

MINUTES of the Highways & Street Scene Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 13th June 2016 at Crown Chambers, Melksham at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Richard Wood (Council Chair), Alan Baines, Paul Carter and Mike Sankey.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Jo Eccleston (Assistant Parish Officer).

Apologies: Cllr. John Glover (Council Vice-Chair)

Housekeeping: Cllr. Wood welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedure in the event of a fire.

- 036/16 **Election of Chair of Highways & Street Scene Committee:** Cllr. Wood invited nominations for the Chair of the Highways & Street Scene Committee for 2016/17. Cllr Wood proposed, seconded by Cllr. Carter that Cllr. Alan Baines was elected as Chair of the Highways & Street Scene Committee. **Resolved:** *The Council unanimously resolved that Cllr. Baines be Chair of the Highways & Street Scene Committee for 2016/17.*
- 037/16 **Election of Vice-Chair of Highways & Street Scene Committee:** **Recommended:** *The Committee appoint a Vice-Chair as and when required.*
- 038/16 **Co-option of New Committee Member:** There were no members on this committee representing the Shaw & Whitley area. Cllr. T Chivers was unable to attend this meeting but was happy to be on the Committee. **Recommended:** *Cllr. T Chivers be co-opted onto the Highways and Street Scene Committee.*
- 039/16 **Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of interest.
- The Council agreed to suspend Standing Orders for a period of public participation.*
- 040/16 **Public Participation:**
A resident wished to express her concern at the speed of vehicles traveling on the A365 past the Turnpike Garage towards the Melksham Oak Community School in a westerly direction from Devizes to Melksham. She requested that consideration was given to extending the 40mph speed restriction further east beyond the Turnpike Garage on the A365 and made the following points:
- The acute road bend in the vicinity of the Turnpike Garage and the neighbouring residential accommodation and roads represents a known road safety hazard on the approach to Bowerhill and the large school and one with a record of road traffic accidents.
 - The fact that this issue / request has been raised before indicates that there has been historic concern about the speed limit arrangements on this part of the A365.
 - In her experience as a local resident over the past 27 years, the speed and volume of the traffic flow moving in a westerly direction towards Bowerhill has increased.
 - The planned growth in residential accommodation in Melksham will increase

further the traffic volume using the A365 (and indeed all other access routes to / from Melksham).

- The A365 is used by slow moving farm traffic in addition, which represents an obvious hazard to motorists negotiating the road bend whilst travelling at the current speed limit.

Cllr. Baines reported that at the time that the planning application for Melksham Oak Community School was considered that the Parish Council requested that additional speed limits were imposed, as there has been a history of accidents on this stretch of road. The Parish Council felt that it would have been much more sensible to have placed the 40mph limit to the east of the Turnpike Garage, however, Wiltshire Council Highways Department did not agree. There has subsequently been an assessment of all speed limits on all "A" class roads and the A365 was not recommended for any changes. Cllr. Wood queried when the last metrocount had been carried out. Cllr. Baines believed that one had been carried out about 4 years ago, and reported that it did qualify for community speedwatch. Cllr. Wood considered that if the speed was reduced for traffic travelling past the Turnpike garage, that this in turn would reduce the speed of traffic past the Melksham Oak Community School. The Clerk asked whether this stretch of road could be an approved site for the use of the SID (Speed Indicator Device). Cllr. Baines replied that this could be a possibility as long as there was a suitable metal post to attach it to. Cllr. Sankey reported that the statutory speed limit for HGVs travelling on national speed limit roads had recently increased from 40mph to 50mph, and as such an HGV could legally travel at 50mph on the bend past the Turnpike Garage. Additionally, if a statutory weight limit is imposed on the A361 through Seend, then the advisory HGV route to Trowbridge from Devizes would be the A365.

The Council re-convened and agreed to bring agenda item 10c forward, followed by agenda items 10a and 10b.

041/16 **Request for Speed Reduction – Eastern Approach to Melksham Oak School:**

Cllr. Baines considered that once the SID was up and running that the A365 should definitely be one of the approved locations for its use, and that a suitable place to mount the device needed to be found. He reported that the SID was a useful tool as it operates 24/7 and does not have to rely upon the availability of volunteers.

Recommended: *The Council supports this request and puts it forward to CATG (Community Area Transport Group) on the grounds that this stretch of the A365 is an advisory HGV route from Devizes to Trowbridge, avoiding the village of Seend. Additionally, the new statutory speed limit for HGVs has now increased to 50mph, resulting in HGVs now being able to approach the bend at Turnpike Garage at a greater speed.*

042/16 **Request for Signage for Pedestrians – Crossing the A365 Spa Roundabout:**

