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### **Walton on Trent – Traffic Impact Concerns**

The Walton on Trent Parish council would like to bring to your attention the ever-increasing impact on traffic in and around Walton on Trent and the surrounding South Derbyshire and East Staffordshire area. The impact is a result of a large number of planning applications, licensed events at Catton Hall and long term roadworks combined with other decisions being taken that have had profound effects on the two closest bridges to the Village crossing of the River Trent. You have all been sent this document as we desperately need to see some individual and collaborative action and joined up thinking across two counties to address this issue. The fact that Walton on Trent sits on the Staffordshire/ Derbyshire border appears to make dealing with this infinitely more difficult than it should be.

As you should all be well aware, access to Walton on Trent from the A38 is via a traffic light controlled, one-way Bailey Bridge, that was built as a temporary installation in 1948. That bridge is supposed to be getting replaced by a new bridge that runs to the Drakelow side of the village and would take a lot of traffic away from Station Lane (Staffordshire to and from Derbyshire) and Main Street in the Village. The replacement bridge 1st received planning permission over a decade ago and the plan was resurrected as regeneration of the old Drakelow Power Station site is finally going ahead at pace. The building of that bridge is now in serious doubt as Staffordshire County Council has withdrawn its funding due to "slow progress" on the bridge. To our knowledge, the houses are being built at Drakelow at the expected rate and the bridge hold ups were being driven by SCC and DCC Highways failing to agree to the adoption of the completed highway. Walton Parish Council are bewildered and appalled by the removal of these funds, caused by something of the County Council's own doing.

Walton on Trent village appears to be under assault as the rural surroundings are being dramatically affected by a large number of changes. These all appear to be considered and evaluated on an individual, incremental basis with no co-ordination or dialogue between the respective District/ Borough and County Councils. As a result, traffic through the village is increasing dramatically and quality of life as a result is diminishing. We fear that at some point the bridge and village will become gridlocked and there are genuine road safety concerns. The local roads were never intended to take these volumes of traffic and the many HGVs now coming through the area. The impact of these major changes in aggregate means that the baseline for each planning assessment or decision is fundamentally wrong and the end points are being underestimated in terms of traffic volume. We believe that a more holistic view of the impact of all these changes needs to be considered and reviewed as a whole. The list to the best of our knowledge is as follows:

1. 2200+ new houses at old Drakelow power station site between Walton on Trent and Stapenhill. This planning application was predicated on the new bridge. Originally there was a planning condition that only 99 houses could be occupied before the bridge had to be completed. That was increased subsequently to 400 occupied. The houses built to date at Drakelow have led to a marked increase in traffic through the village and across the bridge. With withdrawal of funds for the bridge by SCC, that at the very least will lead to a

delay and the builders have made clear their intent to ask for the number of houses to be built before the bridge needs to be completed to be at least doubled from that 400. As Parish council we will do our utmost to fight any such application for a change to this planning condition. <https://www.staffordshire-live.co.uk/news/local-news/new-walton-bridge-bypass-risk-8094075> . Anger over 'invisible bridge' as money is pulled from ...Staffordshire Live<https://www.staffordshire-live.co.uk> › ... › Walton

