

Areas of concern for Ponteland for vehicular traffic.

1. School times between 08.30 and 09.30 and 15.00 to 16.00. This applies to the following locations.

Broadway on Darras Hall. The traffic is mainly from the Darras Hall Estate with probably only a few vehicles from outside of the Estate.

Thornhill Road. This is as Darras Hall except that buses are also involved picking up and wait for school times to end. To compound the problem most of the traffic wants to get onto the North Road where traffic is already at a peak from the Police HQ at the same time.

Callerton Lane. Traffic will appear from all three entrances to the Middle and High School. Newcastle going past the Badger pub and down Rotary Way, Belsay Area via the bridge in Ponteland turning right into Callerton Lane and outlying children from Stamfordham via Western way.

All three suffer from severe congestion especially in the afternoon when family, friends turn up half an hour before schools come out to pick scholars up. So it is not just moving traffic that is a problem but parking of the vehicles up to half an hour before the schools come out.

2. Bank Holidays, caravans and cars etc passing through Ponteland to go into the countryside and then the same traffic returning once the Bank or major holiday finish. The road through Ponteland is a popular route as it enters the countryside as soon as it leaves Ponteland. Thus being a far more scenic route to the Borders than a motorway.
3. Traffic from the Army camp at Otterburn which can be trailers with tanks.
4. It has been confirmed that Normal daily traffic has been held going North through Ponteland from the Diamond Traffic lights back to the Rotary Way roundabout a distance of 0.8 of a mile.
5. In particular Funerals coming to the churches in Ponteland are often held up for 10-20 minutes in queues trying to get to the churches in the centre of Ponteland.

Other problems.

1. Road works, not carried out very often but even a slight hold up causes a severe tailback.
2. Supermarkets traffic wanting to cross over the lane to get to the car park, Sainsbury's and Waitrose.
3. Traffic coming out where the Golf Club entrance sometimes just cannot go North but must go South first to the roundabout at Rotary Way before coming back on themselves.
4. Traffic wanting to turn Right at the Diamond into Eland Lane. If larger vehicles are behind they must wait until a change of lights so that the traffic can turn right and the larger traffic can move on. Thus there could be two changes of lights before movement of traffic can continue.

5. The build of housing just South of Ponteland Boundary due to, the Airport Expanding and new housing built by Newcastle City Council. This is thought to affect the schooling and especially traffic to/from the schools due to the excellent work carried out by the schools. The Airport Authority suggests that the increase will be minimal, even a last straw can break the camel's back!!

Current Traffic Volumes.

The NCC has carried out a brief survey (January 2013) that suggests that there is approximately 6,000 vehicles going North towards Belsay through Main Street Ponteland and 6,000 going South towards the Airport.

The future.

Government Department of Transport projections (DofT) for traffic in the U.K is estimating that there will in an increase of Km travelled from a current level of some 252 Billion Km to a best case of 330 billion to a worst case of some 435 billion Km. I.e an increase of miles travelled by approximately 35% to 43%. The DofT also states that in 2012 some 34.5 million vehicles were on the road with some 28.7 million being cars.

If it is true that the number of cars equate to the number of Km travelled it means that by 2040 there could be an increase of cars by some $(28.7 \times 35\% = 38.7 \text{ million})$ to $(28.7 \times 43\% = 41 \text{ million})$ cars. A best case scenario of some $(38.7-28.7)$ 10 million cars. At first glance this seems far too many but considering the population growth and the increase of cars per family it could very well be true.

Taking the Area of concerns item 4 and adding an increase of some 35% in the number of cars would more than suggest that the traffic congestion will back up past the Airport Roundabout.

Some possible solutions:-

Doing nothing is not an option. The question is will the problems get better or worse? At one time it was rare for a household to have a car, now is common. It is even common for a household to have two cars or sometimes even more.

1. Build a by-pass. This will take away through traffic so reducing the problems on Main Street. It will also allow local traffic to join and leave the Bypass at three points into the centre of Ponteland.
2. Build a road with ample parking area off Rotary Way giving a direct access to the Middle and High School. Thus relieving the traffic on Callerton Lane area. This however does not solve the problems on Thornhill Road or Broadway on Darras Hall.
3. Move the schools to either side of Rotary Way with ample car parking for drop off and wait areas for pick-ups so that Newcastle vehicles do not touch the centre of Ponteland. Stamfordham Road traffic would come down the hill and turn right leaving only Belsay traffic coming through Ponteland.
This new "Campus" would mean relieving the congestion on Thornhill Road and Broadway on Darras Hall. This also has the knock on effect of creating land that can be used for, playing areas such as "kick abouts", leisure, car parking and new Businesses.
4. A combination of the above.