

Paul Roberts

Transport and Development
East Block County Hall
Northallerton North Yorkshire DL7 8AH
development.control@northyorks.gov.uk
PaulN.Roberts@northyorks.gov.uk

Copy:

Kate Broadbank,
Principal Development Management Officer
Place-shaping and Economic Growth
Harrogate Borough Council PO Box 787 Harrogate HG1 9RW
kate.broadbank@harrogate.gov.uk

Date: 26/6/2022

Dear Mr Roberts

20/05181/FULMAJ - Residential development of 88 dwellings including access, landscaping and public open space – Alfa/Avant



We have studied your Considerations and Recommendation dated 17 May 2022 for this application, the site plan of which is displayed above.

We are extremely concerned that (p.1) you support the revised scheme. 'The L.H.A is encourage (sic) to see the site layout includes for staggering the Moor Lane cross roads in the village. Routing vehicles through the development site onto Knaresborough Road', and that you 'welcome' the proposed staggered crossroads. (NB: Moor Lane is only classified as C263 – not even a 'B' road.)

It has been repeated consistently that the government encourages consultation between LPA and local communities, and yet this revised scheme has recently been submitted with absolutely no consultation whatsoever.

We have to tell you that the village of Bishop Monkton is universally outraged at this new proposal and dozens of objections reflecting this have already been submitted to HBC. Have you seen these? The suggestion that articulated lorries, heavy agricultural equipment and trailers, commercial vehicles and through traffic should have to thunder through a new housing estate, is anathema to us. The layout suggests a re-directed curved route (from Moor Road) through the new houses as the village's primary access from the A61. Inevitably there will be street parking, despite what should be front gardens, being given away to hard standing for cars, and there is no consideration to other regular users.

Bishop Monkton is a rural village. There is an established livery close to the proposed site on Moor Road. Horses are a regular feature of the village scene, often with junior riders being led. We are situated on a primary cycle route and cycling clubs pass through regularly, both as individuals and as pelotons during club and charity events. There are no provisions for horses or cycle tracks, and certainly nothing suggested to provide safe pedestrian access along Moor Road.



A large tanker, carrying chemicals, coming into the village from Moor Road

Moor Road (C263) – further concerns



Moor Road close to the village, no pavements and a bend between the Livery and the proposed site entrance.

Heavy trucks like this are a regular feature as they either serve the village or use the route as a short cut to Boroughbridge or the Roecliffe Bar Lane light industrial estate. See also photo on p.16.



Moor Road. No safe place for children leaving school bus. The verge is overgrown and consequently unavailable in summer. Also, yet another stand-off at the hump-back bridge on Moor Road. A blind hill with no control or passing places, and certainly no footpath!



And again - in the same place.



Moor Road/A61/Thwaites Lane crossroads. Another accident. Fast-moving traffic on the A61 but no slip roads, despite ample room to put them in.

Furthermore, we would ask you to consider that children would ordinarily expect to be able to 'play out' in the street near their homes (on a housing estate and with minimal gardens) as a normal social activity. Most houses will have no front gardens and children's safety will be threatened by parked cars and all the through-traffic to which we have already referred. There are 20 residential properties along the road in the site, 4 times more than the 5 existing residential properties on Moor Road, each of which is individual and set well back behind front gardens.

