

**LIFE
BEGINS
AT**



20 = PLENTY

**A 20 MPH OXFORD
WHY AND HOW**

Contents

3	Introduction
4	A 20 mph Oxford: why?
4	A 20 mph Oxford: how?
7	Who else is involved in Life Begins At 20?
7	What has already happened in Oxford?
9	What is happening nationally?
10	Some facts about road traffic speeds



Life Begins At 20

lifebeginsat20@yahoo.co.uk

8 Richmond Road, Oxford OX1 2JJ

01865 426805

www.lifebeginsat20.org.uk

Introduction

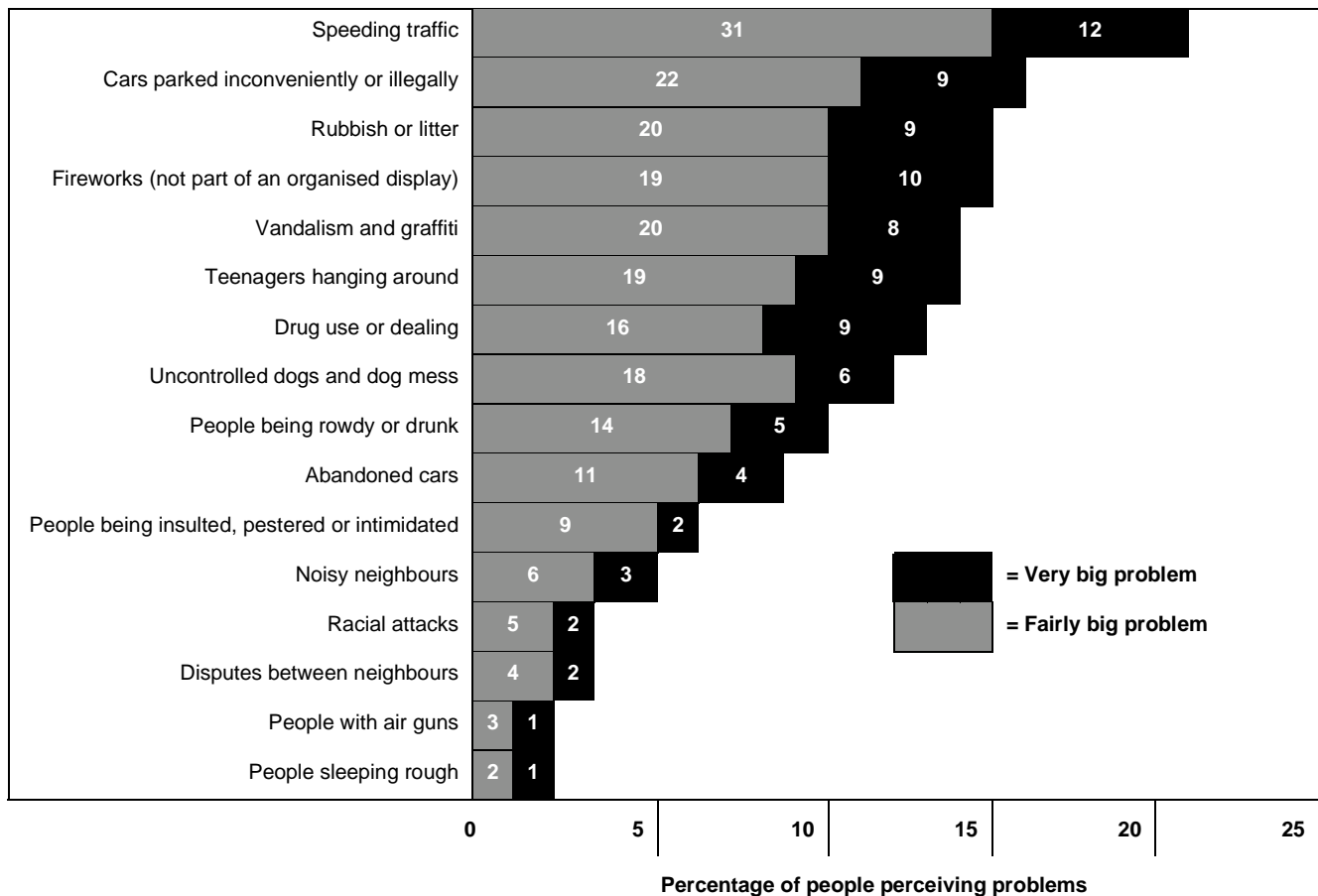
Most of us want to live in a quiet, pleasant street: a safe street in which children can play out alone; a friendly street in which you can meet your neighbours.

