



Why complete the Atherleigh Way?

# Background

LHSRG has been campaigning to reduce traffic in Lowton for more than 25 years. Plans, as far back as 1990 when the Atherleigh Way was built, have been on hold to connect the road to the M6 and M61 bypassing Lane Head, Lowton

LHSRG has been liaising with various agencies since 2006 over congestion and dangerous air quality at Lane Head. Some 12 meetings have been held, attended by Warrington, St Helens and Wigan Council officers, National Highways (formerly HA and HE), the Police and TfGM mostly chaired by Andy Burnham and latterly James Grundy



# Completion of Atherleigh Way

- A completion of the Atherleigh Way which has long been mooted as a solution to reducing poor air quality, congestion and noise on the A579 Winwick Lane/A572 Newton Road, Lowton
- Traffic travelling northbound on the A579 from the Warrington area - queuing/engines idling at the traffic lights at Winwick Lane contribute significantly to the dangerous levels of NO2 and other noxious fumes breathed in by residents
- Residents currently report one HGV southbound for every three northbound

# Congestion/queues on Winwick Lane



# Traffic Volumes on Winwick Lane - 2018 vs 2023

WSP March 2023 survey shows traffic volumes have increased beyond pre-pandemic levels

- Weekly total = 107,915 Daily average 15,416
- 15% increase on 2018
- Daytime (07:00 to 19:00) total increased by 27%
- Goods vehicles (light and heavy) now account for 27% of total compared to 19% in 2018

***In spite of cleaner and electric vehicles this problem is not going to go away by itself....***

# Commuting Traffic

- It is important to acknowledge that the traffic passing through Lane Head and Winwick Lane is predominantly commuting and goods delivery
- Well intentioned policies of promoting public transport, cycling and walking will have minimal impact on the traffic levels experienced

# Where does the traffic come from?

Winwick Lane attracts traffic by its location:

- Lane Head has long been a gateway to southerly destinations for traffic coming from north of the A580
- The A580 going westwards from Astley towards Liverpool has only one southbound crossing, the A574 Warrington Road, before reaching Lane Head. A distance of 8 miles.
- The A574 Warrington Road is not attractive to commuting traffic as it passes through the villages of Glazebury, Culcheth and Croft and is mainly restricted to a speed limit of 30 mph and is HGV restricted
- At some point southbound traffic has to cross the Manchester Ship Canal. Apart from the Warburton toll bridge Lane Head presents the first opportunity to access a crossing point west of the M60





## Lane Head traffic flow in detail

(map courtesy of Google)

