

Balsall Common Speedwatch

Email from William Heardt the Speedwatch co-ordinator for Balsall Common:

Speedwatch is a joint community/police exercise aimed at reducing the excessive speed of motorists who travel through and around Balsall Common.

In particular we monitor speeds within the 30 M.P.H. zones of Balsall Street, Balsall Street East, Kelsey Lane and Station Road but could extend our reach to roads such as Kenilworth Road if we had more volunteers from the community to help us.

We have been active for more than a year now with a small but dedicated band of volunteers.

Some time ago the U3A kindly circulated details of our last recruitment drive to U3A members and we did receive some interest which we were able to follow up.

I would be most grateful if you would circulate this current email to members in Balsall Common to advise that we are again recruiting in anticipation of a training session to be held in February. The training is very easy. It consists of the police Speedwatch coordinator for this area and her colleagues speaking about speed and safety related subjects and a practical exercise in the use of the speed monitoring device that we use. It takes about two hours.

Volunteers can do as much or as little monitoring as they wish. Generally we are in teams of three and most people do one or two monitoring sessions lasting one hour each every month or so. There is no strict rota for this. I circulate a list of possible dates and times then people put their names forward or not as the case may be.

We log the details of motorists driving at speeds significantly more than the 30 M.P.H. limit (120% plus). The registration numbers are then submitted to the police co-ordinator who issues a letter to the driver of the vehicle (or the registered keeper) noting that this event has taken place. No-one is prosecuted as a result of our activities but it is plain to us that our mere presence at the side of the road wearing Hi Viz vests serves to slow people down and remind them of the speed limit. If people are seen speeding twice or three times by us during the year then they are likely to get a much stiffer letter from the police and a visit from the police coordinator in some cases.

The unfortunate death of a motorcyclist on Station Road recently serves to underline the need for safer roads whether we are drivers or pedestrians and in particular young mothers with children, dog walkers and the not so nimble seniors amongst us. Local U3A members in Balsall Common have a real opportunity here to help their community carrying out an interesting and worthwhile service that will help to make the roads safer for us all.

If anyone is interested in joining us they can email me specialtax@hotmail.com or 'phone 07813361578.