No one wants to live in a hostile street that you cannot walk across thanks to fast-moving traffic; a noisy street that is an occasional race track.

Life Begins At 20 is Oxford's campaign to bring traffic speeds down to 20 miles per hour across the city, as part of a wider vision for creating the kind of streets in which we really want to live.

'What's the biggest problem in your neighbourhood?'

The 2003–04 British Crime Survey asked the public what they perceive to be the worst 'anti-social behaviour' problems where they live. By far the biggest problems related to the effects of motor traffic – 43% reported fast traffic as a 'fairly big' or 'very big' problem, and 31% felt the same about cars parked inconveniently or illegally.



Source: 2003–04 British Crime Survey (government report on Perceptions and experiences of anti-social behaviour – see www.homeoffice.gov.uk).

A 20 mph Oxford: why?

Living streets

Communities grow where the streets belong to people, not just to vehicles. City streets can and should be lively, vibrant places which everyone can enjoy. Streets should be places in which you can hear yourself speak above the constant noise from vehicles; in which you can safely walk or cycle with your children.

Our streets should not be grim thoroughfares serving only fast-moving vehicles. Our streets should include everyone and allow a range of uses. Our streets should be a truly shared space in which shoppers and residents, pedestrians and cyclists, young and old, do not take a firm second place.

Reducing vehicle speeds dramatically reduces the number and severity of road traffic accidents. Hit by a car at 40 mph, a pedestrian has an 85 per cent chance of being killed, while at 20 mph the risk falls to 5 per cent. Hull has 20 mph zones on a quarter of its roads. The number of crashes with deaths or serious injuries has been cut by 90 per cent and the number of child pedestrian casualties is down by 74 per cent.

Reducing vehicle speeds is the single most important factor in creating living streets. There is strong and growing evidence to support a maximum speed limit of 20 mph in our towns and cities. The government supports the introduction of 20 mph, and the Conservatives under David Cameron now support 20 mph 'in all urban areas'.

Life Begins At 20 believes the benefits of 20 mph should be felt throughout Oxford, in the streets where we live, shop and stroll. Streets like Cowley Road, and those in the city centre and Jericho, are already showing that where 20 mph is introduced, people begin to enjoy their environments and use the local amenities more.

Driver psychology

At 20 mph, drivers make eye contact with and engage with the people in the street they are passing through. This contact really matters: people in the street know they've been seen. It also makes drivers less inclined to bully their way along 'their' road, and more inclined to share the space.

At speeds over 30 mph, drivers begin to become dissociated from the area they are passing through – and anti-social driving habits, especially speeding, creep in.

A 20 mph Oxford: how?

What are Life Begins At 20's aims?

We aim to persuade the people of Oxford of the attractions of safer, quieter city streets.

We aim to convince the City and County Councils to make Oxford's streets more focused on people.

In particular, Life Begins At 20 aims to convince Oxfordshire County Council of the need for slower, pleasanter streets with 20 mph areas extended to cover all of the city, as it is the county council which controls most of the city's streets.

Life Begins At 20 (LB@20) is part of a movement being witnessed in towns and cities across the UK, and we draw our inspiration and much of our knowledge from other national organisations.

This year, LB@20 is building support for 20 mph in Oxford, and will participate in the national 20's Plenty Action Day to be organised in spring 2007. We hope that community groups and residents' associations around Oxford will hold events that day to begin the process of making their neighbourhood part of the LB@20 campaign.

