

# Request for the Introduction of a 20mph Speed Limit Through Rowney Green

## *Assessment in Support of the Request – September 2023*

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### **1. Introduction**

To ensure greater safety to pedestrians and cyclists the Department of Transport circular 01/2013 entitled “Setting local speed limits” (January 2013) invites traffic authorities to keep their speed limits under review to changing circumstances and to consider the introduction of more 20 mph limit zones over time, in urban areas and built-up village streets that are primarily residential.

Drawing on the Governments guidance and advice, together with their objectives, the Rowney Green Association (RGA) at its meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023 agreed to request Worcestershire County Council to consider a reduction in the speed limit operating through Rowney Green to 20 mph. Association members consider such a reduction would deliver actual vehicle speeds that are safer and more appropriate in recognition of the road features of Rowney Green Lane, especially in the central built-up part of the village, and the particular mix of road users. RGA view the 20mph speed limit as a measure which would encourage drivers’ own assessment of what is a safe speed to travel along the Lane especially by those drivers new to the area.

### **2. Purpose of the Paper**

The purpose of the paper is to set out an assessment in support of a case for a 20mph limit replacing the current 30mph limit area through Rowney Green in order to achieve a safer highway environment, and improvement in the quality of life for our community.

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### **3. Literature Review**

The following documents have been reviewed and utilised in the preparation of this paper to ensure that best practice is followed:

- Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 – Guidance on “Setting local Speed Limits”.
- Department for Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet (TAL) 9/99 – “20 mph speed limits and zones”.

### **4. Background and Context**

This paper provides an assessment of the features of Rowney Green Lane and its various user groups with a view to a speed limit reduction. Our particular request is for Rowney Green Lane to become a road subject to a 20-mph limit with the requisite signage and no additional traffic calming measures (as invariably needed in the creation of 20 mph zones).

The application for 20mph speed limits is set out in TAL 9/99, indicating it is for the Local Highway Authority to determine whether speed limits by zones or by signs only\* should be used. The Authority will need to decide whether the proposed type of speed limit is:

- Appropriate to the area; and
- Beneficial in road safety terms.

Equally important is that the form of speed limit chosen does not require unreasonable levels of enforcement by the police. \* In addition, 20mph speed limits by signs alone would be most appropriate where 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds are already low and further traffic calming measures are not needed.

## **5. 20mph Speed Limit Assessment**

The assessment provides the detail on the application set out above, together with the Guidance set out in DfT 01/2013.

Established practice is to set speed limits in accordance with the DfT Circular 01/2013 – “Setting Speed Limits”. Section 3 of the Circular states that:

*“The underlying aim should be to achieve a ‘safe’ distribution of speeds. The key factors that should be taken into account in any decisions on local speed limits are:*

- *history of collisions;*
- *road geometry and engineering;*
- *road function;*
- *composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users);*
- *existing traffic speeds; and*
- *road environment.*

*While these factors need to be considered for all road types, they may be weighted differently in urban or rural areas. The impact on community and environmental outcomes should also be considered.”*

The key factors to be considered in the assessment of Rowney Green Lane in its built -up area follow.

### History of Accidents

There is no history of personal injury accidents (PIA’s) along Rowney Green Lane over the last 10 years.

### Road Geometry and Engineering

Rowney Green Lane is of variable width and more particularly at several points only of a width for single vehicle passage. There are a number of” blind “bends and these with the aforementioned narrow road sections are often without footpaths. There are no footpaths along much of the length of Rowney Green Lane and those in its built-up locality are sporadic and of varying widths. Many of the properties which adjoin the highway have driveways with no visibility splays to permit a clear view by the property resident of the road to be entered. A number of properties have no driveways or an insufficient driveway such that road parking of vehicles is necessary, sometimes with parking across both footpath and highway. There is no street lighting in Rowney Green so for many months of the year residents’ use of the busy village hall means they will be walking on the highway in darkness.

A series of photographs are attached at the end of the Report which demonstrates the Road Geometry and Engineering Features of Rowney Green Lane.

### Road Function

Primarily Rowney Green Lane is for local access purposes, although on occasions when the Birmingham Road\Redditch Road between Alvechurch and Redditch is subject to road works then Rowney Green Lane is identified and promoted as the diversion route.

