

Ennerdale and Kinniside Parish Council

Mr G Browning
Forestry England
(by email)
CC to:
Cumbria County Council, Highways Department
The Environment Agency
Cumbria Constabulary

16th January 2022

Dear Mr Browning,

Many thanks for your interesting presentation regarding the Phytophthora Larch Disease and for listening to the concerns of the councillors and public that attended. As requested, I have put together details of some of the points that were raised, but these may not be exhaustive.

The primary concerns were regarding the timber lorries, the potential for accidents, the damage to road surfaces and the general suitability of the roads.

I note that you have stated that as the roads are part of Timber Haulage agreed route, then it is up to Highways to make sure that it is suitable and repair any problems. Whilst that may be a legally correct standpoint, it cannot be morally correct to ignore a problem that you are aware of, indeed if a serious incident were to occur there may arise questions over criminal negligence. None of us can afford to ignore the risks involved with the haulage operation.

You disregard the fact that the lorries are frequently damaging the road, passing the problem on to Highways and the cost, ultimately, to the local tax payers. As this is an ongoing problem that isn't going to improve without either a change of route, road alterations, or use of a different vehicle, something needs to be done about it. I understand you have already been sent photographic evidence of this problem.

In another incident that was brought to your attention, which further demonstrates the unsuitability of the route, a forestry lorry left the road in a single vehicle incident, which appeared to be wholly attributable to driver error. This meant that the only access road to a number of properties was blocked for several hours and had access been required by emergency vehicles to those properties, the delay that would have been caused, could have had fatal consequences.

There were concerns raised that lorries were driving too fast along the roads and your assertion that with tachographs fitted, the lorries would not be exceeding the speed limit, is irrelevant. The roads being used are narrow, in many cases single track roads with no passing places. To travel at the permitted speed limit in this situation would be tantamount to dangerous driving. The drivers are not driving to a speed that is safe for those road conditions and that is the speed that is important.

A section of the road through the village is not an agreed route, but is actually classified as a consultation route. Nobody that we have spoken to is aware of any consultation being carried out. The lorries travelling through the village often clash with school times, when there are more children running around and more cars on the school run. The lorries also mount and damage the kerbs in

the village. There appears to be no thought given to the timing of the movement of the lorries, no proper traffic management system in operation.

The Council has received numerous complaints regarding the forestry lorries; those mentioned above are just a handful of the problems raised with us. While we fully understand your need to carry out the timber extraction, given the number of problems being caused by the lorries and the current route, we believe that there should be a full reassessment of the currently agreed route and a full assessment and consultation on the supposed consultation route, so that all elements can be taken into account and an agreement reached. We also need to ensure that there is a mechanism in place for reporting of any future issues or non-compliance with any agreement.

We'll happily supply everybody with a list of the different issues that have been flagged up to us during or prior to the assessment and consultation process, whichever is of most benefit. As a minimum this review should involve CCC Highways, Forestry England, The Environment Agency, Cumbria Constabulary and ourselves. I have copied everyone in to this letter to help facilitate this.

This initial review should be carried out as soon as possible, before the main extraction process and the tourist season begin. Please can everybody contact me to confirm that they are willing to participate in this reassessment and notify me of any dates that they are not available for meetings. I would suggest a preliminary meeting within the next 14 days to agree the framework for the reassessment.

Yours sincerely,



Jane Coltman

Clerk to Ennerdale and Kinniside Parish Council

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