

SUBMISSION TO

AN BORD PLEANÁLA

ON THE

PROPOSED N2 SLANE BYPASS (HA 0026)



bypassslane.ie



BYPASS SLANE CAMPAIGN

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1. Introduction – Position Statement

The Bypass Slane Campaign believes that the key issue facing a decision on granting of permission for the proposed N2 Slane Bypass will relate to

- proximity to the WHS and
- the visual impact of the development.

We accept that there will be a visual impact from particular points locally, including parts of the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site. However, the EIS states that the proposed N2 Slane Bypass route lies some distance outside the western boundary of the WHS Buffer Zone. It also clearly states that many of these impacts will reduce over time with proper mitigation.

We feel that given the scale and overall proportion of these changes that they must be considered acceptable when put alongside the very significant positive impacts for road safety and general quality of life for the resident community of Slane and for other N2 road users.

2. Bypass Slane Campaign - Background

The Bypass Slane Campaign was established in April 2009 at a public meeting of Slane community following the very serious crash involving a HGV in the village on March 23rd 2009. The committee includes four people who were directly involved in that crash and the other members are concerned residents.

The aims of the group are to

1. Highlight the very serious road safety issue in Slane
2. Lobby both locally and nationally for the fast-tracking of the Slane Bypass
3. Lobby Meath County Council for immediate remedial measures
4. Raise awareness locally about these issues and the campaign

We have been involved in a number of activities in the intervening months in pursuit of the aims outlined above. The most significant of these were two addresses to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Transport. The first was in May 2009 where, along with two other community groups, the Slane Bridge Action Group and the Slane Community Forum, we highlighted the seriousness of the road safety situation in Slane and gave a history of the incidents. (Please see Appendix 1 the presentation to the Committee by Norma Kealy, member of the Bypass Slane Campaign and victim of the crash). As a result, a commitment was given by the Chairman of the Committee to invite the Chief Executive Officer of the National Roads Authority (NRA) and the Meath County Manager along with representatives from Slane to discuss the problem before the committee. This second meeting took place in July 2009 and at that meeting both the NRA and Meath County Council agreed that they were responsible for addressing the situation and that a bypass was the only viable solution. The difficulties involved in implementing a HGV ban without a viable safe alternative route were outlined and discussed.

In the intervening months, plans for a new preferred route emerged. A public display of the new route took place on 6th October 2009 at which submissions from interested parties were invited. The design specifications of the scheme were changed to upgrade the bypass to dual carriageway standard. The explanation for the new route was that the new tie-in arrangements would allow for smoother integration of the future N2 upgrade. A secondary benefit of the revised route was that it is significantly shorter and less costly. Subsequently, the EIS and CPOs were published in mid-December.

3. Road Safety in Slane

The Transport Impacts of the proposed bypass are outlined in the Non-Technical Summary and are later presented in more detail in Chapter 5 of the EIS.

Detailed traffic counts are presented and analysed. After the initial opening of the M1 in 2003 there was a 60% drop in traffic on the N2 through Slane. However, in the years since traffic volumes have grown significantly, most recently accelerated by the opening of the Ashbourne N2 Bypass.

The road safety situation in Slane is addressed in Section 5.6 of the EIS and detailed for a 13.5-year period. While no source given for the information nor is there any accompanying catalogue of the incidents, the data presented appear to tally with the experience of local residents. They also broadly match the data supplied to us by the Road Safety Authority for the period 1996 to 2008 (see Appendix II).

There is no contextualisation of the scale of the problem given in the EIS. We feel that it may have been appropriate for traffic flows and safety figures for similar sections of roadway elsewhere be given in order to illustrate the magnitude of the problem. For example, the Gardaí produce a list of Collision Prone Zones nationally on a rolling 10-year basis which is published on their website. The Slane Village section of the N2 is classified as a Red zone (most dangerous) and the weighting given to the road puts it in the top 2% of most dangerous roads nationally out of a total list of over 900 individual sections of road (see Appendix III). In relation to traffic accidents, just two newspaper reports of recent incidents are reproduced. Section 5.6 of the EIS deals with this issue and runs to less than two-and-a-half pages out of a total page count of over 400 pages. While the road traffic record in the village is alluded to in the preamble of a number of other sections flagging the need for the bypass, we feel that the section specifically dealing with this issue underplays the gravity of the situation (Please see Appendix IV for photographs of a selection of collisions since 1985).

The economic cost of the accidents during the 13.5-year period is not presented. (Please see Appendix V for one methodology for calculating such costs).

Chapter 6 of the EIS entitled 'Human Beings' deals with the possible impacts of the construction of the bypass on the resident and visiting populations of the Slane area. However, there is no presentation of the cost of the current traffic safety situation on the local community. This is essential for a fully balanced assessment of the likely impacts of the proposed bypass on the local community.

The human cost of this situation has been affecting the Slane community for decades and given the lack of official action, people have become resigned to the situation. Anecdotally, a significant proportion of Slane residents is either related to or knows someone who has been involved in a traffic incident in

Slane. The cumulative effect of this has had a major detrimental impact on the functioning of our community.

