

MINUTES of the Highways & Streetscene Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 4th November, 2019 at 1 Swift Way, Bowerhill, Melksham at 7.40p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Richard Wood (Council Chair), John Glover (Council & Committee Vice-Chair), Alan Baines (Chair of Committee), Paul Carter, David Pafford, Terry Chivers and Robert Shea-Simonds.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk)

Welcome, Housekeeping & Announcements: Cllr. Baines welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedure in the event of a fire.

Changes to the D3 Bath-Melksham-Devizes Bus Timetable:

Cllr Baines announced that there would be significant changes to the D3 Bus Timetable from 10th November. During the day the bus would now only be running from Bowerhill to Bath hourly, and not half hourly anymore. However, this did mean that the 21.30 bus from Bath would no longer terminate at the Market Place but go on through to Bowerhill via Forest.

256/19 **Apologies:** The full committee were present, there were no apologies tendered.

257/19 **Declarations of Interest:** None

258/19 **Dispensation Requests:** None.

The Council agreed to suspend Standing Orders for a period of public participation.

259/19 **Public Participation:** There were three members of the public present.

1. Request for restrictions to vehicles blocking access on Semington Road – Canal Bridge (agenda item 7b): The resident explained that access and egress to his property for his motorhome had been blocked by vehicles parking opposite his drive. Often these vehicles were parked there for weeks at a time. It not only affects the resident's leisure activities but also his business, as vehicles are often not able to drop off materials for his landscaping business. It was also holding back the purchase of a larger trailer for business use as its not known if they will be able to access/egress the property with the trailer. It was also a health and safety concern for their properties and that of their neighbours as it restricts the visibility of them gingerly pulling out of their drives and the double decker buses, in both directions, are often on the wrong side of the road as having to move out round parked cars and/or restricts the visibility of cyclists using the road as they pull out of their drives. One of his neighbours uses a mobility scooter and often has to move out into the road as cars park with the wheels up on the pavement, and that again causes an issue when facing oncoming traffic coming over the bridge with restricted visibility. The resident had tried using traffic cones to restrict parking but they just get pushed out the way. There had been a recent police chase with a collision into parked cars on the south side and there was concerns from the residents that this could happen to the parked cars on their side too, especially as there are several

emergency vehicles who use that route. The resident was therefore seeking the parish council's support for parking restrictions on the north west side of the canal bridge on Semington Road; by extending the white T-bar by some 70 metres.

2. Residents' issues with inconsiderate parking outside Bowerhill primary school coupled with Request for restrictions to vehicles blocking access in Valiant Close, Bowerhill (agenda item 7a): The resident had lived in the same house on Halifax Road on the corner of Gibson Close for 30+ years and had worked in the primary school for 20+ years and the inconsiderate parking was worse than it had ever been before. The resident's drive was often blocked and all requests to the drivers to move their cars or park elsewhere are ignored. There are often times when the resident cannot park anywhere on the road when her drive is occupied, and often many taxis parking on the road. Cars park right on the junction with double white lines. This is related to the parking of cars for drop off and collection at Bowerhill primary school.

The Council reconvened and agreed to bring forward agenda items 7b & 7a.

260/19 **Resident's Requests (1):**

1. **Request for restrictions to vehicles blocking access on Semington Road – North West of Canal Bridge:** Members felt that this request was more than just a casual inconvenience to a resident's property but a safety concern and asked for more information in writing from the residents in that area so it can be considered by CATG (Community Area Transport Group). Several members had either visited site or had experienced the X34 bus having to move out into the middle of the road to get around vehicles and on occasion meet another X34 in the same direction.
Recommendation: 1. *The parish council raise this issue with CATG to request measures to address the safety concerns raised by canal users parking for long periods of time on the north west of the canal bridge on Semington Road, backed up with evidence (photos and letters) from residents with the suggestion of another area to be delineated for parking for canal users* 2. *Faresaver Bus Company to be contacted to see if they have any concerns of evidence on this stretch of road* 3. *Semington Parish Council to be informed of the request.*
2. **Request for restrictions to vehicles blocking access in Valiant Close:** A resident had contacted the parish council to raise concerns that her drive was often blocked by cars dropping off and collecting from Bowerhill school, preventing her to access or egress from the drive. The Clerk explained that this was a perennial problem and, in the past, had made contact with the school direct and had also called for assistance on occasion from the PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers). There was a discussion amongst members as to whether blocking drives was a police matter, as it cannot be a matter for Wiltshire Council enforcement if there were not yellow line parking restrictions. This had also been looked at for residents with complaints in Wellington Drive and Fulmar Close recently, for the same issue but for Melksham Oak school.

