

## **Road Safety on the A66 between Carkin Moor and West Layton**

### **Introduction**

Ravensworth Parish has now formed a local A66 action group in an attempt to secure more understanding and buy-in for our collective concerns on the issue of road safety on the single carriageway section of the A66 which runs past our village. During the last meeting of this group it was agreed that two of us (Ken Bell and Malcolm Burgess) would arrange to meet Ms Julia Mulligan the Police Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire. This meeting was to take place during the PCC surgery on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November.

In preparation for this meeting with Ms Julia Mulligan, Ravensworth Parish Council has put together this dossier of information relating to our long-standing concerns and long-held collective community hope that we can secure serious measures to improve the inherent safety of the single carriageway section of the A66 adjacent to Ravensworth.

Even while preparing this dossier we have had yet another extremely serious accident on this section of road, resulting in personal injury and closure of this major trunk road for around 12 hours. See below and in the Appendices for more details on this and other recent accidents.

### **Objectives**

Our community is now of the opinion that we really have to 'up the ante' on this matter in order to achieve genuine 'buy-in' from the relevant authorities and agencies resulting in agreement to take prompt action on speed control enforcement and any other relevant road safety improvement measures to minimise the risk of accidents on our part of the A66. We are convinced that there is a very real risk of someone being killed in the short-medium-term if nothing is done.

### **Historical background**

There is a long history of dialogue between Ravensworth Parish Council and the relevant agencies on how to improve road safety on our approximately 2-mile long stretch of single carriageway road. The sections of road to the east (Scotch Corner to Carkin Moor) and to the west (Stephen Bank to Greta Bridge) were both upgraded to dual carriageway with effect from September 2007. Along with other local parish councils we were asked to comment on the Post Opening Project Evaluation (POPE) report on the Scotch Corner to Carkin Moor section which was issued in July 2009. While welcoming the improvements on the latter, we again expressed strong concerns relating to the single carriageway section adjacent to our community. A case was proposed for introduction of a reduced speed limit, but unfortunately this was turned down. See below for more details.

In 2016 the UK Government announced the strategic intent to upgrade all remaining single-carriageway sections of the A66 to dual carriageway in the planning period 2020 to 2025. Our community strongly welcomes this proposal, although it is recognised that it will probably not be implemented for at least 5-8 years from now.

In the interim we have been informed that an improved road layout is under consideration for the local junction of New Lane (the road out of Ravensworth) with the A66. The concept of this scheme has been shared with us by Highways England, although we also fully understand that further project stages including phased funding, detailed design, land purchase and consultation will be required before this improved layout can be implemented, and hence in all likelihood a further 2-3 years may be required to achieve this improvement.

In view of the ongoing concerns on traffic volumes and vehicle speeds we are very concerned that more serious accidents will continue to occur in the period of time before the upgrading to dual carriageway can be completed. Given the nature of a number of recent accidents we fear that a potential fatality is a realistic scenario.

### **History of accidents**

The single carriageway section in question is a 2-mile long straight section with 5 junctions (4 at right angles) on the south side and 2 junctions (both at right angles) on the north side. The highest ingress/egress traffic volumes occur at the following locations: Fox Hall Inn, New Lane, Mainsgill Farm Shop. Recent accidents have occurred at all these locations and also at the West Layton junction.

Appendix 1 provides more details of recent and historical accidents at some of these junctions.

## Recent and historical communications with interested parties

Appendix 2 contains a summary of key recent and historical communications in the form of a timeline. The most recent communications occurring in 2017 have included:

- Letter to Rishi Sunak, MP
- Reply from Rishi Sunak, MP
- Letter from Nick Harris, Operations Director, Highways England
- Follow-up letter to Highways England
- Reply from Nick Harris, Highways England

## The Case for Improved Speed control

For many years Ravensworth Parish Council has consistently argued the case for a reduced speed limit in our single carriageway stretch of the A66. We still feel strongly that an enforced reduction from the national speed limit of 60 mph to 50 mph or even 40 mph would significantly reduce the frequency and seriousness of accidents which may occur. All previous requests have been denied, but no consistent reasons have been used in these responses. See table below

Date	Reason given
June 2009	Response from Highways Agency: 'I can confirm that the police would not support such a limit. They consider that the high volume of HGVs, an ever-increasing proportion of which are mechanically limited to a maximum speed of 56 mph, will tend to keep vehicles below the speed at which they would begin to enforce a 50 mph speed limit on a single carriageway section of road where overtaking opportunities are at a minimum'
April 2017	Response from Nick Harris, Operations Director of Highways England: 'with regards to a 40 mph speed restriction, the present arrangement of the A66 at Ravensworth does not meet the required criteria for a reduced speed limit. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges sets out such requirements, whereby limits should match the characteristics of a road.'
November 2017	Response from Highways England, Area 14: 'I have raised with the relevant teams within Highways England the issue of traffic speed along this section of the A66. The feedback that I have received is that the monitoring undertaken by Highways England has demonstrated that the 60mph speed restriction is being observed by the majority of traffic and as such Highway England doesn't have any evidence with which to initiate any further investigation of traffic speed.'

It can be seen that the above responses are all different.....

A subsequent request by Ravensworth Parish Council for Highways England to make available the speed monitoring data to demonstrate that 'the 60mph speed restriction is being observed by the majority of traffic' was declined. However under the Freedom of Information Act we intend to pursue the release of this information. By experience many residents of the Ravensworth community are sure that numerous vehicles are not observing the existing 60 mph speed limit.

As a check on this we have examined published speed camera van information from North Yorkshire Police. Reference <https://northyorkshire.police.uk/what-we-do/road-policing/safety-cameras/>

For a police camera van periodically parked in the police lay-by at West Layton spanning the whole of 2016, a total of 250 speed offenders were detected during a cumulative 31 hours of speed detection at that location. If published data on Annual Average Daily vehicle flows is applied to these findings (around 7500 vehicles per day in each direction), this means that around 2-3% of all vehicles are calculated as exceeding the minimum speed to qualify for a Speed Awareness Course (SAC).

At this location the speed limit is 60 mph and the minimum SAC speed is 68 mph, hence in reality considerably more vehicles (probably at least 5%) must actually be exceeding the 60 mph in force.

Ravensworth Parish Council has consulted with other communities in the A66 corridor, which currently have single-carriage sections of the A66 running through them. These include the

communities of Warcop and Kirkby Thore in Cumbria. Each of these sections of single carriageway is around 4 miles total length.