The Slane at the Crossroads report states the following in relation to the traffic situation in the village:

It has been very surprising to an outsider to observe the resignation and philosophical attitude towards the continuing danger, which daily threatens the village due to traffic. It is actively damaging the fabric, the businesses, the health and the well-being of people who live in Slane, yet there is little firm commitment to overcome such a huge problem.

A firm time commitment to the making of a by-pass, with further measures to reduce traffic when that happens is ESSENTIAL (original author's emphasis) to any meaningful drive to implement the most far-reaching proposals in this report.
(Geoghegan and Geoghegan 2008, 63)

4. Road safety measures taken to date in Slane

Meath County Council have introduced a number of measures to alleviate the impact of road traffic incidents in Slane Village. However, these changes have been piecemeal and do not represent a viable solution to the particular problems in the village. Meath County Council has acknowledged that the only long-term viable solution to the problem is the construction of a bypass.

4.1 Mill Hill 2002

Following the last serious incident at Slane Bridge in 2001, when the brakes on a HGV descending the hill failed causing it to crash into cars driving in front of it resulting in the death of a two-year-old boy, remedial measures were taken on Mill Hill by Meath County Council. The 'gantries' were erected housing traffic lights which stop south-bound traffic half-way down the hill. Traffic is also separated into heavy vehicles in the left lane and cars and other light vehicles in the right lane. This has undoubtedly helped to reduce deaths in the village but it can only be regarded as an interim solution.

The measures do not remove the danger posed by HGVs whose brakes have failed on Mill Hill. The separation of traffic into two descending lanes does not deal with the dangers to oncoming traffic. The remedial works on Mill Hill have no effect on safety at other locations within the village, e.g. approaching the crossroads along Church Street where the March 23rd 2009 crash occurred or traffic negotiating the bridge while travelling northwards. A similar approach, dividing traffic into two separate lanes as on Mill Hill is clearly not an option at this location.

Incidents continue to occur with some regularity on the Mill Hill/Slane Bridge section and it has emerged that, despite being an integral part of the design of the gantries, no video monitoring cameras have been installed.

The gantries are accepted by many to be a major visual intrusion into the landscape of the village and, should a bypass be eventually constructed, we

hope that they can be removed on completion and opening of the proposed bypass and implementation of the HGV ban. Similarly, the traffic lights in the village square, while necessary, are a major visual intrusion in the most architecturally sensitive part of this heritage village. We hope that their design may also be revisited should the bypass be constructed, in line with the stated aims of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.

Since the March incident, our group has been lobbying the NRA and Meath County Council for further measures to be taken in the village.

4.2 HGV Ban

In the immediate aftermath of the incident in March 2009, many called for the implementation of a HGV ban from the village. Meath County Councillors unanimously passed a motion calling for such a measure. However, it quickly became obvious that while such a move would undoubtedly be of major benefit to the village and other users of the N2, there was no viable alternative route for the HGVs to take. There is a widespread local perception that many HGVs travelling through Slane are only doing so to avoid paying the toll on the M1 motorway. Recent traffic figures suggest that this is only partly true and that there is a very significant number of HGVs using the N2 through Slane for whom the M1 is not an alternative. A HGV ban on its own would simply move the problem from the village somewhere else and was regarded as unacceptable by officials. It seems clear that a HGV ban cannot be fairly implemented until a bypass of the village is constructed and we expect that a ban be implemented as soon as the bypass is opened to traffic. We believe that the HGV ban is central to the success of the bypass and must be implemented in tandem with the opening of the bypass.

4.3 Non-slip surfacing

In September 2009, non-slip surfacing was installed on the southbound lane of the N2 on Church Street from Stanley Heights to the Square. This adds to the safety of the road surface approaching the location of the March incident. This seems to have been installed in direct response to the incident on 23rd March 2009. While this measure is a positive addition, it is questionable as to the likely scale of its impact. It is considered highly unlikely that this measure would prevent another incident similar to that of 23rd March 2009.

4.4 New Speed Limit

A 30kph speed limit was introduced in December 2009 which potentially could be of major benefit, but the operation of this measure is dependent on driver behaviour and Garda monitoring, neither of which can be relied upon. Indeed, many residents believe that the previous 50kph limit was disregarded by many drivers on a daily basis and that Garda monitoring was, at best patchy despite their best efforts. The Gardaí have assured us that Slane has been prioritised as an area for attention for the Garda Traffic Corps, and residents have observed speed checks in operation on numerous occasions. However, these speed checks are effective only when Gardaí are present in the village as drivers revert to ignoring the limits when they are not present. We have heard anecdotally that on a number of occasions those choosing to adhere to the 30kph speed limit have been subjected to intimidation in the form of

vehicles being driven inappropriately close behind and/or flashing of headlights. On a number of occasions, those choosing to adhere to the 30kph speed limit have been overtaken within the 30kph limit area. That the new limits have created a situation where some other drivers are actively driving more dangerously than they would have done before is outrageous, especially given the well-known road safety history of the village, and is also completely unacceptable. We have been instructed by local Gardaí to pass on all details of such incidents and they have pledged to follow them up, but given the difficulties of taking such details while driving coupled with the likely time delay involved in having these incidents dealt with, this is regarded as being a less-than-satisfactory situation requiring further thought and mitigation.

