

## Notes of Lane Head South Residents' Group

The Travelodge, Lane Head,

Monday Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> 2022 7-15 p.m.

**Present:** Julie Middlehurst Asst. Director - Infrastructure and Regulatory Service Wigan MBC, Danny Orrell Traffic Management and Developments Manager Wigan MBC

28 members LHSRG

Kathleen Johnson (Chair) **welcomed** everyone to the meeting.

**Apologies** received from James Grundy MP, Peter Hatfield, Howard Cooper, Gerry and Jackie Finch, Simon Ellam.

Whilst the agenda was followed, many of the issues are interrelated and overlap. Major issues are a result of excess traffic directly affecting residents' quality of life at Lane Head - speeding, noise, broken grids, pot-holes, inability to cross major roads or poor air quality.

### **Traffic through Lane Head/Air Quality/CAZ**

- Winwick Lane's air is toxic. Whilst the EU maximum is 40 ug/m<sup>3</sup>, the WHO limit is 20ug/m<sup>3</sup>... (micrograms of pollutants per cubic metre of air) even at the height of lock down this was never achieved. Average bias adjusted figure from April 2018 to December 2020 approx. 50 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. (NOx Tube 180)
- A Freedom of Information request has been unsuccessfully made to Wigan to supply the 2021 figure for Tube 180. These figures cannot be verified by DEFRA until bias adjusted. Residents are concerned that they are unaware whether air quality remains at dangerous levels – higher than the area where 9year old Ella Kissi Debrah died from air pollution. 12 children live within 100 metres of Tube 180. The government states that air pollution is the biggest threat to health in the UK. Around 1,200 deaths per year attributed to air pollution in Greater Manchester. Wigan has a legal responsibility imposed by the Government to improve air quality.
- The question was asked – **Can you advise what Wigan proposes to do to lower air pollution in the area?**

- Julie Middlehurst responded that Wigan's written objection to Parkside was largely based on poor air quality.
- JM stated there had been resistance to the introduction of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) but it will come into effect in May for HGV's. The level of funding for LGV's, vans, taxis etc planned for June 2022 to be reconsidered due to the lack of compliant vehicles. It does not at this stage include private cars. Funding incentive to upgrade vehicles currently £120 million. It is a fully automated system independent of GMP. Fines to be spent on operating costs of ANPR system, and further improving air quality as well as funding upgrading of vehicles.
- Reference was made to the by-pass by residents as CAZ will not deal with congestion, noise and vibration.
- Concern was expressed that companies may opt to pay the fines and pass on costs to their customers. (a one-off daily charge of £60 for HGV's)

#### **Weight restriction Winwick Lane**

- LHSRG is grateful to Wigan for their signage and initially for installing the CCTV camera opposite Locking Stoop farm.
- Warrington refused to weight limit their section of Winwick Lane which ends at the railway bridge – one reason given that any HGV driver who decides to come down Winwick Lane has nowhere to turn round. It was stated that Wigan had refused to pay for a turning circle on Warrington land. Warrington, however, have now ring fenced their area with a total of 19 x 7.5ton weight restrictions and installed advanced warning signage. One on particular on St Helens land at the junction of A572/3. These weight restrictions took a few months to initiate whilst it took 20 years to weight limit A579 Winwick Lane southbound.
- Wigan were asked if it is possible to liaise with Warrington and place an advance weight restriction at the entrance to Winwick Lane at M6 Junction 22 roundabout advising drivers of the weight limit ahead on both carriageways.
- Danny Orrell confirmed there had been one meeting with Warrington and St Helens Councils.

- **DO agreed to discuss with Warrington how they had weight limited their area in such a short time and that Wigan would plan to weight limit Winwick Lane northbound.**

#### **TFGM Survey**

- According to the 2017 and 2019 TfGM surveys, just short of 100, 000 vehicles travel through Lane Head each week causing congestion, noise, vibration, poor air quality and loss of sleep. Apparently, the Lane Head junction on the A580 is the second busiest junction in Greater Manchester.
- We have requested the September TfGM survey results for the Lane Head area including Newton Road and Winwick Lane. Whilst we feel that there has been a decrease in southbound HGV's due to the weight restriction there appears to be significantly more heavy traffic coming northbound. It was reported that traffic is back to pre- Covid levels.
- **Danny agreed to forward the September TfGM survey results to LHSRG**

#### **CCTV/ANPR camera**

- A CCTV camera was installed opposite Locking Stoop farm on Winwick Lane in May 2021. Residents have sent lists of offending vehicles to the police, but few prosecutions appear to have been made. Police policy is to send warning letters. LHSRG is in regular touch with Inspector Andrew Smith and our community Police officers. Our concern was always that the camera could not be monitored by scarce Police resources.
- An Automatic Number Plate Recognition camera (ANPR) would reduce precious police time monitoring camera footage; it would also act as a deterrent to other would- be offending HGV drivers and not insignificantly, would bring in revenue to Wigan Council.
- LHSRG was informed by Paul Barton, Wigan Council's Director of Environment that "moving traffic offence powers" could be handed to local authorities, this being the case, an ANPR camera would be self – enforcing.

