

DEPUTATION TWO
Moorland Road Residents, Bramhope

THE LORD MAYOR: We now have the Moorland Road residents regrading the speed limit in Moorland Road, Bramhope.

Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should be no longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing the people in your deputation.

MR M KINGSTON: Thank you. My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, good afternoon. My name is Mark Kingston and these are my colleagues, Mike Reilly, Veronica Kirwin, Sarah Kingston, my wife, and Lindsey Boshier.

As you may have seen on local press, radio and TV, we are campaigning for a reduction in the speed limit from 60 miles an hour to 30 miles an hour on the street where we live.

Moorland Road is a small country lane on the edge of the village of Bramhope village. It is single track, it has no pavements and it has two blind bends along its roughly a mile length. At the southern end is a small community of round about 20 homes, which includes 13 children of ten or under who obviously like to run and play and move between each other's houses. There are further houses dotted along the road and at the north end is the Bramhope Scouts campsite. This is due to be upgraded to a County site this year, with greater numbers of scouts visiting most weekends of the year. The lane in between is used by villagers and residents alike for walking, jogging, horse riding, as well as the scouts using it on a regular basis on the weekends. It should be an absolutely idyllic place, looking out over open countryside, and it would be if not for the fact that cars can legally speed down it at speeds of up to 60 mph. It is completely crazy, but that is the case.

The situation has been made worse recently in that local roads have been reclassified down to 30 mph. This has led to the road becoming a rat run for drivers who are in a hurry. They know that they can travel at those excessive speeds without being censored for it. All of us know of residents locally who have had to dive into hedges to avoid being mown down, there are several cars who have ended up in ditches, one of the local children was knocked off his bike. It is only a matter of time before somebody gets really seriously injured or killed. At less than 30 mph they have a chance; at 40, 50 mph, which they are legally allowed to do at the moment, we all know they have got very little chance at all.

We have been campaigning for around about five years actively, lately with a great deal of help from Greg Mulholland, our MP, and Councillor Barry Anderson has also been a big help. Both of them have been very supportive and realise the seriousness of the situation. We also have the support of local police who agree that the limit is wrong but cannot currently censor drivers, even if they are travelling at 50 mph plus, because they are well within the legal limit for the road. They agree that the situation is farcical and that it needs to be changed.

The Highways Department have repeatedly refused to lower the limit and they have given several reasons for that. Firstly, in terms of speed, they measured the speed and they said that the average was 30 mph. For a start, we know that they measured the speed just before one of the blind bends where drivers do slow down to some extent, so obviously that would have been at a lower speed. The locals drive much, much slower than the 30 mph limit so by logic there are many drivers who drive much, much faster than this and it only takes one car travelling at that legal limit of up to 60 mph to kill or injure, seriously injure one of us.

The second reason they have given is one of cost, with an initial estimate given of £6,400 to change the limit for the road, but again what price do you put on the life of a child or one of us?

This decision was made even more laughable to my mind when the following day after getting this letter we received another one from a different part of the Council saying that they had found a spare £20,000 and were going to resurface what we considered to be our already very serviceable road, thus making it even faster. They were happy to make it faster but could not address our concerns at a quarter of that price.

Thankfully at last we have made some progress. Two days ago the Highways Department agreed to reduce the limit to 30 mph but only outside the houses at the southern end of the road – a stretch of about 200m. They costed this as £5,800 as opposed to £6,300 for the full length of the road – a minimal saving of £600. That is because the vast majority of that change is made up of legal costs.

Whilst we are delighted at this process, surely we can afford an extra £600 to protect all the recreational users and the scouts who use it on a regular basis and, more to the point, to remove that temptation for drivers to use the road as a legal rat run. Moorland Road needs to be 30 mph along its full length.

We urge you to end the lunacy of this situation and to help make all of Moorland Road a safer place for all of us. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Bentley?

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, looked after children.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I call for a vote on that? (*A vote was taken*) Thank you very much. Thank you for attending and we shall keep you informed of the consideration which your comments will receive at the appropriate Executive Board meeting. Thank you very much for coming and good afternoon. (*Applause*)