4.5 Variable speed limit signs

In tandem with the new 30kph speed limit introduced in December, two variable speed limit signs were installed in the village to reinforce their impact. These appear to be having some positive effect on driver behaviour in the village and we hope that they are appropriately maintained so that their effectiveness is maximised.

4.6 The Role of the Gardaí

The Gardaí have acknowledged that they are a key part in the delivery of a safer road safety environment in the village. However, local Gardaí have no direct input or control over the activities of the Garda Traffic Corps. It has been pointed out to us in meetings with District Inspector of Traffic that the limited resources available to the Gardaí means that their involvement in the village can only ever be on an intermittent and part-time basis. There will never be 100% monitoring and enforcement of traffic passing through the village. However, without giving specific guarantees, it has been communicated to us that the Garda Traffic Corps do regard Slane as a Problem location and are, when possible, diverting resources into policing road traffic in the area. Also, when the new national speed camera scheme is eventually launched, Slane will receive further attention as a problem location.

5. Slane Community and National School

The N2 has a major detrimental effect on the environment of the village. It is a serious barrier severing homes located in the southern part of the village from certain key services including a newsagents, the post office, the chemist and the credit union are located.

The location of the N2 in relation to St Patrick's National School is also regarded as being a serious and unacceptable danger. The volume and character of the traffic passing the school on a daily basis is completely unsuitable and is a constant source of danger for pupils, their families and staff of the school. While we are unaware at present of any specific related incidents, we consider the location of the new playground on the west side of the N2 opposite the entrance to Stanley Heights is unfortunate given the volumes of traffic passing so close by.

As well as posing a significant and constant threat to motorists, the current situation also puts pedestrians at serious risk. A number of pedestrians escaped serious injury in the March 2009 accident.

We believe that the construction of the proposed bypass will have a very significant positive effect on the immediate environment of the village through a dramatic reduction in traffic volumes. Furthermore, we expect that a HGV ban will be implemented as far as is possible for traffic travelling north-south. We believe the gain from this will significantly facilitate the increased enjoyment of the village, its services and its heritage by residents and visitors alike.

6. The Preferred Route

Chapter 4 of the EIS details the Alternative Routes considered.

One of the very frustrating aspects of this proposed N2 Slane Bypass for the local resident community is the very long lead-in time. The Government, the National Roads Authority and Meath County Council have been well aware for quite some time of the dangers facing road users on the N2 in Slane. The scheme has passed through no less than three separate redesigns over the space of a decade while all around the country, far more complex, long and costly schemes were designed, constructed and opened to traffic for primarily economic reasons rather than road safety. These delays seemed to be politically motivated and appeared to present the authorities as being at best indifferent to the appalling road safety record in the village.

However, we now appear to have reached the happy situation where there is a genuine willingness to push ahead with the proposed N2 Slane Bypass.

The routes presented in the EIS all take an eastern route around the village. This appears to be the most logical given the current alignment of the N2 and the topography of the approaches to the river valley.

The differences in the route options considered for the 2003 scheme are only slightly different to each other and appear to offer only minor localised differences in impacts. They seem to be primarily related to the avoidance of known archaeological/architectural features and/or the view from the direction of Slane Bridge and the Brú na Bóinne WHS.

The differences in the route options considered in the current proposal were focused on the easternmost options presented in the 2003 scheme and is largely unchanged apart from the tie-in arrangements at the current N2 too the south in Johnstown and to the north in Knockmooney.

The current preferred route appears to offer the most balanced combination of impacts whilst achieving the aims of the scheme. The provision of the three roundabouts at the northern, and southern tie-ins, as well as on the N51 junction is a welcome addition as they will serve to clearly define entry to the

village to drivers, and if used along with other appropriate road safety measures within the bounds of the village, may offer a significant positive impact.

We accept the argument put forward in favour of a mid-height bridge as it minimises the need for extensive deep cuttings on the approaches that would be required by a low-level bridge, while avoiding some of the longer distance visual impact of a high-level bridge. The design of the bridge seems to be minimal and as unobtrusive as possible and could be regarded as a logical addition to the landscape in keeping with its river valley location.

However, while we accept that there are major difficulties posed by a possible western route around the village in relation to the integrity of Slane Castle and its demesne, the Hill of Slane and human impact on the residents of the village which are briefly discussed in Section 4.2.1, we feel that it is perhaps unfortunate that no explicit consideration of this option was given in the EIS in the light of the controversy that has arisen in relation to the proximity of the proposed N2 Slane Bypass too the edge of the Buffer Zone of the Brú na Bóinne WHS.

7. Landscape Impacts and the Brú na Bóinne WHS

We note that the proposed bypass will pass 574m from the western boundary of the outer buffer zone of the World Heritage Site of Brú na Bóinne at its closest point. We understand that the area of the World Heritage Site is protected by provisions in the Meath County Development Plan 2001-2013 from developments which may impinge or impact directly (including those that may be visible from the key monuments of Newgrange, Knowth and Dowth) on the archaeological and cultural landscape. We also understand that a number of features of cultural (archaeological and architectural) significance will be directly impacted along the route of the proposed bypass.