# A572 Newton Road and A579 Winwick Lane

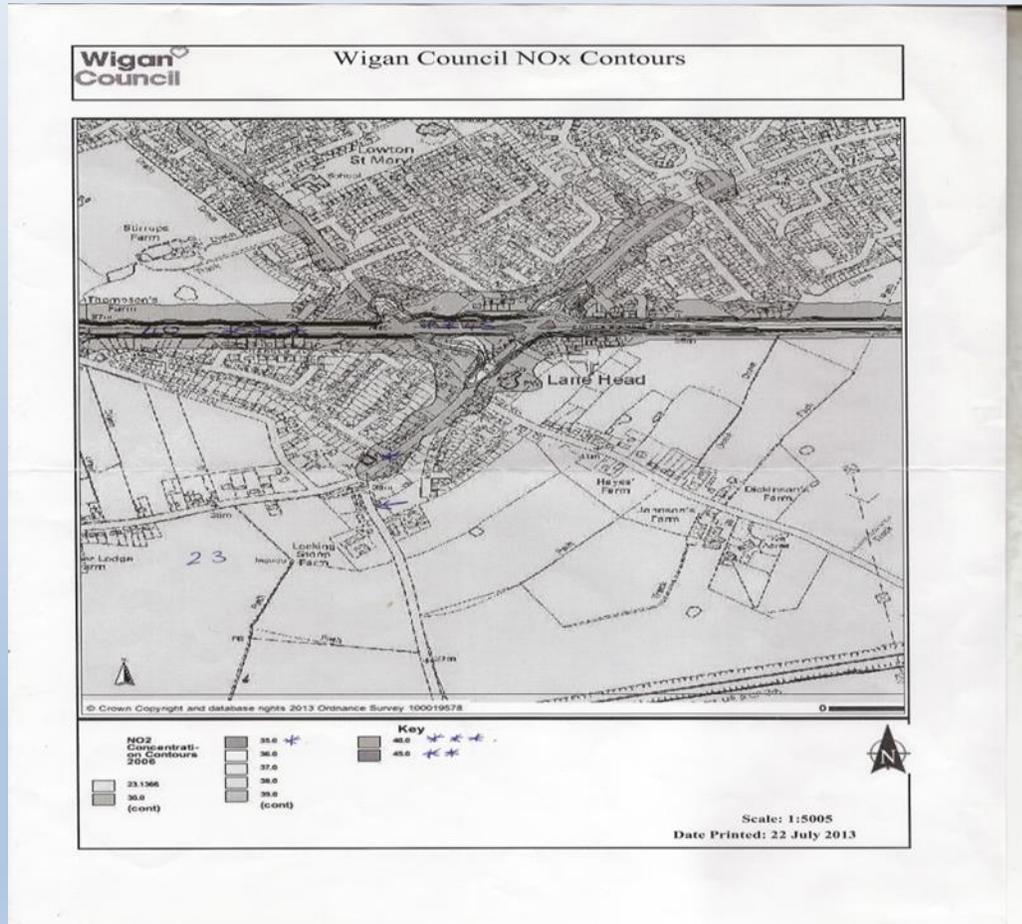
The A572 Newton Road at Lane Head is a single carriageway residential road



The southerly end of Winwick Lane connects to junction 22 of the M6



# Air Pollution NO2 readings Lane Head



# Air Quality at Winwick Lane / Newton Road

Air quality for the past years has consistently exceeded the legal maximum of 40 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. In 2022 Winwick Lane measured 45.3ug/m<sup>3</sup>. Air quality continues to deteriorate. 1 in 23 deaths in GM are linked with poor air quality

2018	57.7 ug/m <sup>3</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> highest reading in GM area
2019	57.9 ug/m <sup>3</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup> highest
2020	41.9 ug/m <sup>3</sup>	highest
2021	44.6 ug/m <sup>3</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> highest
2022	45.3 ug/m <sup>3</sup>	awaiting figures

16 children currently live at the end of Winwick Lane and within 25 metres of the traffic lights experiencing a number of different pollutants

Source:

Imperial College

April 2022

14:25

AIR QUALITY REPORT

9 WINWICK LANE  
WARRINGTON  
53°27'49.74380°N  
2°34'19.41665°W

VERY HIGH  
AIR POLLUTION

92

This address is in  
the 92nd national percentile

EXCEEDS THREE W.H.O.  
LIMITS

addresspollution.org

14:27

LEVELS & HEALTH EFFECTS

Pollutant one: PM2.5

At this address, the annual average of the pollutant PM2.5 is 11.01mcg/m3. The World Health Organization limit is 5mcg/m3.

This study shows 19.9% of strokes were attributed to exposure (for a year or more) of PM2.5 concentrations exceeding 10mcg/m3.

PM2.5 can also cause asthma, jeopardize lung functions and promote cancer.

Pollutant two: PM10

The reading for PM10 at this address is 18.14mcg/m3. The limit is 15mcg/m3.

Cardiovascular mortality increases by 0.76% and respiratory mortality by 0.58% for every 10mcg/m3 increase of PM10.

addresspollution.org

# Environment Act 2021

- All local authorities are legally bound (and need) to work together to reduce dangerous air quality as an Air Quality partner.
- Wigan, Warrington and St Helens have a responsibility to help reduce toxic air quality through Lane Head
- The High Court told the government that it must cut the illegal levels of nitrogen dioxide suffered by dozens of towns and cities in the “shortest possible time”. 2005.... We still wait 18 years on