At **Kirkby Thore** there is an approximately 2 mile long stretch closest to the village which now has a 40 mph speed limit enforced by average speed cameras. The 40 mph limit was in force for a number of years prior to the installation of the average speed cameras. Information provided by Kirkby Thore Parish Council has indicated that although only limited feedback on the success of the cameras has been provided from agencies they were informed that the system had reduced speeds through the section significantly and that hundreds of prosecution notices have been issued, especially in the first few weeks when drivers did not believe the cameras to be working.

Anecdotally, the cameras appear to now have a real impact on speeds and the number of vehicles that appear to be speeding has reduced significantly. They have advised us that persistence is the key word as it took several years for them to get the system installed. We were informed that the local Police Crime Commissioner took an active role in supporting the implementation of the new speed control system.

At **Warcop** there is now a 4 mile section which until recently had a 60 mph speed limit (national speed limit). Some time ago a public consultation meeting was held at Brough where Highways England were seeking views to improve the Warcop stretch of the A66 which regularly has had serious, and sadly, fatal accidents along a particular 2/3 mile stretch. ITV local news were there and the press covered it too. The lobbying of Highways England, the local MP and the police has been going on for several years.

As is often the case in Ravensworth another major issue with Warcop is the fact that traffic is often diverted through the village when the A66 is closed, causing considerable disruption near the primary school, with unfamiliar drivers and unsuitable vehicles passing through.

Their advice to us was to work with Highways England who, at all the meetings, seemed genuinely keen to improve the road, regardless of the start date for upgrading of the full A66 to dual carriageway. After the public consultation, they met with Warcop and neighbouring PCs to suggest proposed improvements, including the 50 mph limit, signage, possible junction improvements and so on. Initially, the new speed limit was for a trial 18 month period but it is now permanent.

Warcop Parish Council are still engaging with Highways England with the intention of gaining agreement to install further improvements, including illuminated speed signs and also average speed cameras, more paint on the road, including double white lines where traffic still speeds, and improved junctions at two dangerous turn-offs. Highways England Area 13 has a budget and have said the dualling, which is moving forward to the detailed planning stage, would not affect any safety improvement work on the existing road.

Ravensworth Parish Council also wants to move ahead with improved speed control measures with the agreement and cooperation of Highways England and North Yorkshire Police, but as has been highlighted elsewhere in this document, firm support (rather than warm words) has not yet been provided, in spite of numerous representations in the past.

## **Conclusions**

In this document we have laid out the case for urgent consideration of improved speed controls in the single carriageway section of the A66 which runs adjacent to our community.

It is clear that many very serious accidents are still occurring – at least 4 in the 6 months which have elapsed since our last contact with Highways England at executive level. We are extremely concerned about the realistic possibility of one or more fatalities occurring in advance of the eventual conversion of this section of road to dual carriageway.

This 2 mile section of the A66 is very straight (an old Roman road), which can often result in drivers becoming impatient and resorting to unsafe overtaking. In addition the road is undulating, making line of sight difficult for drivers joining the main road.

It is clear that many accidents are occurring at one or other of the 5 main junctions from side roads.

Although the clear intention is there to implement an improved layout at the New Lane junction this is neither quick nor easy. Nor is it certain to be funded in the short term. Many local residents are now avoiding this junction altogether in view of the obvious hazards which exist. Our community includes a

fair proportion of elderly drivers many of whom do not feel confident about negotiating the exit to the right (towards the east), nor the entry from the right (from the west).

We hope that the evidence presented in this dossier will help to secure the support of North Yorkshire Police and that in due course the community can work in conjunction with both the Police and Highways England to agree firm plans for improved safety measures and more effectively controlled vehicle speeds in the short to medium term, in advance of the eventual 'ideal' solution of a well-designed dual carriageway when this is eventually constructed.

If no collective intent can be reached on this we are committed to continuing our campaign by using local petitions, meetings with our MP and media publicity as the next measures.

Ken Bell – Chair Ravensworth Parish Council

Malcolm Burgess – Ravensworth Resident and member of A66 Action Group

### **List of Appendices**

1. Information of historical accidents
  - a. Information in the public domain on historical accidents
  - b. Carole Scott accident in 2002
  - c. Summary of four serious 2017 incidents
2. Recent and historical communications with interested parties - timeline
3. Copies of selected recent key communications in 2017
4. Traffic volumes and monitored speeds

## Appendix 1 – Information on historical accidents

### Northern Echo Article

The following article appeared in the Northern Echo in January 2012

#### **66 - 'Danger road still claims lives'**

*Joe Willis, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2012*

A ROAD once dubbed Britain's most dangerous continues to claim lives despite a multi-million pound improvement scheme, figures suggest.

However, road safety campaigners have conceded that further upgrades to the trans-Pennine A66 are unlikely in the near future.

Long-awaited dualling work to two stretches of the road were completed in 2007.

But the new dual-carriageway from Scotch Corner to Carkin Moor and Stephen Bank to Greta Bridge, near Barnard Castle, remains separated by 3.8km of single carriageway, known as the missing link.

Figures obtained by The Northern Echo show that while there were no motorists killed or seriously injured on the Scotch Corner to Carkin Moor stretch in 2010, 12 died or were badly hurt in 2008 and 2009. This compares with only seven in the previous three years before the improvements.

Councillor Michael Heseltine has campaigned for more 20 years to have the entire A66 made into dual carriageway.

He has been told that the Highways Agency is monitoring the impact of the improvements on safety, but will not make an assessment until a period of time has passed to give a clear picture.

Councillor Heseltine said concerns were still being expressed about the safety of the missing link, in particular the Winston crossroads.

The councillor has been told that changes are not planned for the junction or other stretches of the road, but improved signs and road markings were being considered at the cross roads. He said: "The latest information from the Highways Agency is that there are no plans to upgrade the stretch of single carriageway.

"The Government has set aside money for other road projects recently, but the A66 isn't in the reckoning. There aren't enough accidents it seems."

The Highways Agency said it monitored the performance of the road network and also carried out formal reviews three years after completion of improvement schemes through its road safety audit process.

