

A LETTER TO OUR MP

Dear Mr Vaizey

I believe that the much needed and awaited Marcham By-pass has again been refused and for a period of at least five years due to a lack of backing from the South East Regional Assembly an unelected QUANGO!

Nobody wants to see our countryside blighted by unnecessary road building, but Marcham really does need help. I am utterly disappointed that no one seems to be taking this issue seriously. I have contacted the police about incidents just to be told that and I quote "It will take someone being killed before we can do anything" and "Well I would never have bought a property in Marcham".

We have now lived in Packhorse Lane (A415) for over two years and really do like Marcham as a village. We currently do not have any parking to our property and live right on the bends, where presently there are five children under the age of four and another expected in May.

It can take an average of 10 to 15 minutes to cross the road with my two children aged 3 and 1, trying to get them to Nursery, whilst having to put up with disapproving looks from motorists including the police.

It is not just the amount of traffic and danger it is also the abusive language that my children hear when playing in the garden and when we are crossing the road and even at the more considerate drivers who let you cross or slow up.

As I am sure you are aware there have been many unfortunate incidents on this road recently including vehicles and pedestrians and whilst some of these could not be helped, it is only a matter of time before someone is going to be killed or severely injured.

It is not acceptable; we have a right to go to and from our house without abuse and danger. If the by-pass is not going to happen – how long do we have to wait before something will be done, this road needs to be made safe for all users.

I believe that Marcham has been waiting for a by-pass for a number of years. It seems that other villages with less severe problems are having their issues resolved without delay, why isn't our village a priority; the roads are completely inadequate for the vehicles that go through it.

Whilst I am sure that you have received much communication regarding Marcham, I felt it was appropriate as one of your constituents to let you know how affected we are by the A415 and hopefully this will enable yourself and other local bodies to look into this matter and try to resolve the problems that residents of Marcham are facing.

AMANDA ROWE

Dear Editor

Flesh and Metal Should Never Meet – The Bends

I was hit, or rather, clipped by a vehicle as I walked around the bends on Packhorse Lane at the beginning of February. I was taking our dog for a walk and was heading towards Mill Road having crossed the road using the mirrors mounted on the wall. Mirrors which are great and I do appreciate but only useful if you have good eye-sight, are able to move quite quickly and the sun isn't sinking in the west, reflecting into them rendering them all but useless. But I had done the tricky bit, or so I thought! The vehicles wing mirror hit me from behind, on my upper arm and twisted me sharply into the wall of Mrs Chadwick's house. The driver was not driving too fast, in fact he was driving quite slowly as he lives in the village and was due to turn right up North Street. Had the driver been doing the speed limit or faster I would have been seriously injured. The driver stopped and was hugely apologetic and shocked – he had not seen me as he was temporarily blinded as he rounded the bend coming from shadows into the afternoon sun. When I got over the shock and pain of the moment I had to admit that looking back at the corner every car driver was struggling to see past their sun visors. My back is still painful at times and gets stiff easily.

I have written to Ed Vaizey, Iain Brown, the Parish Council and the OCC Highways Dept. I have delivered a letter to every house on Packhorse Lane and now I write to you all as residents, via the MadNews. I am not sure how many of you don't dare to walk along this part of Packhorse Lane, or how many of you avoid using the road because you feel it is dangerous. All I can say is that please be aware, as I was not – even after 26 years – that there is yet another reason to be very careful when using this section of the road.

We bought a house on a busy road therefore we have lived with this fact, as does everyone on this road – we try to be as careful as we can but I have to say that this incident has finally made me see that I cannot stay silent and just put up with it. There is yet another unforeseen danger which I for one was unaware of until I got hit. I cannot just accept this awful state of affairs and I would never forgive myself if I did not do all I could to change things before something serious happens. The road no longer offers pedestrians or drivers the safety that an 'A'-road should. It is not fit for purpose – especially in its present state with the sheer physical size, volume and sadly, speed at which we see vehicles approaching these bends!

I have now heard of other incidents – about other 'clippings, hits or near misses' in a variety of circumstances. Some people have reported them, others have not – some have even been reported in the local press – but what is being done? With the kind support and helpful information from a number of residents already, I am now aware that the by-pass is no longer a viable option due to funding issues. For further information

please see the following website pages.
www.valereservoirgroup.org.uk/vale-traffic-issues.htm

www.transaction.org.uk/downloads
Chapter 13 A415 Marcham Bypass

However, I do not think a Bypass has any bearing on this issue – the problem is the narrowness of the road for approx 200 metres with no pavements, two sharp blind bends and nowhere for people or vehicles to pass each other safely. The A415 has one-way traffic and traffic lights operating on it elsewhere, so why not here? Why can't we have a width restriction on this road? What does this say about our priorities. The narrow point at the bends is less than should be allowed for any two-way road – why should huge lorries be allowed to use this small country road. Why should we accept the warning 'Vehicles in middle of the road' on an 'A' road without any protection for its residents.

I am horrified when I see the families with young children trying to get round the bends, babies and toddlers in tow. The official line from the OCC Transport Department seems to suggest that our bends "do not have an accident record that singles it out for action in comparison to other roads across the county". I do hope this doesn't mean someone has to die or be seriously injured before we get 'singled out'. I have supplied some photographs of the sheer danger that families have to go through just to get their children safely around the corner. What about the Postman, the Paperboy and anyone else trying to do their job in this village?

I am aware of the down-side that queuing traffic pollutes our air – but they are queuing now as vehicles constantly get stuck on the bends. The up-side is that the 'rat-run' vehicles might get fed up with having to slow down and even have to wait for the lights to change and decide to use a more appropriate road thus reducing the volume. Huge vehicles should not be allowed down into the village – my worry being that we just place this problem on other villages – but should this be a reason for us doing nothing to help protect people both on foot and in cars. Traffic lights will certainly help to control the speed at which many vehicles enter the village from either direction. Traffic lights will assist anyone trying to get out of Howard Cornish Road and all the roads meeting at the cross roads at the bottom of North Street.

Please – in reading this letter consider how you might help to improve our village. You may think that this problem does not affect you personally and therefore you do not see the point in doing anything – but even if you don't use or live on this road you probably know people or relatives who do and for their sakes I would urge you to make a stand. It would be great to achieve something worthwhile for all residents and drivers who use the roads through our village. Please write to those who you feel can make Marcham a safer place – please make a difference by being heard.

SALLY TIMBERLAKE
Packhorse Lane

Write to MADNews and let others know what you think about current events