***This can be achieved via the completion of the Atherleigh Way***

# New developments

- In all three local authorities more housing and other developments mean more vehicles which will hugely impact the roads around Lane Head
- The new Parkside development connects directly to Winwick Lane, not directly to the M6 as widely advertised. It is inconceivable that vehicles accessing the site from north of the A580 will not utilise Winwick Lane
- Whilst a weight restriction north as well as southbound and Moving Traffic Powers would enable Wigan to prosecute offending HGV drivers Parkside will be accessed by all classes of vehicle, from cars, vans and LGVs
- ~1300 new houses approved to date for Golborne /Lowton rising to ~2200 by 2037

# Extra traffic

- **Winwick Lane is the tactical diversion route when there is an accident on the M6**
- **Newton Road/Winwick Lane is the designated high and heavy load route for vehicles unable to travel under low bridges on the M6**
- **For the past 2 years Winwick Lane has also been the designated route when closures have occurred in the construction of the M6 smart motorway. Within the last 12 months there have been more than 40 night closures of the M6 Junctions 23/22 causing considerable distress to roadside properties/residents. National Highways have refused to divert traffic through Newton for safety reasons**
- **In addition, the installation of a cycle/pedestrian bridge over the M6 on Parkside Road has necessitated further night closures**
- **Over the past 12 months despite promises to the contrary vehicles working on the Parkside link road are accessing the site via Winwick Lane**

*The extension of Atherleigh Way would obviate the use of Winwick Lane for diversions*

# Attempts to reduce HGVs on Winwick Lane

- Wigan Council de primed Winwick Lane in 2016 and a 7.5 tonne weight restriction was placed on Winwick Lane southbound in 2019. Whilst not enforced it resulted in some decrease in HGVs southbound
- Warrington refused to weight limit Winwick Lane northbound. Stating in response to a FOI request that:
  - a) Wigan did not follow protocols in putting into effect the weight limit
  - b) Warrington agreed to revisit the northbound limit once the Parkside Link Road is in operation on Winwick Lane

# Moving Traffic Powers

- Wigan MBC has applied for Moving Traffic Powers under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 which would make the weight restriction on Winwick Lane enforceable. This should reduce the heavy traffic utilising Lane Head to access southbound routes but as to date not northbound
- This is due to come into effect in forthcoming months. Wigan will initially warn offending drivers and ultimately prosecute
- This, however, is only enforceable southbound which appears nonsensical to drivers

# Potential Routes

Wigan MBC have conducted initial feasibility studies of potential routes (extract from Golborne and Lowton Infrastructure Assessment Engagement, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021)

## Lane Head Bypass options

The Deal  
2030

Our People

Our Place

Our Future

Wigan  
Council

- Option 1 (purple): cost approx £12 million. It includes land in Warrington Borough
- Option 2 (pale blue from A580): cost approx £8 million
- There is insufficient s106 funding
- Further evaluation is underway to explore delivery and funding options.



# Funding

- LHSRG believes that a positive business case can be constructed to secure funding for extending Atherleigh Way
- £10.7 million in Government funding was made available for local authorities to improve air quality (*DEFRA*)
- An extension of the Atherleigh Way would negate the need for an extra left turn only lane on the westbound A580/A572 junction saving ~£4m of S106 funding

# The hidden cost of congestion

- It is estimated that on average British drivers wasted 115 hours in congestion in 2019 costing the country £6.9 billion, an average of £894 per driver - an emotional as well as financial cost -*The Economist* (Queues on Winwick Lane and Newton Road often tail back a mile or more)
- Congestion accounts for significant financial losses in increased business costs
- It is estimated congestion will cost the country £55 billion by 2025 (*Atkins*)

# SUMMARY

- The extension of the Atherleigh Way is an obvious opportunity to address air quality and congestion
- It will benefit all three neighbouring authorities by improving congestion on the A580
- Government funding is available to improve air quality/infrastructure where there is a positive business case
- It would obviate the need for S106 money (~£4m) to be spent on a free flow traffic lane on the A580 at Lane Head
- All parties need to work together to make this opportunity a reality



**LHSRG**

LANE HEAD SOUTH RESIDENTS GROUP