2. Chetwynd bridge weight and (proposed) width restrictions. Chetwynd bridge is approximately 3 miles from Walton on Trent and is on the road from A38 at Alrewas to Tamworth. Despite being covered with 75 tonnes of concrete blocks, SCC have imposed a 7.5 tonne weight limit on the bridge. This has forced traffic to find other routes towards Tamworth from the A38. This has certainly had a huge impact on farm vehicle movements and we dread to contemplate the scale and volume of large farm machinery and delivery lorries coming through Walton, Rosliston and Coton at harvest time. This could be 10s of movements per farm per hour and may coincide with Catton Hall events. As far as we know, no traffic assessment of the impact of this has been conducted by SCC or DCC. It is certainly forcing many vehicles who can't cross the river at Walton to find a way through Burton and Stapenhill then through the conservation area in Walton and no doubt Rosliston to get out towards Elford and Tamworth. Another particular effect of this bridge restriction is upon local school bus routes: John Taylor Route 247, having been re-routed, now collects children from the bus shelter on Main St in Walton - heading towards Drakelow at 8.10am. This time coincides with peak traffic through the village and the narrow pavement upon which the children must wait places them at risk (prior to the bridge restrictions, the bus travelled in the opposite direction through Walton, meaning that the children could wait in the larger area outside the White Swan Pub). This bus also travels through Stapenhill and over St Peter's bridge in Burton, contributing to the increase in traffic here and often delaying the children's return home from school. On top of the weight limit, a width limit on the bridge is also being proposed. This will have devastating traffic consequences related to events held at Catton Hall which is just over a mile from Walton. Tens of thousands of people attend these weekend long events and a width restriction on the bridge will force campers and caravans through Burton, Stapenhill and Walton on Trent. We already have traffic chaos in Walton on the Monday morning post these events and the Chetwynd bridge situation will make the traffic totally unacceptable. There needs to be a review of the licensing of all events at Catton Hall due to the public nuisance caused by the traffic. See attached link to newspaper article. <https://www.staffordshire-live.co.uk/news/local-news/bloodstock-bearded-theory-bosses-slam-8287118>
3. The 14MW waste to power incinerator at Drakelow. A new incinerator has been built at Drakelow site. This will be supplied with waste and ash will be removed via an estimated 200 lorry movements on and off site per day. That traffic will pass by Drakelow and through Stapenhill. In the absence of the new river crossing all that traffic will have to cross the river Trent at the St Peters street bridge. The main route along Rosliston road through Stapenhill is not good at the best of times due to road narrowing at the railway bridge over the border between Derbyshire and Staffordshire and again half way along the road. There are also many speed bumps on that road that are not well maintained. Cars and lorries drive over those speed bumps with care for their vehicles, but in the process often cross the centreline of the road. This situation will, in Walton Parish Council's opinion, be miserable for the residents of Rosliston Road.
4. Proposed 19.5MW incinerator at Stanton. <https://www.staffordshire-live.co.uk/news/local-news/slow-death-claims-over-150m-7851087> . There is another proposed incinerator near Swadlincote that is another 30% larger than the one at Drakelow. On a simple multiplier basis we would expect 30% more traffic movements for

this proposal. Inevitably there will be a knock-on to traffic volume on the surrounding, unsuitable, narrow country roads. Given that lorries already cut through to Netherseal through Coton, Rosliston and Walton as the A444 is so busy and smart sat navs say it's a quicker route; further increase is inevitable.

5. NSIP Oaklands solar farm. A huge solar farm of 410 acres (which would be one of the UK's largest if given the go-ahead) is proposed which will basically cover all the fields between the back of Walton on Trent from Walton Hall grounds to Rosliston and Coton in the Elms villages. The fact that this is being proposed on high quality farmland that would be better used providing food security locally is for a different discussion. The construction traffic plan proposed states that the preferred route for all the construction traffic is via the new Walton Bypass (new river crossing/ bridge). As that is looking precarious, the alternative routes are also restricted by the new 7.5 tonne limit on Chetwynd bridge, so all the traffic will come from the M42 or A38 through Walton and surrounding villages to the proposed site. The applicants claim 37 vehicle movements per day of which 10 will be HGVs. If given the go-ahead, there will be cars and vans to get construction workers to and from site on a daily basis and that traffic will be unmanageable and the routes taken unenforceable. This is, again, totally unacceptable to Walton Parish Council. See article in local paper via attached link <https://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/news/local-news/uks-largest-solar-farm-derbyshire-8250978>.
6. Lullington solar farm - planning appeal. <https://www.staffordshire-live.co.uk/news/local-news/hundreds-fighting-mega-solar-farm-7355767>. This solar farm failed its planning application (from an out of area landlord who was going to remove 3 tenant farmers) after receiving over 200 objections. Despite that number of complaints, SDDC proposed it for approval so may it win at appeal. It was intended to cover 173 acres of good quality farm land. The construction traffic for this application must be of similar volumes to Oaklands but likely not to last as long? The only way that the traffic plan allows traffic to site is again through the surrounding villages.
7. The general state of surrounding roads and in particular the Staffordshire side Station Lane approach from Barton Under Needwood to Walton on Trent Bailey bridge. Given the already substantial increase in traffic on the roads surrounding Walton on Trent, the road conditions are deteriorating rapidly. Potholes, edges falling away because of traffic over use, unkempt hedgerows etc are all leading to the roads being in a dreadful state. In particular, Station Lane between the A38 and Walton is in dreadful condition. Walton Parish council commissioned a Health & Safety report which is attached. This highlighted 11 high likelihood/ impact risks that are in need of mitigation and ultimately recommends building an alternative route to access the area to reduce the volume of traffic down this road. Along with the general concerns for all surrounding roads, the Station Lane roadside barriers are continually being damaged as lorries, which are going down the lane despite their weight and width and signs highlighting the 3 ton, 7' 6" restrictions, have to reverse out knocking over barrier posts. Ignoring these signs is nothing short of driving with undue care and attention. The sides of the road in several places are littered with broken-off wing mirrors, as cars scrape past each other when avoiding potholes and reversing lorries and coaches. Since restrictions were placed on Chetwynd bridge, the number of incidents on the lane have dramatically increased and in the last months several lorries have become stuck in the barriers, leading to road closures which sometimes last hours. Sat Navs are also directing traffic across the Bailey Bridge as the quickest route from the A38 to Tamworth, given the combination of the Chetwynd Bridge restrictions and the lengthy 40mph zone on the A38 as a result of HS2. For far too long, the excuse from Staffordshire for doing as little as possible on Station Lane has been that "the new bridge is going to be built". As this is now in serious doubt, that excuse is no longer valid. The