### Composition of Road Users

With over 190 residences in Rowney Green as the (not to scale) map of properties at the end of the Report shows, many are situated on both sides of Rowney Green Lane itself. Plainly many of the residents will at times be either pedestrians, or car drivers using Rowney Green Lane for business or social purposes, often in the larger towns and villages beyond. Rowney Green itself has no retail outlets. In the absence of continuous pavements, at any time and in varying combinations road users (*those actually on the highway*) will comprise:

- pedestrians including persons with children in pushchairs, dog walkers and people who visit Rowney Green as a centre for attractive countryside leisure walks;
- horses and their riders (there are many equestrian centres of various scales on or near roads leading into the built-up part of the village);
- many cyclists including those with a leisure interest and club members using a variety of racing machines;
- buses using Rowney Green Lane in mornings and afternoons providing services for school children and for public use into Bromsgrove and Redditch;
- other heavy vehicles including lorries and vans making deliveries to Rowney Green properties and often parking on bends where a delivery is due to a located property; and
- agricultural vehicles including tractors and trailers passing through Rowney Green,
- and car drivers- local and visiting.

### Speeds

The most recent assessment of vehicle speeds conducted on Rowney Green Lane between 23<sup>rd</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, using data strips, showed a mean speed of traffic travelling southbound of 24 mph and that travelling northbound of 25 mph. These figures are already at or very near the 24-mph figure regarded by the DfT circular as the target for the likely effective introduction of a 20-mph speed limit through signing alone and the achievement of general compliance with that limit. See also findings from the Atkins et al study (20 mph research study- process and impact evaluation report, November 2018) which adds support to the signed- only 20 mph speed limit model being most appropriate where the mean speed of vehicles is already at or below 24 mph.

### Environmental Considerations

Rowney Green residents over the years have been subjected to a number of environmental issues, namely:

- Air Pollution;
- Noise Pollution; and
- Community Severance.

It is well researched to show that cutting speed can significantly reduce emissions of other pollutants, particularly reducing NOx and particulate matter (PM), and in addition there are safety gains to be had from slower driving which are now indisputable. A number of local highway authorities have acknowledged the link between the speed of traffic and air pollution. The residents of Rowney Green would wish to see a reduction in the speed limit to reduce air pollution through the village.

Research findings also show that traffic noise can have a serious impact on people's health. There is a measurable link between traffic noise and speed, whereby in urban areas with speeds of between 20 and 35 mph, reducing speeds by 6 mph would cut noise levels by up to 40%. As a consequence, reducing speed would have a measurable effect in reducing noise pollution through our village.

Finally, vehicles' speed can lead to an increase in transport related community severance. This is the cumulative negative impact of the presence of transport infrastructure or motorized traffic on the perceptions, behavior, and wellbeing of people who use the surrounding areas or need to make trips along or across that infrastructure or by being close to traffic.

### Summary

**Table 1** below takes the current guidance as set out in DfT 1/2013 and summarises the assessment review to justify a 20mph speed limit.

**Table 1 – Summary of DfT Circular 01/2013 Justification for a 20mph Speed Limit on Rowney Green Lane.**

Existing Speed	30mph	Requested Speed Limit	20mph
Accident History	No history of Personal Injury Accidents over the last 10 years.		
Road Geometry	The Rowney Green Lane road geometry does not meet current design standards for a 30mph road in this location. There are places of narrowing of the carriageway and on-street parking along Rowney Green Lane. There is no pedestrian footway provision along much of the length of Rowney Green Lane. There is no footpath or highway lighting at any point.		
Road Function	Rowney Green Lane is for local access purposes.		
Non-Motorised Users	Pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian movements are prevalent.		
Speed	Current traffic speeds are already at or very near the 24-mph figure regarded by the DfT circular 01/2013 as the target for the likely effective introduction of a 20-mph speed limit through signing alone and the achievement of general compliance with that limit.		
Environment	In the main part of the village there are houses on both sides of Rowney Green Lane. As such there are currently impacts on residents from air quality, traffic noise and community severance.		

## **6. Conclusions**

The assessment provided above shows that a reduction in the speed limit to 20 mph supports the underlying principles set out in the Department of Transport's circular 01/2013 Paragraph 29 that:

*"A principal aim in determining appropriate speed limits should, therefore, be to provide a consistent message between speed limit and what the road looks like, and for changes in speed limit to be reflective of changes in the road layout and characteristics."*

Together with the appropriate factors for consideration as given in the Circular's Paragraph 30 and examined in part 5 of this assessment .

