

Dear Panel,

I am writing in relation to the proposal to increase the speed limit on Green Lanes from 15mph to 20 mph. I oppose the proposal because it seems to me to be misconceived.

Green Lanes were introduced to establish a network of country and minor roads on which priority was given to pedestrians and unmotorised forms of transport over motorised forms. They were intended to improve the quality of life of people living on those lanes and visitors and locals using them for recreation.

Their value to visitors is demonstrated by the support for them from the Jersey Hospitality Association. I am not connected with tourism but I live on a Green Lane (La Rue du Croquet in St Aubin) and can speak from personal knowledge about the contribution that the 15 mph speed limit makes to the quality of my life as a resident. There is a material difference between being passed by a car travelling at no more than 15 mph and being passed by one travelling at 20 mph or, as would be the case if the speed limit was raised, at more than that. Being passed on a narrow road by cars, often as large as vans, travelling at 20 mph is uncomfortable and, especially with larger vehicles, actually scaring. It is much less so when the vehicle is travelling at no more than 15 mph.

I understand that the proposal to increase the limit is in response to complaints by car drivers that the 15mph limit is inconvenient (the word often used is "maddening"). If it is right, however, that the idea of Green Lanes was introduced so that there was a network of lanes where the interest of car drivers is not the top priority, that seems to me to be a concern that can never be higher than secondary. If the concept is worth maintaining at all, priority must be given to the interests and comfort of other users of the Green Lanes and, from my experience, the benefit of Green Lanes would be altogether lost if the speed limit were raised above 15 mph.

I am also a car driver and so do understand that driving at 15 mph is frustrating but Green Lanes can generally be avoided by using larger roads and, even where they do have to be used, sometimes other considerations have to take priority over my interests as a driver. I would go so far as to suggest that the frustration caused to car drivers is a positive factor if it discourages them from using Green Lanes except where absolutely necessary. Reducing the level of traffic makes the environment very much more attractive for everyone outside cars. Nobody regrets the complete absence of cars on Sark and in travel programmes about Sark it is always considered to be one of its most attractive features. Jersey is not Sark but having a network of lanes and roads where cars at least do not have priority is life enhancing and a wonderful feature of this Island.

Best regards

Jonathan Walker