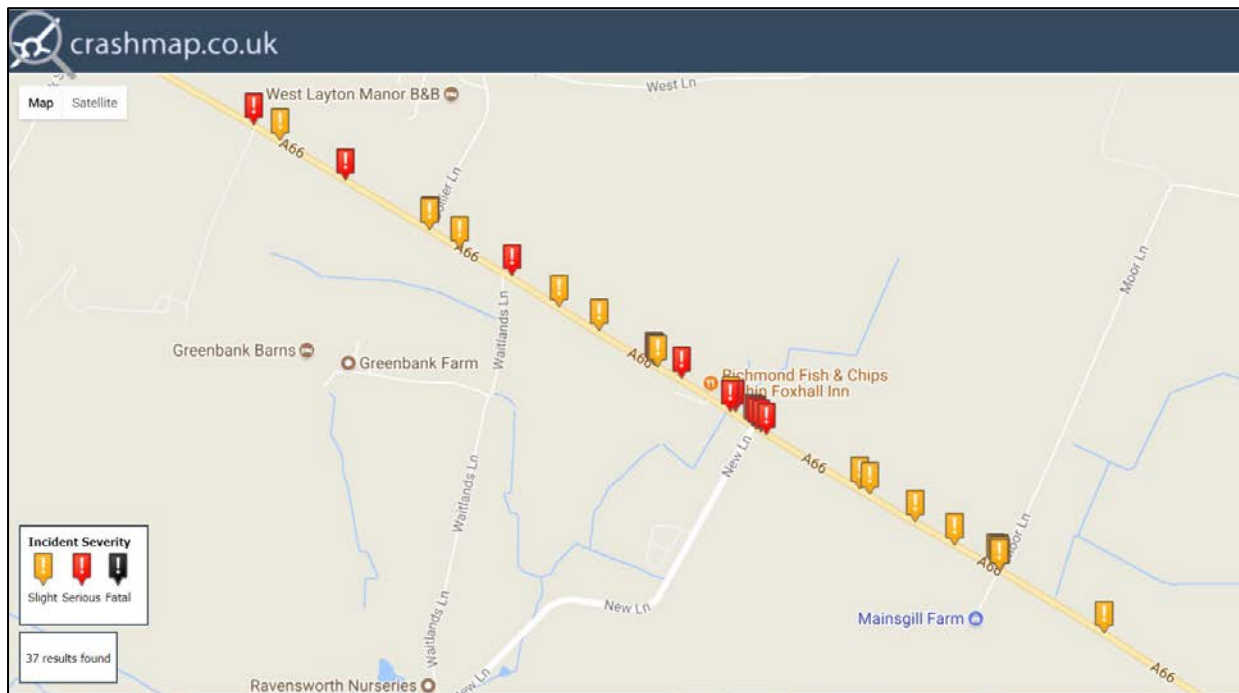
A spokesman added: "This process is under way and will investigate the detailed circumstances of each of the incidents that have occurred following completion of the dualling with a view to identifying underlying trends and causes, and any remedial action that might be required."

## Information in the public domain on historical accidents

The screenshot below illustrates the location of a total of 37 accidents (including around 10 serious accidents) in the stretch of road between West Layton and just to the west of the Mainsgill Farm shop entrance. The time period selected for this screen shot was 2012 to 2017 (although not all accidents in 2017 have yet been included).

It shows that a large proportion of these accidents have occurred in the location of the Fox Hall Inn, New Lane junction and Mainsgill Farm Shop junctions. The majority of serious accidents have been shown to occur in the short section from Fox Hall Inn to New Lane.

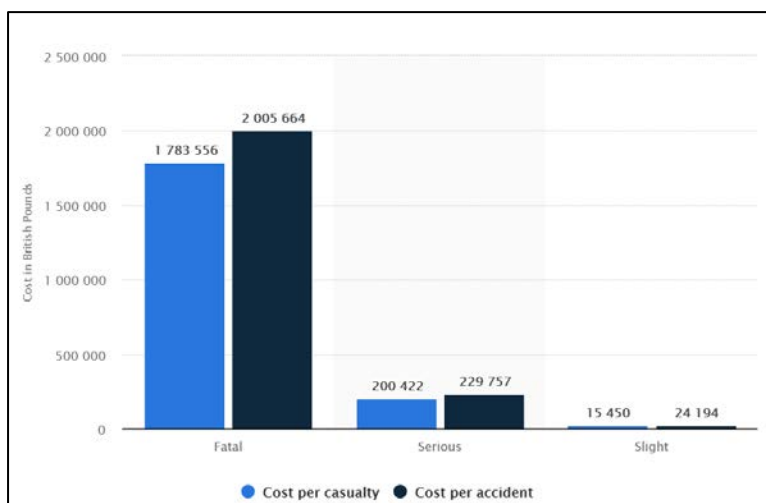
Refer to [www.crashmap.co.uk](http://www.crashmap.co.uk)



The average cost of accidents and casualties in the UK is shown in the chart below

(Source <https://www.statista.com/statistics/322862/average-cost-of-road-accidents-and-casualties-in-great-britain-uk/> )

This data would suggest that the total cost of serious accidents in this section of road alone during the past 5 years was probably at least £2.5 million. On average each air ambulance mission alone costs around £3000.



### **Carole Scott Accident in 2002**

Life-threatening injuries were suffered by Carole Scott and her daughter Catriona resulting from A66 accident in 2002.

Carole is the daughter of a current member of Ravensworth Parish Council, Mrs Carol Scott, who wrote to Rishi Sunak, MP on her concerns for the New Lane junction in 2015 – see recent history of communications.

Carole was leaving the junction at East Layton to join the A66 when she was struck at high speed by an HGV travelling east. Her car was catapulted into the field opposite – on the land adjacent to what is now Mainsgill Farm Shop.

Unfortunately no air ambulance cover was available at the time of the accident and she had to be transported to James Cook Hospital by ambulance. The following is a summary of the severe injuries suffered by Carole as a result of the accident:

- Torn spleen resulting in splenectomy with requirement to take penicillin twice per day for the rest of her life, and to have a flu jab annually.
- Torn liver, which was stitched up with biodegradable sticks.
- Pelvis broken in 4 symmetrical places.
- 2 to 3 broken ribs on right side of rib cage.
- Right lung punctured in two places.
- Glass rash on right arm, considerable scarring as a result. Still removing dirt, 15 years later.
- Medically-induced coma, highly sedated and requiring a high dose of morphine for 10 days.
- Approximately 6 weeks' recovery after 3 week hospital stay, including Critical/Intensive Care Unit for 2 weeks and High Dependency Unit at James Cook for 1 week. Physiotherapy to teach her how to walk with a broken pelvis until it healed.
- Tracheostomy in throat to enable breathing.
- 11 month child was in the car with Carole. She was in a sturdy child seat on the opposite side of the car from the impact direction (impact was from the driver's side). The baby sustained a broken left arm and cuts to the forehead with glass cuts on her feet.

