

Topcliffe Parish Council Update

Dalton Industrial Estate

The Dalton 49 proposed industrial estate expansion was, as expected, approved at the Hambleton District Council planning meeting on 24 Sept. We presented the village concerns about increased HGV traffic which was well received and supported by the planning committee. There is a full report on the home page of the village website (topcliffe.org.uk) Briefly, the plan has had a number of legally enforceable conditions added and approved which include improved signage, a traffic plan which will be made clear to all new tenants and a £50,000 bond to be used for extra surveillance, monitoring, enforcement and, if necessary, traffic cameras.

Inspired Pet Nutrition, the pet food business already established on Dalton Industrial Estate, have applied for permission to significantly expand their current operation. It is clear from their traffic study that this will result in a significant increase in HGV traffic on a daily basis. Their study suggests that there is no reason for this HGV traffic to travel through our village, but we know from our current experience that this is highly unlikely to be the case. We have responded to IPN and the planners expressing our serious concern and asking that legally enforceable conditions similar to Dalton 49 be included in any approval. Our submission has the full support of our District Councillors. Again, more details are available on the village website home page.

Amendment of Existing Weight Restriction Zones

After representations by the Parish Council to North Yorkshire Highways a proposal to move the current weight restricted zone limit from the Busby Stoop roundabout to the edge of the village has finally been agreed and been offered for public consultation. The consultation period ended a few weeks ago and we are now awaiting the final decision from Highways. Our own monitoring of HGV traffic suggests that around 70% of HGV passages emanates from companies located along this stretch of the A167 – which is currently legal. If approved this revised zoning would result in such traffic becoming illegal and we should see a drastic reduction of offenders.

Enforcement Action on Illegal HGV traffic

Part of the Council's recent efforts to reduce illegal HGV traffic has been to instigate prosecutions of offenders via the local authorities. This is a two-pronged attack which, after several initial technical setbacks and delays, is starting to show results.

Operation Spartan - This is a police operated scheme whereby we follow and dashcam record HGV passages from entry to exit of the weight restricted zone. We then submit the recordings to the police, with appropriate documentation and statements, for them to follow up. To date one submission has resulted in a prosecution with two others in process.

Trading Standards Tracking - We are working with Trading Standards who have set up three separate days of tracking HGV passages. They use a different system whereby their officers are stationed at each of the three current restricted zone entry/exit points and time HGV passages. Again, early progress was delayed due to technical hitches but, on their last outing, they recorded four transgressors which are now being processed towards prosecution. They have also committed to continuing these activities subject to their resources and budgets.

As and when prosecutions occur, we will be publicising as widely as possible, so that the HGV fraternity will become aware that passing through the Topcliffe weight restricted zone will result in prosecution and fines.

These may seem small figures compared with the number of HGV passages that we see daily, but the vast majority of those tracked are turning off to bases along the A167 between Topcliffe school and Busby Stoop roundabout – which, as mentioned above, is quite legal. If approve the revised enforcement zone would dramatically reduce illegal HGV's.

Village Tidy Day

Thanks to everyone who came out in the cold and drizzle to help with the Village Tidy organised by Councillors Malcolm Morley and Ben Collard. We had an excellent turn out from villagers who painted, washed, weeded, cut back and litter picked - among other things. Along with the satisfaction of having a clean and tidy village, all the volunteers were rewarded with hot drinks, cakes and bacon butties in the village Hall.