LB@20 also aims to help communities to understand the issues, and to understand that they can change their streets, as well as helping them go the right way about getting that change put in place. In time, there will be dozens of neighbourhood and community groups calling for a 20 mph Oxford.

Is Life Begins At 20 right for your area?

Talk to your neighbours. Find out what they dislike about the traffic in your area. Is anyone bothered about the same issues as you?

- Are vehicles going too fast?
- Are too many vehicles using local streets?
- Are people parking on footways?
- Is it the noise and air pollution that bothers you?
- Are children unable to go out on foot unaccompanied, or on their bikes?

Discuss how you'd really like your area to be, and how the traffic affects this. Give neighbours who are interested a copy of this guide.

If you agree there are speeding or other traffic problems, design a simple leaflet describing the issues. Have it printed and put it through people's letterboxes. (You or a neighbour can probably produce a leaflet on a computer – the cost could be no more than the ink and paper.) Use the leaflet to invite other people in your neighbourhood to get in touch via email or on the phone. Or invite people to a community meeting to hear people's views.

Did you know ...?

Did you know that community groups can book one meeting per month at Oxford Town Hall – free of charge? Rooms are available between 6 pm and 9 pm any Tuesday or Thursday of the month. Tel. 01865 252195 or email: townhall@oxford.gov.uk for details.

Most of the City Council's 24 community centres let local groups use spare rooms free of charge.

Checking your facts

You may find that you need to do some surveys to help determine your problems.

- Are vehicles really going too fast?
- Who is driving through your streets? Locals? Commuters? School-runners?
- Who is parking in your streets? Locals? Students? Shoppers?

Contact the LB@20 team for some tried-and-tested methods to help you quickly establish what the key issues are in your area.

How to start a campaign in your area

Once you've established that there's both a case and support for a local campaign, next:

- 1 arrange to meet engineers and road safety officers from the County Council.
- 2 contact your city and county councillors pressing the case for 20 mph in your community.
- 3 launch your neighbourhood's campaign and contact the press.

1 Arranging to meet the engineers and road safety officers

It's important to find out what advice they might have – and to get them on board.

- Steve Howell, Head of Transport, Oxfordshire County Council, Speedwell House, Speedwell Street, Oxford OX1 1NE. Tel. 01865 815700 e-mail: environment.economy@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Road Safety Team, Oxfordshire County Council, Speedwell House, Speedwell Street, Oxford OX1 1NE. Tel: 01865 815689 e-mail: road.safety@oxfordshire.gov.uk

2 Contacting your local city and county councillors

Contact your local city and county councillors pressing the case for 20 mph in your community. If you don't know who they are, you can:

- look them up on www.oxford.gov.uk and www.oxfordshire.gov.uk.
- look them up (and your MP and MEP as well) on www.WriteToThem.com. All you need to enter is your postcode.
- call Oxford City Council. Tel. 01865 252414.
- call Oxfordshire County Council. Tel. 01865 792422.
- ask at your local library.

Ask LB@20 for any more detailed information: e-mail: lifebeginsat20@yahoo.co.uk
Tel. 01865 426805 / 8 Richmond Road, Oxford OX1 2JJ.

Do contact *both* your city and county councillors – and remember that it's the County Council that's in charge of the highways.

3 Launching your own LB@20 campaign and contacting the press

Your campaign can be as modest or as ambitious as you want:

- You might opt for something as simple as asking residents to put Life Begins At 20 posters in their windows or on posts in their gardens. We have designs for Life Begins At 20 posters that we can supply, so that you can print colourful posters at A3 or A4 size on a home computer.
- In summer, you may want to organise an outdoor event in your street, to bring your street and its community to people's notice: see www.streetparty.org.uk (or contact us) for helpful information about organising street events.

Whatever you decide to do, the most important thing is to keep up the pressure. Once you've started, don't rest until your neighbourhood has been returned to local people.

