

14 January 2018

Dear Jane,

Road safety at Low Lane junction

We spoke briefly on Saturday about the risk of road traffic accidents at the top of Low Lane as the result of inconsiderate parking along the old main road, mainly – or so it would appear – by staff of and/or visitors to the nursing home. You asked whether I should be willing to consider the placing of a mirror on my property to improve visibility for traffic emerging from Low Lane. My reply was that I should prefer some other solution, but that if it were to be generally accepted that there is no practical alternative I should agree in principle in the interests of road safety.


Having said that – and not having been involved in your previous discussions – I am bound to say that I am very sceptical that this will be a solution. I also have some sympathy with the visitors and staff because my personal experience is that care homes rarely have adequate parking provision, and some of the visitors will not be able-bodied. In this case the (private) road is itself badly congested and the home's own car park is small. I note in passing that I understand that Barchester owns the field opposite The Spinney, and that might be partly converted into car parking subject to approval if the company was willing to make the investment. As things stand, I have certainly witnessed a number of near-accidents at the Low Lane junction and the X84 bus drivers approach it warily. Moreover some staff and/or visitors leave their vehicles across the public pavement to the extent that single pedestrians, let alone wheelchair and pushchair users, are forced onto the road.

As you know, I use the bus for most discretionary journeys and this gives me ample opportunity to observe driver behaviour whilst I wait at the bus stops. What I see is that drivers approaching the junction to turn right towards Skipton stop and look both ways (restricted visibility permitting). The main problem is that drivers turning left towards Addingham (the majority) tend not to come to a complete stop and only glance right before proceeding left. Thus they run the risk of meeting traffic forced on to the right side of the road as a result of the parked vehicles. But if these drivers do not come to a complete stop or look both ways now, it seems to me that they are no more likely to stop and also look straight ahead to check a mirror before turning left. I think there may be an easier and cheaper solution, but it would need the cooperation of the police.

Drivers of vehicles parked too close to a blind junction (and some park right on the junction) may be committing an offence by obstructing it, regardless of the lack of a yellow line. Owners of vehicles that obstruct the pavement may also be committing an offence. Sometimes these drivers obstruct both the junction and the pavement, so are doubly culpable. Can the police be asked if they will be willing to divert an occasional non-emergency vehicle, which would otherwise travel on the A65, through Draughton village to check the situation and – if necessary – to issue a few fixed penalty notices? The trick here would be in the timing of the visits (things tend to be at their worst during the afternoons but not every day).

One would hope that word would quickly get around and "nudge" parking further away from the junction. If so, both road and pedestrian safety at the top of Low Lane might be improved without the expense involved in installing a mirror or painting yellow lines.

Finally, I am not sure to what extent Barchester has been involved in discussion about this problem. It is as much an issue for the company as the wider community since the parking congestion extends to its home's own access and presumably inhibits ambulance and other essential traffic as well as those who have right of way to and from the properties behind. Since it is a responsible company, one would hope that it would have constructive ideas of its own as a "good citizen". If not – and nobody likes yellow lines – I would support single yellow lining on both sides of the old A65 from the Muckgate junction on one side (since visibility on that bend is also a problem) and the boundary between Grange Cottages and the nursing home on the other, to the gate of Mr Delves' field.

Yours Sincerely,


Chris Walker

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