While parts of the proposed bypass will be visible from the major monuments, particularly from Knowth, we feel that the efforts made to mitigate and screen the road are extensive and significantly limit the visual impact. It is clear from the Landscape Assessment in the EIS that magnitude of the impact on the view of the road from Knowth will with appropriate mitigation reduce to low in the long term. It is also presented in the EIS that the significance of this change would initially be high, reducing to medium in the long term and because of the distance involved, if accompanied by appropriate mitigation measures, would be neutral (p. 8-42). We note that the impact on the current views assessed from certain other points in the area are considered to be significant. Given the overall scale of the development and its overall impact on the local landscape we feel that the most significant impacts are localized and contained and also that many will reduce in significance over time.

The Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site is well mapped and its boundaries are clearly defined. Furthermore, the WHS is divided into a Core Area of c. 780ha with an additional Buffer Zone of c. 2500ha. While part of the proposed

bypass may be visible from points within the WHS, it is clear that the road lies a significant distance outside the boundary of the Buffer Zone.

It is perhaps notable that significant development has been permitted along the eastern boundaries of the WHS. This has been followed by extensive development of retail parks and an industrial park along with access routes, car parking and lighting. The scale of the M1 cable bridge is far in excess of the scale and impact of the proposed bridge crossing on the proposed N2 Slane Bypass. The M1 motorway is contiguous with the eastern boundary of the buffer zone and actually bisects the site of the Battle of the Boyne. This motorway traverses the landscape of the Boyne Valley which must be considered comparable in character and importance to the section of the Boyne Valley affected at Slane. The proposed N2 Slane Bypass can be regarded as a much smaller scale development in comparison to the scale of the M1 motorway and its bridge, as well as the associated development. Given that the proposed N2 Slane Bypass is planned as a dual carriageway, it is highly unlikely that there will be associated development along the route further restricting likely future impacts.

Given the significant gain involved for the human population of Slane and to other users of the N2, we believe that this impact is acceptable in the long term provided all necessary mitigation measures are undertaken and implemented fully.

8. Key Issues not addressed in the EIS

A number of issues that we regard as being of major import in determining the effectiveness of the proposed scheme have not been adequately addressed in the EIS. We consider that these issues are fundamental and if regard is not given to them at this stage in the development, we are concerned that they may not be given adequate consideration at a later date. Furthermore, there may exist an opportunity at this stage to take these issues into account and impose such recommendations or conditions that are deemed appropriate so that the scheme may progress in a more effective and efficient way than waiting until after the construction of the bypass. It is essential that the full implications of the proposed development be considered in their entirety at this point in order to properly justify any perceived negative impacts arising from the construction of the proposed scheme.

8.1. Assessment of the likely impact of a HGV Ban

The figures in the EIS are based on the assumption that traffic will divert from the existing N2 onto the bypass where appropriate as drivers will consider this option too be the least cost route in terms of time delay. However, the implementation of a HGV ban, which Meath County Council is duty bound to implement following the resolution of Councillors in April 2009 and which we fully expect to be implemented, must be a measure that is formally tied to the completion of the proposed bypass. This would have the effect of removing

the choice open to HGV drivers travelling northwards along the N2 and westwards to Navan to use the current bridge on the N2 and turn at the Square in the village which may be perceived by some as being a shorter route, and forcing them to use the bypass as far as the N51/N2 roundabout and from there westwards along the N51 into the village, through the Square and onwards.

Similarly, a ban on HGVs would have the same effect of removing equivalent HGV traffic from the N2 travelling southwards and on to Navan.

It is essential that the HGV ban be formally signalled as a measure tied to the completion of the proposed bypass in order to ensure the maximum positive impact for road safety in the village. The forecasted traffic flows for all traffic are presented in Section 5.2 of the EIS. The assumptions underlying the figures presented are listed in Section 5.2.1 but, unfortunately are not completely clear in their meaning. We do not consider it acceptable that these assumptions allow HGV traffic the choice of using the old N2 unless their ultimate destination lies along the old N2 within the area of the bypass.

8.2. Assessment of the impact of the opening of the M3 motorway

As it has been signalled that the new M3 route will be tolled when it opens, we feel that there is likely to be a knock-on impact on traffic travelling through Slane. Section 5.1 of the EIS points to the fact that traffic, especially HGVs, currently divert from the M1 motorway to the N2 because of the tolls imposed on that route. Unfortunately, this is not quantified, but it does corroborate a widely held local perception. It is of some interest to note that this finding directly contradicts the opinion held by both the NRA and Meath County Council that the only alternative routes to the M1 and M3 considered by drivers are the R158 (old N1) and the old N3 respectively. (Please see Appendix VI for a map of roads in the Slane/North Leinster region).

We consider it likely that there will be a diversion from the M3 to the N2 route through Slane similar to the diversion currently happening from the M1 and described in the EIS, making the need for the bypass of Slane all the more urgent.

