

ESCRICK PARISH COUNCIL - Public consultation to increase the Parish Council precept to fund a traffic light controlled junction and pedestrian crossings at the A19 / Skipwith Road junction

Background

Concerns about the safety of the A19 through Escrick have been a long-running concern and a frequent topic raised with the Parish Council by residents. A particular area of concern is the difficulty safely crossing the A19 to/from the bus stop, church, surgery, allotments, and The Parsonage. There are also concerns about the difficulty of vehicles getting out from Skipwith Road onto the A19, particularly northbound.

The recent 'Neighbourhood Development Plan' public survey was circulated to all premises in the Parish. Of the 109 responses received, 72 raised concerns relating to the A19.

Proposals – the scheme

The Parish Council has worked with North Yorkshire County Council as the Highways Authority responsible for Escrick, to (a) obtain a design for a traffic light scheme; and (b) obtain a quote from their contractors to implement this.

If approved, the scheme will implement a traffic light-controlled junction, with pedestrian crossings across the mouth of Skipwith Road, and across the A19 at both sides of the junction. The lights would include traffic sensors to optimise the timing of the lights sequence. Streetlighting in the area would also be improved.

Proposals – funding

The work will cost approximately £160,000. We have a fixed price quote valid until March 2020 for the majority of the work.

For several years the Parish Council has been pushing the County Council (as the Highways Authority) to fund this scheme. However, we are advised that their budget position is such that they have very little funding for 'improvement' schemes across the entire county, and that they are unable to fund this.

The Parish Council has also explored whether there are any grant funding schemes available that could cover this (none have been found), or whether the 'Community Infrastructure Levy' (a levy upon new developments in the district) could be used (but we are advised it cannot).

As such the Parish Council has not been able to identify any third party to fund the scheme.

This consultation is to ascertain whether there is public support for the Parish Council to fund the scheme by raising the local Parish Council precept to cover loan repayments.

Parish Councils are able to borrow money for projects like this, through the 'public works loan' scheme. If there is public support, the Parish Council proposes to borrow the money over 25 years at a fixed rate, with an annual repayment of £8,455. To cover this cost, the Parish Council would need to increase the precept paid by residents of the Parish as part of their Council tax by the same amount. The precept is currently £19,000 – so this would be a 44% increase.

A band D household in Escrick currently pays approx £42 per year in Parish Council precept, so this would rise by approx £18 to approx £60 per year – an increase of about £0.36 per week. Band H households (the highest council tax band) pay approximately double these amounts, and therefore the increase would be approximately double this amount.

If residents give support to proceed with this scheme, we will have one final check for any financial contributions that may be available to reduce the borrowing required.

To get approval to borrow the money we need to evidence clear local support – therefore it is important that you complete the attached survey and return it before the deadline of 25th June.

See escrick.org/a19-consultation for further details and/or to complete the consultation online

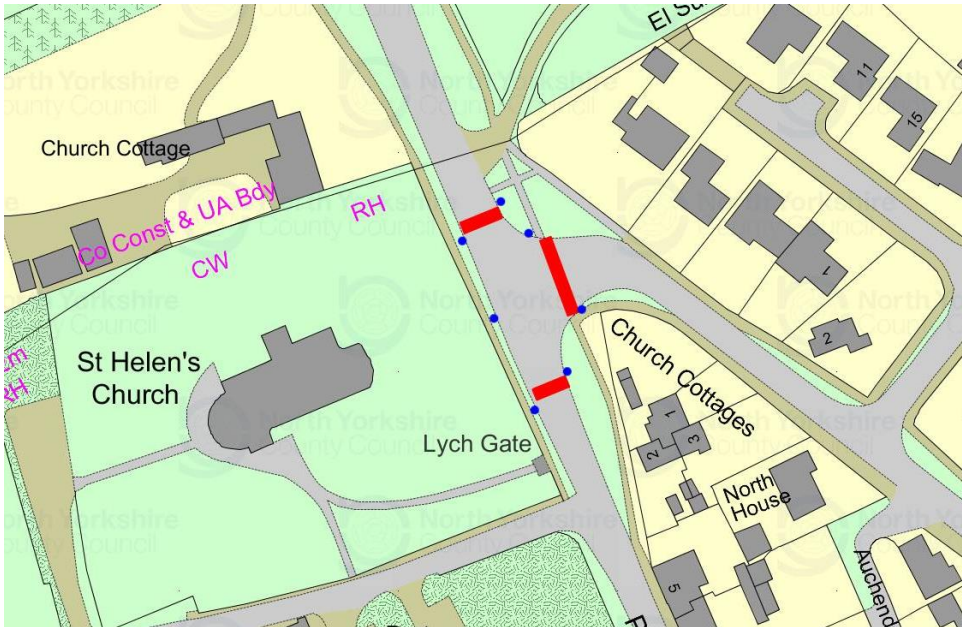


Figure 1: Map showing approximate location of crossings (red), and traffic lights (blue dots) - more detailed versions online

Questions:

Why not simply reduce the speed limit instead?

Parish Councils cannot set speed limits. The Highways Authority believes the speed limit through Escrick is appropriate using national guidelines. Reducing the speed limit would not solve many of the problems. At peak times the average speed of traffic through the village is below 30mph, but it is still difficult to cross the road. Having taken advice from highways professionals, both Escrick Parish Council and North Yorkshire County Council believe this proposal is the most appropriate solution to the problems.

Would a roundabout be better and cheaper?

The Highways Authority do not think a roundabout is appropriate for the traffic flows at the junction. A roundabout would not make it easier for pedestrians to cross the road, and indeed might make it harder.

Why not simply install a pedestrian crossing?

There are national guidelines regarding how far away from a junction a pedestrian crossing should be located. When combined with other constraints such as driveways, the nearest location would be opposite the Sangthai. We believe this is too far north, and many residents would therefore not use it. It is also outside of Escrick Parish, so we would need to convince City of York Council to install it.

What about the impact upon the views of the church?

The traffic light columns will be offset from key features such as the Lychgate. The church has been consulted and is supportive of the proposals.

Why are residents of Escrick Parish having to pay, when most of the traffic is generated by others?

We recognise that this is unfair – but we do not have any mechanism to make others pay for it. Put simply, as a community we face the choice between paying for this ourselves and having the certainty that it will go ahead – or continuing to search for other ways of funding it, with no guarantees if/when it will happen.

What about the ongoing maintenance costs?

North Yorkshire County Council will adopt the scheme once implemented, and therefore pick-up all future maintenance costs.

More questions? Visit escrick.org/a19-consultation or we'll be holding a drop-in meeting from 7pm – 7.30pm on Monday 3rd June at Escrick & Deighton Club

**** You can alternatively complete this form online at escrick.org/a19-consultation ****

ESCRICK PARISH COUNCIL

A19/Skipwith Road Traffic Lights Scheme

- Are you in FAVOUR of the Parish Council going ahead with the A19/Skipwith Road Traffic Lights Scheme?

YES

NO

- Are you in FAVOUR of the Parish Council going ahead with the A19/Skipwith Road Traffic Lights Scheme if it includes a council tax precept increase of 44% (equivalent to £18 a year for a band D household) for the purpose of the loan repayments?

YES

NO

Name	
Address	
Signed	
Date	

Please complete one form per household

**Please return this survey questionnaire to one of the locations detailed below by:
Tues 25th June 19.** Any survey forms received after the deadline will be disregarded.

Collection boxes are located at: Escrick Surgery; Escrick Church; Escrick Village Hall

Surveys can also be returned by post to:

Escrick Parish Council, c/o 40 Linden Way, Thorpe Willoughby, YO8 9ND