### **Pictures of the wreck of the car afterwards**



## **Four serious accidents which have occurred in this section of the A66 during 2017**

Note: This section had to be updated during preparation of this dossier due to the serious accident which occurred on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November

### **1) Couple suffer life-changing injuries in A66 crash – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

On Friday May 19<sup>th</sup> 2017 a very serious accident occurred on the A66 near the Fox Hall Inn, Ravensworth.

At 12.30pm on Friday May 20<sup>th</sup> a lorry tanker travelling eastbound was involved in a collision with a green Skoda Yeti outside the Fox Hall Inn. As a result of the collision the car struck an electricity pole, bringing power cables down across the road. This resulted in a power cut to local villages, including Ravensworth.

The lorry had been carrying corrosive chemicals but was nominally empty.

Emergency crews from Leyburn attended the scene. The two occupants of the car, a 59-year-old man and a 60-year-old woman from the Worksop area, were cut out of the car and taken to James Cook hospital via air ambulance with serious life changing injuries. It is understood that at least one has been left paralysed.

The tanker driver, from Hartlepool was not injured in the incident, but was left extremely shaken.

A third vehicle was damaged by debris from the collision.

As a result of the collision the A66 was closed for many hours to allow the police to carry out a full investigation, to establish the cause of the collision and to allow the power lines, which had been brought down to be reinstalled.

This accident was obviously very close to resulting in a fatality.

### **2) Accident at New Lane junction - 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

Miss Toni Hutchinson, who lives in the village of Gayles was travelling to work around 9am on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July, a bright dry summer morning. She reached the end of New Lane and was turning East onto the A66 heading for Scotch Corner.

Toni indicated right and was 'flashed' by a car leaving the A66 and turning left down New Lane towards Ravensworth off the A66 westbound. Toni pulled out and started to manoeuvre but immediately realised that another car had already started to overtake the car that was turning into Ravensworth. The overtaking car unfortunately hit the rear part of the driver's side of Toni's car, resulting in the car being seriously damaged and subsequently being written off. In a stroke of pure luck she was spun over into the eastbound carriageway with no oncoming traffic to collide with otherwise it is almost certain that serious injury would have occurred.

In the existing road layout there are no overtaking restrictions in either direction. The 'hatchings' which used to exist have been removed. Common sense would urge caution at any junction - but without a double white line (preventing crossing over the middle of the road, and without clear road markings (which have now worn away), human nature can sometimes encourage drivers try to overtake slower traffic - even approaching junctions. This tendency is accentuated by impatience due to the long straight stretch of road in this vicinity (a Roman road).

This kind of incident is far from isolated and numerous residents of Ravensworth have experienced similar 'close shaves'.

As a result of the accident Toni now travels through Richmond to Scotch Corner avoiding this appalling junction eastbound turn onto A66

This incident was reported by Toni's father, Mike, to the Police in Richmond but because no one was injured in either party there was no official recognition/recording of the incident - regardless of responsibility.

Again it is obvious that this accident could easily have resulted in a fatality.



### 3) A66 closed after accident involving 67-tonne excavator – 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017

On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September, the A66 was again closed between Scotch Corner and Bowes for more than 5 hours after a 67-tonne excavator fell off a lorry.

The incident occurred near the West Layton junction. It is understood that a farm vehicle was attempting to leave the West Layton road and join the A66, when a lorry transporting a 67 tonne excavator came over the hill travelling from the Greta Bridge direction in an easterly direction.

The HVG travelling eastwards on the A66 tried to take evasive action, swerving away from the farm vehicle. This resulted in the 67 tonne excavator falling from the transporting vehicle. Luckily no other vehicle was close enough to the accident to be affected.



This was yet another serious accident which could have resulted in a fatality, if a vehicle had been close enough travelling in the opposite direction.

It may be no coincidence that all three accidents described above occurred on Fridays.

By observation of locals many serious accidents seem to occur on Fridays – often associated with drivers attempting to join the A66 from one of the right-angle junctions onto the trunk road but being hampered by extremely high traffic volumes associated with Fridays.

When such accidents occur, resulting in closure of the A66 for many hours, traffic is often diverted through local villages, including Dalton, Ravensworth or Kirkby Hill resulting in congestion and disruption of local traffic on rural B roads not equipped to take the traffic volumes involved.

#### 4) A66 reopens after man hurt in serious accident – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017

The A66 reopened early on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November, following a serious accident the previous afternoon. No official details have yet been released but in addition to [www.richmondshiretoday.co.uk](http://www.richmondshiretoday.co.uk) informal local information has yielded the following description of what happened:

A girl from Melsonby left Ravensworth Nurseries and knowing it would be nigh on impossible to turn east, due to the volume of traffic turned West and then indicated to turn right into the West Layton junction. She was stationary and indicating right, waiting for a gap in the east bound traffic.

A west bound HGV 'didn't' see her, swerved to miss her and hit an oncoming black-coloured east bound SUV. This sounds to have been a head on (or close to head-on) impact.

The nearest resident who lives in the Lodge (on the corner of Waitlands Lane) went to see if he could help. His initial thoughts were that the SUV driver was probably dead.

The collision occurred at about 3.30pm on Sunday.

Two Air Ambulance helicopters attended the scene of the collision. As mentioned above the man in the SUV was seriously injured. Emergency teams attended and he was given treatment at the scene. He was finally flown off to hospital in one of air ambulances at around 7:15, approximately 4 hours after the accident.

We do not know his condition for sure. The worst option is a fatality and the least worst is severe injuries. **Update: Very sadly the SUV driver is now known to have lost his life in this accident.**

The Highways Agency closed the A66 in both directions with diversions were put place around the scene.

The road was closed between Scotch Corner and the A67 junction at Bowes, and reopened at around 3am on the morning of Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November, a total closure period of around 12 hours.

**Full details are not yet available, but it is now known that this collision resulted in a fatality and our worst fears have now been realised.**



The A66 road closure. Photo: Durham Constabulary.

#### Summary

The above summaries describe a total of 4 very serious accidents, in the past 6 months, any one of which could easily have resulted in a fatality

#### References:

- Accident 1 <http://www.richmondshiretoday.co.uk/a66-closed-directions-serious-accident/>
- Accident 2 Personal communication with Mike Hutchinson on circumstances of his daughter's accident
- Accident 3 <http://www.richmondshiretoday.co.uk/a66-closed-directions-accident/>
- Accident 4 <http://www.richmondshiretoday.co.uk/a66-closed-directions-following-accident/>

## Appendix 2 – Recent and Historical Communications with Interested Parties

Summarised below is a timeline describing some of the key communications which have taken place between Ravensworth Parish Council and external parties, including our local MP (Rishi Sunak), our North Yorkshire County Councillor (the late Michael Heseltine), Highways Agency (now Highways England), North Yorkshire Police, and other agencies.

