walk along Coombs Dale. (It is proposed that the playing field will be the site for a new village hall and this will increase both pedestrian and vehicular use of this community space). After the playing field there is:

- The narrow turning into the parking area for the village allotments and orchard; before
- The turning into Trinkey Lane with 8 family sized houses; and then
- 5 family sized homes with roadside access and egress, in the middle of which is;
- Gated access to a field and
- A bus stop; before
- The turning to Avenue Close with 8 family homes

Travelling West from Calver Crossroads, along the right hand-side of the A623 up to the 30 MPH limit there is:

- A one-way turning towards Calver Sough; then
- A blind right-hand bend before the turning to the Industrial estate with approximately 12 units employing more than 60 people; followed by
- Gated access to a field; before
- The first of 2 turnings into Meadow Close/Edge View with 29 family sized houses and 6 bungalows for older residents
- Between the 2 turnings there is a walkway opposite the stile into the playing field
- A post box is situated just past the second turning into Meadow Close together with a bus stop; then
- The turning to Stoney Middleton Hall; followed by
- The turning to Middleton Cottages and a climbing barn/bunk house with car parking

The volume, speed and size of vehicles travelling in both directions along the A623 significantly compromises visibility and safety for vehicles turning onto the A623 from both sides of this stretch of road.

With no crossing facilities, pedestrians find themselves dashing across the road to avoid fast oncoming vehicles from both directions. Crossing the road to simply post a letter or catch a bus presents a real daily hazard and compromises village life.

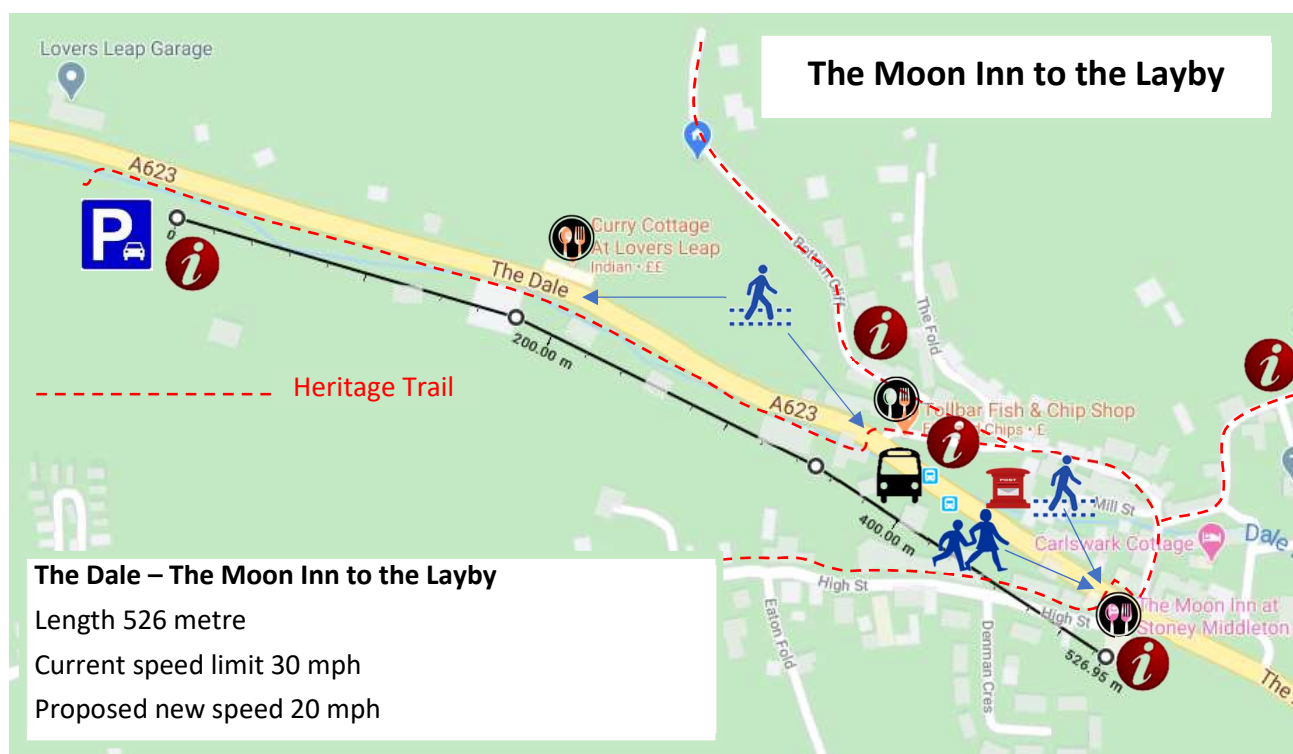
Moreover, the number of houses on or only accessed via the A623 along this stretch exceeds the criteria for a 30 MPH sign in accordance with Government guidelines.

