

As explained at our last meeting, the parish council and councillors have received a significant number of complaints about the increasing number of very, very large HGVs using Wymeswold Road since the decision to allow a change of operator at Hoton Stores. As you know, this is something that the parish council were very concerned would happen and put up a strong fight against the proposal. The consequences of the decision by highways officers not to resist the change of operator has resulted in a very dangerous situation on the road and I attach photographs to illustrate two of the problems.

The first two show the size of HGVs using a weight restricted road and the hazard caused when the turn right onto the busy A60.

The other photographs show the damage to the verges along Wymeswold Road. As you will see, the carriageway is now cracking under the weight of HGVs and there is a cliff-edge from the tarmac to the verge. This lane is popular with cyclists and for those users this road edge is dangerous. As you know, my daughter required hospital treatment after 'falling' off the edge of a road elsewhere in the locality which had been damaged in a similar way.

Other problems are HGVs mounting our narrow pavements, passing inches from the windows of listed cottages and thundering through throughout the day leaving our residents thoroughly miserable. The snip from google maps below shows how many of our historic buildings have no front gardens, the pavement is narrow and in places barely rises above the road surface and the kitchen window of one property is just 90cm from the carriageway. The situation has become intolerable for those living on Wymeswold Road and our older residents fear for their lives every time they walk along this stretch of road.

We should be grateful if you would investigate what measures Highways will put in place to reduce the unacceptable impact on residents that has been caused as a direct result of their decision to permit vehicles of this size to use a narrow road.

Thank you for sending through yours and the Parish Councils concerns with regards to the HGV usage and safety of Hoton village. Ann Carruthers, The Director for Environment & Transport has asked me to respond on her behalf.

To start, we must clear any misunderstandings in relation to the weight restrictions and their use. Weight restrictions are operated on a zonal basis; therefore HGVs are prohibited from travelling through a zone and the restriction is signed at each entry point. As you can see from the map attached to this email, the A60 (Remptstone Road) is not weight restricted, whereas Wymeswold Road is restricted to a 7.5 ton weight limit (indicated by the purple line). This is also signed at the junction of Wymeswold Road.

While the road is restricted, HGVs may still travel along these roads should they need to access a site (in this case, Hoton stores) to either load or unload. Once they have finished servicing the intended site, they may legitimately travel within the zone, however they are encouraged to leave the zone in the most direct manner. This is also on the sign at the junction of Wymeswold Road with the A60.

We appreciate that the presence of these vehicles may be causing inconvenience to the local residents, the Council however has no powers to restrict HGVs from

accessing the site via Wymeswold Road as this is the most direct and only available route. Where the Parish are concerned with regard to the size of the vehicles accessing the plant, this is to be raised with the Borough Council (Leicestershire County Council are statutory consultees only) who made the final decision on the planning application.

Further investigation shows that there has only been 1 slight injury accident recorded on Wymeswold Road in the last 5 years; this did not involve a HGV. This is a good indication that the majority of drivers are aware of the road layout and are driving accordingly. I am also please to inform you that there have been reported accidents at the junction of Wymeswold Road with the A60 either.

With regards to the condition of the carriageway, whilst we are unable to confirm the reasons for why the carriageway may be cracking along the edges, we can confirm that this has been reported to our maintenance team for investigation. An officer will visit the site and request any repairs where necessary. Not all roads in the county are constructed by todays standards and older villages will have narrower roads and pavements, which from time to time may result in larger vehicles having to use pavements to access. Whilst this is unfortunate, we do recognise that it may be necessary and would hope that this is conducted in a safe manner.

Whilst this will not be the response you were hoping for, I hope the above explains why we cannot take any action at this location.