

SPOKES - South West Hertfordshire Cycling Group



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SPOKES is organising a meeting on **Thursday 12th February 2009** from **7.30–9.30 pm** at the **Newton Price Centre, Grosvenor Road, Watford WD17 2QT.**

The theme of this year's meeting is **Safer Cycling in people-friendly neighbourhoods.**

We are once again inviting district and county councillors to the meeting, as well as relevant council and partner staff, other interested parties and our members. We very much hope you will be able to attend and would welcome your input into the meeting.

The question of the safety of our roads, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, is an important one. Parents cite vehicle speeds and volume as the reason why they do not allow their children to walk or cycle. Accident statistics show that the UK has one of the worst records in Europe as far as deaths of pedestrians are concerned. It is no wonder that people are reluctant to walk and cycle and yet this is just what is necessary, if we are to tackle the problems of traffic congestion, global warming and obesity.

One way to make our roads safer is to reduce the default speed limit from 30mph to 20mph. Research has shown that a pedestrian hit at 20mph has a 95% chance of survival, whereas this percentage drops to 45% if the pedestrian is hit at 30mph. Not only are the roads safer where speed limits are lower, but they are also pleasanter places to be. People feel encouraged to walk and cycle and so there are more people about on the streets. Communities become more vibrant and cohesive, as people get to know one another and care about their community. Noise and air pollution are reduced.

These are strong arguments for the reduction of the default speed limit and already a number of local authorities around the country, including Portsmouth, Norwich and Oxford, have adopted it. It should be noted that with a 20mph default speed limit the 30mph speed limit could still be retained where deemed appropriate, for example on through routes or arterial roads.

At the meeting in February we will explore the issue in greater depth and consider how the 20 mph speed limit might be implemented on residential roads in Hertfordshire. We are hoping that Rod King from the organisation **20's Plenty For Us** will speak at the meeting about his experience in working with communities to implement 20mph as the default speed limit for residential roads.

Please let me know soon whether you are able to attend our open meeting. My email address is as follows: rogerbangs@aol.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Roger Bangs
Chairman of Spokes