Always let the media know what you're doing, and of course let the LB@20 team know too – we can put you in touch with other groups in the city so that you can share experiences to help grow your campaign.

Media contact details (not exhaustive):

- The Oxford Times
Tel. 01865 425262 e-mail contact via their website: www.theoxfordtimes.net
- The Oxford Mail
Tel. 01865 425262 e-mail contact via their website: www.oxfordmail.net
- BBC Oxford
Tel. 08459 311444 e-mail: oxford@bbc.co.uk
- Fox FM
Tel. 01865 871000 e-mail contact via their website: www.foxfm.co.uk

- The Courier Journal
Tel. 01235 553444 e-mail: journal.news@couriergroup.com
- Daily Info
Tel. 01865 241133 e-mail: info@dailyinfo.co.uk
- Indymedia
Contact via their website: www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/oxford/static/contact.html

Who else is involved in Life Begins At 20?

Life Begins At 20 draws on the experience of several national campaigning organisations, as well as local groups.

Our local sponsors are:

- **OxPA**, the Oxford Pedestrians' Association: e-mail: info@oxpa.org.uk / tel. 01865 865070.
- **Cyclox**, the cycling campaign for Oxford: e-mail: contact@cyclox.org / tel. 07792 375423.
- **Roadwitch**, a project created by children's author/illustrator Ted Dewan. Roadwitch combines public art, traffic calming, safety campaigning, and community building. It has provided much of the community-led inspiration for LB@20, and has strengthened the community on Beech Croft Road (Summertown), involving children and adults working together, and generating international press coverage. The term 'roadwitching' is now recognised as meaning 'the use of public roadspace for art and community entertainment'. See www.roadwitch.org.uk.

Our national inspiration comes from:

- **Streets for People**, a key organisation run by the national transport lobby group Transport 2000. Streets for People is a network of community groups, residents' associations and individuals who want to improve their local environment. They run the national 20's Plenty campaign and the annual 20's Plenty's Action Day. Linda Beard is the 20's Plenty national coordinator: Transport 2000, The Impact Centre, 12–18 Hoxton Street, London N1 6NG
Tel. 020 7613 0743 / e-mail: linda.beard@transport2000.org.uk.
- **Streets Alive**, a charitable group which promotes culturally thriving communities through traffic-free street events. They offer lots of support for people who want better streets. They produce an excellent Residents' Guide to Street Parties, available on their website: www.streetparty.org.uk.

What has already happened in Oxford?

Oxford already has a number of 20 mph zones. The Cowley Road shopping area, the City Centre, and the Jericho and Walton Manor residential area all enjoy the benefits of more civilised streets.

Case study 1

Jericho and Walton Manor 20 mph zone *by Carey Newson, local resident*

Campaigning for lower speeds can be a lengthy business. In Kingston Road, we had been asking for a 20 mph limit for three years before the local authority agreed to it. It was then another year or so before the new 20 mph zone was actually in place.

From the start, the case for a lower limit was overwhelming. The road was being used as a rat-run by drivers who had a habit of speeding up as they headed north. They were treating it as a traffic thoroughfare rather than a place where people lived and children played around their homes. Every weekday morning children from all over the area, headed to at least five different schools, using our

road to make their journeys on foot or by bike. We were desperate to make the area safer for them and for everyone else.

One of the first hurdles we faced was the county council policy that they would only implement a 20 mph limit if the physical layout of the street meant people were driving at these speeds already. The idea was to prevent speed limits being ignored and so falling into disrepute, but it seemed like a Catch 22. After all, the whole reason we wanted the limit was that people were going too fast. In 2003, when a new traffic calming scheme was planned, we wrote to the council asking again for a 20 mph limit to be introduced alongside the highways measures. We also asked that if the new scheme failed to reduce speeds they would take further action to achieve this. The county replied that if the works led to the reduction, then they would consider a 20 mph limit, but if not they couldn't promise anything. Time passed.