Travelling West from the 30 MPH sign along The Dale

The width of the A623 at the narrowest part of the village in The Dale is 5.8 meters (at The Toll Bar). The usual width of a single lane is 3.65m or 12 feet; hence the lack of central road markings. Whilst there is an argument that narrow roads naturally reduce the speed of traffic this is not the case in Stoney Middleton.

Vehicles speed through when they perceive they have a clear way and, when there is oncoming traffic, larger vehicles and LGV's have to mount the narrow footpaths to pass and this presents a real risk of harm to pedestrians.

Travelling along The Dale and considering both sides of the road simultaneously there is:



- Right-hand roadside vehicular access and egress to 2 properties; and opposite to the left
- A blind turning to an access lane to properties on Denman Crescent; followed immediately by
- The crossroads with High Street and The Nook.

This is a particularly dangerous junction with an oblique left hand turning to High Street and a blind entrance to The Moon Inn car park and to the right a blind, narrow, dog-leg turning onto The Nook. Over the last two years, there have been three vehicular collisions with bollards outside the hairdresser's caused by a combination of the narrowness of the road, inappropriate parking and excessive driving speeds. Please note, the photograph below was taken before the last remaining bollard was demolished.

There are shops at both sides of the A623 at this point with very narrow pavements. After this, in quick succession, there is:

- A left hand turning to the parking area for the butcher's shop and one family sized house; and opposite to the right
- 2 vehicular entrances to a total of 6 family sized houses, a post box and; on both sides of the road



- bus stops; after which to the left
- A vehicular entrance to a parking area for 3 family sized houses; and opposite to the right
- The turning to The Bank/Mill Lane and Chip Shop which is often a pinch-point for vehicular parking and damage. (Over the last 12 months the chip shop has been damaged by vehicles 4 times); followed by
- A number of vehicular entrances to family sized homes, on both sides of the A623, including a car parking area to the right-hand side shared by a number of properties in The Dale; also, to the right
- An Indian Restaurant attracting road-side car parking; and
- A vehicular entrance to a business premises (laundry) and beyond to the left
- The turning to the lay-by which is very well used by residents, customers (Indian restaurant) lorry drivers, walkers, cavers and climbers including many children accessing outdoor activities and heritage trails; and to the right
- The steep driveway to a family sized home; followed by
- Turnings into Heath's (Lovers Leap) Garage

After which the speed limit increases from 30 to 50 MPH.