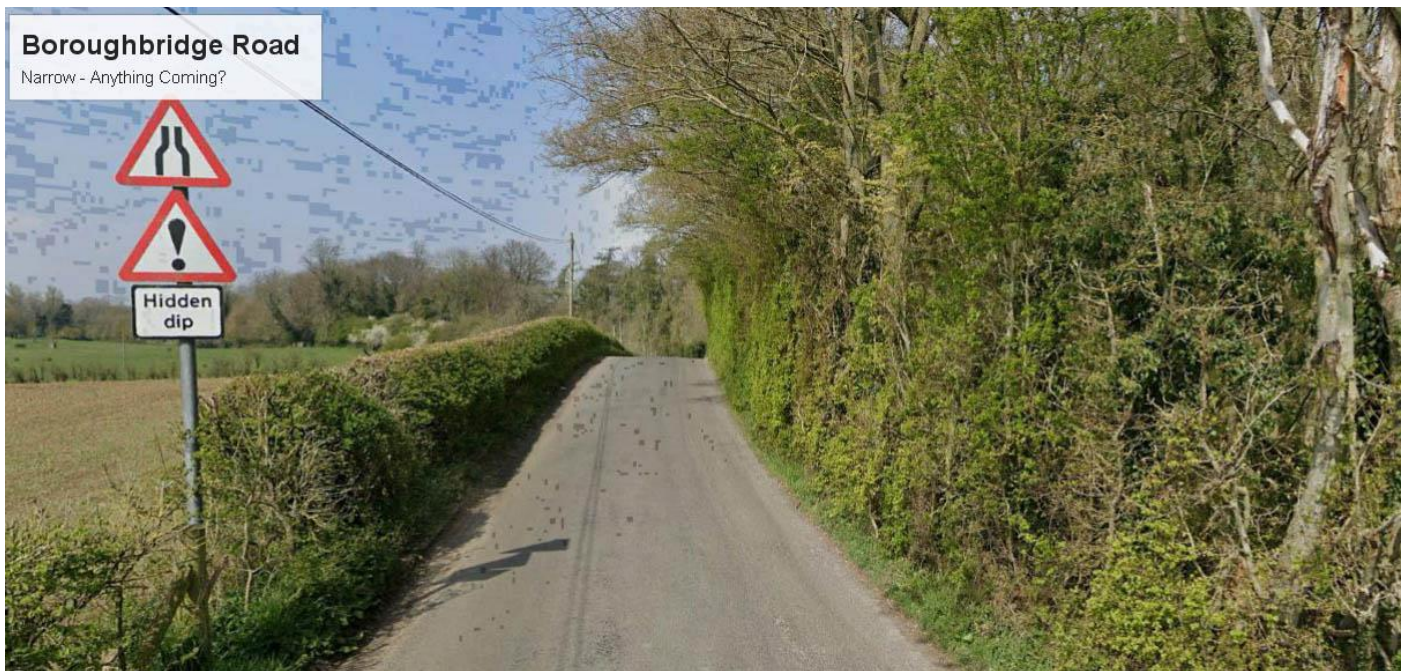
We are truly surprised that this opportunity to create a safe and attractive environment in which to raise a family, has been projected as a nightmare urban high-density scheme in which people must live behind closed doors to keep their children safe and avoid continuous noise and polluted atmosphere. There is no attempt at gentle transition between the eclectic village properties and the open countryside.

We also take this opportunity to comment on the matter of road improvements (p.2). You say, 'The Highway Authority already considers the existing highway network near to Bishop Monkton is in need of improvement due to the expected increase in traffic likely by developments near to the village and considers that the existing roads whilst having capacity do not conform to current standards as the roads have evolved over the years.' We note that you have referred to the 'the existing highway network' needing improvement, and yet you only identify 'the current alignment of Knaresborough Road between Bishop Monkton and Ripon Bypass'.

Why is this the case? You have already referred to the 'network' and 'roads' in the plural, thereby accepting that all approach roads to the village are wanting in this respect. You must have noted that whether approaching from Burton Leonard or Boroughbridge, these also have significant single-track sections and do not 'have the capacity' which you claim – so why ignore them in your report? It seems to demonstrate a lack of consistency and concern and we ask how is this justified?

Have you actually driven into Bishop Monkton *on all four approach roads* and seen for yourself how inadequate and dangerous they are especially in the single-track sections? Two of the roads (Moor Road and Boroughbridge Road) have 7.5T limits (bar access). It is worth bearing in mind that no improvements have been made to *any of these roads* in over 50 years and yet a very marked change has occurred in all aspects of their use, in the size, numbers, axle weight and speed of the vehicles they are expected to safely carry. We include below some recent photographs to illustrate these points:

Boroughbridge (Rocliffe) Road (C263). (Please note once again, that this route into the village only carries a 'C' classification, as do all of the 4 'country lanes').



Boroughbridge Road descending to Holbeck Bridge going towards Bishop Monkton. Single track and unsighted.



Holbeck Bridge, narrow and on a blind bend, and if that isn't convincing enough – It FLOODS to 2m several times a year!



And here it is, the approach to Holbeck Bridge from the village – flooded once again (nearly 2m deep).



This is exactly the same place – EXCEPT this time the help of the Emergency Services was needed! Note stranded car.



The same place again. Two appliances and how many men? This is ridiculous.

Assuming you are not stopped by any floods then the road towards Roecliffe is very winding and narrow for most of the way with a long narrow single track between two of the farms –



On the way to Roecliffe before Westwick Hall Farm, shortly after Holbeck Bridge. This 'informal' passing place is one of the few in a prolonged single track section.

Knaresborough Road, towards Ripon (C3777) Again, note 'C' classification.



Knaresborough Road, close to Thorpe Farm , from Ripon coming back towards Bishop Monkton. Notice erosion and deformation of roadside. Is this post legally sited, so close to the carriageway?



Impossibly oversized articulated cattle transport heading towards Thorpe Farm and Ripon. This 'C' road has to carry agricultural services to local farms, but frequently are just used as a short cut by non-related users.



