

Unique scheme to drive down speed in and around Newton Abbot

A FRESH approach to driving speeds down took to the streets in and around Newton Abbot on January 15 - with more than 20 drivers set to feel the long arm of the law!

In what is believed to be the first operation of its kind in Devon and Cornwall, three sets of Community Speedwatch volunteers, supported by police officers, simultaneously positioned themselves at different locations, armed with speed monitors.

One team was in Greenhill Way, Kingsteignton, another near The Sloop in Kingskerswell and the third in Ashburton Road, Newton Abbot.

The aim was to make drivers think, think and think again as they crossed the area.

'It was a great success, this is the first time our Community Speedwatch volunteers have been able to join forces and offer drivers education right across Newton Abbot and its neighbouring communities,' said Mayor Cllr Mike Joyce who is Speedwatch Co-ordinator for Newton Abbot and came up with the idea.

'We often have one speed monitoring station set up somewhere, but having them in different locations at the same time means some drivers will have been reminded three times, that has to be more effective.'

Cllr Joyce was positioned in Ashburton Road. Of the 807 vehicles that passed him, ten were travelling above 35 mph, despite volunteers wearing hi-vis jackets.

'We had another team on the opposite side of the road and they had 11 breaking the limit by at least 5mph, the highest speed we recorded was 47mph,' said Cllr Joyce.

'Offenders will be sent a police warning and for any previously written to, the consequences could be more serious.'

'The role of Community Speedwatch is to educate, the role of the police is to enforce the rules.'

'We're very grateful that officers could join us and I'm sure drivers are getting the message that we're determined to make our roads safer.'

Alison Hernandez, Police and Crime Commissioner, is chair of the Vision Zero South West road safety partnership and national APCC lead for road safety.

She said: 'Road safety is one of the four priorities in my new police and crime plan and I am so pleased to see the community of Newton Abbot responding so proactively to this issue.'

'I'd like to pay particular tribute to Newton Abbot's mayor, Councillor Mike Joyce, who is one of the most active Councillor Advocates for my office and someone who I know cares deeply about road safety within the town he loves.'

'Cracking down on dangerous road users is vital if we are going to reach the Vision Zero South West target of zero deaths and serious injuries by 2040, but we simply cannot do this without the help of local communities.

'What we have seen here in Newton Abbot is a fine example of residents working with the police to make their town safer and that is something I applaud.'

Residents in Newton Abbot last December rejected a proposed blanket 20mph limit across town but signalled support for targeted areas such as outside schools and nurseries.

How and when the new limits will be applied is being discussed by Devon County Council.

Devon and Cornwall Police confirmed the following data following the January 15 exercise:

14 excess speed offences, five non-compliant registration plates, two tinted windows under the 70 per cent limit, two no insurance, one vehicle with undeclared modifications, two no VEL (road tax), one no MOT, one cracked windscreen, one trailer with no lights, one bodywork in poor condition, one not in proper control (wheel spins).



