

**A Report on the Traffic Congestion and
Car Parking Issues within Osmotherley Village**

January 2021

Introduction

This initial report has been prepared on behalf of the Parish Council due to the impact of three major issues and the detrimental effect on the tranquility and ambience of the village and substantial parishioner concerns:

TRAFFIC CONGESTION VISITOR PARKING RESIDENT PARKING

There is little doubt, that traffic congestion, along with the associated problems of visitor and resident parking on all of the major roads within the village has increased significantly. In a recent survey, many villagers felt disturbed and alarmed by the volume of traffic trying to pass through the village and the aggravation and anxiety caused by this problem is manifesting itself at a significant level. The congestion is dangerous and potentially could lead to loss of life.

If our Emergency Service Vehicles are required to access the Village when the traffic congestion is at its worst, their task will almost be impossible. Surely everyone has a right to swift access to the Emergency Services, irrespective of where they live in the Village.

In previous years these issues have mainly been limited to bank holiday periods but they are now happening more and more frequently. So it is essential that we look to find solutions to relieve the bottlenecks and associated traffic congestion, with a view to improving the wellbeing and welfare for residents.

Also as time goes by the ability to park cars near a persons' home is becoming very difficult. It is acknowledge and accepted that no one has a right to park outside their property, unless it is within their own curtilage, but being able to park within a reasonably short distance is preferable.

The Village was built in a time when there were no motorised vehicles, so the roads are narrow and unsuitable today for the volume of traffic travelling through and those that require to park.

The Parish Council has a responsibility to ensure the Village is a safe and enjoyable environment in which people can live, so it is paramount that we look to find solutions for these issues, even if that involves some changes which may be unwelcome to some.

It is evident that there isn't one single solution that will resolve everything and that the ultimate outcome will not be total perfection, but with an amalgamation of several initiatives, it could see a significant improvement.

Osmotherley is the only Visitor attraction in, the North York Moors National Park, which does not have a Visitor Car Park. Such a Car Park will help in improving the parking within the Village, but it will not resolve all the Car Parking or the traffic congestion issues.

There has been a significant increase in traffic flow through the Village on its way to the beauty spot of, Cod Beck. Some have said that this is due to the Coronavirus. The fact is that traffic problems have been steadily increasing over the last Ten years. Covid 19, may

have brought some additional traffic, but now that people have found this fantastic area, they are likely to continue to visit.

So we have to be open minded to making changes to improve these issues, but having said that, we have to establish how we can accommodate improvements to alleviate the problems highlighted, but yet being mindful of how we retain the Villages ambience, character and charm.

To maintain the status quo is not an option, because what we have, no longer works satisfactorily in this modern day and age.

Traffic Congestion Areas

West End

Approaching the Village from the A684/A19, (West End), because of parked cars on either side of the road, various pinch points are created, starting from the Old Police House, adjacent to Cuddy Lane, right the way in to the Village until you pass the end of School Lane. The restrictions depend on how many vehicles are parked on either side of the road, and the waiting time obviously varies, depending on the volume of traffic, but this becomes a considerable issue, especially at peak times which is during most weekends. If drivers are unfamiliar with the Village, they often fail to observe what is ahead and do not stop in time to let traffic through coming from the opposite direction and even if drivers allow traffic to pass, bottlenecks still happen.

South End

South End is narrow, without vehicles being parked on the roadside. The Road width is significantly reduced by parked cars, from the junction of School Lane all the way along to where the houses finish, just before the turning to, Hawaby, (Burnthouse Bank). The problems are compounded by drivers being unable to see around the bend from around, 25, South End all the way to the Junction of Back Lane and beyond. The lack of available Visitor parking within the Village, is causing drivers to look for any available space, resulting in South End, increasingly becoming the overflow car parking area, which has a great impact on traffic flow along what is essentially a single track road, without any pulling in spaces for approximately 0.30 of a mile, from School Lane to Burnthouse Lane.

North End

Similarly to South End and West End, North End is narrow, with again the road width being reduced to a single carriage way, without any passing places. The congestion starts at the junction with West End and can continue all the way up and beyond Oak Garth.

The congestion is compounded because drivers are unable to see up the road to the North, from Grant close onwards. There is a significant pinch point, where the carriageway is at its narrowest, between 37 to the West and 66 (Corbury House) to the East.