Again, Knaresborough Road, the same truck on the way to Ripon, close to Thorpe Farm.

As a general observation about Knaresborough Road, whether approaching from the North or South of Bishop Monkton, residents have completely lost faith in assurances from NYCC Highways Authority concerning provision and maintenance of signage and road markings.

Both BMAG and individual residents have drawn your attention to the *extremely late provision of the chicane by Harvest View* and how ineffective and inappropriate its positioning. Attention has been drawn by our Parish Council to the failure of the flashing speed signs, and road markings, be they rumble strips or paint, which are not maintained and therefore are relatively ineffective – both within the village and in the approaches.

It was several years before the installation of the chicane at Harvest View, by which time the development had been occupied for some considerable time. Even then the chicane was put in a totally different location and the raised speed table proposal was seemingly dropped.

We get little comfort, therefore, that the LPA or the LHA will insist and enforce changes to road infrastructure in a timely way before any proposed housing might be built in our village. This is part of a general failure by HBC and NYCC in the provision of all infrastructure which should be in place *before any development is commenced – and maintained thereafter*.

Are you able to offer any assurances that the potential development in Bishop Monkton would be any different and the failure to enforce conditions of the Harvest View planning consent will not be repeated?

Knaresborough Road towards Burton Leonard & Knaresborough (C3777)



This single-track section just South of Bishop Monkton, is both lengthy and badly sighted. How can it be suggested that this meets the standards required for existing use, let alone much increased traffic arising from large-scale development in Bishop Monkton? Once vehicles enter the section from either direction, they are committed. How are HGVs expected to respond if they meet? Add cyclists and/or horses and the situation becomes frustrating and dangerous.....



..... as is clearly demonstrate in this photograph. Exactly same place (notice tree), but from the opposite direction.



Knaresborough Road just after the single track – lucky to meet the bus here rather than earlier!



Turning into Knaresborough Road by the church several times a day. The opposite carriageway is blocked by the bus as it turns at the bottom of the hill and is unsighted for vehicles travelling North..... (see next).



.....such as this heavy fuel oil tanker. It breaks hard as it runs down the same hill – only a few meters from the Church Farm T junction which the bus negotiated in the previous photograph. The road appears to be wet, with clear implications.

We challenge the Highways Authority to justify how these roads *can possibly be considered safe* for an increase in traffic and usage, given how demonstrably they are shown not to be so and how wanting the approach road infrastructure is, even for current usage.

It is worth noting that many of the villages nearby, are served by much better roads, and yet Bishop Monkton, which has only a legacy of medieval road infrastructure (frequently determined by field boundaries), has been targeted for large-scale development. Do the statutory authorities involved with this application (plus the other two running concurrently), really believe this is acceptable and meets the increasingly vocal demands for good planning practice? We do not think so.

Additionally, on the matter of the closing of Moor Road at the crossroads, we object strongly to this proposal. There are various compelling reasons, and these include:

The blind spot created by the new garage attached to Crossways on the NW corner will continue to severely limit visibility of traffic coming from Ripon. This will not only continue to affect traffic turning out from Moor Road, but also traffic turning right into Hungate. It is the case that Crossways received their consent (see attached Planning Decision and NYCC Highways response) to develop their property under 17/00140/FUL. It should be noted that the new garage constructed is not integral, per condition by LHA Boroughbridge, but is attached to the original bungalow.

It is because of this that safe sighting of oncoming traffic from Ripon has become impossible.



‘Crossways’. See how the attached garage was built in contravention of the planning restriction and how it obscures sighting of vehicles coming from Ripon.



‘Crossways’. This again illustrates how it is impossible to get safe sighting of oncoming traffic from Ripon. The sand on the road covers an accident that happened an hour or so earlier.

We would like to ask if this application was ever physically inspected by Highways before approval? Had it been so, then surely the consent leading to this problem would never have been granted?

Traffic exiting the proposed new estate must turn either right or left onto Knaresborough Road which already carries speeding traffic using the short cut between Knaresborough and Ripon. Of this a majority, however, will turn left for Hungate (village centre and Roecliffe/Boroughbridge) or for Ripon, suggesting that the proposed location of the pedestrian crossing is on the wrong side of the exit on to Knaresborough road.



Heavy trucks at Moor Road-Hungate crossroads on 8th June 2022. Is it right that these should be routed through a new housing estate? Note how the carriageway is overlapped by the grey truck.

Traffic that is going to/from Hungate (see above) - currently straight across the crossroads - will, after turning left from the estate onto Knaresborough road, have to negotiate a right turn possibly necessitating holding position there until able to do so. The road is not wide, there would be no 'mid-road safe zone', visibility towards Ripon is poor due to Crossways' garage and general road alignment beyond, and larger vehicles coming out of Hungate would cause a blockage because of the space required for turning, often taking them into the other carriageway. Similarly for those making a left turn onto Knaresborough Road immediately prior to a right-hand manoeuvre into the housing estate to get to the A61.

