

What does the 7.5 tonne environmental limit mean?

The environmental weight limit on the B471, which includes Whitchurch High Street, was confirmed by Oxfordshire County Council on 4th November 2009. The OCC Trading Standards Service has provided the Parish Council with an explanation of the 7.5 tonne limit.

The weight restriction is for 7.5 tonne maximum gross weight (MGW). MGW is the maximum legally permitted weight of a vehicle, inclusive of fuel, load, passengers etc, when travelling on a road. This figure appears on a plate fixed to a heavy goods vehicle. As the restriction refers to MGW, what the vehicle actually weighs at the time is irrelevant – it is what it potentially could weigh that matters. So it does not make any difference whether it is loaded or not. The reason behind this is ease of understanding and enforcement – it would be impracticable to weigh vehicles to determine whether they have breached limits.

The 7.5 tonne environmental weight limit for the B471 through Whitchurch applies to goods vehicles. It does not apply to coaches or buses. However these are at present restricted by the Toll Bridge structural weight limit.

How can I tell whether a lorry is over the limit?

Legally, any vehicle with MGW of 7.5 tonnes or greater must have reflective chevrons displayed on the rear. The chevrons are normally rectangular or L-shaped. If a vehicle does not have these it will be under the weight limit. A few may be exactly 7.5 tonnes but the Trading Standards Service will ignore them after verification.

How can I report an offending lorry?

Any member of the public seeing a vehicle of over 7.5 tonnes in the village, which is not delivering or collecting its main cargo in the village, can report it. Information such as date, time, location, registration number, company name and preferably a photograph should be provided to the office below. The matter can then be taken up with the vehicle owner and prosecution may follow.

Oxfordshire County Council
Trading Standards Service – Community Safety
County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND
Tel: 0845 051 0845; Fax: 01865 783106
<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards>

What about the Toll Bridge weight limit?

The environmental weight limit, which was introduced to maintain the rural character of the B471, is independent of the Toll Bridge structural weight limit, though both are at the same level of 7.5 tonnes. When the Toll Bridge is reconstructed in 2013/14 the structural limit will disappear but the environmental limit will remain. The bridge will be rebuilt to a standard strength so that it can withstand the loading from a rogue heavy lorry whose driver has ignored the environmental limit.

Whitchurch Parish Council
Traffic & Roads Group
5th November 2009