

Speed Limit Review Pluckley

July 2011



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1. Introduction

1.1 Scope

Kent County Council has advised that it has no plans to review current speed limits in and around the parish of Pluckley.

Since traffic speeds are one of the principal concerns highlighted by residents in the Pluckley Parish Plan, the Parish Council has undertaken a review of speed limits.

The review has been carried out at key points throughout the parish:-

- Egerton Road
- Forge Hill
- Smarden Road (Thorne)
- The Street
- Station Road (Fir Toll)
- Station Road (nr Station)

In each case, we have reviewed the current speed limit, compared it with the latest advice for setting speed limits, and made recommendations to raise, lower or retain the current speed limit with supporting evidence.

2. Methodology

The review was carried out by Tim Maddrell (ex-KCC Highways), Alan Symonds and Martin Newman of Pluckley Parish Council. We modelled our review on the reviews carried out by Jacobs Engineering for Kent County Council and we used the same speed analysis program.

Each of the sites was visited and the environment through which it passes was assessed and compared with the guidelines laid down in Circular 01/2006. Each site was visited on several occasions at various times of the day to assist in establishing vehicle mean speeds throughout the length of each site. Static location speed check data has been obtained for all the sites and has been used in the report.

The following summary provides the characteristics given within Circular 01/2006, which have been used during the review.

Speed limits for single carriageway roads in rural areas:

- 60mph – recommended for most high quality strategic A and B roads with few bends, junctions or accesses.
- 50mph – Should be considered for lower quality A and B roads which may have a relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses.
- 40mph – Should be considered where there is a high number of bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, where there is a strong environmental or landscape reason, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users.
- 30mph – Should be the norm in villages

3. Site Reports

Egerton Road

Site Environment

Egerton Road runs east-west between the villages of Pluckley and Egerton. At the Pluckley end, it runs through a residential area with housing on both sides of the road for a distance of 400m, then a further 350m with housing on one side only. Beyond that, the area has isolated properties amidst farm land but with the Pivington Mill Industrial Estate at a distance of 1.3km from Pluckley.



The site length assessed is the 1.3km from the junction with Forge Hill in Pluckley to the turn for the Pivington Mill Estate. The road undulates, and has three bends and two junctions within this length. There is no street lighting. The current speed limit is 30mph for 205m from the junction with Forge Hill and 60mph thereafter. There is a footpath on the southern side of the carriageway for 90m from the Forge Hill junction. There are no footways otherwise, rendering pedestrians vulnerable.

The site is used by the residents living along the site, traffic to and from Egerton, agricultural vehicles and HGV traffic using Pivington Mill Estate. The road width varies from 5.5m at best to 3.8m at its narrowest. As such there are points along this site where vehicles have to slow or stop to pass safely, particularly when HGVs are passing.

Conclusion/Recommendation

The first 450m travelling west from the Forge Hill junction are within the confines of the village. The existing speed limit of 30mph extends for the first 205m and complies with Circular 01/2006. Traffic measured at this site travelled at a mean speed of 31.6mph. For this section we recommend **No Change**.

Beyond this point, there is a further 235m with housing on both sides of the carriageway at a density of 5 houses per 100m throughout. There are in addition two bends and a junction. We recommend **extending the existing 30mph limit** for a further 235m westwards to the point shown on the map. This would not have a significant effect on traffic flow but would improve safety for vehicles exiting junctions and residences and vulnerable pedestrians.

Forge Hill

Site Environment

This site extends 450 metres from the crossroads with Egerton Road and Swan Lane, at the top of the village, and runs north-south through the village, becoming Smerden Road. It runs past residential housing on one side and the recreation ground on the other, before the junction with The Street and the village centre. It continues with housing on both sides sharply downhill before levelling out as Smerden Road.



The road runs downhill north-south, with two bends and one busy and dangerous junction with very limited sight-lines, from The Street. There is footpath on one side of the road for the length of the site and, on the other side of the road, for approximately ten yards only either side of The Street junction. There is no street lighting. The current speed limit is 30mph.

The road forms part of the designated HGV route and as such, is used by HGV traffic and agricultural vehicles. Since it provides access to the village centre, including the school, it is used by a large number of private cars and by buses. The road width varies between 6 metres at best and 4.3metres at its narrowest which is at the site of the two bends. To pass these 'pinch-points', HGVs and agricultural vehicles are regularly obliged to mount the footpath in order to pass, endangering pedestrians.

Conclusions/Recommendation

The current speed limit of 30mph extends for the length of this site and complies with Circular 01/2006. Traffic measured at the site travelled at a mean speed of 31.7mph. For this site, we recommend **No Change**.

Smarden Road (Thorne)

Site Environment

Smarden Road runs north-east to south-west from Forge Hill in the centre of the village towards Smarden 6km distant. The site considered is the length within the confines of the village. From the foot of Forge Hill, the road runs level with one bend, access to a housing estate, a major junction for the HGV route, and a further junction. There is housing on one side for the full 900 metres length of the site and on both sides for 170 metres. There is footpath on one side for the most part and both sides for 150 metres at the Thorne junction, and no street lighting. The current speed limit is 40mph.