How do cyclists and horses feature safely in all this chaos?

All this is introducing yet another danger. The effect of this and closing Moor Road, is to create **two dangerous junctions** within a few yards of each other.

Finally, we must refer you to the absence of safe footpaths in key areas of the village and the condition of some of those we do have. In particular, we would like to cite the following as examples:

Hungate and the village central area:

The heavy vehicle we saw earlier coming down Moor Road (see top of p.3.) and approaching the cross-roads, subsequently crossed over the Knaresborough Road and down Hungate and through the village. This is just one of many every day.



Clearly Hungate was not designed for such large vehicles. Just as well that the car was parked half on the pavement making it just wide enough, but a few yards further down it's a very different matter.



This image also shows Hungate looking East, down towards the village from the crossroads.

Note that the path is not only narrow, but slopes down to one side making it very difficult for elderly people to walk upon, or for users of wheelchairs or prams. Regularly wheelchair users along Hungate have to move on to the road here, made even more dangerous by the parked vehicles. Also there is no pathway on the other side



This shows the view from the other side of the crossroads, still looking down Hungate towards village. No pathway at all on the South side, and the short path on Moor Road on the immediate left-hand side of the picture, is hopelessly inadequate and only around 30m in length – then it discontinues all the way to the A61! Too bad if you are a pedestrian and want to catch the bus.

It was surprising that the recent development of 4 large houses on land at Red House did not incorporate a requirement for a footpath for pedestrians to link them into the village.



The same crossroads, SW corner looking out of Hungate onto the Knaresborough Road. End of the pathway leading to Hungate. At this point, pedestrians have no choice other than to cross over at the crossroads either to a footpath on the other side of Hungate, or to continue on towards the village hall. Note no path on the other side of Knaresborough Rd.



Boroughbridge Road (immediately at end of Hungate) again, this time near the Wesley Chapel. Inadequate road AND footpath widths inevitably lead to dangerous pavement-straddling. Where does this leave pedestrian safety?

St John's Road:



St John's Road near the church. The pavement at this point is only 33 inches wide. Unfortunately the road is already effectively single track due to necessary residential street parking and therefore precluding any chance of two-way traffic. No opportunity for widening either the road or the pavement and certainly no possibility of creating another pavement on the other side. We note that both 21/04468/FULMAJ and 21/01833/FULMAJ (running concurrently with this application) envisage around 60 new houses and static caravans, all of which will rely on St John's Road as the primary pedestrian route into the village, passing the church.



This image shows the same place on St John's Road viewed from the other direction. Notice the route bus taking up the entire road. There are no passing places and family groups of pedestrians are often obliged to use the road because there is no suitable footpath.

BMAG and the community as a whole are very concerned about these ongoing and existential problems, but we sense that the worries we have highlighted in this and previous correspondence are not shared by the statutory authorities where road safety is concerned. We ask whether or not you are satisfied with the condition and provision of existing footpaths in the present context of the village, and we also ask why you consider them sufficient for such an alarming 25% expansion of our population by the Avant application alone? How do you propose dealing with the problem of St John's Road? Can you offer any assurance at all that adequate footpaths can be provided to accommodate the current applications? These questions are of fundamental importance to us as a community, and we assume they are viewed in the same light by NYCC Highways.

As stated above, it should be readily obvious that, if the proposed application be approved, the population of our village will increase by over 25% at a stroke, bringing the population to over 1000 residents (based on an average of 2.4 per household), excluding temporary visitors to the caravan park. BMAG, and no doubt the LPA, cannot countenance such an expansion of numbers in a small area without providing for the safety of pedestrians and children and all other road users. We note that Bishop Monkton is ranked as being Tier 3 in the Local Plan, due to its restrictive services and location etc. The Local Plans also states these settlements are only suitable for RESTRICTED DEVELOPMENT. We would suggest that a high-density estate of 88 new houses which boosts so substantially our resident population, can hardly be regarded as 'restricted' in this village.

The community in Bishop Monkton feel that the LHA are sanctioning a planning nightmare and many of us have already said so by letter. Please reconsider the reality of what you propose. **This entire proposal is an irresponsible revision to a housing development which is altogether in the wrong place.**

BMAG maintain their objection.

We thank you for your attention and invite your reply to all the points we have raised.

Yours sincerely

Bishop Monkton Action Group (BMAG)

(Kenneth Barker, Jonathan Beer, Harvey Bigg, Martin Minett, Raj Selvarajan & Bob Upton)