There is a very long history of such communications, but this summary commences in 2009

Date	Communication	Response / Action
March 2009	Letter from Ravensworth Parish Council to Cllr Michael Heseltine requesting serious consideration of introduction of 50 mph limit on remaining single track sections of A66.	Cllr Heseltine continued to argue for this and other improvements with local agencies. Unfortunately this lobbying was ultimately unsuccessful.
June 2009	Letter from Ravensworth Parish Council to Transport Planning and Management responding to the issue of the Post Opening Project Evaluation (POPE) report of the road improvement projects on A66 (two new dual carriageway sections between Scotch Corner and Greta Bridge). Again we emphasised importance of more effective speed control and argued for imposition of 50 mph speed limit	
November 2009		Letter of response from Highways Agency relating to request for 50 mph limit. HA rejected the request, stating that the police would not support such a limit citing 'the high volume of HGVs, an ever-increasing proportion of which are mechanically limited to a maximum speed of 56 mph'
March 2013	Comments from Ravensworth Parish Council to Cllr Michael Heseltine on a document describing road safety results on the A66 since the recent dual carriageway upgrades. Average speeds on the dual carriageway sections were stated to be 74 mph. Ravensworth PC again asked for more lobbying of the Highways Agency to take more seriously the matter of safety on the single carriageway sections of the road	
2014	--	Road layout at A66 junction modified by repainting the lines, removing most of slip lane. Considerable local disquiet on the new road layout, considered by locals to be an adverse step. [Now also recognised by Highways England as not acceptable]
10 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	Letter from Carol Scott to Rishi Sunak MP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pointing out concerns about 'improved' layout of junction (slip road reduced; modified layout for main carriageway)</li> <li>• Described dangerous experience while turning right on to New Lane</li> </ul>	

Date	Communication	Response / Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requested improvements 'before there is a fatality'</li> </ul>	
18 <sup>th</sup> November 2015		Letter of acknowledgement from Rishi Sunak
11 <sup>th</sup> December 2015		<p>Carol was copied the reply from Highways England, main points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Layout revisions were to 'reduce risk of shunt collisions on eastbound carriageway'</li> <li>Numerous complaints from residents resulting in new investigation to consider improvements</li> <li>'outline design work' for revised scheme being undertaken – once full implications and costs identified, a bid for funding could be made – competing with other schemes across England</li> </ul>
8 <sup>th</sup> January 2017	<p>Letter from Ravensworth Parish Council to Rishi Sunak, MP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlined many residents' concerns</li> <li>Poor visibility of junction when travelling east on dark night</li> <li>Apparent abandonment of temporary road signs</li> <li>Pointing out than road sign on A66 was yellow 'temporary' type</li> <li>Suggested 40 mph limit on A66 enforced by average speed cameras</li> <li>Included many photos to illustrate the issues</li> </ul>	
8 <sup>th</sup> February 2017		<p>Reply from Rishi Sunak, MP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shares our concerns</li> <li>Spoke to Minister of State, John Hayes</li> <li>Received reply from Highways England</li> <li>Scheme being designed 'which could be introduced in financial year 2018-19'</li> <li>Reflective posts to be added at junction</li> <li>Improvements to road signs</li> </ul>
		<p>Letter appended from Nick Harris, Operations Director of Highways England:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government announced conversion to dual carriageway between 2020-2025</li> <li>Scheme being designed 'which could be introduced in 2018-19'</li> <li>Detailed review to ensure value for money'</li> <li>Arranged for amendments to existing signs</li> <li>'not appropriate at the moment' for a permanent 40 mph speed restriction enforced by average speed cameras</li> </ul>
23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2017	Letter from Ravensworth Parish Council to Highways England, copied to Rishi Sunak, MP	

Date	Communication	Response / Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expressed thanks for reflective marker posts and improved junction sign</li> <li>• Asked for more details about improved scheme being considered for possible implementation in 2018-19</li> <li>• Asked why 40 mph limit enforced by average speed cameras is 'not appropriate'</li> <li>• Pointed out that even since we received reply to our last letter there have been more accidents in this section of the A66</li> </ul>	
12 <sup>th</sup> April 2017		<p>Reply from Nick Harris of Highways England:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further investigation on dualling of A66 will take some years to develop and implement and may be carried out in phases</li> <li>• Hence reviewing operation of New Lane junction with intention to develop a scheme in shorter term</li> <li>• Present arrangement of A66 at Ravensworth does not meet criteria for a reduced speed limit (as laid out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges)</li> <li>• For further information we should contact the local Asset Delivery Manager for this region</li> </ul>
12 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting between Ravensworth PC, Cllr Angus Thompson and local asset delivery manager, Highways England, Darlington to discuss proposed improvements to New Lane junction with A66.</li> <li>• Discussion also held on potential merits of imposing a reduced speed limit on the 2-mile single carriageway section of the A66</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline layout of proposed new junction tabled, although at present no funding exists for taking this to the next stage and probably earliest date for implementation could be 2-3 years away</li> <li>• Our request for consideration of reduced speed limit again rejected citing 'the monitoring undertaken by Highways England has demonstrated that the 50mph speed restriction is being observed by the majority of traffic and as such Highway England doesn't have any evidence with which to initiate any further investigation of traffic speed.</li> </ul>

