

NYC Councillor's Report mid April 2024.

A66

Following the 'signing off' after years of waiting by the Secretary of State for Transport, the A66 upgrade is now on course for completion by 2029. The actual start date will depend on how many challenges there are and how the courts react to these appeals. The appeal period ends this Wednesday.

The start date is probably going to be late spring/early summer next year. All 6 sections between Scotch Corner and Penrith are to be constructed together. The unknown quantity however, is Scotch Corner roundabout. I attended a meeting last week at which 2 senior officers from National Highways spoke. It would appear that no final plan has been agreed for the roundabout.

This, I told them, was very unsatisfactory. The roundabout, despite tinkering with the lights, continues at times to be a huge bottleneck. Trying to get out of Middleton Tyas onto the roundabout on a Friday afternoon can be frustrating to say the least.

I stressed to these officers that a final plan for the roundabout would be welcome, but regardless be the upgrade needs to be done in advance of the A66 upgrade, not afterwards. A further consideration is the Designer Outlet, work on which is now expected to recommence in June and which cannot open for business before the roundabout upgrade is completed. Our 2 officers didn't seem to be aware of this stipulation which was in the original planning permission granted.

HIGHWAYS

It has been an incredibly difficult winter which has been the wettest in the north in the last 130 years. We have had 10 named storms in the last 12 months. Who heard of such a thing in the north of England 15 years ago?

Gullies are cleaned on a programmed basis but in 22/23 there were 1100 non programmed orders and this figure increased to 1700 in the 23/24 year.

Water coming off neighbouring land is a major issue in many cases, but especially the road just out of Aldbrough towards Melsonby which often has to be closed at wet times, and also Kneeton Lane between Middleton Tyas and Barton. Having seen the success of getting the drains right just 400m from the Black Bull in Moulton as you head towards North Cowton, which regularly had to be closed because of water coming off the neighbouring land, I will keep pestering Highways until we get results. The road between Gilling and Aske is the subject of a meeting next week between Highways officers and the Land Owner's agent.

SPEEDING.

Figures recently published show that the police have caught 1,534 motorists in Richmondshire alone for exceeding the speed limit since 1st October last. There were 280 convictions in March alone. I understand that the police have agreed Manfield, Skeeby, Stapleton, Cleasby, Gilling West, East and West Layton, Eppleby and Carlton as target villages through which motorists are speeding.

Some residents and PCs were disappointed last year that I didn't take a stronger line within NYC regarding the 20's Plenty Campaign, but within my division there were more PCs who were against a blanket 20mph than in favour. I take the view that, whilst financial considerations will be a factor, are we not better to have a system of police enforcement where possible with the backup of Matrix Boards which some villages think are very effective and Community Speed Watch schemes?

LITTER.

The trial of 8 signs which I funded through my Locality Budget, whilst not a perfect solution to littering, have been deemed to be a success by the dept. in Richmond who deal with litter picking.

If you would like one in a specific area, then please contact me and I'll see what can be done, provided it is in an area which has historically had a litter or fly tipping problem. I understand more signs are to be purchased by the council.

I wish to thank anyone on behalf of all residents, who has been involved in litter picking. However, the residents of Aldbrough who cleared both sides of Deer Street all the way from Barton Interchange to the Manfield Crossroads deserve a special mention. A massive pile of bagged rubbish was piled up for collection next to the bus stop in Aldbrough. Well done everyone!

Angus Thompson.

15th April 2024.