PCSO Janet Gould arrived at the meeting to introduce new Melksham Rural PCSO Adam Almond; a very well-timed impromptu visit!

Cllr Baines outlined the residents' issues that had been raised that evening. PCSO Janet Gould explained that parking issues outside schools were commonplace outside all schools but were short lived for a relatively short period of time each

morning and afternoon. Inconsiderate parking on Halifax Road had been an issue for as long as Janet had been a PCSO, and she had visited the school to discuss the issues but she was assured that the school had a Travel Plan and it was in hand. Although the issues had been raised again there was not a lot the police could get involved with however it was short lived but acknowledged that it was an inconvenience. Perhaps it would be a good idea to raise with the Highways Authority to look at this area and/or for the School Travel Plan to consider walking buses etc. Other members' experience with the Travel Plan at the new Forest & Sandridge School was that the measures in the Plan were not enforceable, however others felt that it was a useful tool for applying for related funding.

With regards to blocking access to drives Janet advised that it was an offence to block someone's drives so that they are unable to pull off and leave their residence, but it is not an offence to block access to a drive from the road.

It was felt that the issue outside Bowerhill primary school was compounded by the traffic calming. PCSO Janet Gould explained how traffic flow had been improved outside a school in Trowbridge by removing the traffic calming chicanes and the introduction of a pedestrian crossing and raised road level. This may be a better option to investigate rather than the "Living Streets" proposal under agenda 5b. which proposed making school routes safer by closing the road outside schools at drop off and collection times. The members thought that this would be worth investigating but would need some liaison with the school and residents before raising as a suggestion to CATG. It was felt that the cars parking outside the school would act as traffic calming, if the chicanes were removed. The traffic calming scheme was more than 20 years old now, and put in as a community benefit from the housing in Falcon Way, and may be worth re-examining to see if there is a more modern approach.

PCSO Adam Almond offered to raise the issue with the school when he met with them to introduce himself.

Recommendations:

- 1. The parish council write to Bowerhill Primary School and request that they contact parents to ask them to park considerately and safely on the surrounding residential roads.*
- 2. The parish council ask Bowerhill Primary School to examine their Travel Plan again, and consider alternative measures such as a walking bus or a drop off zone.*
- 3. The parish council investigate the idea of removing the traffic calming chicanes on Halifax Road with Bowerhill Primary School in the first instance, before taking to CATG as an issue.*
- 4. The parish council ask for additional patrols of the PCSOs for outside Bowerhill Primary school and surrounding roads at school drop off and pickup time.*

The members thanked the PCSOs for their visit, and they left the meeting.

261/19 **Documents & Correspondence:**

- a) **Minutes of Last Highways and Streetscene Committee, 9th September 2019:**
The members noted the minutes and the following actions which had been taken from the previous recommendations.

- b) **“Living Streets” campaign:** Members noted the campaign by this organisation as part of October being “International Walk to School Month” which asked for support to make streets safer for everyone. It included details for school street schemes where local authorities were asked to close roads to school traffic at key times of the day to make them safer for children to make their way by foot, bike or scooter. The difficulty was that it was not considered suitable for any of the schools in the parish as they were all on through roads used for other traffic, not just for school users. It was recognised that the proposed primary school on the Pathfinder Place development would have a lot of pupils who may come from further afield and probably by car from the Semington Road and East of Melksham development, and that the parish council should highlight now the desire for a school drop off circular route be part of its design, thus negating the need for parents to park their cars outside the school and in the surrounding streets. It was noted that the developers had designed a route to access the adjoining field for possible future residential development and that perhaps this road should only be used for access to the school and not be a through road.
- Recommendation:** *The parish council highlight the parish council’s desire for careful thought and planning to be given to pupil drop off and collection points and prevention of inconsiderate parking on residential roads surrounding the proposed new school on the Pathfinder Place development to the School Travel Plan Officer at Wiltshire Council.*
- c) **Queensbury Bus Shelters:** Members welcomed news that a new company had been set up with ex staff and the intellectual property of Queensbury Shelters which had ceased trading in March 2019. They would continue to supply new shelters but also provide spare parts for existing ones and offer an installation service.
- d) **Notice of Variation of Charges for Off Street Residents Permits:** Increased charges were coming into effect from 19th November for off-street residents parking permits in pay and display car parks, this included Melksham.
- e) **Town Council Gateway Signage:** The Clerk had contacted the Highways Officer to see what the current status of this project was as the parish council had received no response from the feedback to the Town Council in June. The Highway Officer had confirmed that he had made it clear to the Town Council that this project would not be pursued until an agreement had been reached between both Councils on the positioning of the signs.