A resident living in Mills Road, who walks his children to Bowerhill Primary School, states that he has to cross the A365 at the Spa Roundabout, and has requested additional signage with regard to pedestrians crossing. The Committee noted that there is a light controlled crossing by the end of Wellington Drive, which they considered to be the safest route to Bowerhill Primary School. Additionally, they considered that any signage closer to the roundabout would be counter productive and could suggest this to be a recommended crossing point, when in fact it could be dangerous if motorists were watching out for emerging vehicles on the roundabout

rather than pedestrians. **Recommended:** *The Council do not support this request and advise the resident about the location of this light controlled crossing.*

- 043/16 **Request for Metrocount – Speeding between Purlpit and First Lane:** A resident had reported that traffic was regularly travelling at more than 30mph on the stretch of road from Purlpit to First lane, Whitley along West Hill. He had requested that a metrocount be carried out and further 30mph signage erected. Cllr. Baines advised that as there was street lighting on this stretch of road that this denoted it was a 30mph limit and thus it was not legal to install speed limit repeaters. It was noted that the SID could not be used on this particular stretch of road as there was not a suitable metal post to mount it on. Community Speedwatch were active in Top Lane and it was considered that this could be extended to West Hill if a suitable and safe location for them to operate the equipment could be found, pending the qualifying outcome of a metrocount. The Committee considered that bus stop hard standing at the top of West Hill could be a suitable location for a metrocount. **Recommended:** *The Council support the request for a metrocount and puts this forward to CATG, suggesting the bus stop hard standing as a suitable location.*

The Council returned to the Agenda order.

- 044/16 **Wiltshire Council Highways Department Documents:**
- a) **Latest Newsletter (June 2016) Published by Wiltshire Council Portfolio Holder, Cllr. Philip Whitehead:** The Committee noted this newsletter.
 - b) **Code of Practice for Litter & Refuse (Published by Defra):** The Committee noted this as a reference document.
 - c) **Highway Inspection Manual (Published by Wiltshire Council):** The Committee noted this as a reference document.
 - d) **Presentation to Parish & Town Councils by Wiltshire Council on Service for 2016/17:** The Committee noted this document and paid particular reference to gully emptying, noting that the new scheme was to prioritise high risk gullies. High risk gullies are those where there is a perceived risk of house flooding or road safety, additional gully emptying will be rejected if the gullies do not fall into this category.
 - e) **Service Provision for 2016/17:** The Committee noted this document. It was noted that weed spraying fell under the remit of the Parish Steward. The Clerk advised that the overgrown footway along the A365 by Redstocks could be addressed under discretionary works if the Parish Council added this item to their “wish list” and considered it one of their top five priorities. The roundabout by the Police Station at Hampton Park had a problem with weeds overgrown buddleia, and this too could be addressed. Cllr. Wood queried Wiltshire Council’s policy with regard to footpaths breaking up, stating that the footway on Semington Road in Berryfield was particularly bad. He asked if Wiltshire Council could be asked if they were planning to replace it. **Recommended:** *The Council query Wiltshire Council’s policy on the maintenance of footways.*
 - f) **Spreadsheet for Discretionary Works by Parish Steward:** It was noted that under Wiltshire Council’s new Highways Contracts that it would only address statutory issues. All issues were currently reported to Wiltshire Council via their Street Scene App, however, if there was no statutory obligation for them to address the issue then it was shut down. Any non-statutory maintenance and repair issues were to be reported to the Wiltshire Council Highways Engineer via a spreadsheet in order that these could be passed to the Parish Steward to carry

out. The Parish Council were to list all jobs requiring attention and then identify the top 5 priorities within this list. This spreadsheet would then act as a record of jobs requested, jobs completed and jobs awaiting attention.

045/16 **Parish Steward Scheme Presentation by Wiltshire Council, 9th June 2016:** The Parish Officer and Cllr. Carter had attended this presentation. It was noted that in addition to the works listed on the Service Provision Document, that the Parish Steward would undertake painting of railings etc in August when there was no schedule planned, and that Wiltshire Council would provide any paint required. The Parish Officer reported that the feedback from other Parish Councils at this presentation was that the App reporting system was not very effective in identifying issues that had be reported directly by residents and then shut down by Wiltshire Council as non-statutory. Adrian Hampton, Head of Local Highways & Street Scene South for Wiltshire Council had advised that Wiltshire Council received over 30,000 reports via the App system each week. He stated that Parish and Town Councils could receive this information, but that they could only produce one report that would need to fit the requirements of all the Towns and Parishes. He requested that all at the meeting thought about whether they wished to receive this information, and if so in what format, then to email this information to him. Wiltshire Council would then devise a reporting system based on what the majority of parishes had requested. The Committee considered that it would be really useful to receive a report from Wiltshire Council as it could then identify any jobs that parishioners had requested that may have been missed by the Parish Council that could then be added to the discretionary list. This would also show due diligence, as the Parish Council would not want to miss addressing an issue that could prove to be dangerous.

