

John E Ke.
Stowey
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Presentation to Planning, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee
Re: 7.5 T. HGV Weight Restriction, The Street, Stowey.
19 May 2014

1. Mr Chairman, Members of Council: Thank you for the opportunity to address you about the need for a 7.5 tonne weight restriction TRO on the Street in Stowey. The Street runs through Stowey from the A368 junction (near Bishop Sutton) to Stowey Road. Immediately west of the Stowey Road junction is Stowey Quarry; and to the east is the A37 at Clutton. The A37 provides a suitable alternative route.
2. The Street is a busy, steep, narrow, twisting road, with several pinch points made worse by poor oncoming visibility. This makes HGV traffic exceptionally dangerous to other road users including vehicles, school transport and the many cyclists, horse riders and walkers. The HGV traffic causes substantial road and property damage, obstructs traffic and undermines the environment and local amenities. My time today is limited but recent events illustrate some of these issues.
3. The narrowest part of the road at the lower end of the village is only five meters wide. There is insufficient room for a lorry and a car to pass at crawling speed let alone 2 lorries at greater speed. The screeching of brakes and near misses is a common occurrence.
4. HGV traffic is acknowledged as causing severe road damage. B&NES has only recently spent a considerable amount of money shoring up some 18 metres of the road; 50 metres further up, the road is already cracked and badly sunk; and a further 100 meters up, there is very evident deterioration. On the opposite side of the road, the surface is badly damaged, apparently due to braking on sharp bends. A steep gully lies adjacent to these areas of road, posing a significant danger to road users, and (not for the first time) a car recently went into this gully. These safety risks and repair costs are avoidable.
5. Stowey Quarry has been the subject of the recent 2010 Planning Inquiry, resulting in the refusal of planning consent to dump hazardous waste including asbestos. However the 2007/8 Stowey Quarry planning consent for dumping other waste continues to allow 100 vehicle movements per day, which can go through Stowey. Indeed the latest planning process has resulted in a considerable increase in HGVs through Stowey, as the owners have substantially increased their activities.
6. I have lived at the lower end of Stowey for some 44 years, during which time the impact of HGV traffic has steadily worsened. The Street, by its nature, cannot become more suitable for HGV traffic, but there is more traffic of all types, and lorries continue to become bigger and heavier. The situation has been exacerbated by HGV Sat nav routes through Stowey, growing airport traffic, and use of the Street as a "rat run". Well known haulage, construction, removal and coach companies are amongst regular HGV users.

7. On 29 January last, yet again, a 6 axle lorry hit and damaged the wall outside my house as it tried to avoid a smaller lorry coming up the road. This I reported to B&NES traffic Department but repairs are still awaited. This is the third such HGV accident outside our house in the last 6 months.

8. Representations have already been made on numerous occasions in the past for HGV traffic to be banned from using the Street in Stowey except for local access; and my colleague Alana Weeks will deal with this in her presentation which follows.

9. Thank you.

John Eke
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Re: 7.5 Tonne HGV Weight Restriction, The Street, Stowey.
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1. Thank you Committee members for the opportunity to address the history of the proposed 7.5 Tonne, HGV weight restriction, on The Street in Stowey (which I will refer to as 'The Weight Restriction').

2000 Resolution

2. On 3 October 2000, B&NES' Transportation Sub-Committee resolved to introduce The Weight Restriction on 3 roads near Stowey Quarry including The Street. The proposal was included in the 2000/2001 Capital Programme. (A)
3. The grounds were the unsuitability of The Street for HGV traffic, namely
 - damage and costs caused by HGVs
 - road safety
 - and pollution
4. This resolution was not implemented, apparently because an employee left B&NES. This is a governance issue, but also an opportunity. The work is done and the resolution can be implemented forthwith.

Stowey Quarry

5. As to Stowey Quarry, B&NES has never intended that up to 100 quarry lorries per day could use The Street. The 1997, 2007/8 and proposed 2010 planning conditions consistently provide that Stowey Road/A37 is the designated route. (B)
6. Unfortunately many Stowey Quarry drivers do use The Street. In order to enforce the designated route, B&NES imposed The Weight Restriction (on road safety grounds) in the 2010 planning conditions. Despite the refusal of the 2010 planning application, The Weight Restriction is still clearly required for road safety enforcement. (C)

Local Agreement

7. In 2012, B&NES and local residents (backed by the Parish Council, PACT and police) agreed:
 - a 30 mph speed limit on The Street (introduced in August 2012)
 - and The Weight Restriction (subject to funding and a TRO); and the route plan was approved in January 2012 (D).
8. The 2010 Quarry planning application, which included funding for The Weight Restriction, was rejected in November 2013. However B&NES confirmed its continued support for The Weight Restriction (subject to funding and a TRO) in January 2014.
9. Residents were therefore shocked to learn, at a Parish Council meeting on 5 February 2014, that B&NES no longer accepts the need for The Weight Restriction.

10. We wrote to the Strategic Director for Place, who delegated our concern to the Divisional Director Environmental Services. His view (18 March 2014) is that B&NES' prior support for The Weight Limit is no longer relevant; although he said that a vehicle count will be undertaken to determine current need.
11. Aside from issues of good faith, a vehicle count cannot address the ongoing multiple issues posed by HGVs on The Street . The basis of the 2000 resolution, Quarry traffic routing and very recent agreement with residents are
 - the enduring unsuitability of The Street for HGV traffic
 - the need for The Weight Limit
12. Reinventing the wheel will only involve unnecessary risk, delay and cost. Priority action and funding is clearly required in these circumstances.

Thank you.

Alana Weeks

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