262/19 **CATG (Community Area Transport Group) Meeting, 17th October, 2019:**
Cllr Baines raised concerns that there were big discrepancies in the amount of contributions that had been offered and requested of the councils in the Melksham Community Area. There was a concern raised about the recent over provision of white lines to prevent obstruction to residents’ driveways, which would most likely require residents to make a contribution to in the future.

- a) **Action/Notes Log of CATG meeting:** The members noted the updates on current issues on the Actions/Note Log of the CATG meeting held on 17th October 2019.

b) Actions required further to CATG meeting:

i) **Issue 7049 Redstocks – request for Junction improvements:** Highways have completed an initial investigation and produced a Briefing Note (Appendix 5 of the Notes Log). This detailed a ballpark figure of £25,000 for construction costs. To produce a more robust estimate, then a topographical survey and utility searches would need to be completed, at an estimated cost of £2,500. There was not a big collision injury record at that junction. The Clerk reported that the original requestor had been in touch earlier in the day to enquire as to progress with the scheme and who did not agree with the statement in the briefing note that the volume of traffic entering and leaving Redstocks was considered to be low, although there were no records to substantiate this. The resident had advised on the typical vehicle movements to and from the hamlet based on the number of vehicles that the businesses produced, the liveried stables, residents etc which were estimated to be about 180 per day. Members commented that the volume of vehicle movements was a subjective figure in terms of whether it was considered low or not. It was advised that CATG will only prioritise schemes that significantly reduce collisions or an improvement in road safety. **Recommendation:** *The parish council take no further action on this Issue.*

ii) **Issue 9-19-9 Bowerhill Falcon Way – Request for Bus Shelter:** The Highways Officer had given a ball park estimate of £6,000 to include possible ground works. There was also a land ownership issue for the land to the rear of where the shelter was proposed to be installed, as it was unknown. Cllr Baines explained that the precedent had been set by other members of the CATG who had offered to contribute 100% for bus shelters, and therefore there was an expectation that the parish council would have to wholly fund this scheme. There were parish council funds available from CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) from the Pathfinder Way development, Sandridge Solar Farm funding and the Capital Assets Earmarked Reserve.

Recommendation:

1. *The parish council confirm their support of the provision of this bus shelter and offer a third financial contribution to the scheme, with Cllr Alan Baines being given delegated powers as the council's CATG representative to offer/negotiate up to 100% to secure the provision of the scheme, and in a timely manner.*
2. *The parish council seek an alternative quote from Queensbury Shelters for the supply and installation of this bus shelter, as a price comparison.*

iii) **Issue 9-19-10 Beanacre Westlands Lane rail bridge – Request for warning signs of road narrowing for westbound vehicles:** Highways have inspected the site. The road width within the 30mph limit is not constant which is the reason for not displaying a “road narrows” sign on the approach to the bridge for westbound vehicles. The provision of a “pedestrians in road” signs could be considered. The cost of two new signs would be in the region of £500. It was noted that signs were being provided at the expense of CATG for another council in the Melksham Community Area, and that the request for these signs was for a safety reason.

Recommendation: *The parish council confirm their support of the provision of these signs, and request that they are wholly funded by CATG as per the*

precedent recently set for another similar scheme in Snarilton Lane with Cllr Alan Baines being given delegated powers as the council's CATG representative to offer/negotiate up to 100% to secure the provision of the scheme.