The site is used by the residents along and traffic from villages to the west, the HGVs using the cross-Weald route, and agricultural vehicles. The road width is more or less consistent at 6metres.

Conclusions/Recommendation

The site includes a 300metre length with significant density of housing and three junctions within 100 metres, including the HGV route, with limited sight lines. The mean speed of traffic measured at this site was 37.7mph. We recommend **reducing the speed limit to 30mph** for this site. This would not significantly affect traffic flow and would discourage the small minority of vehicles who approach the junction at speeds that are unsafe given the limited sight lines for vehicles exiting from the Smarden Bell Road onto Smarden Road.

Given that this is a comparatively short section to have a 30mph limit, and a wish to avoid changes in the speed limit within the village, it is recommended that the 30mph limit extend the 900 metres length of this site, from the foot of Forge Hill to the confines of the built up area of the village i.e. just beyond the junction with Lambden Road along Smarden Road. It is also recommended that the limit be extended around the bend of the Smarden Bell Road along the HGV route to give better advance warning and sightlines of a significant junction and the speed limit just ahead. The road here narrows to 5 metres and HGVs regularly mount the verges or residential driveways to pass. This would encompass the entrances of seven houses and a yard.

The Street

Site Environment

This site runs east-west, from its junction with Forge Hill for a length of 210 metres then bends sharply before falling downhill into Station Road. It encompasses the heart of the village with its shops, school, church, public house, parking, and housing on both sides of the road. There is also a Certified Location for caravans. There is footpath the length of the site on one side and, for a few metres off Forge Hill, on both sides. There is no street lighting. The current speed limit is 30mph. The users are residents, shoppers, school traffic, including buses, and visitors to the village. Apart from the buses, delivery vans and caravans, the majority of traffic is private cars. The site is frequently congested with parking, both for school and shops, and for residents.



Conclusions/Recommendation

The site is potentially dangerous for both pedestrians and motorists, given the volume of traffic and the limited visibility, particularly at the junction with Forge Hill. School children regularly cross the site from the parking area to the school, both when being dropped off and collected; and also to access the church or the Recreation Ground as part of their school activities. We have considered whether a reduction in speed limit to 20mph would be advisable. In practice, however, the very congestion of the site has the effect of slowing traffic and the mean speed recorded at the site was 19.5mph, which itself suggests a reduction is not necessary. We are also keen to minimise the variability of limits within the village confines. For these reasons, therefore, we recommend **No Change**.

Station Road (Fir Toll)

Site Environment

Station Road runs westward from The Street to Fir Toll, then south westward to the station. The first 500 metres has housing on one side of the road. At Fir Toll, for 400 metres there is housing on both sides of the road, with a bend and the junction with Lambden Road. The road width is consistent at 5.8 metres. There is no footpath and no street lighting. The current speed limit is 40mph.



Users are residents and people going to and from the station. The village hall is also located here, with its car park.

Conclusions/Recommendation

For 400 metres, from the Village Hall to Malmains Road, the density of housing and lack of footpath warrants **a reduction in the speed limit to 30mph**. This would not seriously affect traffic flow as the mean speed recorded at this site was 37.7mph. Though the distance is relatively short, the limit should logically be extended down Lambden Road to the link with the proposed 30mph limit along Smarden Road at Thorne. This would form a continuous, consistent limit.

This does leave a section of Station Road from The Street down to Malmains Road of 600 metres which would be left as its current 40mph limit. There is housing the length of this section, on one side of the road or other, at about 4 houses per 100 metres. This density, the lack of any footpath, and the advisability of a consistent limit throughout the village, suggest that this section too should be **reduced to 30mph**. This would not seriously affect traffic flow, as the mean speed recorded here was 37.0mph.

Station Road (Station)

Site Environment

At a distance of 1.4km from the centre of the village, and 600 metres beyond the above site, this site runs along Station Road past the entrance to the station. It extends for 580 metres from the crossroads with Dowle Street and Chambers Green Road to New House Lane, just over the humpback bridge of the railway line. Within this site, there is housing for 150 metres, the entrance to the station, more housing and a coal yard, a public house, a garage and the blind hump back bridge. There is no footpath or street lighting. The current speed limit is 60mph.



Users of the site include residents, station users, HGVs and agricultural vehicles for a major farmer/haulier just beyond the site, the coal yard, and traffic going west to Tenterden. Many station users opt, rather than paying in the car park provided, to leave their vehicles along Station Road where no charge is incurred.

