

DEPUTATION TWO – MEANWOOD ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN

THE LORD MAYOR: Hello, good afternoon and welcome to today's meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and can you begin by introducing your colleague in your Deputation. Thank you.

MS Z WALKER: My name is Zoe Walker and I represent St Urban's Primary School Parent Teacher Organisation.

DR H BRYANT: I am Helen Bryant, I am an orthopaedic registrar and the Treasurer of the PTA at St Urban's Primary School.

MS Z WALKER: We are here to present a deputation for road safety measures in Meanwood. To quote Leeds City Council's Child Friendly Leeds statement, the top priority for young voices in Leeds was children and young people can make safe journeys and easily travel around the city.

Following numerous incidents involving cars failing to stop at the zebra crossing on Tongue Lane we, the parents at St Urban's Primary School, are campaigning for road safety measure outside the schools on Tongue Lane and beyond.

Currently the speed limit is 30 miles per hour – there are no signs to this effect. Traffic comes off the ring road from outer Leeds and uses these roads as a cut-through to Leeds city centre and other areas of Leeds with little regard for speed limits and those who live here.

We understand that the Council has plans to introduce 20mph zones outside all schools, prioritising those identified as being at higher risk. Tongue Lane should be made a priority. The introduction of the lower speed limit will reduce the risk of injury to children. We would also like to see the speed restrictions and a crossing introduced at the roundabout at the top of Church Lane and beyond. The left turn into Parkside Road is a blind corner. There is currently no safe place to cross. Church Lane and Tongue Lane have been described by local residents as being like a race track with traffic whizzing up and down and must be doing at least 40 mph. There have been several crashes causing serious damage to cars and property. Earlier this year a motorbike came off the road on to the pavement on Tongue Lane as children walked to school; thankfully, no-one was seriously hurt.

Of the pupils at St Urban's Primary and Cardinal Heenan, over 200 children walk or cycle to school every day, most of whom will need to cross Tongue Lane and/or Church Lane or Parkside Road. We feel that if these roads were made safer, then more children would walk, reducing traffic congestion further.

In addition, there are a large number of children who use public transport to travel to school. They board and alight on Tongue Lane. Cardinal Heenan expects the number of children who walk or travel by car and public transport to increase this September when the free school bus service is cut, increasing the risk of incident.

For most parents, including myself, witnessing speeding and failure to stop at the crossings have become a daily occurrence. In order to avoid crossing at the blind corner on Parkside Road, we usually wait for several minutes to cross the road on Church Lane, then walk on the opposite side of the road to school and use the zebra

crossing at the top to return to the school side of the road. Most days we have to wait at the zebra crossing for cars who refuse to stop.

Recently, a van slowed down to almost stopping at the humped zebra crossing but continued to drive over the crossing. My two sons and another child had already begun to cross there. Lightning reflexes resulted in avoiding a disaster as I pulled my children to safety and held out an arm for the other child as a barrier to her crossing. Incidents like these tend not to be reported to the police as insufficient evidence is gained at the time but this was not the worst. On driving up Tongue Lane I stopped at the crossing to allow pedestrians to cross, only to be overtaken by the car behind. Imagine my horror watching the pedestrians crossing, only the beep of a horn and a fast-acting parent avoiding disaster.

I have watched as groups of children from Cardinal Heenan risk life and limb to cross the road at the mini-roundabout unaccompanied by grown-ups, buses and cars screeching to a halt only centimetres from children crossing. Every day I see children alighting public transport on Tongue Lane walking in front of the bus and proceeding to cross while cars overtake and speed past, just to gain an extra minute on their journey. I see childminders with furrowed brows allowing older children to walk responsibly but concerned that a car may just take a corner too quickly. This is most definitely not a child friendly area of Leeds.

I and others could report similar incidents to you every day of the school week. We, the parents and local residents, urge the Council to seize this opportunity to avoid a child being seriously hurt or killed. Our concerns have been echoed by the community as a whole and since January we have gathered over 500 signatures of local residents in support of our campaign, with many comments of similar incidents.

We have also engaged West Yorkshire Police, who are able to assist us in delivering road safety education and increasing driver awareness.

Trauma is the leading cause of death in children. If you hit a child at 40mph you will probably kill the child; at 30mph the child has an 80% chance of survival; at 20mph the child is likely to survive with minor injuries.

Please do not wait for a child to be hurt or killed. Now is the time for Leeds schools and residential areas to be made child friendly.

In summary, then the action we would like to see: a 20mph zone outside St Urban's Primary School and Cardinal Heenan School; a Pelican crossing or school crossing patrol; speed restrictions on Tongue Lane and Church Lane at the roundabout; and a pedestrian crossing beyond the roundabout.

Thank you for your time and for this opportunity, and for listening. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harper.

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you both for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Sorry. All those in favour? (*A vote was taken*) I think that is CARRIED.