

MINUTES of the Highways & Streetscene Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 20 March 2023 at Melksham Without Office Space (First Floor), Melksham Community Campus, Market Place, Melksham, SN12 6ES at 8.23pm

Present: Councillors Alan Baines (Committee Chair), John Glover (Chair of Council), Terry Chivers, Mark Harris and Robert Shea-Simonds

In attendance: Councillor Peter Richardson (part of meeting) & 3 Members of public

Via Zoom: 1 member of public

Officers: Teresa Strange, Clerk & Lorraine McRandle, Parish Officer

453/22 Welcome, Announcements & Housekeeping

Councillor Baines welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through the fire safety evacuation procedures for the building.

454/22 To receive Apologies and approval of reasons given

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pafford who was attending a Melksham Oak School Governor Meeting as the parish council representative and Councillor Patacchiola due to work commitments. It was acknowledged that the meeting date had recently been brought forward.

Resolved: To note and accept the reasons for absence

455/22 a) To receive Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

b) To consider for approval any Dispensation Requests received by the Clerk and not previously considered.

There were no dispensation requests.

456/22 Public Participation

5 members of public were in attendance, including 1 via Zoom, wishing to speak to various items on the agenda, therefore, Standing Orders were suspended.

Councillor Peter Richardson spoke in his capacity as Chair of Community Action Whitley & Shaw (CAWS) and was in attendance to discuss their request for speed reduction measures in Shaw and Whitley. He was accompanied by Kirsty Jamieson, the Shaw & Whitley Community Speed

Watch Co-ordinator. The request was for a number of measures, given concerns of speeding along the A365, which was used by children to access Shaw School, particularly those from George Ward Gardens. Community Action Whitley & Shaw (CAWS) sought a reduction in the 40mph speed limit between George Ward Gardens and Shaw traffic lights and the addition of 30mph roundel signs painted on the highway on both Corsham Road, Whitley and Shaw Hill.

A resident of Westlands Lane, Beanacre was in attendance to voice their concerns at speeding over the railway bridge on Westlands Lane requesting the 30mph speed limit on Westlands from the A350 be extended to the bridge or rumble strips be installed instead, if this was not possible, following a recent accident on Westlands Lane. No barriers had been provided either side of the bridge to stop vehicles going over. The road had recently been tarmacked, which unfortunately had created a ridge at the edge of the road, which was making it easy for tyres to get caught in and causing pedestrians to be further out in the road to avoid. Drivers negotiating the bridge were unaware of the potential for pedestrians to be in the road. The slow sign painted on the surface had been tarmacked over during these works and needed to be reinstated.

Mark Blackham, Chair of Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG) was in attendance with a resident of Martlet Close concerned at the removal of vegetation by the former developer some time ago, including some trees, on the eastern side of Falcon Way which had left the area looking unsightly. They sought support of the Parish Council in trying to find a solution to get the area maintained more appropriately.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

Councillor Baines asked if Members were happy to move the various agenda items further up the agenda for discussion, which Members agreed.

457/22 To note Minutes of last Highways & Street Scene Committee meeting held on 16 January 2023 and updates on actions taken.

Members noted the minutes of the last Highways & Streetscene meeting held on 16 January and the actions taken by officers.

- a) Highway Funding (Min 353/22). To note updates (if received) following a request to Wiltshire Council for the £200,000 Section 106 Highway contribution from planning application PL/2022/02749 for 144 dwellings on Semington Road be spent on various highway projects in the vicinity of Berryfield.**

The Clerk informed the meeting there had been no update other than the Wiltshire Council highway officers had taken into account and were actively planning for this.

b) Pathfinder Way (Min 355(b)). To note response from the Senior Highway Engineer to request for 'No Right Turn' signage off of Pathfinder Way.