Conclusions/Recommendation

While the parking for the station produces congestion and has safety implications for this length of road, it also, perversely perhaps, has the effect of reducing speeds, especially given the proximity of the humpback bridge. The mean speed recorded here was 34.3mph. The site is clearly appropriate for a 30mph limit. The only issue is its limited length. Given this, we recommend a **reduction to 30mph over a stretch of 480 metres.**

4. Summary of Site Reports

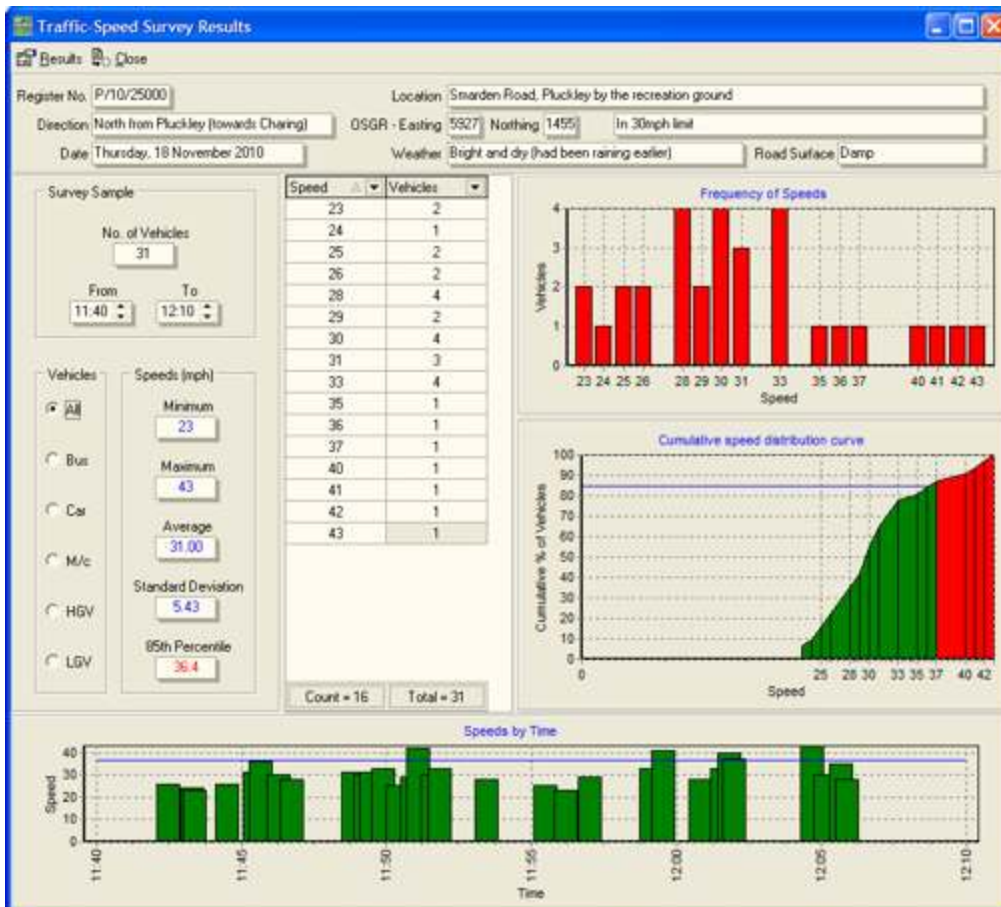
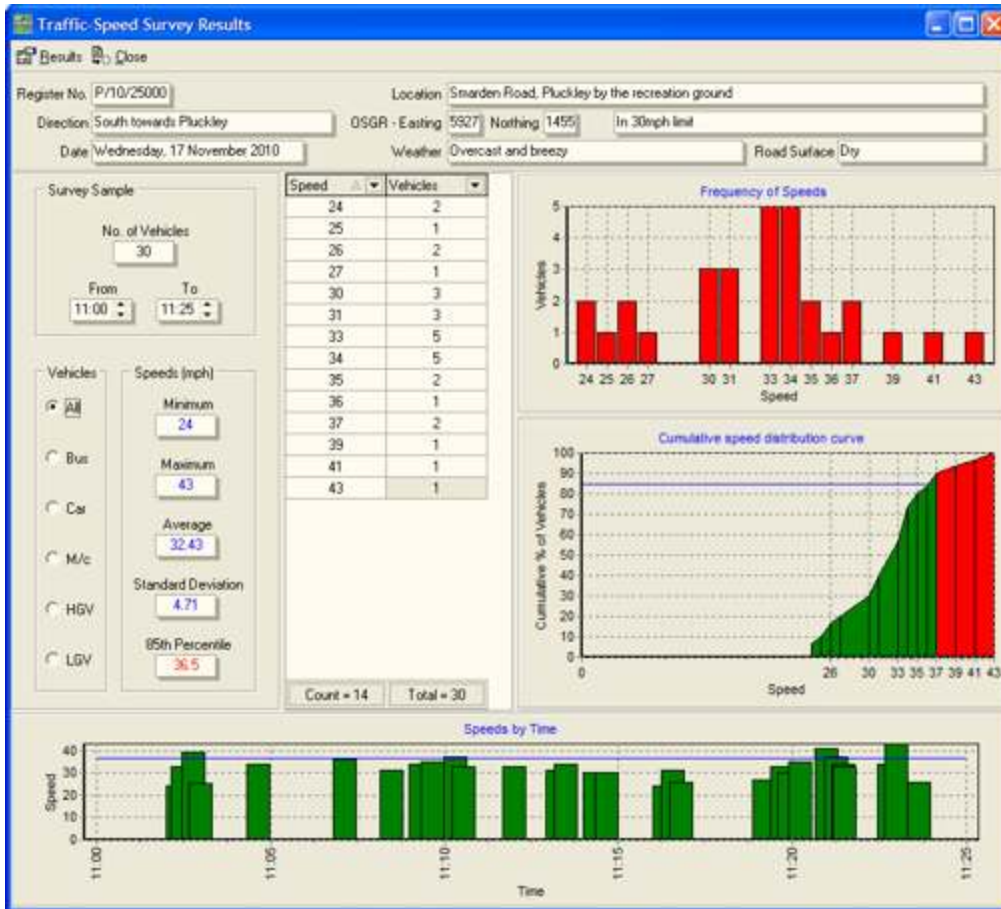
Proposed changes to existing limits

