

Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council – Road and Traffic matters

This draft paper outlines some of the concerns raised by residents of the parish and some ideas for improvement to be proposed to Lancashire County Council. This follows discussions between councillors and residents at Annual Parish Meetings and other events over the past three years. If this paper is agreed by Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council, the intention is that it be shown to residents for their comments before being sent to Lancashire County Council.

Louise Haigh, the new Secretary of State for Transport, has said recently that local traffic decisions should now be made locally (see, for example, [Labour leaves low-traffic schemes to local bodies - BBC News](#)), so there will no longer be any need for any decisions to be ratified by central government. However, it is worth noting that our proposals are in line with the government's own vision. As it states in its guidance ([Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/04 \(DfT, 2004\)](#)):

- DfT's (*the Department for Transport*) vision is for a transport system that is an engine for economic growth but one that is also greener and safer and improves the quality of life in our communities
- we want our roads to become safer, less congested and less polluted
- we want to encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport and cycling and walking more attractive and effective, promoting lower carbon transport and tackling local road congestion
- we want to contribute to wider public health and safety outcomes by contributing to a reduction in road casualties.

Summary of proposals

We propose:

- the creation of a "20 mph zone" throughout Caton and Brookhouse;
- pedestrian crossings, speed limits and further traffic calming beyond Caton on Lancaster Road, Hornby Road and Quernmore Road;
- a 30 mph speed limit in Caton Green and onwards to Brookhouse;
- improvements to and around the mini-roundabout at the centre of Caton;
- making Holme Lane a No Through Road;
- a full review of the provision and quality of pavements throughout the built-up areas;
- consideration of making pavement parking illegal on some streets

1. A "20 mph zone" in Caton and Brookhouse

Most of the residential streets and roads within the parish have a 20 mph speed limit. While this is not always observed, there appears to be general acceptance that these are sensible limits. Residents and road-users generally feel safe in these streets. However, there are some roads within the built-up areas of the villages where there is a 30 mph speed limit and this has consistently caused concerns.

It is well-known that reducing speeds in residential and other built-up areas reduces the frequency of accidents, and also reduces the severity of any accidents that do occur, leading to a significant reduction in serious injuries and deaths. The government paper states: "for every 1 mph reduction in average speed, collision frequency decreases by around 5% For typical types of road traffic collisions, the risk of death for drivers and pedestrians involved reduces with reduced vehicle speeds" Further medical evidence is given at <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.b4469> (an article in the British Medical Journal). One way of achieving these benefits is to implement "20 mph zones".

According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), "20 mph zones use traffic calming measures to reduce the adverse impact of motor vehicles on built up areas. The principle is that the traffic

calming slows vehicles down to speeds below the limit, and in this way the zone becomes 'self-enforcing'. Speed humps, chicanes, road narrowing, planting and other measures can be introduced to both physically and visually reinforce the nature of the road. Evidence shows that 20 mph zones are an effective way of preventing injuries on the road The first widespread evaluation of 20 mph zones in the UK was carried out by TRL (*the Transport Research Laboratory*) in 1996. It found that injury accidents were reduced by 60%, and child injury accidents were reduced by 67%. The evaluation did not find evidence that accidents increased on surrounding roads due to drivers changing their route." ([20-mph-zone-factsheet.pdf \(rospa.com\)](#))

In addition, slower traffic speeds make areas more pleasant places in which to live and work, go to school, use local services etc. Pedestrians feel more comfortable in streets with lower speed limits. This is particularly true for the most vulnerable road users: those using wheelchairs or mobility scooters, those with children or dogs, for example. Overall, therefore, lower traffic speeds help to make areas better places in which to live and go about one's business.

We therefore propose that the whole of Caton and Brookhouse, including the main roads, be designated a "20 mph zone". This would mostly affect Lancaster Road and Hornby Road, which together form part of the A683, and Quernmore Road; the other roads in the built-up areas of Caton and Brookhouse already have a 20 mph speed limit, though this is of course not always observed, and other traffic-calming measures would also be useful here.

There is good reason to suppose that this would improve road safety significantly. The A683 through Caton has many potential hazards, with roads, small streets and residential drives at many places. In addition there are bus stops, popular shops, services, public houses, a garage, a café, a health centre and more along this stretch of road. Pedestrians frequently cross the road to access these services.

Meanwhile Quernmore Road is a residential road as far as the school playing field, with side streets and bends. For most of this stretch of road there is pavement on only one side of the road, and for some sections there is no pavement at all on either side; entering or leaving properties at these places is extremely hazardous – a serious accident waiting to happen.

Moreover, on both Hornby Road and Quernmore Road there are currently outline proposals for new housing developments which would significantly increase the volume of all kinds of traffic, including both pedestrians and motorists.

The reductions in speed will not cause motorists any significant delay. As the government guidance states, "journey time savings from higher speed are often overestimated". The difference in time for motorists travelling straight through the whole of Caton on the A683 (a distance of about three-quarters of a mile) at 20 mph rather than at 30 mph is only about 45 seconds. We are sure that no motorist would strongly object to spending an extra 45 seconds in their car in order to help make streets safer and more pleasant environments.

2. The approaches to Caton

The A683 just east of the village (Hornby Road) is outside the current 30 mph area, but is still used by pedestrians. In particular, pedestrians frequently cross the road at the bottom of Holme Lane and at Bull Beck in order to access the Lancashire Greenway, without any kind of pedestrian crossing. We therefore propose that there should be pedestrian crossings at these spots.

Moreover, there is a very serious accident black spot at the sharp bend just beyond Bull Beck, generally caused by cars being driven too fast. There is a pressing need for much better safety barriers here, but these would not reduce the startlingly high number of accidents. We therefore propose that there should also be further traffic calming along this stretch, including a 30 mph limit all the way from Caton to a point beyond the sharp corner just after Bull Beck.