- **JM agreed both to look into an ANPR camera which would automatically register HGV's over 7.5ton.and to register for moving traffic offence powers.**

### **Weight Limit on Newton Road**

- As residents of Newton Road are well aware many hauliers having ignored the signage on the East Lancs. now go straight down Newton Road instead of turning into Winwick Lane. This of course was not the intention to increase Newton Road traffic.
- NOx levels on Newton Road are considerably lower than the level on Winwick Lane and are well within the legal limit (between 15 and 18 ug/m3) Therefore, Wigan does not consider it possible to weight limit this stretch of Newton Road. There was considerable scepticism amongst residents questioning the validity of the NOx readings on Newton Road, given that there is more passing traffic than on Winwick Lane and there are several areas of poor air quality on Newton Road and the East Lancs. (See Wigan Council NOx Contours 22.07.13 Also, that there are many other factors that should be taken into consideration such as congestion, noise, inability to cross the road safely. Frustrations were aired as to why solutions were not being found. **JM commented that Wigan had to be realistic as to the solutions that could be progressed but would look into the location of the NOx tubes on Newton Road and the validity of their data.**
- A personal account was read out from a young resident on Newton Road describing her experience of the traffic; struggling to cross Newton Road to school; recorded messages in the middle of the night stating "this vehicle is turning left;" noise of brakes; traffic hitting broken grids and her brother's asthma attacks having walked back and forth to school for 12 years. The meeting was moved by this account.

**JM promised to look into the criteria for a weight restriction on Newton Road.**

### **Speed on Newton Road**

- Chris Walker reported the speed issue on Newton Road towards the Travellers Rest. He has over 100 video clips of excessive speeding, risking accidents/fatalities to pedestrians, cyclists, dog walkers who regularly use this route. He has requested a solution from Wigan

Council such as double white lines to prevent overtaking, speed limit reduction to 30mph/speed camera. Mark Tilley, a Wigan Officer has responded that traffic data does not warrant Council action. **DO to ask the newly appointed traffic Engineers to look into this.** JM suggested that it was those speeding who should be prosecuted rather than penalise law abiding drivers. Chicanes have been used by Warrington on Parkside Road and near the Golf Club in Culcheth.

**Would Wigan consider this measure?**

- Counc. E. Houlton suggested 'Brighter Borough' money to purchase and train residents in the use of a radar gun. This had a mixed response. **DO agreed to meet residents on Newton Road. JM to look at the data again.**

**S106**

- Residents expressed their and other residents' groups complete objection to the proposals set out early 2021 by Wigan Council. The feeling was that the proposals would actually encourage traffic to travel through Lane Head. The merits of a by-pass to solve traffic issues at Lane Head were described. DO described the difficulty of gaining funding and providing a viable business case. (Given the move to walk/ cycle, there is no pedestrian footpath on most of Winwick Lane and too dangerous to cycle.)
- Counc. M. Cooper pointed out that the continuation of the Atherleigh Way to Winwick Lane would make sense as they were both the same road – the A579.
- Alan Kirkham asked if S106 money earmarked for St Mary's Community Hall could be released to complete the improvements – car park, emergency lighting, replacement windows. **JM to take this back to Aiden Thatcher**, the Wigan Officer responsible for S106.

**M6 SMART Motorway Upgrade**

- Lane Head has long been a diversion route for the M6. DO stated that National Highways, formerly HE, confirmed this diversion route with Wigan when Winwick Lane was weight restricted southbound. Hence Winwick Lane remains the diversion route for the new SMART motorway upgrade. This, in spite of its severe impact on Lane Head i.e. on -Wigan's residents. An alternative would have been the A49

which residents believe would have far less polluting effect on properties and less noise nuisance. (It is accepted that some drivers will choose their own route)

- The Diversion route signage has been regularly left operative when the diversion is not in place - thus legitimising HGV's to travel southbound on Winwick Lane in spite of the weight restriction. Residents have been told by NH that if the diversion causes sleep disturbance, they can be put up in a hotel for the nights the diversion takes place. (Ironic – when this happens every night as drivers make the short cut through Lane Head).
- Residents have paid for secondary double glazing so that they can sleep at night without the rattle of grids, squeal of brakes and vibration of HGV's. People are forced, where possible, to sleep in rear bedrooms. **DO to have ongoing discussions with NH and other adjoining local authorities as to how this can be alleviated.**

#### **Exit from Delamere Road to Kenyon Lane**

- Cars exiting Delamere Road cannot exit safely onto Kenyon Lane. Wigan have agreed to extend the Keep Clear Box.
- **Terry Hewitt to attend a site meeting at peak times with Wigan Traffic Engineers to ascertain the size of the extension.**

#### **Impact of Parkside**

- Gareth Edwards explained that Wigan's decision not to attend the Parkside Inquiry was manipulated by those proposing Parkside to their advantage. JM, unaware of residents' feelings that they had been let down by their Council stated in hindsight that Wigan should have attended.
- Counc. K. Houlton suggested that traffic entering the Parkside site from Winwick Lane should not be allowed to travel southbound on Winwick Lane - by redesigning the roundabout, blocking off any access to Winwick Lane. **Could Wigan ask for this as mitigation?**

**JM promised to look to resolve some of the above issues.**

The meeting thanked both Julie and Danny for their attendance at the meeting and their understanding of the issues.