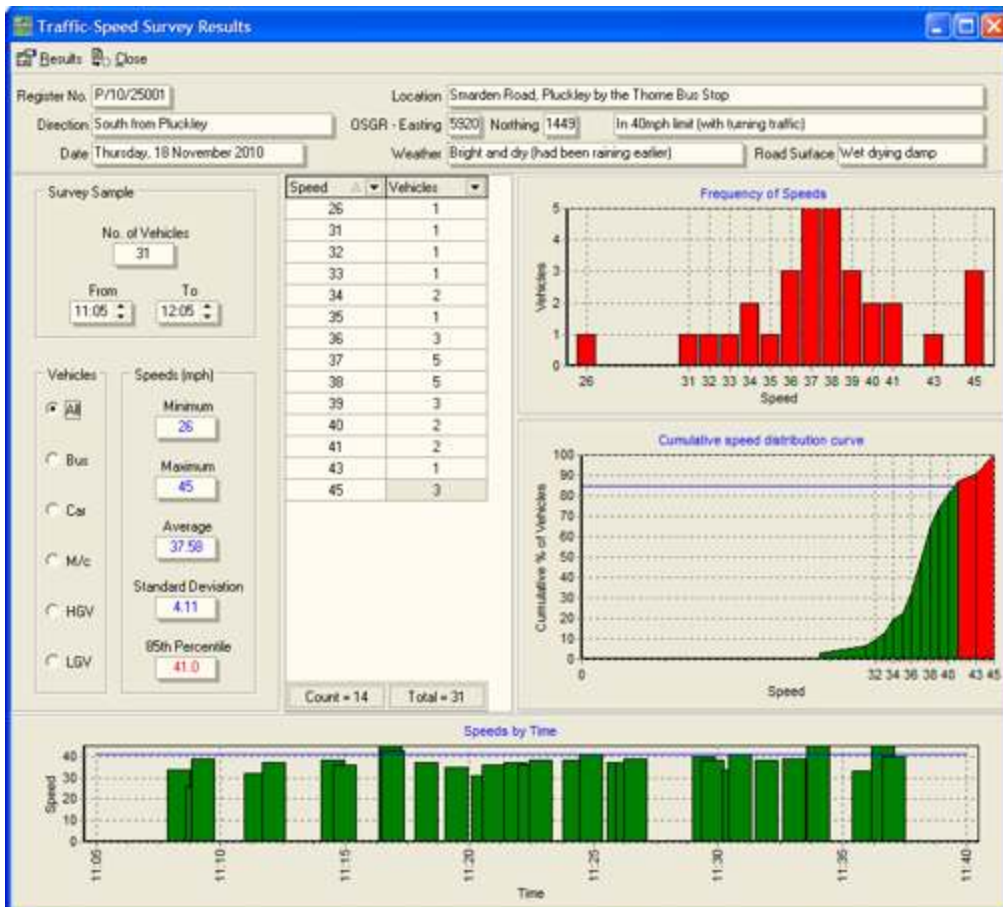
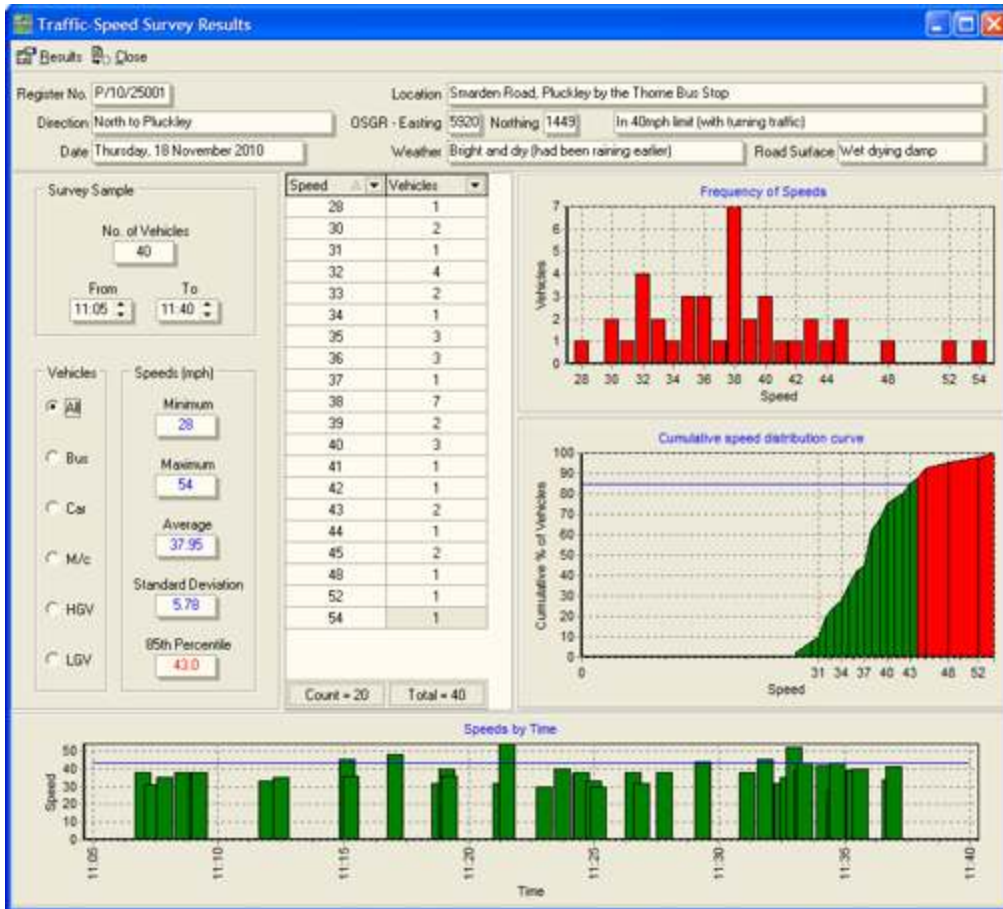
Road	Site	Existing	Proposed
Egerton Rd	E of Westfields	30mph	NO CHANGE
	Westfields to dip	60mph	30mph
	dip to Pivington	60mph	NO CHANGE
Forge Hill	Forge Hill	30mph	NO CHANGE
Smarden Rd	Forge Hill to Lambden Rd	40mph	30mph
The Street	The Street	30mph	NO CHANGE
Station Road	The Street to Village Hall	40mph	30mph
	Station	60mph	30mph
Lambden Rd	Lambden Rd	40mph	30mph