The EIS reports that the opening of the Ashbourne N2 Bypass to motorway standard has increased traffic through Slane. It seems likely that as future upgrading of the N2 route takes place, its attractiveness as an alternative route to the tolled M1 and M3 routes will increase significantly.

There is some consideration given in the EIS to the impact of current construction work on the M3 on traffic levels through Slane, but there is no assessment of the likely impact of the operation phase of the M3 on traffic through the village.

It is possible that tolling of the new N2 Slane Bypass would act as a deterrent to traffic diverting from other routes but we do not consider this an attractive

option as other non-HGV traffic would be incentivised not to use the bypass and use the old N2 route through the village.

8.3. Further traffic calming and road safety measures on the N51

The proposed scheme will not result in a complete bypass of the village. It will not remove traffic travelling through the village in an east-west direction. As there is an increase in traffic predicted on the N51, we believe that the scheme should take account of this fact and include appropriate traffic calming measures to minimise its impact, especially in relation to HGVs. There is a steep slope on both the eastern and western approaches to the village which may cause further difficulties for traffic, especially HGV traffic and on occasion adverse incidents involving HGVs using this route have been recorded.

It is proposed that a 50kph speed limit be imposed to the eastern side of the N51/N2 Bypass junction which would be welcome. However, we consider it necessary that other measures be introduced to encourage traffic to adhere to this limit, e.g., traffic islands, signage, carriageway constrictions, both on the eastern and western approaches to the village. It is essential that traffic, especially HGVs, approaching the village from the east and negotiating the steep slope towards the Square, be compelled to approach at an appropriate speed.

We consider that the most appropriate time for the design and implementation of these measures is now when the proposed bypass is also being designed and constructed.

8.4. The implications of the imposition of a toll

As mentioned above, we would consider the imposition of a toll on the current proposed N2 Slane Bypass as being counter-productive, even if a HGV ban were introduced and implemented. A toll would have the effect of removing the incentive for drivers to use the bypass. Non-HGV traffic would have the option of diverting around the bypass through the village, thus defeating the purpose of its construction.

We note that under the Transport 21 strategy there is a longer-term plan to upgrade the N2 between Ashbourne and Ardee. The implications of the imposition of a toll on this route has not been assessed in the EIS. Again, we would hope that any toll that might be imposed on the route be done so as to have no impact on traffic travelling through the village of Slane, i.e. that this not effect the route of the proposed bypass.

9. Conclusions

We are very pleased that the issue of the N2 Slane Bypass has finally reached this stage. We welcome the fact that the issue of road safety is finally being addressed in a constructive and sustainable way. We strongly believe that this development will greatly benefit the village of Slane, the local community and the users of the N2 in the long term.

1. We believe that the route chosen offers the best compromise solution to the competing environmental factors.
2. However, we feel that, given the proximity of the proposed route to the Brú na Bóinne WHS, more explicit consideration should have been given in the EIS to a western route, even if this appears to be completely unviable.
3. We believe that the design of the bridge, similarly, is the best compromise solution.
4. However, we also believe that the issue of road safety has not been given adequate attention in the EIS when compared to the other environmental issues considered. Nor has there been any contextualisation of the scale or impact of the problem. We sincerely hope that the consideration given to this section is proportionate to its gravity.
5. We are also concerned that the positive impacts of the construction of the proposed N2 Slane Bypass have not been adequately discussed or quantified.
6. A number of road traffic safety measures have been implemented in the village over the last decade. Each addresses a specific problem and none is a solution to the situation. While a number of these have resulted in improved road safety, the cumulative effect of these measures has fallen far short of a meaningful solution.
7. We note that the proposed N2 Slane Bypass, while lying close to the Brú na Bóinne WHS, is clearly outside and some distance from the boundary of the Buffer Zone.
8. We accept that there will be a visual impact from particular points locally, including parts of the Brú na Bóinne WHS. However, the EIS states that many of these impacts will reduce over time with proper mitigation. We feel that given the scale and overall proportion of these changes that they must be considered acceptable when put alongside the very significant positive impacts for the resident community of Slane and for other N2 road users.
9. We feel that the proposed N2 Slane Bypass must be considered as part of a package of measures designed to maximise the positive impact of the bypass on the community in Slane.

10. The proposed HGV Ban should be introduced automatically on completion of the proposed bypass.
11. Toll-dodging has been reported in the EIS as contributing to traffic flows through Slane. Consideration should be given to the likely impact of the opening of the M3 Motorway which will also be tolled on traffic flows through Slane Village.
12. Tolling on the Slane Bypass must not be considered if the scheme is to achieve its aims and maximise its effectiveness. A commitment to this effect should be given by the NRA and Meath County Council.
13. The implications of the introduction of tolls in the future on an upgraded N2 between Ashbourne and Slane should be considered.
14. Given that there will be an increase in traffic, including HGV traffic on the N51, we consider it an essential part of this scheme that appropriate traffic calming and management measures be installed on the eastern and western approaches to the village. There is a steep hill on the eastern approach which, although not posing the same level of danger as the hills on the N2, nonetheless poses significant dangers. Measures to ensure adherence to the 50kph speed limit should be installed.
15. We hope that, should the bypass be constructed, it will be possible to remove the gantries from Mill Hill and redesign the traffic signal arrangement in the Square. Slane is a heritage village in its own right and we hope that the immediate environment of the village can be reinstated once the serious dangers from current traffic are removed.

