

APPENDIX ONE:

NOTES FROM PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 19TH JULY 2021 AT ST BARNABAS CHURCH, BEANACRE BY MELKSHAM WITHOUT PARISH COUNCIL

TO HEAR VIEWS OF PARISH RESIDENTS ON THE PROPOSED BYPASS CONSULTATION (2ND NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION ON ROUTE 10C) TO INFORM THE PARISH COUNCIL WHEN FORMING THEIR OWN RESPONSE

Present:

Melksham Without Parish Council

Councillor John Glover	Chair of Council and Chair of meeting
Councillor Alan Baines	Chair of Highway & Streetscene Committee
Councillor David Pafford	Vice Chair of Council
Councillor Mark Harris	
Councillor John Doel	
Councillor Richard Wood	
Teresa Strange	Clerk
Lorraine McRandle	Parish Officer

Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford (Melksham Without North & Shurnhold)

21 Members of the public

Councillor John Glover opened the meeting and explained the meeting was not planned to be a discussion type event, but for the councillors to listen to the views of parishioners to aid the forming of the parish council's own response to the Wiltshire Council consultation.

The parish council area surrounds the town and represents communities that will most likely have opposing views on the potential bypass, such as those in Beanacre and Bowerhill, and the parish council will be making their response to the consultation following input from all the differing views of their parishioners.

It was reiterated by the Chairman and other councillors during the meeting that residents must send their views to Wiltshire Council direct, that can be done either by the online survey, by email or writing to the officers at County Hall.¹ In addition, to note that this is the time to ask for any mitigation to alleviate concerns raised, in case Wiltshire Council are minded to proceed with the project. So, if objecting – or supporting – do state that if it goes ahead, what mitigation would be required to overcome a problem area (for example to ameliorate noise) and to suggest what that

¹ <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/3146/A350-Melksham-bypass>

mitigation could be perhaps as a cutting, trees); as well as suggested improvements to Rights of Way etc.

The message that the proposed bypass is not just a “Melksham” or “Beanacre” bypass was also emphasised; and not just a project of Wiltshire Council but a part of a Strategic Route by the Western Gateway comprising of several local authorities including Gloucester, Wiltshire, Christchurch, Poole, Dorset and BANES.² The Western Gateway is a group of combined authorities working together to obtain the funding for the project which is classed as a “Major Road Network”. It would be funded in the main by central Government, with some element from Wiltshire Council. There are currently arguments being put forward by some that is not affordable, and Wiltshire Council published documents stating that it is affordable; a dichotomy of views.

Councillor Baines explained that some of the problem has been caused by the route across the Avon Valley not being fully completed when the work was done by BANES³ at Batheaston some years ago, due to the environmental objections, and now most HGVs use the A350 which is being further emphasised by the HGV ban on the Cleveland Bridge in Bath and the Bath Clean Air zone. This means that the A350 has become the major route for North-South traffic for Heavy Goods vehicles, these are the issue rather than the private cars and commuters.

A summary of the views put forward by residents:

1. Redstocks residents – concerns of close proximity of the Bypass to Redstocks (100 yards to houses) which will create considerable noise and pollution
2. Redstocks resident (previously lived in Woodrow and Beanacre) – concerns about the current economy which is now in a mess, works in mental health and thinks that is an area where funding would be better spent, the world is a different place since covid with people working at home. Is housing development behind this project? Not for or against the project, but is ‘for nature’ and doesn’t want any money spent on a road; we need more trees, there are perfectly acceptable roads. It should be concentrated on ‘community’ now.
3. Redstocks resident – understand population increasing, road traffic increasing, the bypass is coming, but route 10c will only be 100 or 50m from some houses in Redstocks. The community have taken professional advice from an independent consultant about a proposal to move the route one field further away from the houses. In terms of mitigation, they would be looking for environmental woodland, sound barriers. Moving one field away would also avoid the medieval site as the proposed route would mean that mitigation would be in the field with the medieval site.

² <https://westerngatewaystb.org.uk/about/>

³ Bath & North East Somerset Local Authority

It was confirmed by the Chairman that being realistic whilst objecting and coming up with a compromise position would carry more weight than an outright objection with no reasoning.