Members noted the response from the Senior Highway Engineer to the Council's request for no right turn signage to be installed off Pathfinder Way, who had stated at present the estate roads were unadopted as public highway, therefore the Local Highway & Improvement Group (LHFIG) could not intervene, however, he had expressed doubt such a proposal would work.

It had previously been highlighted to Wiltshire Council there was an inconsistency with the road signage along Pathfinder Way, following a recent change in the speed limit and whilst it was understood the signage to be installed by Wiltshire Council had been done, there was still some outstanding signage to be installed by Taylor Wimpey as part of the Pathfinder Place development.

It was noted the 30mph sign coming down Pathfinder Way on the left-hand side was still in-situ, having been rotated 180 degrees facing traffic coming from Bowerhill which meant it was a repeater sign and therefore, difficult for any enforcement. It was noted the turn left arrow was still visible on Bowerhill roundabout.

The Clerk explained she had raised this issue recently with the local Highways team.

Members noted that there was a later agenda item to support the request of Wiltshire Councillor Holder for double yellow lines on the entrance to Newall Road and Maitland Place, however, it was suggested the double yellow lines needed to be installed along the whole length of Pathfinder Way and included on the double yellow line request to Wiltshire Council.

c) Bowerhill School/Village Hall (Min 355(b)/22). To note any update following meeting between Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder, Bowerhill Village Hall and the Headteacher of Bowerhill Primary School regarding improvement to access to the grounds for parking and drop off and consider any recommendations coming from that meeting.

Correspondence had been received from Councillor Nick Holder explaining whilst the Principal of Bowerhill Primary School had come up with a solution to the issue, it was much more complicated than an issue for the Local Highway &

Footpath Group (LHFIG) to consider and required discussions with officers at County Hall due to the costs involved.

Councillor Harris explained he had attended the meeting but was unable to provide an update at this time.

d) Redstocks Road Condition (Min 356(c)/22): To note road surface works undertaken on 8 & 9 February.

Members noted following concerns from residents of Redstocks at the condition of the road surface, the road surface co-incidentally had been repaired within a week or two of being discussed by the parish council, with residents of Redstocks thanking the parish council for their support nonetheless.

e) Speed Indicator Devices and change to threshold levels (Min 356(e)/22): To note update and reinstatement of Speed Indicator Device schedule.

Councillor Baines explained whilst the trigger levels of the new Speed Indicator Device (SID) had successfully been changed in line with Wiltshire Council's policy, unfortunately given the design of the older device, this was not possible as there were not options for different increments and therefore would operate at the lower trigger speed of 30mph.

The Clerk wished to pass on the thanks to the Town Council Amenities Team for assisting with this.

458/22 Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) (formerly Community Area Transport Group – CATG)

a) To note Minutes and action log of Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) meeting held on 2 February 2023.

Members noted the minutes and action log of the Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) meeting held on 2 February 2023.

b) To consider questions raised at the LHFIG meeting for the parish council to respond:

i) LHFIG Issue 9-22-19 – To alter stagger barriers between Corsham Road and Eden Grove, Whitley – to approve project to move forward following site visit by Engineer and approve funding share £375

It was noted that following a site inspection the safety barriers could be removed and replaced to allow more

space for mobility scooters and pushchairs. However, this would also make life easier for cyclists (which are not permitted to ride here) and slightly increase the risk of a child running out into the road.

Councillor Chivers informed the meeting he had raised this as an issue having been approached by a couple of residents who used mobility scooters. However, for various reasons he was aware that their specific requirement for the barriers to be changed no longer existed.

Recommendation: Not to progress this issue, but revisit if the issue arises again.

ii) **LHFIG Issue 9-22-22 – Request to replace louvre shuttering on approach to signals, Corsham Road, Whitley – to approve funding share £375**

Councillor Chivers highlighted the positioning of the shutters often meant HGV drivers could not see lights very clearly.

It was noted the shuttering was positioned mainly for cars to see clearly.

