

SHIPTON BY BENINGBROUGH - HIGHWAYS AND ROAD SAFETY ISSUES: WHAT HAS THE PARISH COUNCIL BEEN DOING?

Road safety and speeding is a perennial issue which we look at virtually every meeting and have done for many years. The Parish Council has no authority to implement any suggested improvements; North Yorkshire Council Highways department and the Police Authority hold the power – and just as importantly, the budget.

There is now a renewed, independent campaign for the introduction of 20mph zones, fixed speed cameras and average speed zones across North Yorkshire villages, and Shipton is one of the signatories of this petition, so this seems like an opportune moment to bring us ‘up to speed’(!) with your Parish Council’s actions and representations in recent years.

Main Street Pedestrian Crossing

In June 2023, we met with our North Yorkshire Cllr and Highways representative from North Yorkshire Council for a village walk-through to outline some aspects of work required. We explained our priorities, and we confirmed the request for a pelican or zebra Crossing on Main Street. We also raised this with our newly elected MP, Sir Alec Shelbrooke, who raised the matter with North Yorkshire. The response from Highways was:

“There is no feasible location for a pelican crossing. To the north of the Dawnay Arms there is a bus stop. There are driveways on the eastern side of the carriageway which would be impeded by the placement of such a crossing. This location is very close to the next pedestrian refuge, of which there are already two in the village. Access to the Dawnay Arms would be restricted, plus areas where on street parking occurs would be displaced to the inconvenience of adjacent householders.”

Main Street Traffic refuge

We wrote to Highways in November, to request that the traffic island near the old garage development (now Townsend Close) is left in situ. Sadly, it was removed, but Highways provided evidence that large vehicles like refuse lorries would have run over the pavement when exiting the Close were it to have been left in place.

Main Street / A19 - 40mph ‘buffer’

The Parish Council have also campaigned for the introduction of a 40mph ‘buffer zone’ at either end of the village on the A19. This is to give vehicles a chance to reduce speed from 60mph to 40mph rather than a sudden braking (or not!) from 60mph to 30mph. Following our campaign, and a letter requesting this from our MP, the response from Highways was:

“North Yorkshire Police have confirmed that they would not support a 40 mph “buffer” at Shipton by Benningbrough. When assessing a proposed reduction in a speed limit we follow the DfT [Department for Transport] guidelines in order to maintain a fair and consistent response. The DfT suggests that in order for a 40mph limit to work there should be a degree of roadside development meaning that a driver would see the need for the reduction in speed limit and comply. There is little or no development either north or south of Shipton by Benningbrough on the A19 and consequently no change in environment. Similar reductions in speed limit with no change in environment in the county have not resulted in the desired reduction in vehicle speeds, and any speed limit that relies on Police enforcement to work will fail as this is not a sustainable

long-term option. Given this response from North Yorkshire Police, the Local Highway Authority does not propose to pursue the introduction of 40 mph restrictions.”

Station Lane – school lay by

We have also requested some action to renew the road markings in the school lay-by which Highways will put on the works calendar.

Police Action

We also communicate our concerns to the police. In September this year, North Yorkshire Police told us:

“Additional traffic/speed calming measures, including reductions or extensions of existing speed limits, the implementation of road signage (including speed limit, speed matrix or Vehicle Activated Signs) and further road engineering (speed bumps, chicanes, road markings, crossings etc.) are decisions made at the discretion of the local authority and not North Yorkshire Police.

If you have evidence of anti-social use of individual vehicles or poor/dangerous driving on a dashboard camera or other form of camera, then North Yorkshire Police’s ‘Operation Snap’ aims to improve the attitudes of all who use our roads and increase the level of safety for all.

Information on Op Snap and how to submit evidence can be found here:

<https://www.northyorkshire.police.uk/police-forces/north-yorkshire-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/op-snap/> or by emailing: OpSnap@northyorkshire.police.uk”

The police continue to make use of mobile speed camera enforcement in the village.

Vehicle Automated Signs (VAS)

The Parish Council have purchased two VAS cameras for use in the village, and these are rotated between the North / South of Main Street and East Lane / Station Lane. There are specific requirements from Highways about the siting and use; we are not allowed to install permanent traffic signs which is why they need to be moved regularly. The lampposts on which they are sited must also be checked and approved.

The data from these cameras gives really useful information on the speed and volume of traffic through the village and is published on the Community website. What it does show is that the ‘median’ speed of 85% of traffic is around 32-34mph through Shipton, which is good news, but does not give us much evidence to claim that speeding is a major issue.

Air Quality

One aspect which we were concerned about in connection with the sheer volume of traffic on the A19 was air quality in the village. Happily, the air quality monitoring equipment installed by the then North Yorkshire County Council showed that in 2022 and 2023, the nitrogen dioxide levels were well within the recommended limits. The new North Yorkshire Scientific Services Team have written to the Parish Council to advise that:

“As the nitrogen dioxide figures for Shipton are low we cannot justify additional diffusion tube monitoring for nitrogen dioxide in the village and we do not have additional specialist monitors for dust monitoring available at this time.”

We explained we do have concerns, particularly in relation to the Yorkshire Green substation building project. The Scientific Services Team said: "Our team are now aware of your concerns and if we consider that monitoring would be beneficial in the future, we will consider this site for deployment of the specialist equipment."

20s Plenty! Campaign

The Parish Council is also a signatory to the 20s Plenty! Campaign, which seeks to publicise and pressure North Yorkshire Council for the implementation of 20mph zones in residential village settings, and of course especially around school premises.

At the end of last year, Highways wrote to us about our proposal for 20mph zones on Station Lane and East Lane, following our consultation with residents. We are encouraged that they have agreed to arrange a speed survey: "... the results of which will help to assess the feasibility of a speed limit reduction on both roads."

It is a step in the right direction, and we will continue to campaign on your behalf. Please contact us if you have any other concerns or comments which you would like the Parish Council to consider.