At the western approach to Caton (Lancaster Road) there is a caravan park, followed by a number of houses, all outside the current 30 mph area. This is a very bendy section of road where there have been several accidents, and pedestrians walk to and from Caton on a narrow and uneven pavement. In order to improve safety on this section of road, we propose that the 30 mph limit should apply all the way from Caton to a point just to the west of the sharp bends.

There are two short stretches of the A683 where parking is often a problem. These are near the junction with Low Road and by the housing estate at the eastern fringe of Caton (the "Bargh's" site). Parking here causes hazards for both motorists and pedestrians, and there have been a number of near misses. We propose that double yellow lines should be painted on these sections of the A683.

Quernmore Road beyond Caton is narrow, bendy and hilly most of the way into Lancaster, with no pavements. There are high hedges along many sections of this road making for poor visibility. There are frequent accidents on this road, generally caused by cars being driven too fast, despite a number of warning signs. We propose that the speed limit should be 30 mph as far as Gresgarth Hall, and 40 mph thereafter until the approaches to Lancaster.

3. Caton Green

Just outside Brookhouse lies the hamlet of Caton Green, with about twenty houses and a care home on the main road; however, the road through Caton Green currently has a speed limit of 60 mph. This means that residents cannot safely walk along the only road in the hamlet. We propose that the speed limit through Caton Green should be 30 mph, reinforced by traffic calming measures.

Government guidance states: "The minimum length of a speed limit should generally be not less than 600 metres to avoid too many changes of speed limit along the route", which does seem reasonable. Therefore this 30 mph limit should continue westwards until the 20 mph limit is reached in Brookhouse.

4. The mini-roundabout in Caton

There is a roundabout in the middle of Caton where the A683 joins Brookhouse Road and Station Road. However, many motorists travelling along the A683 appear to believe that they have right of way, barely slowing down at all as they cross straight over the roundabout, even when there are other road users waiting to enter it. This leads to frequent near misses – one day soon there may be a serious accident.

There are road signs alerting motorists to the roundabout, but they are clearly not sufficiently effective. We propose that the circular section in the middle of the road be raised: a flower-bed with prominent tall shrubs could be an attractive addition here. Alternatively, a traffic island could be created, or rumble strip material could be used, in order to persuade motorists to treat the roundabout as a roundabout.

There are no barriers in place at or near this junction, meaning that pedestrians are often tempted to cross the road at or very close to the roundabout itself, which is potentially dangerous. We propose that barriers be erected to minimise this danger at all four corners of this junction.

The pedestrian crossing on the A683 is very close to the roundabout. This sometimes leads to traffic having to wait on the roundabout, which is a potential hazard. We propose that consideration be given to moving the pedestrian crossing further along Hornby Road to alleviate this problem.

5. Holme Lane

Holme Lane is a very narrow road between Brookhouse and the A683. There are a few houses at the top and at the bottom and an even narrower stretch of road between these two sections.

Local residents know better than to try to traverse the whole length of Holme Lane by car, but occasionally other traffic tries to do so, often persuaded by their satnavs. This can lead to very awkward reversing or even, for larger vehicles, getting stuck in the narrowest section and damaging the hedges on one or both sides of the road. Thus at present it is not possible for pedestrians, cyclists and those in wheelchairs or mobility scooters or pushing buggies to use the lane safely, since there is no room for cars to pass them, although some pedestrians and cyclists do nevertheless use Holme Lane as a short cut to the Greenway.

We therefore propose that Holme Lane be designated a No Through Road. This would be most easily and effectively achieved in practice by erecting a small barrier in the narrowest section, making the road completely impassable to cars. This would make the road safe for pedestrians etc., enabling it to be used safely as a useful short cut between Brookhouse and the North Lancashire Greenway. A pedestrian crossing across the A683 at the foot of Holme Lane would help make such journeys even safer.

This would be very unlikely to cause residents of Holme Lane any significant inconvenience. Those living at the top would still be able to enter and exit Holme Lane at the top, and those living near the bottom would still be able to enter and exit at the bottom.

6. Pavements

Many residents use wheelchairs, mobility scooters, buggies etc. The quality and width of the pavements are very important for them. For this reason, government guidance recommends that pavements should have a minimum width of 1.5 metres. However, this is clearly not adhered to in Caton and Brookhouse, where the provision and quality of pavements are very patchy. While there are good-quality pavements in some places, in many other places the pavements are uneven, narrow or even non-existent.

This leads pedestrians and other road-users to feel unsafe. On some roads (e.g. the stretch of Quernmore Road south of Broadacre), residents cannot leave their properties without walking immediately on to a busy road without a pavement. On other streets (e.g. Copy Lane), a wide pavement suddenly disappears into nothing. If the traffic-calming measures referred to earlier were to include strategically-placed chicanes, this would allow for pavements to be provided in these places.

The frequency of dropped kerbs also needs to be increased, to facilitate access for those using wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

We propose therefore that a full review of the provision and quality of pavements in Caton and Brookhouse be undertaken, with a view to making significant improvements.

7. Pavement parking

Parking on pavements can often be a problem for road-users, especially those in wheelchairs, pushing buggies etc. It reduces visibility of oncoming traffic, meaning that some people, especially children, are liable to venture on to the road without taking due care and attention.

Some residential streets (e.g. Artlebeck Road) are narrow, with houses on either side and very little off-street parking, and so on occasions it may be inevitable that some cars are parked partly on pavements. There is no easy solution to this issue on such streets. However, on other streets, e.g. Hornby Road, cars are often parked on the pavement, even though the road is wide enough for this never to be necessary. We therefore propose that consideration be given to making pavement parking illegal in some places.