The considerable increase of Visitors traveling to Cod Beck is on the whole the main cause of majority of the traffic congestion in the Village. North End, sadly sees the most of the traffic jams which occur. This traffic chaos often causes mayhem and stand offs, with

some drivers being unwilling to move. Residents often witness serious verbal altercations and unpleasantness, so much so, that residents are starting to seriously consider if the Village is still an attractive and desirable place to be any more.

The verbal and physical tirades that they have to witness, coupled with the reality that they are unable to get to and from their homes in their vehicles at certain times because of traffic blockages, which sometimes can be for up to twenty minutes are tainting the whole reason why people decided to live here.

School Lane

School Lane is very narrow and frequently there is inconsiderate parking that happens, almost making part of it impassable. Consideration should be given to making this a part one way street, with the No Entry sign being beyond the "Snowdenfield" mounting block. Also double yellow lines should be placed in the areas where some cars currently park, making it almost impossible to negotiate a Vehicle through the remaining gap safely.

If you were to make School Lane a one way it would have certain road safety advantages (especially around the school) and may also release additional parking opportunities as you could park on one side of the road (dependent on the width).

Parking in the Village

The lack of Parking facilities within the village are also starting to cause even more problems. The increase in the numbers of cars visiting the Village, means that any free parking spaces are quickly taken up leaving the overspill volume, needing somewhere to park. Few, if any, turn around and go away. Instead they choose to park on the verge opposite Oak Garth and beyond on the Western side North End, stopping drivers seeing over the brow of the hill, as the travel up North End. Vehicles are now also parking indiscriminately on the East side of North End/Quarry Lane from Oak Garth to beyond the Cote Ghyll entrance. Car parking in these areas, compounds the traffic flow issues and cause dangerous obstructions to the footpath and highway.

Sometimes the cause of the traffic problems we face as a Village has been levelled at the movement of Caravans, travelling too and from Cote Ghyll Caravan Park. In 2020 the Owners of the Caravan Park, have tried to get their guests to arrive and vacate at certain times to try and alleviate congestion . There have been times when we have all been under lockdown, when the congestion still happened even though there wasn't any movement of Caravans because the site was closed. So the problem still exists whether the site is open or closed.

Possible Car Parking Improvements

Car parking in the Village is an emotive subject, with there being a wide range of views. Some people who do not wish to see things change, may have this opinion because, where they live has on-site parking and as such the issues are not as relevant or concerning to them.

Other views are that they do not wish to see the pleasant green spaces change. In a perfect world, none of us would want change, but we do not have a perfect world, so something has to alter in order to make improvements.

We need to find a suitable site for a Visitor Car Parking. The general consensus is that a Visitor Car Park has to be with in close proximity or a short walk from the centre of the village. The size of such a Car Park has to be meaningful and would need to accommodate, say up to fifty cars, so we would need to find a site in the region of one and a half acres plus, in size.

It would be advisable for a Visitor Car Park to be able accommodate employees cars from the various businesses with in the Village. At any one time, this could be around ten to twelve cars at peak times. This would remove employees cars from roadside parking, helping to ease parking problems.

Having a Visitor Car Park would then provide options to for a Resident Permit Parking only scheme. This would prompt a debate of how many Permits per household and where do the cars that may be attached to households that cannot get a permit, park.

A number of Parking bays for Patrons of the three Public Houses could be provided, with a two hours' time limit with a no return for three hours, say between 8am and 6pm.

Those who have the facility to park off Road on Back Lane but choose to park on the roads within the village, because it is easier, should be encourage to park where they have an allocation.

These suggestion create a turnover of spaces and are dependent on the need for a long term Car Park for Visitors and Workers.

Notwithstanding the improvements for Villagers that these measures would create, it will still not resolve the narrowing of all roads because there will still be parked cars which therefore still leaves the question of how do we resolve the traffic congestion issues.

There are no easy solutions to solving the traffic congestion, because it is not possible to have a road widening scheme, so we need to be creative and innovative.

Possible Traffic Congestion Improvements

a) A one way system for Access to Cod Beck.

Visitors would access Cod Beck through Osmotherley, but would have to exit Cod Beck through Swainby. Osmotherley Village would therefore be inaccessible for Car users from Swainby side of the cattle grid to the North Side of Osmotherley.

This would reduce the numbers of vehicle returning back through the Village. It would also improve road safety for Pedestrians and Cyclists and for Villagers.

It would also remove the need to make major changes to parking arrangements on North End.

The abuse of the restrictions could be an issue, any such abuse would have to be managed and Policed.

Some traffic congestion could still be encountered because Caravans would still be able to travel south down North End from Cote Ghyll. If we were able to make an agreement with the owners of Cote Ghyll that the customers had to leave/arrive by 9.30 or after 4.30, then this may resolve that issue.

