

The following are the comments and objections to both the planning applications relating to Oakenshaw Cross. These are sent on behalf of Residents of Oakenshaw .

Return of the cross

The Cross is important to Oakenshaw , it is reported to be the only surviving monument of its type in Kirklees. It was commissioned by Dr Richard Richards of Bierley Hall as a memorial to his late wife. It has stood on Wyke Lane for over 300 years and being on the road means it can be seen , to move it down to the left on the grass will mean it cannot be seen from the main road as now.

It deserves to be safely preserved and safely back in place, Kirklees should be proud to have it and look after it for future generations not see it as a problem.

There is a wider issue on Wyke Lane, which has a 7.5 restriction for HGV sign at the bottom of the road ,and is narrow at the junction with Bradford/ Cleckheaton Road this doesn't stop larger vehicles using the lane as a cut through from Westfield Lane to Bradford/ Cleckheaton Road . The cross and its plinth serve as a traffic calming measure , if the cross is not replaced in situ this measure will be lost .

The farm tractors and bin collection wagons have negotiated the roundabout without any accidents for years, its only when large HGV's use the lane there is a problem, a European one of these caused the damage and even though the details for the firm responsible, no action has been taken to prosecute by the council for damage to their historical monument . No answer as to why has ever been given yet it seems sensible for a third party to pay for damage they have caused by wilfully ignoring the restriction sign .

Access and egress from Wyke lane has become more complicated recently with the proposal of a bus lane. The proposed bus lane means that any traffic turning right onto Bradford Cleckheaton Road from Wyke lane almost immediately will be joining the new road layout which begins within 50 yards from the junction .

If we factor in the pedestrian crossing , the loss of the cross hatchings on the road to enable the formation of the bus lane, which is an extra lane of traffic at this point, as well its an accident waiting to happen, in fact there has already been an increase in accidents near this junction due to the altered road layout .Surely in view of this it would be irresponsible to remove the visible traffic calming measures of the cross and its plinth, effectively a roundabout which restricts larger vehicles .

The safety reasons stated in the application are misleading , there have only been two accidents affecting the cross on the lane , both caused by HGV's that should have been on the narrow road which is Wyke Lane, it's not a main road. In fact it's a lane turning onto an unnamed main road, not the A638 as Kirklees continually call it The A638 stops before chain bar .

There is only one firm , Nu Farm up Wyke lane, who have instructed all their drivers and visitors to access the site via Westfield Road , so there is no need for any HGV' s to be going up or down Wyke Lane apart from the bin wagon and delivery vans . It would make more sense if Highways addressed the issue properly and stopped HGV's going up Wyke lane and making it fully access only .

Oakenshaw residents' association are concerned about the return of the cross, since it was removed there has been a considerable amount of misinformation around cost of repair and where it is to be re-sited. This has meant the temporary removal and storage has become long term and the original intention an pledge given to MP Kim Leadbeater, at a meeting,

just after it was removed , to return it to its original site has now apparently been broken as its not mentioned here .

This sadly reflects the lack of consultation with the residents and the monument group who have been meeting with the council to discuss this over the years during which our cross has languished in an insecure yard . There has been no explanation of why it can't be returned to its original position or whether the proposed site's foundations can take the weight of the monument .

The residents deserve the return of the cross as promised , without any further delay , an apology for the misinformation and lack of consultation, and assurances that the cross will be protected for future generations as far as possible by Kirklees

Please take our concerns into consideration when making your decision. This needs to be thought through properly and a safe solution found for the monument, highways and residents .

Please consider the points above and maybe the panel could do a site visit

Mant thanks

Chair of Oakenshaw residents