Recommendation: To approve the £375 costs to install shutters on Corsham Road, Whitley traffic lights.

iii) **On Street Parking Reviews: LHFIG Item 6b - To consider submitting any new requests for next financial year**

Councillor Baines expressed frustration Wiltshire Council had moved the goal posts again with regard to the process for councils to submit double yellow line requests, with several of the parish council requests having been submitted to Wiltshire Council several years ago.

Councillor Baines informed the meeting councils now had to submit requests only once a year to the Local Highways & Footways Improvement Group (LHFIG) for consideration at their first meeting in the financial year. At a previous meeting, it had been agreed any traffic orders covering several parishes in the same area, which included Melksham Town Council in this council's case, be covered by one traffic order, to save on the legal costs associated with a traffic order. Unfortunately, Melksham Town Council had yet to produce their list for consideration which had resulted in a considerable delay

in requests going forward.

Councillor Baines noted the council's current list of requests for double yellow lines included the following and sought a steer from Members for any further requests:

- Semington Canal Bridge
- Lancaster Road, Bowerhill
- Avro Way, Bowerhill
- Merlin Way, Bowerhill
- Mitchell Drive, Bowerhill
- Westlands Lane, Beanacre (Wessex Water request)

Frustration was expressed at the delay in the requests being moved forward, with a suggestion the parish council try and progress these, without waiting for the Town Council to produce their requests. Councillor Baines highlighted if the parish council were to do this, consideration needed to be given to the legal fees involved for the traffic order of c£3,000. As Chair of the Finance Committee, Councillor Glover stated he would be happy to support the council moving these requests forward and to cover the costs involved. Councillor Baines suggested the council could ask the costs be split 50/50 with the Local Highway & Footpaths Improvement Group (LHFIG), which members supported.

Councillor Baines informed the meeting he had received correspondence from a business on Bowerhill Industrial concerned at the delay in their request for double yellow lines having not been progressed and the impact this was causing to their business. With Councillor Baines responding to the concerns by stating the parish council were just as frustrated with the delay suggesting they contact their local Member at Wiltshire Council – Councillor Nick Holder, Michelle Donelan MP and Councillor Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Wiltshire Council.

The Clerk raised concern at parking on Westinghouse Way either side of the car park entrance to Bowerhill Sports Field, as it was often quite difficult for people to get out of the car park due to vehicles parking either side of the entrance, making it difficult to see oncoming vehicles.

Recommendation 1:

- a) To ask that the Local Highway and Footpaths Improvement Group (LHFIG) progress this council's requests as soon as possible without having to wait for Melksham Town Council to submit their requests.

- b) To be prepared to contribute up to 50% of the c£3,000 legal costs to ensure that this proceeds quickly.

Recommendation 2: To forward the following new double yellow line requests to the Local Highways and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) for consideration:

- Pathfinder Way (including the entrances to Newall Road, Maitland Place and the proposed school access road)
- Lancaster Road (intermittent double yellow lines to enable passing places and break up the continuous parking; as well as double yellow lines opposite the entrances to the old hangars to enable easy access for HGVs in particular)
- Westinghouse Way either side of the entrance to the Bowerhill Sports Pavilion.

iv) LHFIG Issue 9-19-11 - Portal Road, Bowerhill Gateway Signage

The Clerk explained that the design of this gateway signage had been received on Friday and so it made sense for the committee meeting tonight to have sight and approve it. Councillor Baines noted the costs were within the original estimate provided.

Recommendation: To approve the design of the gateway signage.

459/22 To consider residents' requests for support by the Parish Council including requests for the Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) next meeting on 9 May 2023):

a) Land on Falcon Way. To consider a way forward with regard to land ownership and future maintenance

Following the concerns from residents of Bowerhill at the cutting back of vegetation along parts of Falcon Way by the developer, due to concerns it was causing damage to garden walls, Councillor Baines explained the council had been attempting to install a bus shelter at the bus stop next to Kingfisher Drive and discovered all the land was still in the ownership of the developer and therefore had approached Wiltshire Council to adopt at least the land by the bus stop but preferably all the land along Falcon Way.

