

Escrick Parish Council
40 Linden Way
Thorpe Willoughby
YO8 9ND

clerk@escrick.org

17th June, 2016

95 Alive Partnership
c/o North Yorkshire Police Traffic Bureau
PO Box 809
York
YO31 6DG

Re: Safety of A19 through Escrick village.

Dear Sir or Madam,

Escrick Parish Council formally request that the members of the '95 Alive Partnership' respond to safety concerns regarding the A19 through Escrick Village. We request that the speed limit is reduced to 30mph, and other appropriate measures are implemented to allow residents to cross the road in safety.

Problem statement:

The A19 runs through Escrick village – currently with a 40mph speed limit.

Although the majority of housing is to the east of the A19, many core facilities including the doctors' surgery, pharmacy, church, allotments, hotel, health spa, pub and restaurants are located to the west of the A19. Significantly, the only northbound bus stop in the village (from Selby, to York) is also located on the west of the A19 (outside the church).

As such residents and visitors frequently need to cross the A19.

It can be difficult to cross the A19 safely, due to a combination of factors including:

- There is a high volume of traffic on the A19, including a high volume of lorries;
- There is limited visibility of vehicles approaching from the south due to a bend in the road;
- There are two T-junctions in close proximity, meaning pedestrians not only need to watch for a gap in the traffic on the A19, but also watch for vehicles pulling out of side roads (Skipwith Road, and the road to the Fat Abbott/surgery);
- There is no pavement on the west side of the A19 south of Skipwith Road, which limits the options as to where pedestrians can cross.

The current 40mph speed limit itself is too high, and vehicles regularly exceed this limit, as evidenced by the frequent triggering of the vehicle activated signs.

There is a small traffic island in place, but it is too small. For example, it cannot accommodate a parent, child and pushchair – nor does it provide sufficient protection from the turbulent air generated by lorries passing by. To reach the traffic island from the village, pedestrians have to first cross the Skipwith Road junction – a wide junction with three lanes of traffic and limited visibility up Skipwith Road.

Impact

As a result of the difficulties safely crossing the A19:

- Many people have stated that they would now rather drive the short distance across the village to the doctors' surgery or pharmacy rather than attempt to cross the road as a pedestrian – adding to traffic problems.
- Others have stated that they no longer use the bus into York, and drive instead, due to the difficulty crossing the road to the bus stop.
- The Church of England School in the village (which is separated from the church by the A19) now hires coaches to take children to the church – a journey of less than 500 metres.

Evidence of the problem:

- Police attending one of the recent accidents commented that, in their view, the speed limit should be reduced, and encouraged residents to complete the '95 alive' speed concern report.
- Escrick Parish Council circulated the '95 alive' speed concern reports to all households in the village, and received 63 responses raising concerns about speed on the A19 (attached).
- We are aware of numerous road traffic accidents along this section of the A19.
- The problem has been raised by members of the public at almost every Parish Council meeting in the past 12 months, and regularly prior to then.

A worsening problem:

We understand that this problem has been evaluated previously by NYCC in 2007 and was not considered a priority. However, since 2007 there have been a number of significant changes:

- Buses no longer stop elsewhere in Escrick village, and now only stop at an unmarked bus stop on the A19 by the church gate. This not only means that residents have to cross the A19 to/from northbound buses, but also means that buses now dwell for much longer on the A19 to pick-up/set-down passengers. This impedes visibility for crossing the road, and creates the additional hazard of vehicles overtaking buses.
- There has been further development west of the A19 – including a pub and health spa. In addition to generating new reasons for pedestrians to cross the A19, both of these have significantly increased the traffic at the junction of the A19 and the road leading to/from the surgery.
- The volume of traffic on the A19 has continued to grow.

Additional hazards:

In addition to the hazard to pedestrians crossing the road, there are risks to other road users:

- Southbound buses stop opposite the church gate. Vehicles overtaking these buses on the opposite side of the road have less than 90m visibility to oncoming northbound traffic with a potential head-on speed in-excess of 60mph.
- The cycle lane from the south merges with the main carriageway at the Skipwith Road junction. Cyclists have to use the main carriageway through the village, which is a relatively narrow stretch of road with a bend. Vehicles overtaking cyclists do not necessarily give sufficient clearance and/or are in the path of oncoming traffic round a bend with limited visibility.
- There are a number of private drives, and a recently built private road, that open out onto the A19 through Escrick where vehicles need to pull out with limited visibility. The recently redeveloped garage to the north of the village is also a busy junction, and site of several accidents in the last year alone.
- It can be difficult for vehicles joining the A19 from Skipwith Road and the lane to/from the doctors' surgery to do so safely at times of busy traffic.

Action requested:

Speed limit:

- We believe there is a very clear case for a reduction in the speed limit through Escrick to 30mph, (and for action to enforce the new limit).
- We note that DfT guidance from 2013 states: '*It is therefore government policy that a 30 mph speed limit should be the norm through villages.*' Whilst Escrick falls just below the 20 houses frontage threshold outlined in TAL01/04, it does appear to meet the '*other key buildings*' criteria.

Pedestrian crossing / junction design:

- In addition to reducing the speed limit, improved provisions are required for pedestrians to cross the road – for example a pelican crossing or improved central island.
- The Parish Council would welcome the opportunity to meet and explore options further with the relevant highways experts.
- The Parish Council are willing to work collaboratively with the relevant bodies to support making the case for the changes and associated investment.

We are aware that the council needs to work within budget constraints. However, we believe that the risk to life is very real, and that a full evaluation of the problem and potential mitigations is required nonetheless. The financial cost of change needs to be considered against the hidden financial cost of continued accidents.

Next steps

The Parish Council seeks a response to the concerns raised in this letter.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with the relevant experts to support your response.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Rowson
Chair – Escrick Parish Council

(Attached: (i) map of affected area; (ii) 66 speed concern report responses)