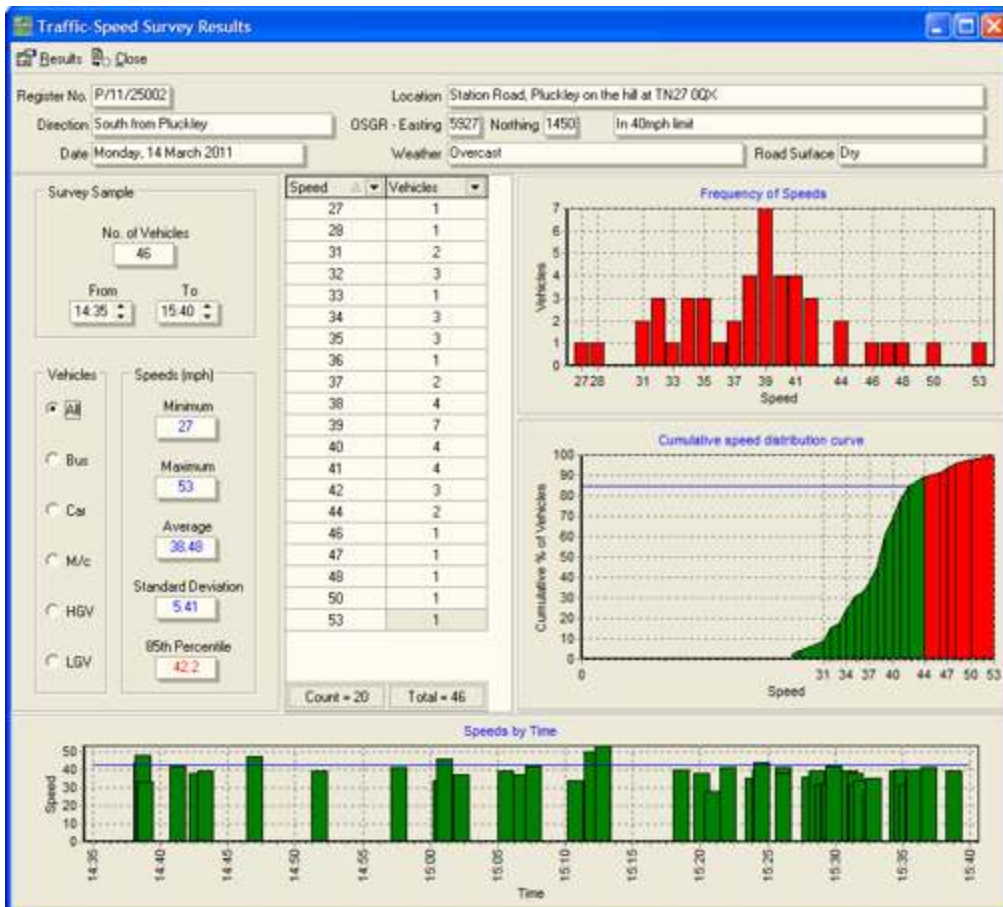
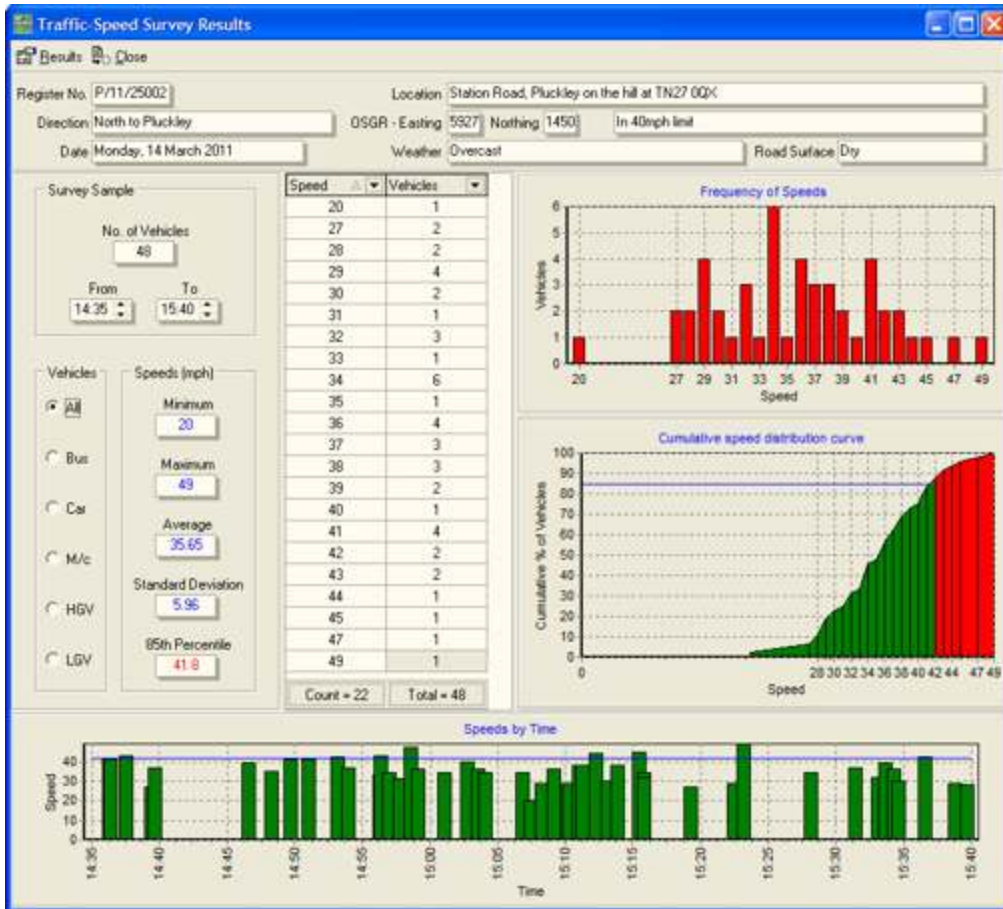
The above recommendations take account of the site environments and the usage of the roads. They apply the guidelines included in Circular 01/2006. They also take into account the measured current behaviour of motorists and do not seek to impose unreasonable changes.