- iv) **Issue 9-19-11 Bowerhill Portal Road – Request for Bowerhill nameplate and white gates:** The Highways Officer advised that siting signs and gates on this approach might prove difficult due to the presence of the shared use footway and needing to maintain head clearance for cyclists of 2.4m. There is some limited highway verge space on the nearside as you enter Portal Way beyond the extent of the footway. Cllr Baines explained that with the planned development there, of a new Dick Lovett showroom, that it may be better to install a Bowerhill nameplate and planter at that stage, coupled with a surface treatment on the road as you enter the road. Cllr Glover remarked that at the entrance to Snowberry Lane there was a restricted width footway with signage conflicting with the cycle way.

Recommendation: *The parish council contact Dick Lovett to request if they could incorporate a “Welcome to Bowerhill” feature as part of their works to make an entrance to the new premises planned at Portal Way.*

- iv) **Swift Way, Bowerhill nameplate:** The members noted the following response to the parish council's request. The site had been investigated and a number of 'phone calls made to various Wiltshire Council departments in this regard but it does appear, regrettably, that no nameplate was ever erected at this location and 7 years have now passed since the road was adopted. The request had been placed on a growing list of sites for which replacement nameplates were required. Currently there is no budget allocated to this provision and the situation will next be reviewed in advance of the budget setting for 2020/21. There was no appetite from the members to offer to fund this sign to speed up the process.

263/19 **Resident's Requests (2):**

- a) **Request for restricting some vehicles from accessing Westlands Lane from the A350:** The parish council had been contacted by residents of Westlands Lane alleging that over size and weight vehicles had been using the restricted access from the A350 on route to the National Grid installation on Westlands Lane. A very conciliatory and explanatory response had been received from National Grid who explained that all the contracts they set up stipulate that this route must be avoided and they have emphasised this when the contracts are up and running as they are very keen to maintain a good relationship with the local residents. In addition, National Grid had installed bollards at their junction with Westlands Lane to make it difficult for larger vehicles to gain access and had also added signage for vehicles leaving site to turn left and not right, back through the village. National Grid personnel had not recognised any of the vehicles that had been captured in 'photos by residents. There were occasionally difficult delivery drivers that are aware that the weight limit applies to the road and not the bridge and do not accept that they cannot use the village route for access and to this end, there was a suggestion that additional signage could be installed at the junction of the A350 and Westlands Lane to restrict access to the National Grid site to delivery traffic. An offer had been made to show a few concerned locals around the site to see what they do as a

company and have a two-way discussion to reach a satisfactory outcome; this would have to be restricted to a maximum of 10 people. The members were more than satisfied with the response of National Grid.

Recommendation: *The parish council take no further action in regard to this request other than extend the invitation to attend a site visit to National Grid for Beanacre Community Group.*

- b) **Request for weight limit on the bridge on Westlands Lane:** This was another request from the Beanacre Community Group.

Recommendation: *As the weight limit is currently on the road and not the bridge, and the unlikelihood of gaining any further enforcement here, the parish council do not pursue this request any further.*

- c) **Request for pedestrian crossing on A350 at Beanacre:** This was also requested by Beanacre Community Group and they stated that they wanted to bring the community and village together by allowing residents to feel that they can go safely from one side of the village to the other in a more secure manner, they also considered that it would make the village look like the 30mph zone that it is. Cllr Baines explained that there had already been three sets of dropped kerbs and central refuges provided for crossing the A350 at the site of the 3 bus stops on that stretch of the A350. Although they had been provided a number of years ago, there had not been a material change in the number of pedestrians crossing the road since, to warrant a new crossing. It was noted that a light controlled crossing costs in the region of £50,000.

Recommendation: *The parish council take no further action on this request.*

Cllr Pafford left the meeting at 9.35pm

- d) **Waiting and parking requests 2020-2021:** A request had been received from Wiltshire Council's Highway Network Management team outlining that the deadline for receipt of waiting and parking requests was 31st January 2020.

Recommendations: *The parish council put the following schemes forward for parking restrictions:*

- 1. Access and egress points along Lancaster Road, Bowerhill Industrial Estate (arising from Min. 238/19e)i) Full Council 21st October 2019*
- 2. North West side of Canal Bridge on Semington Road (arising from Min. 260/19.1.) earlier in this meeting.*

264/19 **SID (Speed Indicator Device):**

- a) **Eligibility & Deployment Criteria for Temporary Speed Indicator Devices:** The members noted the revised guidance dated and reissued in September 2019.