What really gave our campaign the lift we needed was a 20's Plenty week. We had some signs printed and, using borrowed posts, made a number of 20 mph signposts and put them up in some of our gardens. We then leafleted the road, and asked people if they would join us to support the campaign, either putting up a sign in the garden or a poster (on the back of the leaflet) in the window, to show they were in favour. The response was tremendous. Posters appeared in windows all along the street, and lots of people got in touch to request a sign – we couldn't make them fast enough. Before we had even written a press release the regional TV news was on to it, and the local papers followed soon after. The evident local support for the limit brought our local councillors on board too, and was influential in persuading the county to agree to the 20 mph zone.

We are really pleased that the zone covers the whole of Walton Manor and Jericho. It is also great to see the appearance of the Jericho street market in the small area that was closed to traffic as a result of the St Barnabas Better Ways to School project. The removal of priority signs at pinch points, that once encouraged drivers heading north to burn their tyres on Kingston Road has also helped. Of course it is not perfect. The occasional car still treats the route as a race track, and more enforcement would be good. But in general it has been successful. Without the zone the area would undoubtedly have succumbed to traffic and would be a more dangerous and much less vibrant place.

Case study 2

Beech Croft Road by Ted Dewan, Beech Croft Road resident

Beech Croft Road in Summertown has run a series of mischievous events combining public art-making with traffic-calming. These 'folk traffic-calming' events, known collectively as The Roadwitch Trial, have received international attention and regular British television, radio, and print media coverage since they began in 2003.

Not only have the experiments in artful traffic-calming succeeded in slowing down motor traffic, they've created an unlikely bond between residents, the vast majority who approve and participate in them, especially during street parties.

Beech Croft Road was then the obvious choice for a launch of Oxford's Life Begins At 20 campaign, and the launch was held during Beech Croft Road's 2006 Fathers' Day street party. The Lord Mayor of Oxford, Jim Campbell, opened the event, giving Beech Croft residents a boost and hearty blessing. Life Begins At 20 signs were posted in front of many houses and remained there all summer.

The launch included a victory cycling loop of all the street's children and their friends, plus a series of 'mini-museums' set up by residents in their front gardens and hallways. It also included the exhibiting of a fake speed camera and a community clothesline entitled SOX, consisting of 100 mismatched socks hung across the street which remains to this day as a creative curiosity and fitting symbol of the street's residents.

On its own, bringing speeds down to 20 mph may not spontaneously generate this kind of street life. However, the campaign has galvanised Beech Croft residents in their determination to continue lobbying for new measures to transform their street into a place fit for leisure and socializing, rather than just a technical area for moving and storing cars.

There's much more about Beech Croft Road on www.roadwitch.org.uk.

What is happening nationally?

Across Britain, communities are turning to 20 mph speed limits to civilise their streets. Here are some examples:

Kingston-upon-Hull – 20 mph champion

The City now has more than 115 20 mph traffic calmed zones, covering over 30 per cent of the city's roads, and they are pressing on to civilise more streets. Over 200 deaths or serious injuries and 1000 other injuries are estimated to have been saved since the first zones were implemented in the 1990's. The total number of crashes within the 20 mph zones has fallen by 56 per cent, the number of crashes with deaths or serious injuries has been cut by 90 per cent and the number of child pedestrian casualties is down by 74 per cent.

Portsmouth – intending to be first city to introduce blanket 20 mph

Portsmouth has recently agreed to implement 20 mph limits on almost all its streets by 2008. This will make it the first city in Britain to introduce a blanket 20 mph speed limit on all residential roads to reduce serious accidents. As well as reducing the number of injuries on the city's streets, the £475,000 scheme is aimed at reducing noise pollution and improving air quality.

