Holcombe Parish Council
Speeding in Holcombe – Options Going Forward

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1. Executive Summary

Speeding through Holcombe, particularly on Holcombe Hill, has been a persistent concern for residents over a number of years. The Parish Council has previously taken a range of proportionate and lawful steps to understand and address the issue, including speed surveys, Community Speedwatch, a Speed Indicator Device, and most recently the purchase and deployment of an Auto Speed Watch (ASW) device.

These actions have demonstrated that:
- Vehicles do exceed the speed limit in the village, some persistently and at relatively high speeds.
- The problem is real, but long-standing and not easily resolved.
- The Parish Council's ability to secure sustained enforcement or major highway intervention is limited by statutory powers, evidential thresholds, and external resourcing priorities.

This paper provides:
- a brief recap of where the Parish Council now sits, and
- a clear set of options for how it may wish to proceed.

It is acknowledged that speeding is unlikely ever to be eliminated entirely. The realistic objective is risk reduction, deterrence, and reassurance, and to ensure the Parish Council can demonstrate that it is acting responsibly and proportionately.

2. Position to Date (Summary)

- Community concern about speeding has been persistent.
- Previous interventions (Community Speedwatch, SID, commissioned surveys) had limited or diminishing impact.
- The Parish Council lacked up-to-date, objective data.
- An Auto Speed Watch device was therefore purchased to generate intelligence and inform a data-led approach.

Since deployment:
- The ASW device has required technical optimisation.
- It now produces usable data, though with limitations:
- downhill traffic only
- daylight operation
- weather and seasonal dependency
- Data confirms that speeding occurs, including repeat and high-end speeding.
- Data has been shared with the local police, but has not resulted in significant enforcement activity, likely due to resourcing and prioritisation.

3. Key Constraints and Realities

Before setting out options, it is important to recognise several constraints:

- The Parish Council has no enforcement powers.
- Police and Highway Authority intervention thresholds are high.
- None of the available tools guarantee long-term behaviour change.

Any solution will involve trade-offs between:
- cost
- data quality
- deterrent effect
- credibility with external agencies

Additional Context on the Limits of Further Data Collection

It is important to recognise that generating additional or more robust data does not, in itself, guarantee action by external agencies. Police and Highway Authority decisions are driven by statutory responsibilities, competing demands on limited resources, and prioritisation frameworks that place significant weight on recorded collision and injury (KSI) data. Given Holcombe's low KSI profile, further data collection may not result in enforcement activity or highway intervention. Any investment in additional data should therefore be understood primarily as a means of strengthening the Parish Council's own understanding, supporting transparent and evidence-led decision-making, and demonstrating a responsible and proportionate response to community concern, rather than as an expectation of external action.

4. Options Available to the Parish Council

Option 1 – Continue with Auto Speed Watch (Status Quo)

Description
Continue operating the existing Auto Speed Watch device in its current location, using it primarily as a deterrent and intelligence-gathering tool.

What it provides
- Identification of repeat and high-end speeders
- Indicative speed data over time
- Visible sign of Parish Council action

Advantages
- Already owned
- Low ongoing cost
- Minimal volunteer burden
- Reassurance to residents
- Can continue sharing intelligence with police

Limitations
- Not evidential for enforcement
- Directional (downhill only)
- Daylight and weather dependent
- Does not provide full traffic volume data
- Limited external agency response to date

Overall
A proportionate baseline measure, but unlikely on its own to materially change behaviour.

Option 2 – Speed Indicator Devices (SID / VAS)

Option 2A – Basic Speed Indicator Device

Description
Deploy a Speed Indicator Device that displays a driver's actual speed, typically using colour or warning messages to indicate compliance or non-compliance.

What it provides
- Immediate feedback to drivers
- Visual deterrence
- Simple behavioural nudge

Advantages
- Well understood and widely accepted
- Immediate impact on some drivers
- Clear and visible action
- Relatively easy to deploy

Limitations
- Limited long-term effect if permanently sited
- No meaningful data for analysis or escalation
- Regular speeding drivers may ignore it
- Does not support engagement with police or highways

Overall
A visible and simple deterrent, but largely symbolic and short-lived in impact.

Option 2B – Speed Indicator Devices with Data Logging

Description
Deploy enhanced Speed Indicator Devices (SID / VAS) that display vehicle speeds to drivers and also record traffic data such as average speeds, volumes and time-of-day patterns.

Indicative cost
Typically £2,400–£3,300 + VAT per unit, plus mounting and installation.

Assessment
These devices offer a hybrid of visible deterrence and basic data collection. However, they are not enforcement-grade, do not identify individual vehicles, and are relatively expensive compared to the quality of data produced. In a low-KSI location such as Holcombe, the data generated is unlikely to materially alter police or highways prioritisation.

Overall
A potentially useful but costly middle-ground option, offering more information than a basic SID but significantly less robust data than a short-term pneumatic tube survey.

