

MINUTES of the Highways & Streetscene Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 15 January 2024 at Melksham Without Office Space (First Floor), Melksham Community Campus, Market Place, Melksham, SN12 6ES at 8.06pm

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

In attendance: Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder (Bowerhill) and 3 members of public (including Stuart Renfrew, Highway Technician)

In attendance via Zoom: 1 member of public

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

366/23 Welcome, Announcements & Housekeeping

Councillor Baines welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting members of public present had been shown the evacuation procedures for the building and understood that the meeting was being recorded to aid the minutes and published on YouTube and be deleted once the minutes had been published.

367/23 To receive Apologies and approval of reasons given

It was noted Councillor Chivers was not present.

POST MEETING NOTE: Councillor Chivers advised by telephone message the following evening that he was back in hospital.

368/23 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

None received.

369/23 To consider holding items in Closed Session due to confidential nature *Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of business, where publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.*

There were no items to be discussed in confidential session.

370/23 Public Participation

Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of public to speak.

A resident of Beanacre was in attendance to voice their concerns at the speed of traffic on Westlands Lane travelling above the 30mph speed limit, particularly in the evening. They also raised concern at the safety of pedestrians walking along the lane towards Whitley, who had to walk in the road, as there is no footpath on a 60mph road.

Another resident of Westlands Lane attending via Zoom agreed there was an issue with speeding and felt the speed limit needed to be reduced from 30mph to 20mph.

Stuart Renfrew, Highway Engineer raised a concern at the condition of New Road which, due to the number/types of vehicles using it, churning up the verges either side of the road, due to the narrowness of the lane in places, despite passing places and wondered if there was any merit in closing it from its junction with Woodrow Road, allowing access for horse riders, pedestrians etc.

Informal discussions had taken place with highway engineers on what could be done to try and resolve the issue, including on a temporary basis, in order to ascertain how the traffic would behave if changes were implemented. The various positives and negatives of closing the lane at one end were highlighted to Members, including increased traffic along Woodrow Road and Church Lane, farmers not being able to access their fields and an increase in farm vehicles during harvest etc using other roads in the area.

Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder noted there was an update on the Parish Steward scheme later in the meeting and informed the meeting Parish Stewards had been diverted from their normal duties in recent weeks to assist with recovery from recent flooding in Wiltshire, however, from today Parish Stewards would be returning to normal duties.

Following an incident a few months ago whereby the footpath opposite the Tesco Express on Blenheim Park had subsided due to the number of vehicles parking on it. Whilst it had now been repaired, Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder explained he had been contacted by a number of residents in the area with photographic evidence of a number of vehicles continuing to park on the footpath with a request that consideration be given to the installation of bollards on the footpath, in order to prevent vehicles parking on it.

Councillor Baines noted any bollards would have to be set back from the highway which would severely restrict the width of the footpath, potentially requiring the footpath to be widened to accommodate the bollards.

Stuart Renfrew felt the inclusion of bollards would not restrict the width of the footpath too significantly to impact pedestrians, however, raised a concern if implemented this would displace parked vehicles to elsewhere in the area.

A resident of Berryfield attended the meeting to raise concern at the condition of Berryfield Lane and the lack of road markings at the top of the lane near the farms, therefore making it unclear who had right of way. Also, given the number of large vehicles using the lane to access the various farms, the verges in places had also been damaged.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

As several members of public present had submitted various requests for consideration, Councillor Baines brought items 9(b) one-way traffic on New Road 9(c) Berryfield Lane and 12(a) Westlands Lane further up the agenda for consideration.

Wiltshire Council Nick Holder left the meeting at 8.25pm.

371/23 To appoint a Vice Chair following the resignation of Councillor Stefano Patacchiola

Resolved: To appoint Councillor Pafford as a temporary Vice Chair until a permanent Vice Chair was appointed in due course.

372/23 To note Minutes of last Highways & Street Scene Committee meeting held on 25 September 2023 and updates on actions taken

Members noted the minutes of the Highways & Streetscene meeting held on 25 September 2023.

373/23 Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG)

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

(i) Issue 9-23-10: A350 Beanacre signs indicating the weight limit on Westlands Lane. To note proposed signage to be installed and funded from a separate Wiltshire Council central highways budget

Councillor Baines explained as the revised signage was a renewal and refurbishment of existing signs, for which Wiltshire Council had a separate budget, funding did not have to come out of LHFIG funding and therefore the parish council did not have to contribute towards the costs of the new signage.

However, if the parish council wished for weight limit signage to be installed at the Corsham Road end of Westlands Lane, as this was new signage, the parish council would be asked to contribute towards the costs, which was likely to be up to £500.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow a resident of Westlands Lane to speak to this item.

Clarification was sought from the resident if the weight limit related to the bridge, or Westlands Lane itself and noted the current weight limit signage was at the end of the lane itself once vehicles had turned into the lane from the A350.