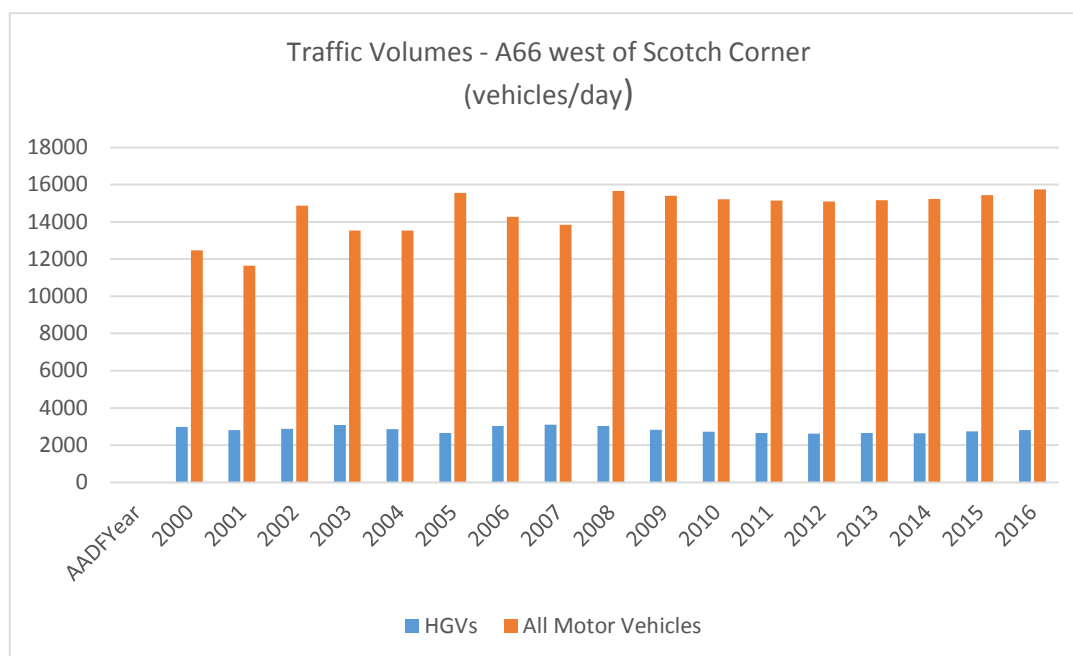
Copies of selected recent communications are included

- Summary of previous communications
- Letter to Rishi Sunak, MP
- Reply from Rishi Sunak
- Letter from Nick Harris, Highways England
- Letter to Highways England
- Reply from Nick Harris, Highways England

### Appendix 3 – Traffic Volumes and Data on Speeding

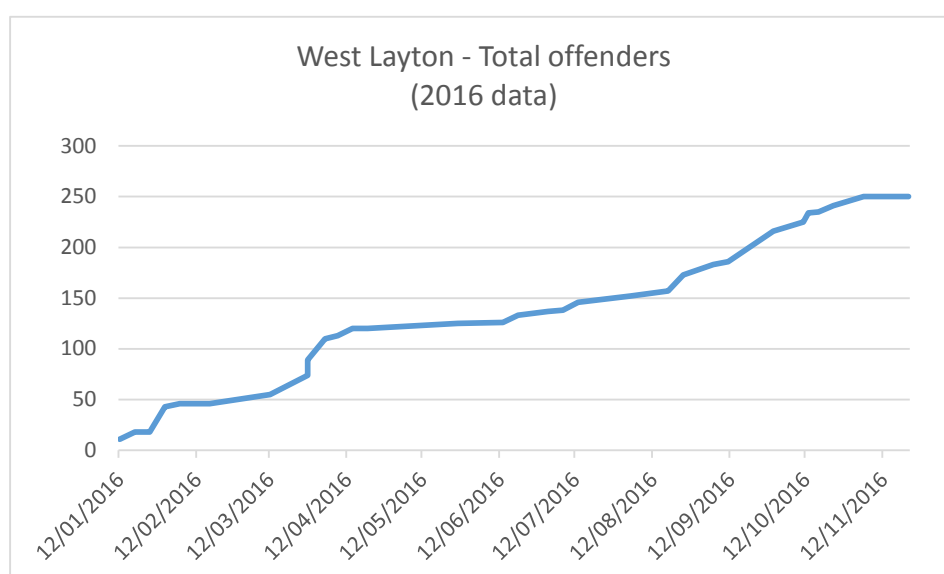
The growth of traffic volumes on the A66 west of Scotch Corner can be seen in the plot below.

This shows that the Average Annual Daily Flow (AADF) for recent years is around 15000 vehicles per day. Source – Government Traffic Data at [www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-counts/cp.php](http://www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-counts/cp.php)



Data from North Yorkshire Police web site indicates the number of vehicles travelling above the minimum speed which qualifies for a Speed Awareness Course (SAC) as shown below.

This data applies to the speed camera van monitoring point at West Layton. Since the speed limit at this point is 60 mph, the minimum speed qualifying for a SAC is  $60 + 10\% + 2 \text{ mph} = 68 \text{ mph}$ .



Note: This shows only those vehicles caught speeding above 68 mph.

The total number exceeding 60 mph will obviously be considerably higher.

Ravensworth Parish Council  
Ravensworth Village  
North Yorkshire, DL11 7ET  
8<sup>th</sup> January 2016

### **Safety on the A66 at the New Lane Junction**

Dear Mr Sunak,

On behalf of Ravensworth Parish Council we are writing to you in relation to the ongoing concern for safety at the junction of New Lane and the A66. We fully appreciate that this has already been raised with you as a concern by many other local residents in recent months and years.

At the outset we would like to say that everyone in our community has welcomed the news that the A66 will be fully converted to dual carriageway as part of the government's highways strategy. However since it is understood that implementation is likely to occur between 2020 and 2025 we realise that any significant road improvements may be at least 5 years away. In the meantime the volume of traffic passing this junction appears to be steadily increasing and many local people have expressed ongoing concern for safety either entering or leaving the A66 to/from New Lane.

We know that this topic was raised with you in late 2015 in a letter from Mrs Carol Scott. On that occasion you kindly raised the matter with the Chief Executive of Highways England, Mr Jim O'Sullivan and about a year ago, on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016 you passed on the reply which was received from that organisation. In the letter you assured Mrs Scott that Highways England were aware of the high risk nature of the location and that they were "currently in the process of conducting an investigation to improve the safety of the junction". In view of the fact that a further year has elapsed, we would like to know about the progress of that investigation and wondered if Highways England could provide an update on status?

Many local residents have described worrying incidents which have still occurred at regular frequencies. A few examples are given below:

1. When turning right into New Lane (travelling eastwards on the A66) drivers have experienced being passed simultaneously at high speed by HGV's travelling both west and east which have come very close to the vehicle which is turning into New Lane. This can be very alarming, particularly when the turning vehicle is a large van. Photo 1 illustrates the potential concern. This situation is similar to that described by Mrs Scott in her previous letter to you, but many others have experienced similar incidents.
2. Turning into New Lane while travelling eastwards on a dark night is also hazardous since it is very difficult to see the junction. Locals know that the turn-in is after the yellow road sign, but strangers do not. Safety would be improved if, for example, reflective chevrons could be installed on the westward side of the junction. See Photo 2.
3. Occasionally HGVs have to turn into the road towards Ravensworth and vehicles travelling out of the village have had to reverse back down New Lane, since it has been necessary for the HGV to swing well to the right in order to manoeuvre the vehicle safely into the side road
4. We are also concerned about apparent abandonment of temporary road signs which have not been removed many weeks after work has been completed. This has added additional problems for drivers joining the A66 due to the fact that their view of oncoming traffic has been impaired. See Photos 3
5. The road sign indicating Ravensworth and Kirby Hill at the junction appears to be a temporary road sign (yellow) rather than a proper white sign in which names have not been abbreviated to R'worth and K'Hill (see Photo 4)

The above is a small selection of observations by local residents on current concerns for road safety at this junction.