4. Councillor John Doel as a landowner and resident of Woodrow Road declared an interest and felt the proposal for no junction at Woodrow meant people would not use Woodrow as a rat run to get to A350. Junction at Lacock seemed sensible having witnessed a fatal accident there some years ago. However, the proposed route would come extremely close to his house.
5. Woodrow resident – concern at loss of part of land and business for several farmers in Woodrow.
6. A350 made worse by traffic accessing Asda and McDonalds and creating a backlog which is the main issue.
7. Woodrow resident - Concern a lot of people have only just found about the proposals and would have appreciated someone speaking to them about the proposals.
8. Wiltshire Councillor Phil Alford explained presentations had taken place at the Area Board, Town Council and Parish Council, the route was only indicative and therefore that was why landowners/farmers had not been spoken to yet, once the route had been finalised then discussions would take place with landowners/farmers and reiterated proposals were still at the non-statutory stage and there were still opportunities to tweak the route.
9. Councillor Baines explained proposals with regard to the route around Redstocks and Lower Woodrow in particular had taken the Parish Council by surprise and hopefully some of these aspects could be changed with good reasons why.
10. Resident of Lower Woodrow who rented land was concerned at the destructive nature the overpass in Lower Woodrow would have and people's life in the area and note an attenuation pond is proposed on someone's land. Clarification was sought on what an attenuation pond was for.

Councillor Baines explained attenuation ponds where there to collect water from the road as drainage meaning the water did not drainage into water courses.

Councillor Glover reminded people to give alternatives when responding to the consultation to Wiltshire Council.

11. The loss of grade 1 agricultural land.
12. How much land will be lost to the scheme?
13. Government has put forward proposals to be carbon net zero by 2050. Therefore, does this road scheme need to be evaluated or at least look at the least destructive option.
14. Impact on the flood plain in Woodrow.
15. With regard to mitigation. Once built who will be responsible for making sure it is put in place, if trees etc proposed who will maintain

With regard to mitigation Councillor Baines explained as part of any planning consent, it would include for example tree planting and how would be responsible for its maintenance and for how long.

Councillor Wood, as did several Councillors, expressed disappointment that not more residents of Beanacre were present as the bypass would relieve the traffic issues in the village. Therefore, more support was needed from residents of Beanacre for the scheme.

Councillor Wood explained Wiltshire Council were willing to listen to what people had to say with regard to tweaking of the route. For example, the 'bulge' at Redstocks, was not set in stone as further investigations were needed on a possible ancient settlement in this area.

Whilst residents of both Redstocks and Woodrow/Lower Woodrow had a lot in common, it was better to send individual responses to the consultation, even though there was a commonality its what residents want addressed.

With regard to funding for the project there was potential to be able to apply for 'Levelling up' funding.

Councillor Wood explained the Parish Council could not stop the bypass, but after years of experience in responding to planning applications, even if objecting, in order to try and make the best out of the situation to ask for mitigation in order to make it more acceptable. Once the plans are approved it is too late.

Councillor Pafford explained the plans will have to go to a public enquiry and they will look at what has been proposed to mitigate the by-pass.

16. Dog leg through Bowerhill to Sandridge Common, Sandridge is on a hill.

Councillor Baines explained the reasoning for this route, was to avoid Lopes Close as otherwise it would be cut off from the town. Coincidentally the Parish Council had objected to the construction of Lopes Close.

17. Praters Lane will be severed by the by-pass.

Councillor Glover explained several public rights of way would be severed by the by-pass and will be looked at by the Parish Council with regards to alternatives, mitigation.

18. Redstocks resident. Information included in reports out of date. The population is going down. Would rather see the money spent on the local community

19. Concern people will be flooded in Woodrow Road area.
20. Concern people's views are not being listened to.
21. Resident of Melksham (close to Beanacre) concerned at the impact on wildlife and the loss of fields.

The Clerk asked those people who had filled in their information for track and trace if they were happy the Parish Council used this information in order to contact them with updates, if not to let officers know they wished to opt out.

The meeting was reminded the Parish Council would be putting in their response to the consultation once the meeting at Bowerhill had been held.

Those present were encouraged to attend Area Board meetings where updates on the scheme will be provided.

It was noted Lacock Parish Council were seeking an extension to the consultation deadline, as they were not aware of proposals for the northern part of the route until very recently. The Clerk confirmed the parish council were aware of this request, and it was an agenda for their Full Council meeting on Monday evening.

Meeting finished at 7.55pm