

## Email to The Director of Highways and Trading Standards

NYCC

March 2021

### HGV Traffic Problem

I am writing to you on behalf of Topcliffe Parish Council because you are ultimately responsible for Trading Standards and Highways. We hope that you can provide us with some advice and help to solve our HGV problem.

Firstly some background to the problem.

Topcliffe is a village of approximately 1500 people situated about 4 miles south of Thirsk next to the A168/A19 . The majority of the village is a designated conservation area since 1994 and has 15 listed buildings. To protect the conservation area Highways surrounded the village with no 7.5 tonnes except for access signs in 1999. The roads are just not suitable for large vehicles.

Until 2 years ago HGV traffic through the village was light but it has now reached unacceptable levels. For two months we have been recording HGV traffic on some roads on a part time basis. To date we have photographed over 750 HGV's on Front Street alone. We have recently started recording HGV's on Church Street and the daily numbers are very similar. We have not started recording on Long Street yet.

There is no doubt this HGV traffic is causing damage to the village both physically and environmentally.

1. The footpaths and kerbs are being destroyed by large articulated lorries particularly at junctions.
2. The old Toll Booth was quite badly damaged 18 months ago by a large coach .
3. It is dangerous for pedestrians on all streets when large HGV's navigate the village
4. We are aware of several parked vehicles being damaged by HGV's.
5. Many residents report serious vibrations in their properties which is beginning to cause damage.
6. The wall supporting the road and banking on the northern exit to the village is in danger of collapse. Articulated lorries are a significant cause of this problem which is being repaired by North Yorkshire Bridges Department in March 2021.

The pictures below taken from an upstairs window in Church street will give you some idea of the sort of problem we experience daily.

We believe there are several reasons for this increase in traffic;

1. Two local businesses in nearby Catton have expanded greatly and their lorries insist on using Topcliffe for access claiming they are operating from within the exclusion zone for lorries. Prior to expansion they both used the A167/A61 route to and from their sites avoiding Topcliffe and Catton. Interestingly their planning consent excludes their lorries going through Catton but not Topcliffe.
2. A new business ...wood pellets in Sand Hutton and Dalton whose vehicles ignore the signs and take the most direct route between their sites.
3. Dalton industrial estate expansion ... lorries appear to use Topcliffe as a route to the north.

4. AllenBrooke Industrial Estate is also within the current weight restriction area adding to the problem. The proposed industrial units at Park Barn farm will also be within the restricted area and will add further to the problem.

We discussed the problem with the local police and Hambleton/North Yorkshire councils and were advised to join Lorry Watch which as I am sure you are aware is administered by Trading Standards. We set up a camera to record lorry movements which are then reported on a daily basis.

The first area we would appreciate your help is in dealing with the reported HGV's

We have reported over 750 HGV's going through the village so far. To date we have received little or no feedback at all and not 1 HGV driver has been prosecuted or warned.

According to your department if the company is contacted they claim to be delivering in the area or that they are local. This may be true in some cases but purely as an example I have included records of 4 lorries/ companies that are repeatedly going through the village and are clearly not based in the area either. They are;

1. WK05 KBN: Hallikeld Farms based in Northallerton and recorded 8 times in February
2. FW68 FWN articulated log carrier ( wood pellets) recorded 5 times in February
3. NX68 UPT articulated log carrier Fawcetts ( wood pellets) recorded 4 times in February
4. Jackson Plant Hire various HGV's recorded 6 times . Based in Carlton Miniott

It does not seem that Trading Standards are particularly interested in dealing with this issue and the general feeling is that they are paying " lip service " to the process. We would appreciate some firm action and perhaps some honesty.

The second area we would appreciate your help/advice with is the positioning of the 7.5 tonnes access only signs.

We understand that the signs were put in to prohibit HGV traffic in the conservation zone in Topcliffe. However to prevent Lorries arriving at a sign and then finding nowhere to go but through the village the signs were placed near alternative routes. North of the village the sign is 2 -3 miles from Topcliffe at the Busby Stoop roundabout. By default this allows the local firms in Catton and Allenbrooke to claim they are within the 7.5 tonne zone and therefore must have access which defeats the purpose of the zone in the first place. It is also ironic that they cannot travel through their own village under their planning consent. The same is true for Dalton industrial Estate and Dalton. The planning consent excludes lorries travelling through Dalton to the site. Topcliffe, the only village in the area with a conservation zone, was not considered in any of the planning consents and as a result suffers traffic problems.

The signs need moving to the border of the conservation area on the edge of Topcliffe and warning signs need to be placed in the current positions so that HGV's have ample warning that to continue will place them in a no drive zone in the village.

We appreciate that you have a large department to run and that your time comes at a premium. So we would be quite happy if you could delegate these issues so someone with authority to act

I have copied Bob Baker (NYCC councillor), Mark Robson, leader Hambleton District Council and Peter Bardon Chair of Hambleton Planning into this email . They are all very aware of the problems we are experiencing and I am sure should you wish to contact them, they can provide you with further information

We look forward to hearing from you