However, when Wiltshire Council approached the developer, the developer had suggested the bus stop be removed as well as the bench installed by Bowerhill Residents Action Group

(BRAG) and therefore everyone was at an impasse on this issue and therefore, it was in the hands of the legal department at Wiltshire Council.

The Clerk explained the parish council had requested the original planning application from Wiltshire Council, to ascertain if there were any planning conditions relating to the landscape plan, unfortunately this information was not available, therefore, it was difficult to prove the developers were in contravention of their original planning consent. Unfortunately, it had taken some time to retrieve this information from Wiltshire Council archives as the original plans had been submitted to West Wiltshire District Council previously.

The Clerk explained for the many complaints received at the vegetation being cut down and the subsequent unsightly verges, the council also received requests from residents of the other side of Falcon Way for the vegetation to be cut back, as they were also concerned for their boundary walls.

The Clerk explained she had discussed with Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder about the possibility of holding a meeting with the developer in order to find a solution and move forward, given previous unhelpful responses from the developer.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow residents of Bowerhill to speak to this item.

The residents explained most of the planting was shrubs rather than trees and suggested most of the damage to the walls were as a result of how they were constructed rather than damage from vegetation. It was also noted the trees had been cut back at the request of residents in order to gain more light into their gardens, without consultation with other residents.

One resident explained having spoken to the developer, he would be happy to discharge this land for a £1 to an organisation to maintain, with the resident enquiring if this was a possibility.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

Members raised concern that whoever took on the verges would be responsible for their upkeep, which came at a cost, not just in maintenance cost but also in legal fees.

It was asked whether the Archive Office at Chippenham held

any records of the original planning application, in order to ascertain if there had been a contravention of any of the planning conditions. The Clerk informed the meeting she was going to the Archive Office shortly and could ask if any information was available. The original planning application had been retrieved from County Hall; it was just that they did not provide the evidence required.

The residents expressed frustration that previously Wiltshire Council had been maintaining the verges, however, this had stopped and were unclear why this was the case.

Councillor Baines explained Wiltshire Council had been asked to continue to maintain the area and take on the land but were currently at an impasse.

Recommendation: To liaise with Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder, Wiltshire Council including their Legal Team as well as the developer in trying to reach a resolution and to highlight to Wiltshire Council they had previously maintained the land and should therefore continue to do so and subsequently take over the land.

b) Lorry Trailers Parking on Lancaster Road, Bowerhill. To consider correspondence from Sergeant James Twyford

Members noted the correspondence received from Sergeant Twyford stating he had been requested to revisit the issue of lorry trailers parking on Lancaster Road, Bowerhill suggesting several solutions to the problem, including the installation of double yellow lines.

The Clerk highlighted in the correspondence from Sergeant Twyford he had suggested speeding needed to be 'designed out' for a lasting solution, such as chicanes, or width reduction of the road.

It was highlighted if double yellow lines were put in, as suggested, Sergeant Twyford had raised a concern this could result in vehicles using Lancaster Road and others in the vicinity as a race track.

Councillor Harris stated his concern was drivers ignoring legislation and parking trailers on the highway unlit at night and wanted enforcement action but felt the local Police were very reluctant to do this.

Councillor Baines reminded Councillor Harris the parish council had already raised the issue with the Traffic Commissioners office and also highlighted policing numbers

were currently low. However, a potential solution was for a lorry park in the area, which had been requested by the council for several years.

It was noted as discussed earlier in the meeting the provision of intermittent yellow lines on Lancaster Road could help with the parking issue, as well as help stop any potential speeding.