One of our parishioners has pointed out that in the single carriageway section of the A66 which passes through Kirby Thore a significant improvement has resulted from the installation of 40 MPH average speed cameras for this part of the route. It has been suggested that a similar installation would be quite possible for the section of road between Blackhill and Stephen Bank.

Even if such a scheme were in place for the next 5 years, surely it would represent a significant road safety improvement, in addition to any road or signage improvements at the New Lane junction. Such a scheme would also improve safety at other difficult junctions, such as that at Mainsgill Farm Shop.

In summary we would be most grateful if you or others could advise how the potential improvements outlined above might be progressed in practical terms and expediently.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bell and Alister Walgate

Acting Clerk to Ravensworth Parish Council and Co-Chairmen of Ravensworth Parish Council



## Photographs



Photo 1

A large van about to turn into New Lane – when HGVs are travelling past such traffic in both directions at the same time there is often dangerously little clearance between these and the stationary vehicle.

This is exacerbated by the fact that HGVs travelling west often have to swerve slightly to the right immediately after the New Lane junction due to the road layout and narrowing lane (see photo).



Photo 2

When travelling eastwards on a dark night it is very difficult to determine the exact location of the junction. We would suggest installation of improved indication on the westward side, such as reflective chevrons or similar.



Photo 3A

Temporary speed limit sign left in place many weeks after road works have been completed. This particular sign has resulted in partial impairment of ability to see oncoming traffic when turning to the right out of New Lane



Photo 3B

Signs for temporary diversion, now redundant but apparently abandoned and left in place for many weeks



Photo 3C

Signs associated with temporary road works, now redundant but apparently abandoned and left in place for many weeks



Photo 4

The 'main' road sign installed at the New Lane junction appears to be a 'temporary style' sign, in yellow and with abbreviated place names rather than in white with full spelling of place names.

This sign has been in place now for a few years.

RISHI SUNAK MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Ken Bell and Alister Walgate  
Co-Chairmen, Ravensworth Parish Council  
Ravensworth Village  
DL11 7ET

Our Ref: ZA12033

8 February 2017

Dear Mr Bell and Mrs Walgate,

Thank you again for contacting me about the safety at the junction of New Lane and the A66. I fully share your concerns about this and I have been pushing this matter hard in private meetings and in Parliament. Following your letter, I contacted Highways England and I also met with the Minister of State for Transport John Hayes MP, who is responsible for the road network. Following this, I have received a reply from Highways England which I have attached for your full information. I am delighted to say that work will be undertaken to improve the safety of the junction.

Firstly, a scheme is being designed that could be introduced in the financial year 2018-19 to improve the operation of the junction. I understand that the proposals are currently undergoing a full review and a cost/benefit analysis. Secondly, reflective marker posts will be installed at the entry of the junction, and a new direction sign will be installed.

Lastly, they have informed me that signs that are currently in the verges are awaiting re-installation for further road closures but they will be amended in view of the concerns you have raised. The letter indicates that some signs will be removed once temporary works are completed during the next essential maintenance period.

While Highways England do not consider a 40mph speed restriction appropriate, I do hope that the measures that they will be taking come as very welcome news to local residents, and that this action will lead to a tangible improvement in safety. I am very pleased that Highways England are taking these steps, and I look forward to seeing these works implemented in the near future. Thank you again for taking the time to contact me, and please do let me know if there might be anything further I can do to help.

Kind regards,

**Rishi Sunak**  
**Member of Parliament**  
**Richmond (Yorks)**





Dear Mr Sunak

Thank you for your email of 12 January 2017 to Jim O'Sullivan, on behalf of your constituents, Ken Bell and Alister Walgate, of Ravensworth Parish Council, concerning the A66 at and around New Lane Junction. I have been asked to reply to you as this issue falls within my area of responsibility.

As you may be aware, we have been working with the Department for Transport and Transport for the North on the Northern Trans-Pennine Routes Strategy Study. This led to the government announcement in the Autumn Statement to take forward further investigations to dual the A66. The aim is for works to commence in the Road Investment Strategy Period 2, between 2020 and 2025.

In addition to this, work has been undertaken on designing a scheme that could be introduced in the financial year 2018-19 to improve the operation of the A66 at New Lane / Ravensworth junction. However, to ensure that value for money is provided, a detailed review of the scheme proposals is currently taking place. This is to ensure that the cost of the work is proportionate to the likely benefit that may be obtained in the life of the scheme, before this length of the A66 is dualled.

In your constituents' letter, an issue has been highlighted regarding temporary signs in the verges. Some of these were installed in respect of temporary works, to repair a structure adjacent to the junction. These works are ongoing and will be completed when the A66 is next closed for essential maintenance. Other signs are also in the verge awaiting reinstallation when required for further road closures. We have arranged for amendments to be made to these signs, to address the concerns expressed by your constituents.

At the moment, it is not appropriate for a permanent 40mph speed restriction, enforced by average speed cameras, to be installed on this length of the A66 as your constituents suggest. However, reflective marker posts will be installed around the entry to the junction, to improve its visibility to drivers travelling along the A66 during the hours of darkness. In addition, a direction sign, with a black legend on a white background, will be installed to replace the previous sign at the road junction – again, as suggested by your constituents.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Nick Harris", written in a cursive style.

Nick Harris  
Operations Director

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2017

## Safety changes at danger A66 junction

HIGHWAYS chiefs have agreed to make safety improvements to a dangerous junction on the A66.

Highways England will make the changes to the New Lane junction at Ravensworth after the intervention of Richmondshire MP Rishi Sunak.

Ravensworth Parish Coun-



**CHANGES TO BE MADE: MP Rishi Sunak at the junction**

cil had written to him asking for his help after villagers raised concerns about the T-junction on a single carriageway stretch of the important east-west trunk road.

The villagers said the junction, which lies in a dip in the landscape, is poorly signposted and there are insufficient warning signs for motorists, particularly when travelling from the west.

Mr Sunak wrote to the Government agency asking it to address the villagers' fears

He said: "The A66 single carriageway sections of this vital artery are to be made dual carriageway but work will not start for a few years yet – it is important that the junction is made safer now."