Councillor Baines clarified the weight limit was due to the bridge, except for access, with the parish council having made a request weight limit signage be more appropriately placed on the A350, in order to give advanced warning to drivers of the weight limit.

Recommendation: To approve the installation of advanced weight limit signage at the Corsham Road end of Westlands Lane.

(ii) Issue 9-23-11: A365 Bowerhill, Devizes Road junction with Hornchurch Road: Request to introduce double white line system to prevent overtaking. To consider proposed options

Councillor Baines informed the meeting at the LHFIG meeting on 2 November, costings for two options to improve the junction had been presented to the group:

Option 1: Kerbed traffic islands x 2 with internally illuminated 'keep left' bollards. Estimated cost including 20% Contingency: £11,325.00.

Option 2: Rediweld 'Redipave' bolt down rubber traffic islands x 2 with solar powered rebound bollards (no ducting) Rediweld install. Cost estimate not including contingency: £14,062.44

However, LHFIG members were unconvinced that it was a problem, there was no history of any collisions at this junction and therefore was felt to not be a good use of funds. It was noted that there was a housing site allocation in the draft Local Plan for a site adjacent to the school which could affect the road layout here.

Recommendation: Given the comments from LHFIG, not to proceed with this request.

(iii) Issues 9-22-12 & Issue 9-22-13 Halifax Road, DeHavilland Road & Dowding Way, Bowerhill: Request for drop kerbs/footway Improvement.

To note the Council's 50% contribution of £3,266.37 towards the total cost of the project had been paid.

Councillor Baines explained the contribution was higher than expected, however, the Portal Road gateway was under the estimate provided, therefore the combined cost was less than the total for the two jobs.

(iv) Issue 9-19-11: Portal Road, Bowerhill: Request for Bowerhill name plate and white gates.

To note the Council's 50% contribution of £855.40 towards the total cost of the project has been paid.

374/23 To consider requests for support by the Parish Council including requests for the Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) next meeting on 8 February 2024:

a) To consider a request for a 'village gate' and 'SLOW' sign painted on Woodrow Road in order to slow traffic down

With regard to the request for a village gate, Councillor Baines highlighted Woodrow Road was not a village and therefore did not qualify for such. Also, a village gate would only affect in-coming traffic, noting there was also an issue with out-going traffic speeding as well, having negotiated various traffic calming measures and parked vehicles and coming to a clear bit of road.

It was noted due to concerns of speeding vehicles travelling around a bend and potentially hitting parked vehicles, a request had been received for 'SLOW' to be painted on the road, in order to slow vehicles down before they reached the bend.

Councillor Baines informed the meeting having seen and been contacted by a resident/s regarding irresponsible parking of a vehicle in advance of the blind bend, whereby out-going traffic had to take up position on the wrong side of the road to manoeuvre around it, hoping nothing was coming around the bend, felt, whatever speed the approaching traffic was travelling, it was an accident waiting to happen. Therefore,

suggested the answer might be to tackle the irresponsible parking, given the number of offences being committed, including obstruction of the highway, which could be prosecuted.

It was noted there was an unofficial sign in the verge on the approach to this bend warning of a concealed entrance, which probably would be more visible to approaching traffic than slow painted on the road.

Clarification was sought if the request for 'slow' painted on the road met the relevant criteria for such requests.

Councillor Baines confirmed it did not meet the relevant criteria, as such signage needed to be placed adjacent to other road signage, which was not present at the location requested.

Recommendation: Not to support the request for a 'village' gate or 'Slow' signage painted on the road.

b) To consider a request for one-way traffic on New Road

Councillor Baines noted New Road was the route for the milk tanker every day to serve Selves Farm, Forest Lane as it could not access the farm from the Lacock end. It was also the route for animal feed supplies and at least two landholdings used it for their harvest, rather than taking loaded trailers through the narrow section of Woodrow, in the town and then try and negotiate Forest Road traffic calming or Church Lane with the various parking issues.

Councillor Baines suggested any work/maintenance required on New Road should be part of the S106 Agreements for proposed developments at Sandridge Common, particularly as these developments would generate additional traffic, which would try and use New Road in its present form to access the A350 and the M4 via Lacock and the single-track medieval bridge, which traffic East of Melksham already did.

Councillor Pafford noted at a recent meeting it was suggested an overall view of traffic flow in the area and potential consequences of doing anything in New Road had been suggested and therefore, it would be useful to see some analysis of what the advantages and disadvantages of closing off one end of New Road would be before making a decision.

The Clerk reminded Members the council had already submitted comments to Bloor at pre app stage regarding their proposals at New Road Farm and therefore suggested the council could ask for highway funding for improvements to New

Road.

Recommendation: To await more information from Wiltshire Council Highways on the consequences of traffic flows in closing New Road to traffic from Woodrow Road end.

To request Bloor, as part of their proposals for their New Road Farm site, include a contribution via S106 funding for highway improvements to New Road.

c) To consider a request for road surface repairs and road markings on Berryfield Lane

Councillor Baines sought guidance from Stuart Renfrew if the Parish Steward was able to fill in the numerous potholes on Berryfield Lane or whether this was beyond their scope.