This one way system would seriously reduce traffic returning through Osmotherley. It could be introduced relatively quickly and at low cost via an Experimental Order, no consultation is required. Signs would be required and road markings as usual. This one way system can be in place for a maximum of 18 months and can be amended or taken out at any time. The consultation takes place through the duration of the scheme and is reviewed after 6/12 months usually.

b) Traffic Lights

This in itself may seem a simple solution, and is one that we have had a limited experience on, from the recent work carried out by Yorkshire Water. Admittedly, this work was done in mid - December, where visitor numbers were considerably less than in earlier months, but some traffic congestion was still encountered, albeit to a lesser amount.

Traffic Lights can be Vehicular activated and have flexible timings, but can result in a back-up of traffic and they cannot be used over long stretches of road or have several junctions accessing the road they are on. E.g. North End and South End.

This option is likely to be costly and because several other roads access North End and South End, the idea is potentially impractical.

c) Creation of Passing Places at the pinch points.

Whilst this would be a desirable solution the possibilities of doing this is not possible, because the land is not available in the areas where the congestion is.

d) Increased Road Signage

This assists with the other options and can provide results with increased enforcement and could be used to create passing places at pinch points. This option also can be costly and is only as good as the enforcement. We already struggle to get enforcement now, so what are the chances of obtaining increased enforcement that this will require.

e) Creation of Parking Spaces by replacing verges and adding a possible multi-user' lane, for cyclists, equestrians and other vulnerable road users

This option would increase traffic flow in certain areas and improve road safety by cars no longer mounting pavements and a cycle lane would be better for cyclists. This could be costly and contentious in relation to Land ownership and Village Green. It would also only alleviate the problem in a small area on North End, but with potential changes that could be made at the pinch point on North End, it could be a solution to North End accommodating two way traffic again.

Changes would need to be made to the pinch-point between 37 to the West and 66 (Corbury House) and above, would mean that the shrubbery border in front of 66,68, 70 and 72 North End would have to be removed, in order to widen the road in this area. If this were to happen, double yellow lines would then need to be provided, to both sides of North End from the corner of Back Lane/Grant Close, all the way to Oak Garth. Whilst this resolves the two way traffic flow problem in the main, it would remove parking for around sixteen vehicles and the need some re-modelling of the gateways to the properties from where the shrubbery border had been removed.

The next question this creates, is where would the Vehicles from these properties park?

There may be a possibility of acquiring some land above Mable Cottage on the Eastside of North End. The implications of this are, acquisition costs, removal of some trees and then the cost of creating a dedicated parking area, which would have to be for residents only. It is not certain at this stage if the land in question would be large enough to accommodate enough cars!

If the Land isn't large enough or wasn't able to be acquired, alternative land would need to be sourced near-by, paid for and developed to fulfil this possibility. This would mean sourcing some land on Back Lane.

Matrix Signage

Using a Matrix signage in a strategically placed position, say at the bottom of Clack Bank, to provide up to date information about the Car Parking capacity at Cod Beck, could result fewer cars coming in through the Village if the Car Park is full, that is, if drivers were to observe the sign, therefore reducing congestion.

There is an on-going cost to such a sign, in addition to the need to be able to provide accurate data from the Cod Beck Car Park . There are also problems that may be caused by Vehicles turning around on Clack Bank or at the Road Junction if the Car Park is full.

Park and Ride Scheme

A suitable Car Park would need to be available outside the Village to accommodate a sufficient number cars. All visitors to Cod Beck would have to use the Park and Ride Scheme, thereby stopping the through put of cars in the Village.

On the surface this sounds a good solution, but in reality would people observe this?

It may also mean the need to close the Cod Beck Car Parks other than for blue-badge holders, double yellow lines would be needed on all the verge areas and there would be the need for consistent enforcement.

Road Calming Measures

Physical measures such as chicanes a road humps etc, can assist with slowing down traffic. These measures can be expensive and are likely to not be well received by Villagers, due to the noise and the disturbance/nuisance they create.

Engagement

Whatever we decided to do, we also need to engage with all Key Stakeholders to restrict Vehicle movements, by doing this it will help to ease congestion and traffic flow as well as helping business to manage resources better.

Education

Education is very important of any changes and soft measures such as Leaflets, Promotions, "Ossie" Helpers or Champions and a Parish Council Website could all be used in conjunction with each other with the aiming of improving awareness, but without hard solutions to the issues that we face, these measures will potentially make little or no improvement to the problems.