North Lanarkshire – 20 mph zones using signs only

The results from a Scotland-wide trial of low-cost advisory 20 mph schemes in residential areas were so good that North Lanarkshire Council decided to extend the three trial areas in its own area to all suitable residential streets. By March 2002 advisory 20 mph speed limits covered the vast majority of residential roads in North Lanarkshire. Strathclyde Police was very supportive of the project. Householders were consulted to gain their support. So far, the scheme covers the majority of the council's 325,000 residents. Just over £360,000 was spent on the various elements of the scheme up to March 2001, and since then there has been a significant reduction in casualties. The council is now piloting mandatory 20 mph sign-only zones in three large residential areas.

Aberdeen – set to pioneer a blanket 20 mph speed limit

Aberdeen has pledged to become the first city in Scotland to impose a blanket 20 mph city-centre speed limit in an attempt to improve pedestrian safety. The city council's environment and infrastructure committee backed the proposal for a central Aberdeen speed limit order. There was only a handful of objections to the plan during the formal statutory consultation exercise - most wanting the proposed limit to be extended further. Grampian Police, Grampian Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Ambulance Service have pledged their support for the new controls.

And that's not all ...

With more and more 20 mph schemes being implemented the evidence is there for all to see. Lowering speeds to 20 mph really does create streets that everyone can use – the young, the old, and everyone in between; there are no age limits where civilised streets are concerned. Towns and cities across Britain, many of them similar in size to Oxford, are looking at ways to extend 20 mph.

Did you know ...?

20 mph speed limits can be advisory or mandatory. There are all sorts of technicalities surrounding Home Zones, 20 mph zones, 20 mph limits, pedestrian priority zones, and suchlike. One of the ways LB@20 can help local groups is by helping you understand such matters.

Some facts about road traffic speeds

Perhaps the most surprising fact about reducing speeds from 30 mph to 20 mph is that vehicles get across cities quicker the slower they go. According to transport planners, in a city where the limits are 20 mph not 30 mph, there is less need for traffic signals and the queuing that traffic lights cause. Slow-moving cars require fewer controls and allow a more efficient city. There's little sense in speeding from one queue to the next as we do at the moment. Slower speeds make it easy for motor vehicles to merge with ease, for cycles to co-exist with motor vehicles, and for pedestrians to cross roads.

Did you know ...?

- Hit by a car at 40 mph, a pedestrian has an 85 per cent chance of being killed while at 20 mph the risk falls to 5 per cent. (*Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety*)
- When traffic is slowed down to 20 mph, there is a 70 per cent drop in accidents to child pedestrians. (*Transport Research Laboratory*)
- Kingston-upon-Hull has implemented more than 115 20 mph traffic calmed zones, covering 26 per cent of the city's roads. The number of crashes with deaths or serious injuries has been cut by 90 per cent and the number of child pedestrian casualties is down by 74 per cent. (*Hull City Council*)
- Overall, the cost of implementing Hull's 20 mph zones has been £4.5 million, with another £5.4 million required to zone other areas of the city. The financial savings from the zones already implemented (in terms of injury costs) have been estimated at well over £40 million, giving a 10:1 value for money ratio. (*Streets for People*)
- More than half of road deaths and serious injuries occur on roads with 30 mph speed limits. (*Transport Statistics for Great Britain*)
- Children from disadvantaged families are five times more likely to be killed on the roads than the better off. (*Department for Transport*)
- Children's deaths and injuries could be reduced by 67 per cent if 20 mph were the speed limit on residential roads. (*Health Development Agency*)
- The proportion of children walking to primary school in Britain has fallen from 61 per cent in 1993 to 53 per cent in 2003, with an increase from 30 per cent to 39 per cent in the numbers driven to school over the same period. (*National Travel Survey*)
- The direct cost of road crashes involving deaths or injuries is about £3 billion every year. The cost of implementing sign-only 20 mph limits on all residential streets has been estimated to be approximately £200 million.

Try it!

If you drive, try driving at 20 mph sometimes. Start on roads such as Cowley Road where 20 is already the limit in places. Then try driving at 20 mph on residential roads – how does it feel?



Life Begins At 20

lifebeginsat20@yahoo.co.uk

8 Richmond Road, Oxford OX1 2JJ

01865 426805

www.lifebeginsat20.org.uk