Recommendation: To write back to Sergeant Twyford to say unfortunately the law was being broken and not being enforced. Whilst taking on board the suggestions raised in his correspondence, such as the installation of intermittent double yellow lines there was still an enforcement issue, which the Council would like to see addressed.

c) Westlands Lane, Beanacre. To note concerns of speeding on Westlands Lane and consider a request for a reduction in the speed limit. To note correspondence from Senior Traffic Engineer following recent accident on Westlands Lane (railway bridge).

As raised by a resident earlier in the meeting, there was concerns at speeding along the lane, particularly over the bridge.

Councillor Baines noted, due to the proposed temporary closure of a public right of way in Beanacre which would be considered later on on the agenda, this meant pedestrians temporarily being directed on to the lane and therefore it was important some signage was installed to warn drivers of the possibility of pedestrians in the road, particularly as there was no pavement available.

Councillor Baines noted the Parish Council had previously requested an extension of the 30mph speed limit, with the Senior Traffic Engineer recently highlighting speed limits should not be introduced to simply address an isolated hazard such as the bridge.

Councilor Baines informed the meeting the council had previously requested a gateway feature on the Western side of the bridge next to the entrance of the substation, however this was very expensive and the suggestion at the time was that it would not make much of a difference to driver speeds. The parish council had also requested the hedging be cut back in order the 30mph sign could be seen more clearly and this was on the list for the Parish Steward to keep an eye on, on a regular basis.

Recommendation: To ask that the road markings on the

road are reinstated following recent roadworks and submit a request to the Local Highways & Improvement Group (LHFIG) for additional signage warning drivers of pedestrians in the road.

d) Burnt Cottages, Beanacre. To consider a request for “No HGV parking” on the layby outside Burnt Cottages.

Following a request from a resident of Burnt Cottages for the “No HGV parking” sign to be reinstated a response had been received from Highways, stating there was no record of any parking restriction sign being installed, being present or recently removed from the Burnt Cottages slip road. The resident had provided photographic evidence of lorries parking in the layby and blocking access from their properties, which happened regularly with drivers taking a break and visiting the Greggs store/café opposite.

Highways had also confirmed that there was no traffic order restricting parking for any vehicles, HGV or otherwise, within the public highway of the slip road. In order to prevent HGVs only, such an order would need to be created and implemented with attendant bespoke signage.

Recommendation: To make a request to the Local Highway & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) for the installation of white lines on the road in the layby outside Burnt Cottages, to deter vehicles blocking their access.

e) To consider supporting a request from Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder for double yellow lines on entrances to Maitland Place and Newall Road off Pathfinder Way, Bowerhill.

This request had been discussed earlier in the meeting with a recommendation to include Pathfinder Way which included Maitland Place and Newall Road on the list of double yellow line requests to the Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) for consideration.

f) To consider complaint regarding inconsiderate parking outside Bowerhill Primary School.

Correspondence had been received from a resident of Gibson Close concerned at inconsiderate parking in Gibson Close, which was making it difficult for people to get in and out of their driveway.

Councillor Baines noted along Forest Road, some residents had installed wooden stakes with white painting on top in the verge, in order to deter people from parking on them and wondered if this could be a solution to the resident’s concern.

It was unclear who maintained the verge highlighted by the resident.

g) To consider a request from Atworth Parish Council to work with the Parish Council on widening the usable pavement width between Atworth and Shaw.

In discussing this request, Members felt it fell under the remit of the Parish Steward and therefore it was up to Atworth Parish Council to suggest when the Parish Steward was scheduled to visit them that they request this work be undertaken. It was not for the Parish Steward to undertake the work when scheduled to visit the parish, particularly given the other requests received; with priority in the parish particularly given to major roads that were used to access the schools, and for flood prevention.

It was noted there were areas along the A365 in the parish where the pavement needed to be widened.