Land Availability for Car Parking

The Housing and Car Parking survey carried out on behalf of Hambleton District Council, resulted in their being a small need for Social Housing and an overwhelming need for car parking.

Following this survey we should have done a Village walkabout in October 2020, to look at parcels of land.

This was postponed and to date we have heard nothing further about what Hambleton propose.

The parcels of land which are to be looked, there are few parcels of land that would be suitable or available.

Hambleton District Council, have identified 18 potential parcels of land to look at within the village.

Narrowing down the suitability of these 18 should not be too difficult because access and egress will be the main issue together with land owners not wishing to relinquish their ownership.

From the identified sites there are probably five contenders, with only one site that would be ideal for a joint Social Housing and Car Parking scheme.

Conclusion and Recommendations for further Discussion

This whole subject is contentious and emotive, it will be impossible to please everyone, but it is important for significant changes to be made.

Possibly the ideal scenario, would be for the site which is most suitable for a joint housing/car parking scheme to be acquired and developed as well as the introduction of a No Entry access into Osmotherley from Cod Beck.

In doing this the majority of the parking issues within the Village could potentially be resolved by the provision of a suitable car park for Visitors and Employees, a residents only parking scheme and time limited bays outside the three Public Houses.

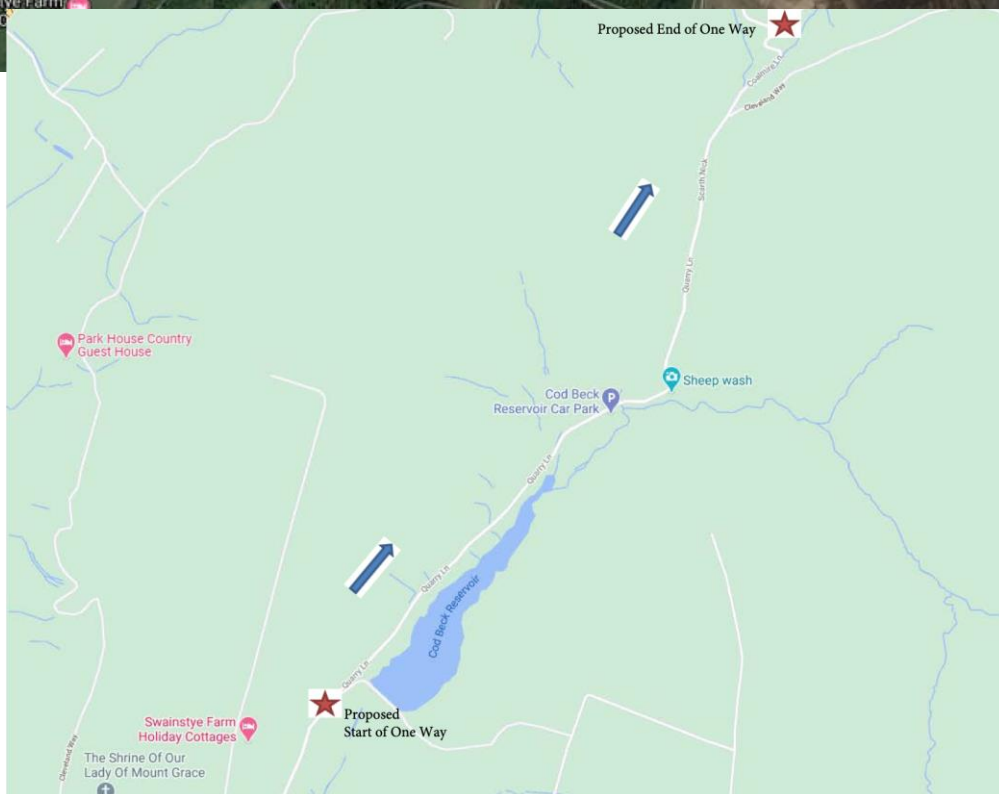
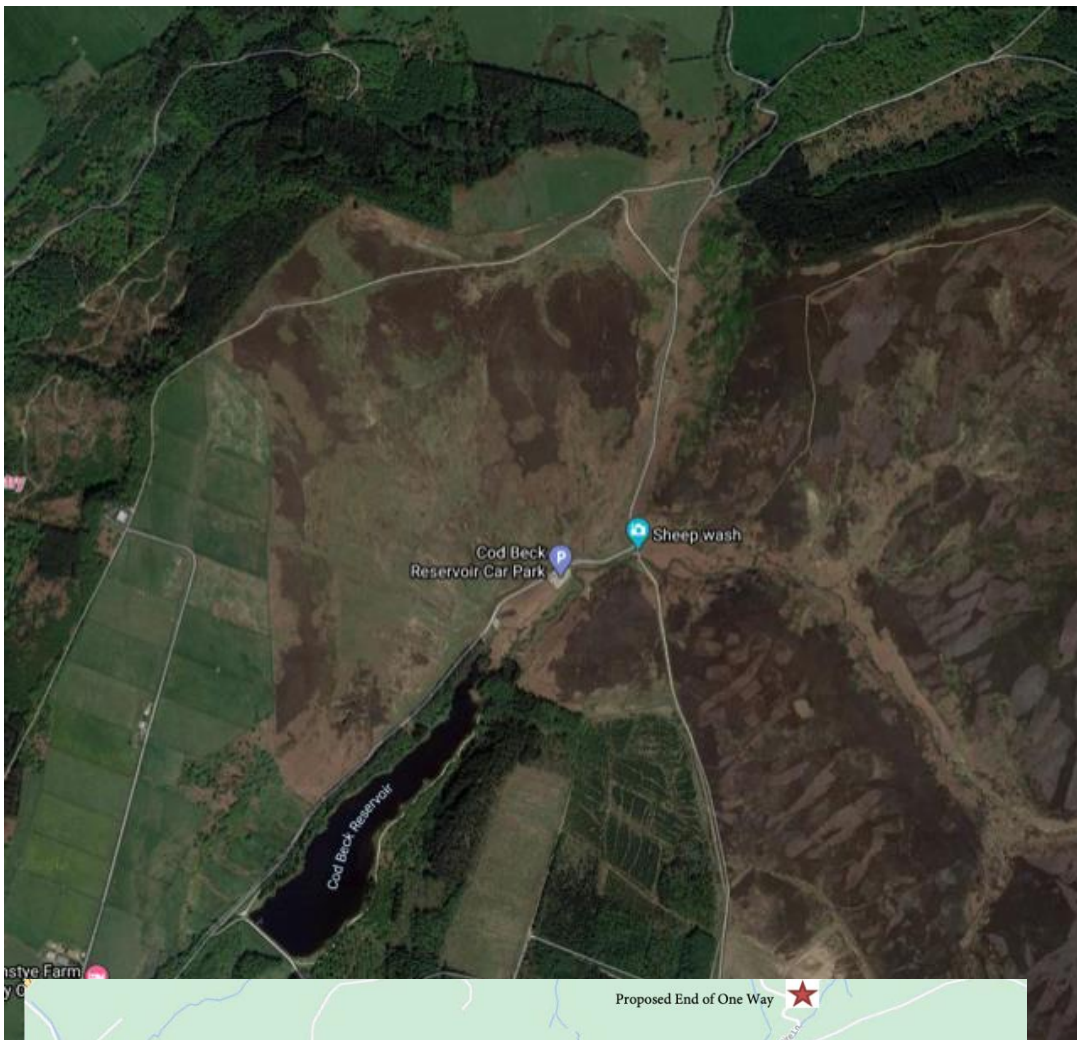
The traffic congestion on North End should be minimal with there being no return from Cod Beck. The pinch points in West and South End could be resolved by double yellow line parking restrictions,.

There is also a need to remove the danger and congestion as you come over the crown of the hill on North End towards Cod Beck and to stop vehicle owners randomly parking because this area is closer to Cod Beck which will immediately become targeted if these changes were made. This could easily be solved by extending the double yellow lines from 45 North End to both sides of the carriage way, all the way to and beyond the entrance of, Cote Ghyll, on Quarry Lane.

If this could be achieved then, with improved Education, the current issues and problems that we have will be significantly reduced.

From the information set out in this document, it is clear that to achieve the Parish Council's objectives set out in the introduction, of significantly improving traffic congestion, visitor and residents parking within the Village, that several initiatives will have to be implemented. These initiatives will require the engagement and backing of Hambleton Council, North York Moors National Park Authority and also Central Government.

Possible One Way System
Cod Beck to Swainby





North End (one of the pinch points)



South End (one of the pinch points)



West End (one of the pinch point)



Typical Traffic Congestion

Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared following discussions with most of the Villages Business Owners, Village residents and with the help of Terry Luck, a local Resident, who's experience and knowledge in Traffic Management and Car Parking through working for Northumberland County Council has been invaluable.

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