Recommendation: *The Council request that they receive a report from Wiltshire Council listing all the requests received via the Wiltshire Council Street Scene App.*

046/16 **Priority of Discretionary Works for the Parish Steward:** The Clerk reported that until now any works required in the Parish had been prioritised by the Clerk and the Parish Officer following the advice of the Wiltshire Council Highways Co-ordinator. Due to the internal restructuring of the Wiltshire Council Highways Department, the Parish Council no longer queried issues with the Highways Co-ordinator as the direct point of contact was the now the Parish Steward. The Clerk sought direction from the Committee over how they wished to prioritise work for the Parish Steward. She advised risk to property flooding as the number one priority, followed by highway safety issues, and all other requirements to follow these. Cllr. Wood considered that the priority of work should be gauged against whether the well being of parishioners was endangered. Cllr. Baines suggested that it was taken to Full Council for every member to think about any jobs within the parish that they wished to see go on the discretionary list for the Parish Steward. Cllr. Baines reported that the signage on the "G Plan" roundabout was in need of repair, and that this could go on the list along with the leaning bus stop pole on the A365. Additionally, he stated that there was a document of the cost of highways work, which would be a good reference for the cost implication of any non-statutory jobs that the Parish wished to undertake.

Recommendation: *1. To ask members at Full Council about any jobs they know of that they wish to go on the priority list for the Parish Steward. 2. The priority of works for the Parish Steward is delegated to the Officers.*

047/16 **Remit of Parish Caretaker:** The Clerk reported that she was concerned over requests from members for the Parish Caretaker to carry out tasks that Wiltshire

Council will not do. One example could be the clearing of fly tipping that is not the responsibility of Wiltshire Council and landowners cannot be identified. The committee felt that the Parish Caretaker should only carry out such duties as a last resort, when all other avenues have been exhausted. It was noted that the Clerk was the Parish Caretaker's Line Manager and as such any tasks should be given to him by her. **Recommended:** 1. All tasks for the Parish Caretaker to be directed via the Clerk. 2. The clearing of any fly tipping should only be undertaken by the Parish Caretaker as a last resort and when all efforts to identify the landowner have been exhausted.

048/16 **Minutes of CATG Meeting, 24th March 2016:** The committee noted the minutes of the CATG Meeting held on 24th March 2016. Cllr. Baines reported that he had requested the funding for new batteries for the SIDs and for the new Berryfield Village Name Plate. The Clerk reported that the footpath behind Bowerhill School had now been done. It was noted that the kerb stones on the south side of the entrance to Middle Lane from Corsham Road in Whitley are loose. **Recommended:** *The Clerk to report the loose kerb stones in Middle Lane as a defect, and advise that there is an approved CATG request for dropped kerbs at this location that could be addressed at the same time along with the set of dropped kerbs opposite.*

049/16 **SIDS (Speed Indicator Devices):**

- a) **Specification for Seeking Quotations for Installation of SIDS:** The Committee reviewed the specification for the taking down and erection of SIDs that had been drawn up by the Clerk. The Clerk had asked Stuart Renfrew, Wiltshire Council Highways Co-ordinator to give his professional view on this document and he had given the Clerk a list of contractors that had a Street Works Licence. Andy Cadwallader, Wiltshire Council Highways Engineer, had also offered to send this specification out to their main contractors. The Clerk advised that the best situation would be for Melksham Without, Melksham Town and Atworth Parish Councils to all use the same contractor. The Town Council's Caretakers had Street Works Accreditation, however, the Town Council wished to charge £100 for each removal and erection of the SID, but moreover they could not guarantee that their Caretakers could carry out the work when required. Cllr. Baines reported that there were 8 approved sites in the Parish with a further 2 potential sites. The SID batteries could be charged in the Parish Council office, but not overnight due to the potential fire risk. It was considered that the best procedure for the use of the SID between the three Parishes would be that the Parish due to use the SID would take it down from its previous location in another parish and erect it in their own, paying the cost for this. The parish that had it next would follow the same procedure. The Clerk advised that she would check with the insurance company that if a contractor was collecting the SID from outside of the parish that they were still covered. **Recommended:** *1. The Council approve the Specification for works to take down and erect the SIDs, but add in a clause stating that lamp posts and telegraph poles are not to be used to support ladders in line with Wiltshire Council policy. 2. The Council seek quotes from contractors with Street Works Accreditation.*
- b) **Purchase of Battery Packs for SIDS:** The Clerk asked whether the Council were happy for her to go ahead and order 2 sets of 3 batteries (£24.69 per battery) at £148.14 and 3 chargers (£12.96 each) at a total cost of £38.88 plus 3 sets of plug connectors to attach the batteries.. **Recommended:** *The Clerk to order the battery packs as outlined above.*

- c) **Application to CATG for Funding of Battery Packs for SIDS:** CATG had stated that they were willing to fund up to £300 for the purchase of new batteries. It was noted that if CATG were not willing to fund this that the Town Council and Atworth Parish Council would be asked to split the cost three ways

050/16 **Dates for Future meetings of the Highways & Street Scene Committee:** The Committee noted possible future dates to fit in with the next CATG meetings.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Chairman, 20th June, 2016