In conclusion, the Rowney Green Association asserts that the road features of Rowney Green Lane in the built-up area are of a kind, when combined with the current number and variety of road users, that powerfully evidences the case for the introduction of a 20-mph speed limit.

Additionally, the number of road users to include pedestrians will grow in the near future arising from the approved development of nearly 50 new dwellings at Bordesley Hall, situated at the junction of Rowney Green Lane with the Holloway. Some of these properties will be of the five to six bed type each with parking spaces for multiple vehicles.

The Rowney Green Association will be ready to provide further information as may be required, by Worcestershire County Council Officers and Members in considering this case for a reduction in the Rowney Green village speed limit to 20 mph, and in the consultation with other bodies possibly involved in the process of making of the necessary new speed limit order.

**Rowney Green Association September 2023**

Travelling Southwards :



**approach to built- up part of RG showing obscured bend by Orchard Cottage**



**lane begins to narrow by Bleaklow**



**narrow pavement , narrow road by Cherry Tree Farm for single vehicle passing.**



**4 - road narrows further by East Leigh through to Wythwood**



**5 -- road narrows further by East Leigh through to Wythwood**





**6 - road effectively for a single vehicle by Highfield Cottage through to Valley View Cottage**



**7 - road effectively for a single vehicle by Highfield Cottage through to Valley View Cottage**



**hedges and no pavement pose pedestrian risk in road by Lancaster House**



**pavement of varying width and some of-necessity on -road car parking by The Nest**



**approach to blind bend close to Woodbine Cottage.**



**road becomes narrower on passing Woodbine Cottage**



**Travelling Northwards:**

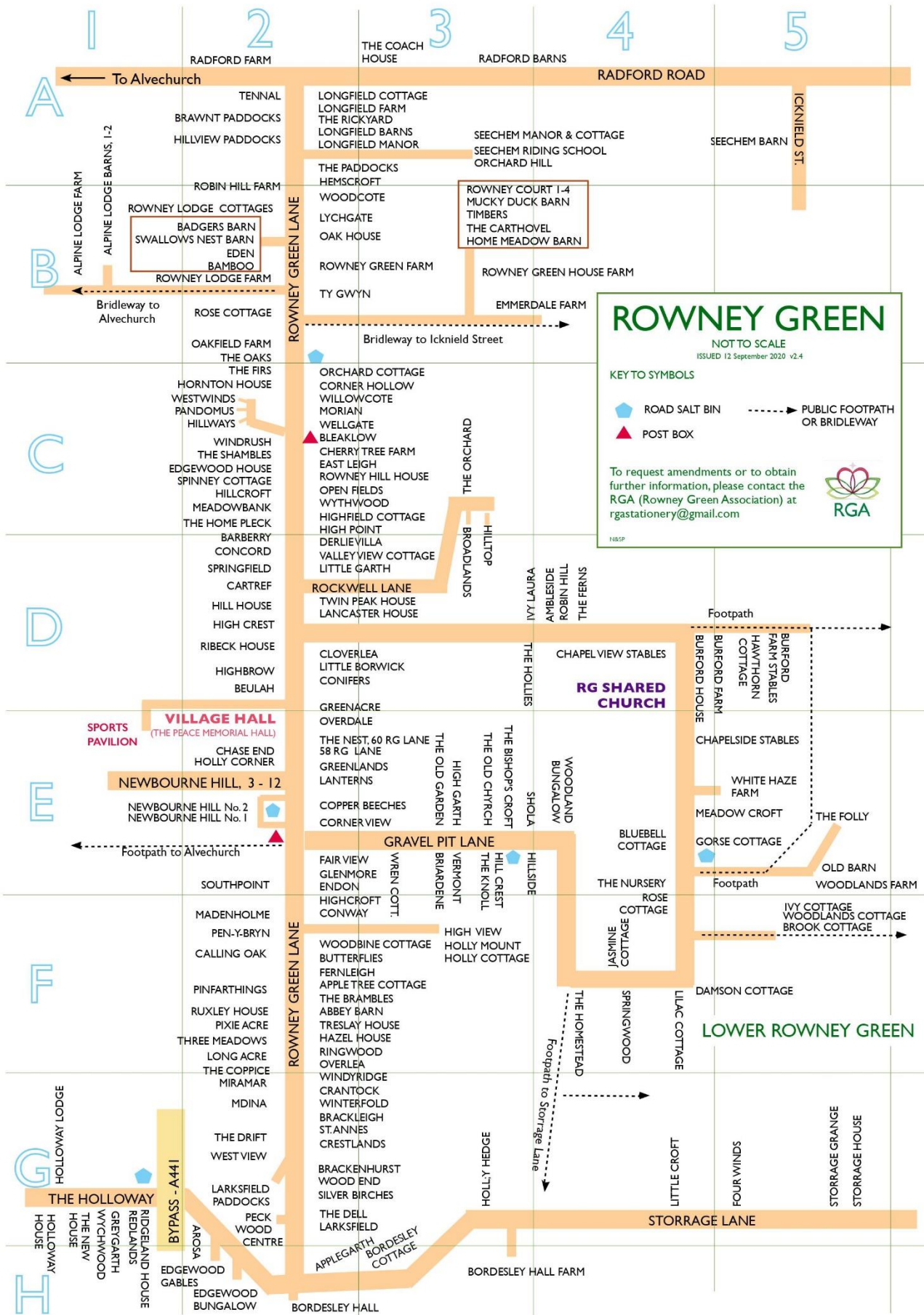