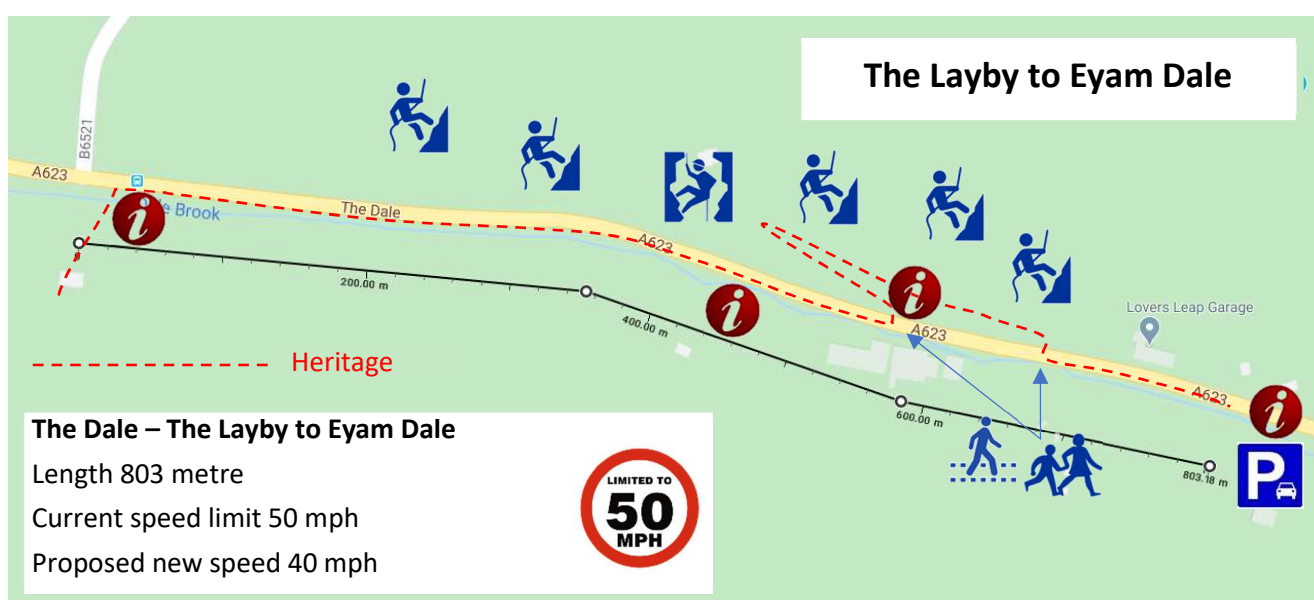
Traveling along this section of road encounters:

- A gated entrance/stile to a new footpath through an old quarry site; and on the right
- Access to a 170-acre site of special scientific interest (SSSI) including caving systems and climbing routes; and on the left

- Turnings to industrial units, a site with full planning permission for a significant Visitor/Heritage Centre with a shop, café and parking for 32 cars and a separate building for an Apart-hotel with 49 apartments and parking for approximately 100 cars. There will also be an agricultural engineering business on site

The volume, speed and size of vehicles travelling in both directions along The Dale significantly compromises visibility and safety for vehicles turning off or onto the A623 from both sides of this stretch of road. With no crossing facilities, pedestrians find themselves dashing across the road to avoid fast oncoming vehicles.

Walking along the narrow pavements is also hazardous as LGV's regularly mount the curb to negotiate their way past oncoming vehicles. Crossing the road is undertaken by hundreds of walkers, climbers, cavers and especially children which presents a significant daily hazard and impacts on community life and enjoyment.



Case for reducing the speed limits:

The A623 is a major trunk road and is heavily used by cars, vans and LGVs. The 40 and 30 MPH speed limits through the village should be just that; maximum speed limits. However, DCC and the Derbyshire Police Casualty Reduction Enforcement Support Team (CREST) have provided recent data to demonstrate that these limits are regularly and excessively exceeded. See Appendix A.

Also, despite the A623 severing Stoney Middleton there are dropped curves but essentially no safe crossing points for pedestrians and limited speed reduction measures. There is one flashing 30 MPH warning sign at the Western approach to the village and some white road markings but these are so faded by heavy vehicular use that they are ineffectual. This provides clear evidence that the needs of motorised vehicles are prioritised over the needs of pedestrians and residents and this compromises community life.

Furthermore, the visibility splay of some of the access roads in the village (normally 4.5m x 120m) are seriously deficient and present a hazard to vehicles turning onto the A623.

In addition to this, traffic-related pollution is a significant concern for Stoney Middleton due to the volume of traffic pumping out exhaust fumes. According to The Clean Air Strategy air pollution is the fourth biggest threat to public health in the UK after cancer, obesity and heart disease. Pollution is a particular concern in The Dale (limestone gorge) where pollutants disperse very slowly due to the narrow, steep sided landscape. However, the slower a vehicle travels the less pollution it emits providing an unquestionable case for reducing the speed limits in the village.