Mr Sunak said he was delighted that Highways England had agreed to erect permanent, prominent junction signs to take the place of temporary signs and also to install reflective marker posts to make the junction more visible, especially after dark.

He added: "Anyone who has used this junction, especially at busy times, will know how difficult it can be to join or leave the A66 here. Dualling will ultimately provide a much better solution but in the meantime this will certainly help motorists spot it in good time."

In its response to Mr Sunak, Highways England said it would continue reviewing other possible improvement measures for the junction although the parish council's idea of a 40mph speed limit on the A66 near the New Lane turn-off had been ruled as not appropriate.

Mr Nick Harris  
Operations Director  
Highways England  
Walnut Tree Close  
Guildford  
Surrey  
GU1 4LZ

Copy to:

Mr Rishi Sunak  
MP for Richmond (Yorks)  
House of Commons,  
London  
SW1A 0AA

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017

Dear Mr Harris

### **Safety of road junction of New Lane with A66**

We refer to your recent correspondence with our Member of Parliament, Mr Rishi Sunak regarding the concerns of our local community about the inherent safety of the junction of New Lane, leading out of our village with the A66. Mr Sunak kindly took up these concerns both with Jim Sullivan of Highways England and the Minister of State for Transport, Mr John Hayes MP.

As a direct result of these representations some improvements to the road signs and marking of the junction have been made. We are very grateful for this action.

### **Improvements to the layout of the road junction**

In your letter to Mr Sunak, which he copied to us, you also mentioned that 'work has been undertaken on designing a scheme that could be introduced in the financial year 2018-19 to improve the operation of the A66 at this junction'. You mentioned that a detailed review of the scheme proposals is currently taking place in order to ensure that the cost of the work is proportionate to the likely benefit in the time period before this section of the A66 is converted to dual carriageway.

We were originally made aware of your intention to look at an improved design for this junction at the time of previous correspondence between one of our parishioners, Mrs Scott, with Mr Sunak in late 2015 / early 2016. In a reply received in early January 2016, Mrs Scott was assured that Highways England were aware of the high risk nature of the location and that were 'currently in the process of conducting an investigation to improve the safety of the junction'.

Our immediate question is this: Is it possible for details (or even an outline) of the revised scheme to be made available to us? If so how can this be accomplished and when?

### **Control of traffic speed on the A66**

Your letter to Mr Sunak also mentioned that 'at the moment it is not appropriate for a permanent 40 mph speed restriction, enforced by average speed cameras, to be made'.

Would it be possible for you to explain to us why such an arrangement would be 'not appropriate'?

Prior to our letter to Mr Sunak we actually had a very helpful exchange with the parish council at Kirkby Thore in Cumbria. We realise that the 40 mph speed limit which exists on the A66 at that point had in fact been established some years ago in response to concerns about a number of accidents or near-misses at the junction with Main Street (which carries regular traffic from the nearby Gypsum Works).

The local parish council was concerned, however that the speed limit was not being observed and with helpful intervention by Highways England a speed monitoring programme was undertaken which revealed that in fact the average speed of traffic through the single carriage section of the A66 was 49 mph. Subsequently it was agreed (also with the support of the local Police Crime Commissioner) to install an average speed camera enforced system, which now appears to be very effective.

Even if a similar enforced speed limit of 40 mph is deemed 'not appropriate', would some effective means of speed reduction not be possible? Our strong suspicion is that much of the traffic leaving the dual carriageway section of the A66 at Black Hill does not slow down to 60 mph (and certainly not to the current temporary speed restriction of 40 mph, associated with ongoing repair work).

As explained in our recent letter to Mr Sunak, many of our parishioners have expressed concerns about the risks of turning into / out of our own junction. In particular several people have stated that they simply no longer risk turning right either into the junction or out of the junction due to the poor layout and high relative traffic speeds. Because of the layout of the road travelling west there is a tendency for traffic to swing to the right to follow the revised layout and this often means that traffic in this direction encroaches on the narrow central area which is supposed to be used by right-turning traffic.

Even in the time which has elapsed since we received our reply from Mr Sunak there have been more accidents in this section of the A66, including one around two weeks ago, which occurred at the New Lane junction and which resulted in the A66 being closed in both directions for several hours.

We fully appreciate that the correct decisions must be made on the use of public money, particularly when such expenditure would be to provide an interim solution, however we have real concerns that in the intervening time period (perhaps 5 years) before the A66 is converted to dual carriageway, a serious accident could occur.

We look forward to your reply in due course.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bell and Alister Walgate

Co-Chair, Ravensworth Parish Council

39 Ravensworth Village

Richmond

North Yorkshire

DL11 7ET

Tel: 01325 718920

Email [ravensworth.village@gmail.com](mailto:ravensworth.village@gmail.com)



Our ref: CEO18384602

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39 Ravensworth Village  
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**Nick Harris**  
**Operations Director**  
Walnut Tree Close  
Guildford  
Surrey  
GU1 4LZ  
[www.highways.gov.uk](http://www.highways.gov.uk)

12 April 2017

Dear Mr Bell and Mr Walgate

Thank you for your correspondence of 23 March 2017 concerning the A66 New Lane junction in Ravensworth.

I appreciate your comments in relation to the work that has recently taken place at this junction. Further work to remove the existing temporary barrier, on the western side of the junction, will take place as soon as possible. I cannot give a precise date at this time, as it is dependent on other closures in the vicinity relating to the A1 motorway upgrade.

As you are aware, further investigation will take place regarding the dualling of the A66, between Penrith and Scotch Corner. This scheme will take a number of years to develop and implement, and may be carried out in different stages.

Because of this, we are reviewing the operation of the New Lane junction, with the intention of developing a scheme that can be carried out in the shorter-term.

Please be assured that, once sufficient studies have been undertaken, we will consult the Parish Council to see if a suitable scheme can be taken forward, from the options identified.

With regards to a 40mph speed restriction, the present arrangement of the A66 at Ravensworth does not meet the required criteria for a reduced speed limit. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges sets out such requirements, whereby limits should match the characteristics of a road. In the case of Kirby Thorpe, this is considered a village; there are similarities with Ravensworth, though this is classed as a rural road. We would therefore not be able to put forward a case for speed restrictions at this time.

Once again, thank you for your letter. If you would like any further information please contact Chris Bell, Asset Delivery Manager for this region. Chris can be contacted by email at [chris.bell@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:chris.bell@highwaysengland.co.uk) or telephone 0300 470 2339.