Recommendation: To not work with Atworth Parish Council in widening the usable pavement width between Atworth and Shaw and to request the Parish Steward widen the path in places along the A365, Shaw.

h) To consider requests from Community Action Whitley & Shaw (CAWS)

Councillor Baines explained earlier in the year, a call for a safer route along the A365 from George Ward Gardens to Shaw had been made by residents of George Ward Gardens, which the Melksham News had picked up on with a request for comment by Wiltshire Council and the parish council. There had previously been a request for a reduction in the speed limit from George Ward Gardens to Shaw. Wiltshire Council responded to say the 40mph speed limit was unlikely to be changed, as it would not meet the necessary criteria.

The parish council had requested a traffic survey, which was undertaken in December 2020; the results showed the 85th percentile of drivers driving at 38.5mph in a 40mph speed limit.

It was noted that if this stretch of road had a 30mph speed limit at the time, the same results would have only just triggered the road qualifying for Community Speedwatch and a Speed Indicator Device (SID). It was highlighted there had been no change in the characteristics of the road, with Councillor Baines noting that since the traffic survey request, Shaw Guest House had closed and therefore there would be less people entering the highway along this stretch of road.

It was also noted a speed review had taken place on 'A' roads in Wiltshire with no change in speed limit along this stretch of road being recommended.

Councillor Baines highlighted this request was similar to one lodged by Michelle Donelan MP for a change in the speed limit in Beanacre from 40mph to 30mph, which had been rejected by the parish council, as it would have resulted in a very long 30mph speed limit, which was detrimental to the observance of speed limits generally, as drivers did not perceive there to be a reason for it and therefore they may not adhere to the speed limit.

Recommendation 1: To not support the request for a change in the 40mph speed limit along the A365 from George Ward Gardens to Shaw traffic lights to 30mph, given the previous response from Wiltshire Council, noting there has been no change in the road characteristics since the last request to warrant a change in the speed limit.

Recommendation 2: To submit a request to the Local Highway & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) for 30mph speed roundels to be painted on the A365 at the following locations:

- Folly Lane, Shaw just before Beltane Place on the crest of the hill (inbound).
- Shaw Hill just after the traffic lights (outbound)
- Corsham Road, Whitley near the entrance to Mavern House and just passed Shaw School).

To ask that the faded 30mph roundel sign on Corsham Road, Whitley (inbound) near Top Lane be repainted.

460/22 Proposed A350 Bypass (Standing Item)

a) To note any updates since the last meeting – latest newsletter from M4 to Dorset Coast (National Highways).

Members noted the latest update and that the M4 to Dorset Coast Study had still not been issued.

b) To note correspondence from resident regarding potential A350 bypass East of Melksham

Correspondence had been received from a resident suggesting a new route for the potential A350 bypass which it was noted reiterated a previous route, which had subsequently been ruled out by Wiltshire Council.

461/22 Footpaths

- a) To note Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) for Footpath MELW85 (Part) commencing on 24 April (required for 5 days) to enable rail crossing upgrade to allow for safer use**

Members noted the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order related to upgrading of the railway crossing at Beanacre, with the temporary diversion being for residents to use Westlands Lane.

Recommendation: To respond to the Traffic Order requesting there needed to be some form of signage on Westlands Lane warning of the potential for pedestrians in the road, with this signage being made permanent in due course.

462/22 Road Safety

- a) To note Supplementary Agenda item for Area Board Meeting, 8th March regarding Road Safety Update from Wiltshire Police.**

Members noted the information contained within the Road Safety Update from Wiltshire Police which had been presented at the Area Board meeting on 8 March.

- b) To note recent targeted Police Speed Enforcement in the parish.**

Councillor Baines noted Police Speed Enforcement had taken place elsewhere in the parish, other than Shaw & Whitley, including Woodrow Road. However more enforcement was required here at rush hour both in the morning and evening, as well as weekends. Enforcement had also taken place in Beanacre with a requesting already being made that enforcement needed to take place outside Melksham Oak School.

Meeting closed at 10.07pm

Signed.....

Chair, 27 March 2023