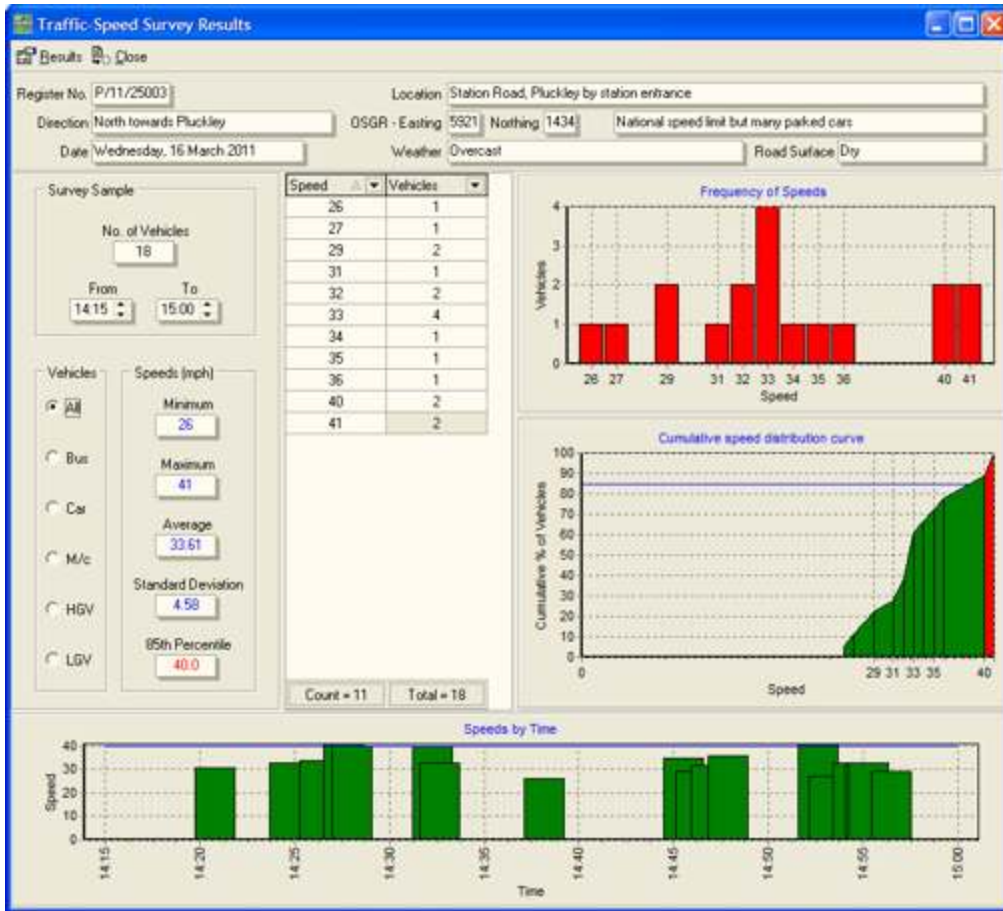
The speed limits proposed applied to the areas listed have the significant advantage of establishing a single speed limit for the built-up environs of the village. This avoids the need for varying signage and removes uncertainty.