Option 3 – Pneumatic Tube Speed & Volume Survey (Automatic Traffic Counter)

Description
Commission or request a temporary speed and traffic volume survey using pneumatic tubes laid across the carriageway for a defined period (typically 7 days).

What it provides
- Empirical, statistically robust data
- Traffic volumes
- Speed distributions
- Time-of-day patterns
- Potential vehicle classification

Advantages
- Most reliable data available
- Direction-neutral (uphill and downhill)
- 24-hour coverage
- High credibility with highways authorities
- Strong evidence base for future discussions

Limitations
- Temporary snapshot, not continuous monitoring
- Cost involved
- No deterrent effect by itself
- Does not identify individual vehicles

Overall
Best option for understanding the true scale and nature of the problem, but not a solution in itself.

Estimated Costs and Scope

Pneumatic Tube Speed & Volume Survey (Automatic Traffic Counter / ATC – the “tubes across the road”)

Typical cost (UK parish level)
- £250–£500 + VAT per location for a 7-day survey
- Some councils charge closer to £300 where the Parish Council is already on an approved framework
- Repeat or multi-site discounts are sometimes available

What is usually included
- Installation and removal of tubes
- 24-hour data collection
- Directional speeds (uphill and downhill)
- Traffic volumes
- Time-of-day analysis
- Summary report (typically PDF and/or spreadsheet format)

What is not included
- Any deterrent effect (drivers typically ignore pneumatic tubes)
- Ongoing or continuous monitoring (the survey provides a snapshot in time)

Key point for the Parish Council
This option provides the most robust and defensible data available, but it is temporary in nature and purely diagnostic rather than a solution in itself.

5. Comparative Summary (High Level)

Option | Deterrence | Data Quality | Enforcement Support | Cost | Longevity
ASW | Medium | Medium–Low | Low | Low | Ongoing
SID (2A) | Medium | Low | None | Medium | Short–Medium
SID (2B) | Medium | Medium | Low | High | Medium
Tube Survey | None | High | Medium | Medium | Short

6. Other Options Which Have Been Considered

Community Speed Watch (CSW)

Community Speed Watch involves volunteers conducting roadside speed monitoring sessions, typically wearing high-visibility clothing and using hand-held equipment, with data passed to the police for warning letters or potential escalation.

While recognised nationally, this approach has previously been used locally and is not considered appropriate for Holcombe at this time, for the following reasons:
- It relies heavily on volunteer availability and ongoing commitment.
- It requires residents to stand by the roadside, which is time-consuming and undesirable.
- Its effectiveness tends to diminish over time.

- It does not align with the Parish Council's decision to adopt a camera-based, intelligence-led approach precisely to avoid these drawbacks.

For these reasons, there is no appetite to re-establish Community Speed Watch in the village.

Additional or Enhanced Signage

Some councils pursue additional warning signs, village gateways, or painted road markings to reinforce speed limits.

While such measures can form part of wider highway-led schemes, on their own they are generally regarded as:
- having limited long-term impact on driver behaviour, and
- unlikely to address persistent or high-end speeding.

Any such measures would in practice be subject to Highways Authority approval and prioritisation.

Police-Led Enforcement Campaigns

Occasional targeted enforcement campaigns can be effective in the short term. However, experience to date suggests that:
- local policing resources are stretched,
- speeding in Holcombe is unlikely to meet the threshold for sustained enforcement activity, and
- data already shared has not resulted in material police intervention.

As such, this option is largely outside the Parish Council's control.

Engineering and Physical Traffic-Calming Measures

Physical measures such as build-outs, chicanes, cushions, or road narrowing are generally the most effective way of reducing vehicle speeds.

However, these measures:
- fall within the remit of the Highways Authority,
- involve significant cost and long lead times,
- require feasibility studies, consultation, and prioritisation against other schemes.

They are therefore not considered a realistic short-term option, though they may remain a longer-term aspiration.

7. Recommendation

Having considered the options available, the Parish Council is recommended to adopt the following course of action:

1. Maintain the existing Auto Speed Watch (Option 1)
The Auto Speed Watch device should continue to be operated in its current role as a deterrent, intelligence-gathering tool, and means of resident reassurance. While its limitations are recognised, it represents a proportionate baseline measure at low ongoing cost and provides visible evidence that the Parish Council remains actively engaged with the issue of speeding.

2. Investigate commissioning a Pneumatic Tube Speed & Volume Survey (Option 3)
The Parish Council should investigate commissioning, via the Highway Authority or an approved provider, a short-term pneumatic tube speed and volume survey. This would provide the most robust and defensible empirical data available, including 24-hour, bi-directional speed and traffic volume information.

The purpose of this investigation would be to:
- strengthen the Parish Council's understanding of the true scale and nature of speeding in the

village,
- inform future decision-making and engagement with external agencies, and
- demonstrate that the Parish Council has acted responsibly, transparently, and proportionately.

It is recognised that this option is diagnostic rather than a solution in itself, and that commissioning such a survey does not guarantee enforcement action or highway intervention. However, it represents the most credible next step should the Parish Council wish to enhance its evidence base.