It is therefore proposed that the current speed limit from Calver Crossroads along The Avenue is reduced from 40 MPH to 30 MPH and the speed limit along The Dale is reduced from 30 MPH to a 20 MPH zone to the outskirts of the village. After which it is proposed that the speed limit should return to 30MPH increasing to 40 MPH beyond Heath's (Lovers Leap) Garage and 50 MPH only after the turning to Eyam,

Whilst 20 MPH zones on trunk roads may currently be unusual the special nature of The Dale, the narrow width of the trunk road, narrow footpaths and the negative impact on the community caused by motorised vehicles make this a case worthy of serious consideration, particularly as the impact on journey time is likely to be slight.

Appendix A

Government advice published at <https://www.gov.uk/speed-limits> states that:

You must not drive faster than the speed limit for the type of road and your type of vehicle. **The speed limit is the absolute maximum** - it doesn't mean it's safe to drive at this speed in all conditions.

The information given below demonstrates that a significant number of motorists travelling along the A623 exceed the speed limits set for the road.

Data Loggers

Derbyshire County Council (DCC) provided data loggers for a three-week period in May/June, 2018 to monitor the speed of vehicles through Stoney Middleton. Monitors were placed on The Dale within the narrow part of the village (30 mph) and The Avenue (40mph speed limit).

The Dale (30mph)

Period monitored	Number of vehicles	Number of speeding vehicles	% of cars speeding (both directions)
*15 – 21 May, 2018	8845	5022	57%
04 – 10 June, 2018	9606	6548	68%
13 – 19 June, 2018	9233	6317	68%

The Avenue (40 mph)

Period monitored	Number of vehicles	Number of speeding vehicles	% of cars speeding (both directions)
*15 – 21 May, 2018	9586	1171	12%
04 – 10 June, 2018	10205	669	6%
13 – 19 June, 2018	9917	670	6%

* During the first week of the monitoring period there were roadworks along The Dale which explains the variance in recorded speeds.

Essentially, 64% of cars were speeding as they passed the monitor at the Dale end of the village and 8% at The Avenue. From the aggregated figures provided by DCC it can be deduced that every day during this period around **7000 vehicles per day were exceeding the speed limits**.

CREST (Casualty Reduction Enforcement Support Team) Data

CREST has identified Stoney Middleton as a Community Concern Site and undertakes significantly more speed checks than is normal for most areas across Derbyshire.

The site of the speed camera is the layby in The Dale, Stoney Middleton with the camera facing towards Calver and the van facing towards Tideswell. However, mobile enforcement is able to capture data in both directions. The data for checks undertaken between January, 2018 and June, 2020 is set out over:

Appendix A cont.

The Dale (speed limit 30 mph)

Date of speed check	Length of time of speed check	Number of offences/notices issued
01/04/2018	3 hours 40 minutes	58
14/04/2018	1 hour 51 minutes	45
04/03/2019	3 hours 40 minutes	26
25/03/2019	2 hours 40 minutes	35
15/07/2019	3 hours 40 minutes	24
02/05/2020	1 hour 50 minutes	20
27/06/2020	1 hour 51 minutes	16
19/07/2020	3 hours 40 minutes	29
08/11/2020	Not known	43

A consequence of vehicles exceeding the speed limits is the impact on the health and well-being of residents and visitors. The World Health Organisation rank air pollution and traffic noise as the 2 main threats to public health. The faster a vehicle travels the greater the threat to wellbeing. Petrol and diesel fumes increase with speed and, similarly, road traffic noise grows significantly with the speed of passing vehicles. The Welsh 20MPH Task Force Group has found that, at this speed, traffic noise reduces by 3 decibels enabling people to more easily listen to each other and sleep better.

Reducing speed limits in Stoney Middleton would reduce toxic fumes and vehicle noise and provide a massive air quality and public health gain for residents and visitors.