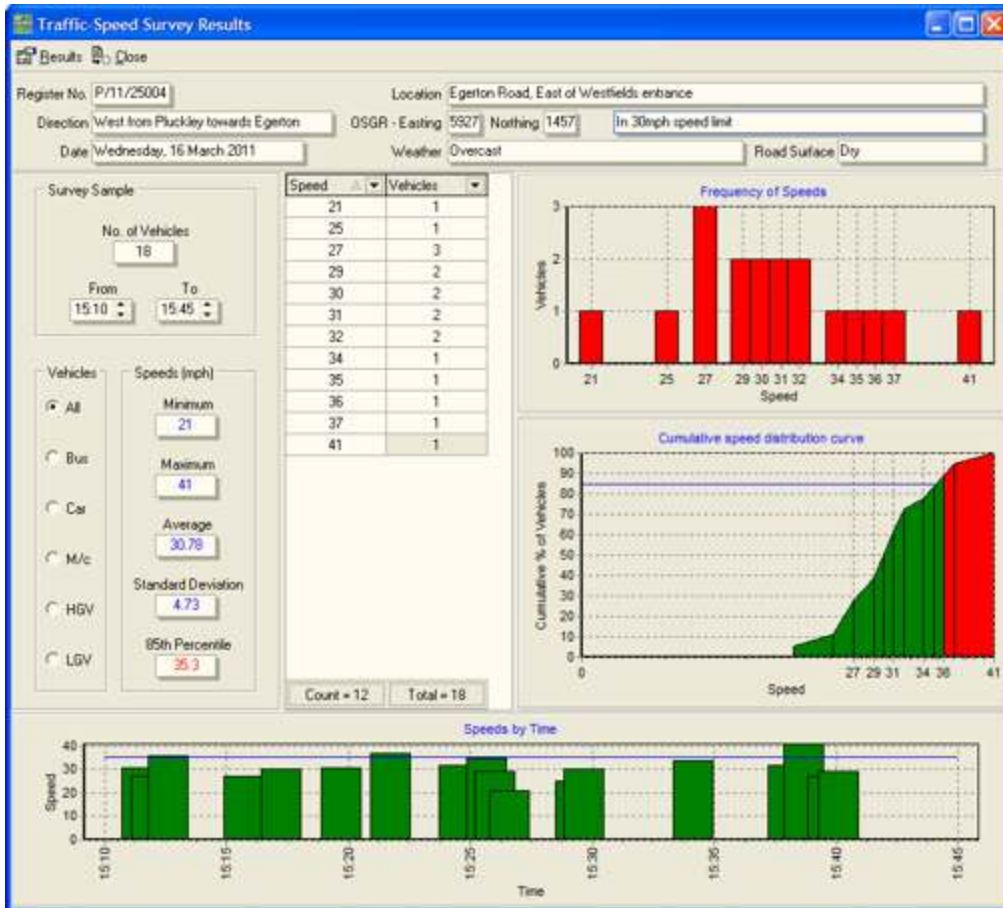
Appendix 5.a Speed survey results





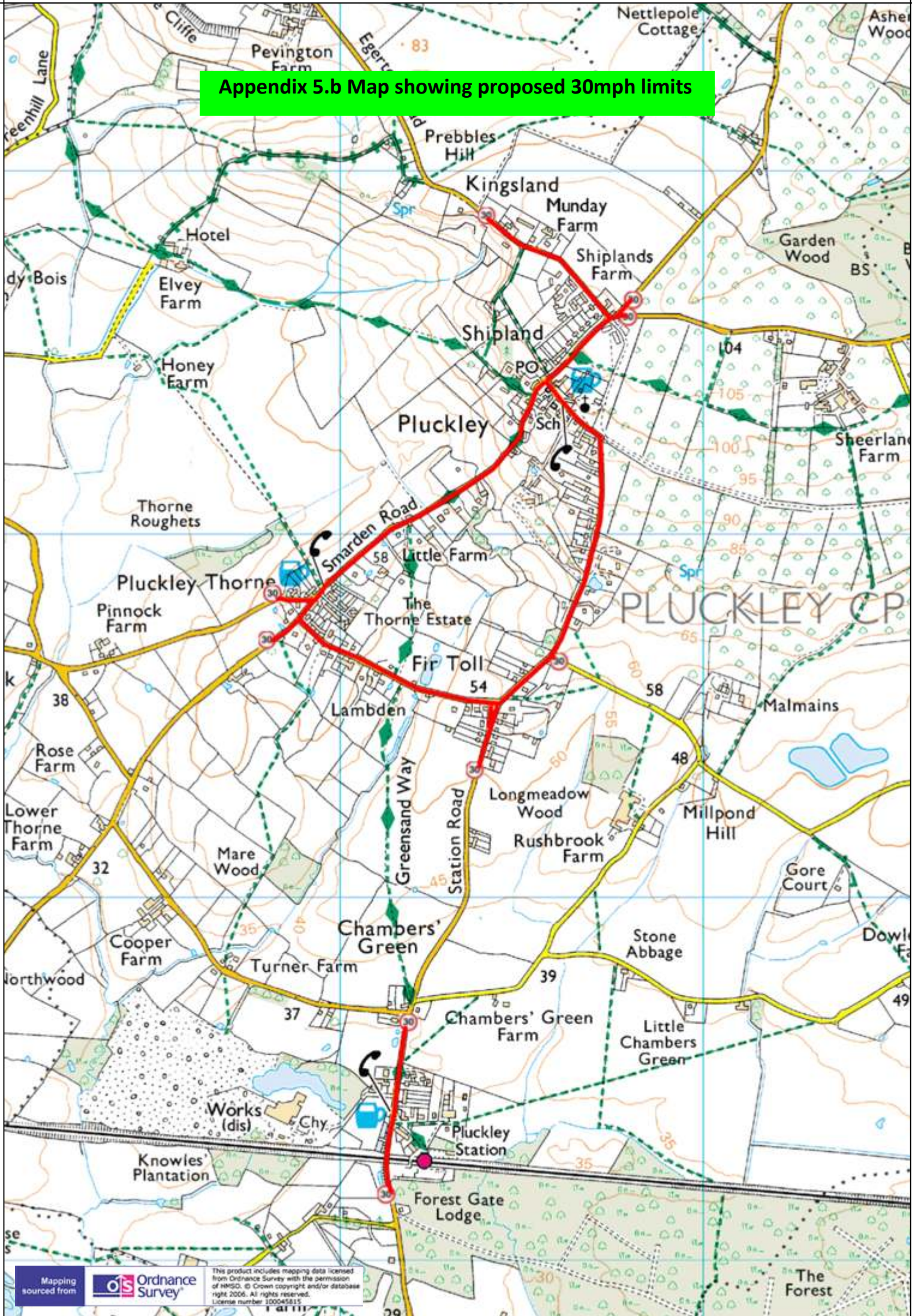








Appendix 5.b Map showing proposed 30mph limits



Mapping sourced from



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Appendix 5.c Table of road lengths

Road Section mph	Length (metres)	Existing Speed Limits (mph)						Proposed Speed Limits		
		Speed Limit		Average Speed		85th % speed		Length speed limited		
				In	Out	In	Out	30 mph	40	
Egerton Rd	1,634	30/60		32.1	30.8	36	35	205		205
Westfields	150	30						150		150
Charing Rd	788	30/60						75		35
Swan Lane	880	30/60						35		212
The Street	212	30		19.4	19.8	22	23	212		625
Station Rd (Street-Malmains)	625	40		35.7	38.5	42	42	31	594	397
Station Rd (Malmains-Village Hall)	397	40							397	480
Station Rd (Chambers Green Rd-R.Beult)	1,088	60		33.6	34.7	40	41			242
Smarden Rd (Egerton Rd-The Street)	242	30		32.4	31.0	37	36	242		773
Smarden Rd (The Street - Luckhurst)	773	30/40						223	550	200
Smarden Rd (Luckhurst-Lambden Road)	200	40		38.0	37.6	43	41	200		145
Thome Estate	145	40		145						100
Smarden Rd (Lambden Road-Parish Boundary)	1,101	40/60		100						612
Lambden Road	612	40		612						64
Lambden Road south spur to Station Road	64	40		64						100
The Pinnock (Smarden Rd-Dering wood)	1,814	40/60		15						
Chambers Green Rd	1,022	60								
Chambers Green to Bethersden Road	1,706	60								
Elvey Lane (road to Elvey Farm)	766	60								
Past Malmains out to Bethersden Road	1,467	60								
Pivington Lane	1,445	60								
Road south of Munday Bois	670	60								
Rose Farm Rd	360	60								
Rushbrook Lane	676	60								
Saracens	606	60								
Station Rd (Village Hall-Chambers Green Rd)	708	60								
Surrenden/Bethersden Rd	2,293	60								
The Pinnock towards Munday Bois to boundary	960	60								4,415
Total (metres)	23,404							1,173	2,677	4,415
Total (miles)	14.36							5%	11%	19%

% of Total

Average Speed	85th % speed
29.1	33
30.7	35

The police also carried out two speed checks on Forge Hill in 30 mph limit on two days the first day Tue 1-Mar-11 14:45 - 15:30 second day Wed 2-Mar-11 17:45 - 18:30