- b) **Quotations for Replacement SID:** The members reviewed the 3 quotations for non-solar powered SIDs.

Recommendations:

- 1. The parish council purchase a SAS300 SID that displays "XXmph" and "Slow Down" at £2,000 and a Mobile SID Essential Starter Pack at £150 and a set of spare batteries at £140, from Solagen Ltd against Quotation ref. 8223 dated 18/10/19 at a total cost of £2,290 excluding VAT.*

2. The Clerk to contact Atworth Parish Council to see if they wish to continue in a joint arrangement for the regular chargeable scheduled installation of the SID and whether they would like to make a contribution to the capital expenditure.

265/19 **Footpaths & Rights of Way (RoW):**

- a) **Request for access onto MELW40 Praters Lane from Sandridge Common:** Arising from Min. 231/19 Full Council 21st October, update from Wiltshire Cllr Phil Alford (Melksham Without North). This issue has arisen again as residents are unable to gain access to the start of Praters Lane (in the old bus layby by the site of the former Forest & Sandridge school) from the main A3102 as the development of Lopes Close, on the old school site, is in the way and the crash barrier prevents residents walking on any footway in that direction. Following on from the Site Visit arranged by Cllr Alford with the Rights of Way Officer and Area Highway Engineer, with input from Cllr Baines, a proposal had been put forward. It was agreed that there was no scope for a footway in front of Lopes Close, therefore any route would have to go to the rear opening up the hedge and putting a culvert in the drainage ditch to link the RoW with the layby. The RoW Officer had identified funding that could potentially be accessed to pay for the culvert, gate and new fencing for both the residents' and farmer's side. It was recognised that this proposal would require landowner consent, for a permissive path, rather than a new RoW.
***Recommendation:** The parish council support the proposal to approach the landowner to see if there was an appetite for a permissive path to the rear of Lopes Close to provide a safe access from the A3102 to RoW MELW40 Praters Lane.*
- b) **Order to extinguish part of width of MELW41 at Snarlton Farm (Brown's Lane):** The members noted the Order was made on 25th November 2019.
- c) **Request for Right of Way on footpath to the rear of Forest & Sandridge School and request for maintenance funding:** Wiltshire Cllr Phil Alford was currently investigating who was responsible for funding the maintenance of the footpath put into to the rear of the school before it opened. Under Min. 164/16 (12th September 2016) the parish council had resolved not to make any financial contribution to the future maintenance of the path as it was considered that this should have been sorted out at the time of the s106 agreement (as requested by the parish council as part of the planning application for the school) and therefore was down to an agreement between the Consortium of developers, the builders of the school, Wiltshire Council and Greensquare, the maintenance contractor. The area was transferred from Melksham Without to Melksham Town under the last Community Governance Review which took effect on 1st April 2017. In March 2018 the Parish Council requested that the Town Council request that the footpath becomes a formal RoW to ensure its future use by the public was safeguarded, it also connected up two established RoWs MELK74 across the public open space to MELK105; this had been raised now with Cllr Alford as no progress seems to have been made.
- d) **Blocked Right of Way at Beanacre:** The Clerk advised that the RoW at Beanacre had been blocked with an approx. 6' high fence and therefore had been reported to the RoW Officer. It was noted that although this was not a through route it did lead to the historic site of a community well/spring.

266/19 **Traffic Regulation Orders & Planned Roadworks:**

- a) **A350 Farmers Roundabout:** The members noted the latest newsletters for the scheme, which was now coming to an end, and so far seem to be working well and keeping the traffic flowing.
- b) **Planned works to A365/B3353 Shaw Hill traffic lights:** The members noted the planned replacement work in the Spring, which also included some drainage work whilst the traffic management was in place.

267/19 **Parish Steward:** The Clerk advised that the Parish Steward had been continuing with undertaking great work in the Parish, and had been into the office this morning for a briefing for this month's work starting today, having already toured the flood hotspots in Whitley due to the recent heavy rain. It continues to be an excellent service.

Meeting closed at 9.59 pm

Chairman, 11th November, 2019