APPENDIX I

IMPACT STATEMENT : Norma Kealy, Survivor Presented to Oireachtas Committee on Transport 5th May 2009

Good afternoon.

Ladies and gentlemen I would like you to consider this for a moment.

- How would you feel if, every day your life and your family's lives were in constant danger?
- How would you feel if you were afraid to cross the road in your village or town?

That is what living in Slane is like these days, and that is why we are here.

- How would you like to live in a village where over 22 people have been killed and the people who were supposed to do something about it had dragged their feet and kept putting off key decisions and action during that time?

You would probably feel very angry and demand that something meaningful be done as a matter of urgency, and that is why we are here.

Let me introduce myself.

My name is Norma Kealy. I am one of a group of mothers who survived the latest crash in Slane and I am speaking today on their behalf. Let me tell you briefly what happened on Monday 23rd March.

That morning, we had just dropped our children off at the local national school. We were driving southwards, along the N2, down the steep approach to the crossroads in the centre of Slane Village. My three-year-old son was in the back of my car and one of the other mothers had her 19-month old baby with her.

While stopped at the red light, suddenly there was a loud bang from behind. In our rear-view mirrors, we saw a HGV coming towards us, with no sign of slowing. We knew immediately that our cars were going to be hit, but there was absolutely nothing we could do and for the majority there was nowhere to escape to on this confined section of roadway. Several violent impacts followed as the HGV ploughed down the hill through the traffic, the force of its momentum smashing our cars into each other. One car was flipped forwards onto its roof and another was pinned between a truck and a telephone box. I speak for everyone when I say that we will never forget the shock, fear and panic we all felt in those few moments.

When everything eventually came to a stop, I got out of my car with my son and I could hardly believe the scene of chaos and destruction around me. In the minutes following the crash it gradually became clear that, by some miracle, nobody was dead or seriously injured. Most of the impact had been absorbed by a smaller truck that by pure chance happened to be directly in front of the HGV. Had that truck not been there, it is almost certain that the HGV would have caused several deaths and many serious injuries. Analysis by the Gardai of traffic collisions put Slane in the top 1% of most dangerous roads in the country. Few, if any, of these roads cuts through the heart of a small rural village and pass directly in front of a primary school.

The crash happened immediately after the morning school-run. If this pile-up had occurred just ten minutes earlier, the results would have been catastrophic. The victims would have included even more children. Over the years, many children have been caught up in a number of incidents, most notably the bus crash on the bridge in 1985 involving 46 children and the tragic and completely unnecessary death of 2-year-old David Garvey in 2001.

These crashes are NOT 'accidents'. No one in Slane is surprised when they happen. The only real accident in our case was our survival. This crash **should not** have happened. Action should have been taken long ago. **The village of Slane needs a bypass.** Unless something is done, the one certainty is that there will be more crashes and more deaths.

There are twenty-two white wooden crosses mounted on a wall, close to the bridge, in Slane. These represent those who have lost their lives on this most treacherous stretch of road because of this inaction. There could be several additional crosses there now, including one each for myself and for my son. The trauma and distress we experienced that morning is something we will never forget. We are reminded of it, on a daily basis, as we go about our lives in our village. We have no choice but to sit in that very same spot, looking in our rear-view mirrors, fearing what might happen next.

The construction of the Slane bypass is vital to our community. It must become part of the Government's Transport 21 Strategy. You have the power to help us make Slane a safer place for our families. Visit our village; see the situation for yourselves. When you do we are confident that you will make the strongest recommendation you possibly can to the Cabinet to proceed with the construction of the bypass as a matter of urgency. We cannot tolerate this situation continuing indefinitely. Don't leave our lives at risk for a second more than is necessary.

Thank you.

Appendix II

Road Safety Authority Road Traffic Collisions in Slane 1996-2007 (21/05/2009)

Road Traffic Collisions, 1996-2007, Slane, Co. Meath

Thirty-nine road traffic collisions occurred within the Town-land of Slane where at least one person was either killed or seriously and slightly injured over the period 1996-2007. 3 out of the 13 were fatal collisions. The RSA road collision data refer to all reported *injury collisions* on public roads. It does not include *material damage only* collisions nor does it include collisions not reported to and recorded by An Garda Síochána and forwarded to RSA.

