

Radford Semele Community Speedwatch Annual Report

Community Speedwatch is a national initiative whereby proactive members of local communities, with the support of the local police, record details of speeding vehicles using an approved detection device. Registered owners of vehicles exceeding the speed limit are contacted by letter warning them of the consequences of speeding with repeat offenders receiving a “knock on the door” from a Police Officer irrespective of where in the country they live. The whole exercise is designed to raise awareness of the consequences of speeding and act as a deterrent against breaking speed limits.

In the winter of 2020, Radford Semele Parish Council voted to set up a local scheme with the aid, support and advice of PSCO Ed King (aka “our local bobby” and a member of the Safer Neighbourhood Team) and the Warwickshire Police Road Safety Unit.

We set about seeking volunteers and with the generous assistance of the FoRGE and the Sports & Social Club newsletters as well as a social media campaign we initially established a team of nine, including three Parish Councillors – now expanded to twelve including four Councillors. Following basic police checks and roadside safety training for all volunteers, three of us received in depth training from the Warwickshire Police Road Safety Unit in the use of the speed detection device – an Ultralyte 100™ LASER hand held unit. The advanced training entitles trained individuals to lead teams of three volunteers conducting roadside checks. Warwickshire police also provided us with roadside signs (to be displayed advertising our presence) and a quantity of Hi-Viz jackets. The Parish Council funded further jackets with “Radford Semele Community Speedwatch” printed on the back.

Speedwatch activities were suspended nationally during the worst of the COVID-19 crisis but were restarted mid 2021 by which time the Parish Council had agreed to fund the purchase of our own LASER speed detector (so we would not be reliant upon the availability of a loan device from Warwickshire Police).

We began to field teams later in the year, the first being on 28 September 2021 following which we reported four vehicles exceeding the 30 mph speed limit on Southam Road by 5 mph or more. Since then, we have run twelve sessions in various locations aiming for at least one a week (except during holiday periods and during bad weather). We are hoping that more volunteers will receive police training in the operation of the LASER in the near future so we can field teams with greater regularity.

One issue was that we have discovered is that the Laser device “Ultralyte 100™” is somewhat misnamed and a better name would be “Quiteheavy 100” so it is quite a challenge to hold it steady for an extended period of time (any movement during speed measurement results in an error). The Parish Council agreed to fund purchase of a custom support tripod which had its first outing on the morning of 25 April with great success, nearly doubling the error free speed readings recorded. On this occasion, nobody passed us at excessive speed which serves to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Community Speedwatch Initiative as a deterrent.