ADDRESSING H.G.V. ACCESS ISSUES IN CAWOOD VILLAGE

Most of what I say is in relation to HGVs coming from Sherburn, but first of all, I want to express my feelings regarding the bridge weight limit which I feel is a distraction to the actual problem of trucks in the village.

I am infuriated with what I keep reading online about how there are loads of signs advising the weight limit. This is fundamentally to misunderstand the problem that the photographed HGVs are experiencing. Putting up additional signs saying there’s a weight limit on the bridge would make no difference at all because it’s simply the wrong message, which is evident from the problems we experience in Cawood. The photos on social media show trucks turning to avoid the bridge (albeit at the last minute) as they should. Realistically very few HGVs ever drive over the bridge, as shown by the prosecution figures. This country is full of old towns, villages and streets that are unsuitable for HGVS and many have camera enforced restrictions. HGV drivers would not keep their licence for very long with 3 points on the licence for every infraction (12 points is a loss of licence; 6 points on a HGV licence makes them answerable to the traffic commissioner who has the power to remove professional licences entitlement).

The current signage gives no indication of how to avoid Cawood Bridge which is effectively setting people up to fail. In a full sized 18m long, 44 ton non-rear steer vehicle with a 50ft trailer (not including 10ft of cab) on a road width of 16ft you cannot turn left from Sherburn Street to Rythergate or right to Thorpe Lane. Even with a short or steering trailer it is a difficult manoeuvre to turn right: I know because I have done it, and it is impossible to turn left.

From Sherburn Industrial Estate, with an up to date truck satnav. programmed to Selby, drivers are directed into Cawood where they turn right onto Thorpe Lane. Any HGV driver referring to a map (whether satnav. or paper) and reading the numerous road signs showing the weight limit would see the crossroads and simply have no way of knowing how tight it is. The crossroads are defined as a main road on all the maps that I have looked at. Furthermore, the river is clearly marked on the maps and anyone who didn’t know the area would believe they can turn right or left at the crossroads to avoid the bridge's weight limit restriction; and this is where the problem really is.

Now for potential solutions. Placing signage before Long Lane and also Biggin Crossroads, both with instructions to turn right for access to the A19 and A63 and M62 to avoid the village and create an escape route, is an obvious must!

Most modern truck drivers use a HGV oriented satnav where you program your truck's height and weight, the machine looks at the legal restrictions in place and it will pick what it believes is a suitable route. This, however, disregards the blue signs that say things like “Unsuitable for HGV’s” as this is just advice. For this reason, I believe we require a legally enforceable restriction.

If we had, for example, a "No HGVs over 7.5T Except for access" sign, this would not affect farm traffic, buses or local deliveries as it only applies to goods vehicles. 

I believe this restriction should be in place from Long Lane to the cross roads.

This would avoid HGVs needing to turn in the village at all, as Thorpe Lane to Rythergate and Rythergate to Thorpe Lane would need "straight ahead only” signage.

It would stop trucks using Sherburn Street thus limiting potential damage to the ageing buildings fronting the street and narrow paths for pedestrians. It would also stop large vehicles from trying to avoid the imposed weight limit by attempting to use Chestnut Road if the restriction was placed at the mini roundabout.

If these restrictions were introduced with adequate signage, trucks would have to avoid the village; satnavs and maps would slowly be updated over time and eventually very few HGVs would even attempt to travel towards the village.

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