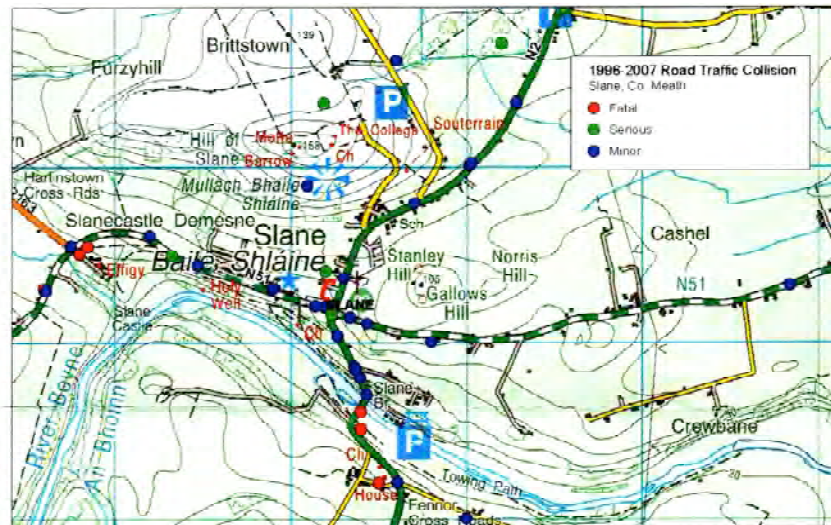
TYPE of collision	DAY	MONTH	YEAR	HOUR	MINUTES	WEEKDAY	Town-land	Vehicle 1 class	Vehicle 2 class
Minor	7	2	1998	19	30	7	FENNOR	3	3
Minor	19	5	1998	20	30	3	ROSNAREE	3	-
Minor	25	6	1998	14	0	5	SLANE	3	3
Minor	18	3	1998	1	0	3	SLANE BRIDGE	12	10
Minor	28	8	1998	21	15	6	FENOR	3	-
Minor	19	9	1998	11	45	7	SLANE	3	3
Minor	24	12	1998	14	10	5	SLANE BRIDGE	3	-
Minor	16	4	1999	16	10	7	SLANE VILLAGE	2	3
Serious	18	6	1999	12	20	6	SLANE	14	-
Minor	9	7	1999	12	0	6	SLANE	3	-
Minor	29	8	1999	23	0	7	SLANE	3	-
Fatal	7	7	2000	13	0	6	SLANE	12	-
Fatal	21	6	2000	0	40	4		10	12
Serious	3	2	2000	14	30	5	SLANE	3	3
Minor	16	2	2000	14	30	5	SLANE	3	-
Serious	30	11	2000	2	0	5	LITTLEWOOD	3	3
Fatal	28	5	2000	0	15	1	MAIN STREET	3	-
Fatal	12	2	2001	12	0	2	SLANE BRIDGE	3	3
Fatal	28	10	2001	8	10	1	SLANE CASTLE	3	-
Fatal	19	12	2001	3	15	4	CASTLEPARKS	3	-
Minor	18	6	2001	1	20	2	SLANE DEMES	3	-
Minor	3	6	2002	3	25	2	KINGSCOURT	3	-
Minor	20	11	2002	4	5	4	CORNAMAN	4	-
Minor	25	9	2003	16	25	5	BRINK	14	3
Minor	9	5	2003	9	30	6	SLANE	2	-
Minor	12	8	2004	16	30	5		2	-
Serious	27	11	2004	15	20	7		3	-

Minor	1	8	2007	12	45	4	SLANE	3	3
Minor	4	10	2007	18	10	5	SLANE	3	-
Minor	27	10	2007	21	0	7		3	-
Minor	7	12	2007	9	0	6	SLANE	11	3
Serious	25	5	1997	3	30	1	SLANE	3	-
Minor	15	6	1997	19	30	1	SLANE	3	3
Minor	11	11	1997	11	0	3	SLANE	12	-
Minor	9	4	1996	16	25	3		3	3
Minor	30	8	1997	18	45	7	CASTLE PARK	2	-
Fatal	27	7	1996	1	15	7		3	-
Serious	27	5	1997	21	10	3	SLANE CASTLE	3	3
Minor	26	9	1996	9	0	5		3	-

Definition of Vehicle class

- 1 Pedal cycle
- 2 2-wheeled motor vehicle
- 3 Private car
- 4 Van
- 5 Taxi
- 6 Hackney car
- 7 P.S.V. (minibus)
- 8 P.S.V. (bus)
- 9 Goods, not over 2 tons, unladen
- 10 Goods, over 2 tone, rigid
- 11 Goods, rigid + trailer
- 12 Goods, artic with semi trailer
- 13 Artic. tractor only
- 14 Other

Figure 1: Road Traffic Collision locations, 1996-2007, Slane, Co. Meath



RSA Collision Data – Conditions of Use

1. The RSA road collision data would be provided exclusively for the use of your organisation/company
2. The RSA road collision dataset or subsets of the dataset should not be passed to any third parties.
3. RSA road collision data are not to be presented in either written or oral form that could directly or indirectly identify an individual.
4. The RSA road collision data refer to all reported *injury collisions* on public roads. It does not include *material damage only* collisions nor does it include collisions not reported to and recorded by An Garda Síochána. The locations of collisions are based on information provided to the RSA by An Garda Síochána.
5. The responsibility for interpretation of the data lies fully with the data user.
6. The RSA should be clearly acknowledged as the source of the data in any publication or presentation in which RSA road collision data are used.

The RSA should be provided with a copy of any published paper in which RSA road collision data are used.

