

BASA Chairperson's first email to David Orton:

-----Original Message-----

From: Freda Raphael [<mailto:freda@historicalsearch.co.uk>]

Sent: 13 April 2010 18:53

To: Orton,David (Environmental Services)

Cc: 'JulietteBlake'; D Hirst; Ian Bell; John Evans

Subject: Ripley Road, Sawmills, and bus shelter

Dear David,

I have been following your recent correspondence with Councillor Blake with interest, since I alerted her to the fact that yet another lorry attempting the extremely awkward turn-around at Bullbridge/Sawmills had partly demolished our bus shelter.

There are several issues here.

1: The problem is not simply 'a few mindless HGV drivers'. Sawmills residents will tell you that several times each day traffic passing along the busy A610 is held up, causing long tail-backs, whilst an HGV driver attempts the tedious task of trying to turn around on this narrow stretch of road, returning eventually the way he'd come. So why do so many drivers take the risk? I think the answer lies in word having got around that the warning signs indicate a lower height, perhaps a foot difference, between the actual bridge clearance and the advertised height. Professional HGV drivers have to know the exact height of their trailers and most residents here have watched in awe as a driver passes the flashing warning sign in Sawmills before negotiating the road under the bridge by a whisker. Sometimes, of course, they get it wrong, resulting in overturned trailers, spillages, and lengthy traffic hold-ups. On the other hand, other drivers, thinking they'll risk it, drive around the corner (where our lovely new bus shelter used to be!) but chicken out when they see reality ahead. My attached photos illustrate this.

They also show our half-demolished bus shelter (24.03.2010)

2: Removing the low railway bridge 'given sufficient resources' is not an option, surely. Apart from its historic nature, I am told that its presence prevents wayward drivers from striking the next, main-line railway bridge further along the A610. I have myself witnessed a trailer striking the similar railway bridge in Ambergate when both

rail and road traffic was held up for many hours whilst a safety inspection was carried out. We cannot risk such delays on the A610.

3: Mr Lockwood's very generous offer to allow HGV's to turn around in his (extensive) yard should, at least, be considered. As should Councillor Blake's suggestion of some sort of lengths-of-chain warning, at an appropriate place, straddling the A610.

I'm wondering how the cost of re-positioning the illuminated warning sign compares with the cost of (regularly) replacing the bus shelter. Repositioning the sign would be a one-off cost; replacing the bus shelter would be a periodic cost. (Our lovely new, but recently demised, bus shelter can't be more than two or three years old)

4: If you are uneasy about using Mr Lockwood's private access to allow HGVs to turn back then, surely, the other option would be to re-locate the warnings much further east along the A610 at one of the roundabouts near Sainsbury's and the police HQ. This would have the added advantage of keeping all unnecessary HGV journeys from passing along Ladygrove (Sawmills) in the first place.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Freda Raphael

Chairperson, BASA

(Bullbridge and Sawmills Area Civic Society) Visit our website:

www.bullandsaw.co.uk

David Orton's reply:

On 14/04/10 11:00 am, "Orton,David (Environmental Services)"
<David.Orton@derbyshire.gov.uk>wrote:

Dear Freda,

Thank you for your email.

I note your comments regarding HGV drivers. I would expect any HGV driver believing such a rumour wouldn't get very far using this countries highway infrastructure. To avoid unnecessary restriction of the highway network and thus avoid inappropriate rerouting of HGV's,

the safety margin is much less than 1Ft. Unfortunately, I don't consider that the height restriction at this railway bridge can be better signed.

There are nearly 20 signs in this area of Derbyshire warning of its presence and the over height vehicle activated signs should effectively stop any driver from attempting to pass under this restriction.

Consequently, any driver would be negligent in trying to drive a over height vehicle under this bridge. To enable HGV's to turn back more safely, this highway authority has at some expense improved the existing turn around at Sawmills to allow easier & safer manoeuvring of HGV's.

As the existing flashing warning signs are located at the most appropriate locations, there little merit in relocating them. I do not

consider that the proposed Lockwood's turn around is a suitable location. It is distant from the height restriction, the main road and

access roads are of narrower width, and consequently there is less highway visibility available. Any HGV having to be reversed back this far would be a considerable danger to other highway users and very lengthy delays would result. It is considered use of such a location would be to the detriment of both highway safety and of residents bordering the main road.

I am sorry I could not be of more help on this occasion.

David Orton B.Ed, FIHIE, I.Eng.
South East Traffic and Safety
(01629) 539186

BASA Chairperson's reply:

-----Original Message-----

From: Freda Raphael [<mailto:freda@historicalsearch.co.uk>]

Sent: 14 April 2010 15:45

To: Orton,David (Environmental Services)

Cc: D Hirst; Ian Bell; John Evans; 'JulietteBlake'

Subject: Re: Ripley Road, Sawmills, and bus shelter

Dear David,

Many thanks for your considered observations. The fact remains, though, that too many HGVs have to laboriously reverse along the A610, having ignored the over height warning signs, and then do elaborate turning procedures close to the Bullbridge/A610 junction - hence the demise of our lovely new bus shelter.

Since ignoring the over height signs is negligence, can these drivers be prosecuted? Have any drivers been prosecuted? Is this a question to raise with our local police team?

This is a serious problem in our small community and we have to try to find a better solution.

Kind regards,

Freda Raphael
Chairperson, BASA
(Bullbridge and Sawmills Area Civic Society) Visit our website:
www.bullandsaw.co.uk

... And the final email from David Orton:

Thank you for your email. I can inform that the Police have powers to enforce this issue; so any such observations of bridge strikes need reporting to them. However, it would be helpful if when it is expected damage has been caused to the structure, if details could be passed to our call centre so that our engineers can check the structures integrity to make sure the route is still safe for other users. Receipt of such details would also enable us to claim damages from the vehicles owner.

David Orton B.Ed, FIHIE, I.Eng.
South East Traffic and Safety
(01629) 539186