**bend approach by Pen y Bryn**



**road narrowing by Meadowbank**



1 RADFORD FARM 2 THE COACH HOUSE 3 RADFORD BARN 4 RADFORD ROAD 5 ICKNIELD ST

A To Alvechurch TENNAL LONGFIELD COTTAGE LONGFIELD FARM THE RICKYARD LONGFIELD BARN LONGFIELD MANOR SEECEM MANOR & COTTAGE SEECEM RIDING SCHOOL ORCHARD HILL SEECEM BARN

B ALPINE LODGE FARM ALPINE LODGE BARN 1-2 BRAWNT PADDOCKS HILLVIEW PADDOCKS THE PADDOCKS HEMSCROFT WOODCOTE ROWNEY COURT 1-4 MUCKY DUCK BARN TIMBERS THE CARTHVEL HOME MEADOW BARN ROBIN HILL FARM

C ROWNEY LODGE COTTAGES BADGERS BARN SWALLOW'S NEST BARN EDEN BAMBOO ROWNEY LODGE FARM ROWNEY GREEN FARM ROWNEY GREEN HOUSE FARM TY GWYN EMMERDALE FARM

D OAKFIELD FARM THE OAKS THE FIRS HORNTON HOUSE WESTWINDS PANDOMUS HILLWAYS WINDRUSH THE SHAMBLES EDGEWOOD HOUSE SPINNEY COTTAGE HILLCROFT MEADOWBANK THE HOME PLECK BARBERRY CONCORD SPRINGFIELD CARTREF HILL HOUSE HIGH CREST RIBECK HOUSE HIGHBROW BEULAH

E VILLAGE HALL (THE PEACE MEMORIAL HALL) CHASE END HOLLY CORNER NEWBOURNE HILL, 3 - 12 NEWBOURNE HILL No. 2 NEWBOURNE HILL No. 1

F GRAVEL PIT LANE FAIR VIEW GLENMORE ENDON HIGHCROFT CONWAY SOUTHPOINT MADENHOLME PEN-Y-BRYN CALLING OAK

G WOODLAND BUNGALOW THE BISHOP'S CROFT THE OLD CHURCH THE KNOLL HILLSIDE THE NURSERY ROSE COTTAGE JASMINE COTTAGE THE HOMESTEAD SPRINGWOOD LILAC COTTAGE DAMSON COTTAGE

H HOLLOWAY LODGE THE HOLLOWAY HOUSE THE NEW HOUSE GREYGARTH WYCHWOOD RIDGELAND HOUSE REDLANDS AROSA EDGEWOOD GABLES EDGEWOOD BUNGALOW

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ROCKWELL LANE TWIN PEAK HOUSE LANCASTER HOUSE CLOVERLEA LITTLE BORWICK CONIFERS GREENACRE OVERDALE THE NEST, 60 RG LANE 58 RG LANE GREENLANDS LANTERNS COPPER BEECHES CORNER VIEW

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