signage needs to be improved to stop the overweight and over-width traffic from coming beyond the entrance to Tuckleshome Nature Reserve. It would be preferred if a physical width restriction is introduced at that point, to stop inappropriately large vehicles approaching the bridge and damaging the road in the process. It is only a matter of time before the bridge gets damaged beyond use and has to be shut for weeks/months for repair or worse still, a pedestrian or other road user gets seriously injured. Of additional note, the situation at the Drakelow "crossroads of Doom" (where Burton Road, Rosliston Road, Caldwell Road and Barn Lane meet), which has the highest accident rate in Derbyshire, gets made worse by the increasing volumes of traffic. <https://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/news/motoring/derbyshires-crossroads-doom-crash-hotspot-8167279>

8. Any number of smaller planning applications not having a big enough impact to trigger a traffic assessment. As 2 examples, here is one recent application. <https://planning.southderbyshire.gov.uk/dmapps.aspx/?ref=DMPA/2023/0221> and one from 2021 <https://planning.southderbyshire.gov.uk/dmapps.aspx/?ref=DMPA/2021/1010>. Both these applications are for small industrial/ storage units on farms with access from the rural road network between Walton on Trent and its surrounding villages. On their own, they do not constitute a major change to traffic but the cumulative effect of lots of these small applications just adds to a road traffic situation that is at tipping point.

In summary, the rural infrastructure in and around Walton on Trent is being stretched to its limit. The rural way of life in the corner of South Derbyshire between Swadlincote and the Staffordshire border is in serious threat. A combination of circumstances is leading to potential traffic chaos. We, the Parish Council of Walton on Trent would implore the local and county planning departments (SDDC, DCC and SCC) to seriously consider the situation cumulatively and take appropriate actions. Being on the border between 2 counties has not helped as it is all too easy for one council to blame the other. We believe as a minimum the following is required:

- The funding and building of the new bridge is of crucial importance. Without it, be in no doubt that Walton Parish Council will do its utmost to object to and oppose any planning application related to increasing the number of houses allowed to be occupied at Drakelow before the bridge is completed.
- In the interim, the Station Lane approach to Walton on Trent needs to be improved. The mitigations referred to in the attached H&S assessment need to be implemented. Better signage and traffic obstruction features to stop lorries and other oversize vehicles going down the lane, damaging the road and bridge. The potholes desperately need filling/more permanently repairing. The overgrowth needs to be regularly cut back and fencing properly repaired before a car or lorry ends up in the stream that runs alongside, or a pedestrian gets injured or worse.
- Traffic enforcement. Overweight and oversize lorries coming down Station Lane cannot continue to be ignored as a "nuisance". Drivers need to be held to account and traffic offences issued when numerous signs telling drivers of the impending restrictions are simply ignored. Walton has also become somewhat of a "rat run" and speeding through the village has markedly increased. Walton Parish Council are taking steps to have speed indicating devices installed, and aim to start community speed watch to accumulate data to support enforcement action being taken.
- The impact of restrictions at Chetwynd bridge. This needs a proper traffic impact review that includes the events at Catton Hall which attract up to 50,000 people, in addition to HGV and associated infrastructure for setting up and dismantling, which can no longer be mitigated via any other routes. A width restriction will cause traffic chaos through

Barton, Stapenhill, Rosliston and Walton on Trent. Effectively SCC are diverting A513 lorries, vans, campers etc. through Walton on Trent and Stapenhill.

- The cumulative traffic impact of all these changes on Rosliston Road through Stapenhill and on past Drakelow to Walton, Swadlincote and Rosliston and surrounding villages and the A444; all need to be properly independently assessed. SDDC planning applications rely on a statutory consultee - DCC highways. They report no traffic issues were raised for any of the above mentioned planning applications – they need to be looked at cumulatively and in the round by DCC highways and Planning Officers.
- The licensing of events at Catton Hall needs to be reviewed for traffic management issues causing a public nuisance in light of all the other changes in the vicinity. It would be a shame to lose the income from these events for the local economy, but residents of Walton are no longer willing to tolerate their lives being made a misery for several weekends a year as a result of the traffic generated by the events.

We look forward to your response on this matter both individually and collectively. We are happy to convene a meeting of interested parties at a convenient date.

Best Regards

Walton on Trent Parish Council

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