APPENDIX III

List of Collision Prone Zones

An Garda Siochána

There are over 900 individual sections of road on this list and each has been given a weighting according to the number of deaths and injuries over the last 10 years. Their analysis shows that the section including Slane Village (highlighted in red) is in the top 2% of most dangerous roads in the country.

List of Collision Prone Zones									
Division	ZoneNo	StartZone	EndZone	Zone Length	Fatals	SerInj	MinInj	Weighting	Zone
LM	R173LM9	Carlingford Rd	Jenkinson Cross	8km	1	6	6	350	Amber
LM	R175LM10	Jenkinson	Greenore Port	9km	1	15	10	700	Red
LM	R174LM11	Jenkinson	Ravensdale	8km	1	12	5	510	Amber
LM	R175LM12	Cooley Junction	Carlingford	9km	0	10	5	400	Amber
LM	R173LM13	Carlingford	Omeath	10km	0	6	5	280	Amber
LM	N52LM6	Martins Cross	Knockbridge	5km	0	2	2	100	Green
LM	R177LM15	Carrickedmund	Dungooley	7km	0	6	4	260	Amber
LM	R178LM16	Carrick Rd	Stonetrough	8km	0	4	7	260	Green
LM	R178LM17	Stonetrough	Essexford	8km	1	4	6	290	Amber
LM	N52LM7	Inner Relf Rd	Gibbstown	9km	0	16	25	980	Red
LM	N52LM8	Gibbstown	Martins Cross	4km	0	3	2	130	Green
LM	N52LM9	Martins Cross	Readypenny	8km	2	4	7	360	Amber
LM	MINOR ROADLM3	Lisdoon	Carrickedmund	7km	2	8	7	480	Amber
LM	MINOR ROADLM4	Knockbridge	Carrickrobbin	8km	0	1	1	50	Green
LM	N2LM1	Kilmoon X	Flemington X	6KM	8	12	28	1320	RED
LM	N2LM2	Flemington	McGruders X	7KM	4	17	21	1130	RED
LM	N2LM3	McGruders X	Collon	12KM	8	34	20	1820	RED
LM	N2LM4	Collon	Ardee	10KM	3	9	9	600	AMBER
LM	N3LM1	Ross X	Kilsaren Bridge	10KM	6	24	22	1460	RED
LM	N3LM2	Navan	Silver Tankard	8KM	5	16	15	1030	RED

From:
List of Collision Prone Zones
An Garda Siochána
(<http://www.garda.ie/Controller.aspx?Page=101> accessed 27/04/2009, p.2)

APPENDIX V

Photographs of a Selection of Collisions in Slane since 1985



10 March 1985



10 March 1985



26 June 1999



7 September 1995



8 July 2000



12 February 2001

12 February 2001



12 February 2001



12 February 2001



12 February 2001



28 April 2001



26 August 2002

29 July 2002



26 August 2002



26 August 2002



31 October 2003



31 October 2003



23 March 2009

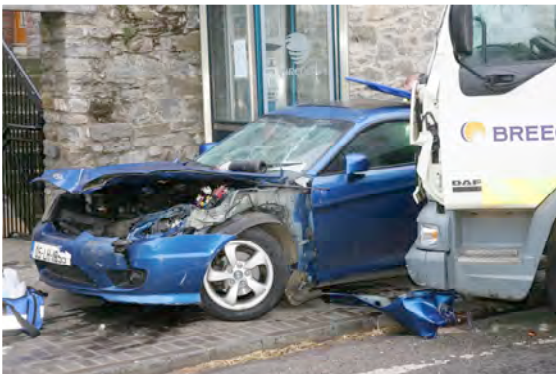
23 March 2009



23 March 2009



23 March 2009



23 March 2009



23 March 2009

APPENDIX V

Cost of Collisions

Goodbody Economic Consultants August 2004

Cost of Collisions

Goodbody Economic Consultants in a Department of Transport-commissioned study¹ set the following values for costs per collision:

TABLE 3:	
Fatal	€2,280,000
Serious Injury	€304,600
Slight Injury	€30,000
Material Damage	€2,400

Between the years 2000 and 2005, the total cost to the state of traffic collisions was €10.6 billion.

Table 3: Total cost of Road Collisions 2000 to 2005			
TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF COLLISIONS	COST (€000)	TOTAL COST (€BILION)
Fatal	2,063	2,280	4.704
Serious	15,295	305	4.659
Minor	32,234	30	0.967
Material Damage	119,631	2	0.237
Total	169,223	N/A	10.6

* COST PER COLLISION

From: Goodbody Economic Consultants (2004) 'Cost-Benefit Parameters and Application Rules for Transport Project Appraisal'. Study commissioned by the Department of Transport, August 2004.

Cited in:

Road Safety Authority (2007). 'Appendix I: Cost of Collisions', *Road Safety Strategy 2007-2011*. Dublin: Road Safety Authority, p. 72.

http://www.rsa.ie/publication/publication/upload/822_RSA_Strategy_ENG.pdf accessed 2/05/2009.

APPENDIX VI

Map of Roads in the Slane/North Leinster Region