With regard to line marking, Councillor Baines noted there were no road markings at the junctions of Winston Road or Padfield Gardens and therefore these could be done at the same time, as the junction at the end of Berryfield Lane, if Members were minded to approve this request in order to spread costs.

The Highway Technician agreed part of the road was in a poor condition and informed the meeting a request to repair part of the road had recently been submitted and hoped this would be undertaken shortly. He also supported the suggestion of road markings at the end of the lane to delineate who had priority but expressed a note of caution in doing others where there was no issue of highlighting priority, particularly as such lining would constantly need refreshing and the costs involved.

The Clerk reminded the meeting a planning application had recently been approved for 53 dwellings (Phase 2 – PL/2022/08155) which joined Phase 1 for 50 dwellings (PL/2023/00808) to the rear of Townsend Farm with a proposal for a pedestrian access onto Berryfield Lane at the far end.

Recommendation: To ascertain if the Parish Steward was able to undertake remedial work to fill the numerous potholes and the breaking up of the road surface along Berryfield Lane.

To submit a request to the Local Highway & Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) for line marking at the end of Berryfield Lane, in order to delineate priority at the junction and to link in with other requests in the area, in order to reduce overall costs.

Stuart Renfrew reminded Members potholes could be reported by the Wilts App.

d) To note concerns regarding vehicles parking on both sides of Westinghouse Way, Bowerhill

Members noted correspondence between Gompels, Swift Way and a youth football team who hired the football pitches at Bowerhill sports field, regarding parked vehicles on both sides of Westinghouse Way, making it difficult for delivery lorries to negotiate.

e) To consider a request for bollards on the pavement opposite Tesco Express, Blenheim Park, Bowerhill to stop vehicles parking on the pavement

Concern was expressed if bollards were installed, it may reduce the width of the pavement for those in wheelchairs and with pushchairs and also displaced parked vehicles and cause problems elsewhere.

It was noted the reason the pavement had been damaged in the first instance was due to a waste vehicle parked on the footpath and this had been dealt with and the company involved warned not to park their vehicles there in the future.

Recommendation: Not to progress this request.

To request Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder provide photographic evidence of the types of vehicles involved, in order for the Highways Committee to review in due course.

375/23 To receive feedback from the Area Board (Highway Focused Meeting) held on 6 December 2023

Councillor Harris informed Members he had attended the meeting, which he had felt was worthwhile and encouraged Members to attend any future highway focused meetings, which may be held in the future, as it had been very informative.

376/23 Proposed A350 Bypass (Standing Item):

Members noted whilst the M4 to Dorset Coast Strategy Study had been completed, as yet, it had not been published.

The Clerk informed the meeting she regularly chased National Highways for an update, but to date had not received a response.

377/23 Road Safety/Speed enforcement

a) Westlands Lane. To note concerns of speeding and consider submitting a request for a Traffic Survey

It was noted two Traffic Surveys had taken place in recent years with the last one being undertaken in 2016. Neither survey gave a high enough 85th percentile speed or average speed for intervention, such as Community Speedwatch. It was also noted there had not been any particular changes in circumstances since the last survey was undertaken in 2016, when an average speed of 29.4mph had been recorded.

Councillor Baines summarised the various actions which had been taken following concerns from residents of speeding in the lane being raised with the parish council:

- Weight limit signage is currently being reviewed.
- A 20mph speed limit investigated, however, the criteria for 20mph speed limit/20mph speed zones requires the average speed to be 24mph and therefore following previous traffic surveys, traffic did not meet the criteria either.
- Warning signage of pedestrians in the road has been installed either side of the bridge.
- Investigated if the 30mph speed limit could be extended to the far side of the railway bridge, however, this was not acceptable to Wiltshire Council.
- A gateway feature had been considered; however, this would have costed £1000s, with it suggested at the time this would not make much difference to the speed of traffic.

Recommendation: To submit a traffic survey request to Wiltshire Council and identify a suitable location for it to be located.

b) Speed Indicator Devices (SID)/ANPR Cameras

i) To note following a traffic survey, Pathfinder Way, Bowerhill has qualified for a SID (Speed Indicator Device)/Community Speedwatch

Members noted following a recent traffic survey a combined 85th percentile of 37.6mph in a 30mph area had been recorded, therefore meeting the criteria to qualify for Community Speedwatch and a SID.

ii) To note updated SID schedule and correspondence from Street Lighting.

Members noted the updated schedule which include identified sites on Pathfinder Way (both direction).

Councillor Baines informed the meeting, Street Lighting had been in touch to ask that the Evolis device (which recorded data) not be installed at the Shaw Hill location, due to the weight of the device on the particular type of lamp post installed, which was unfortunate, as the parish council had hoped to collate data on traffic speeds on Shaw Hill. Therefore, Shaw Hill was now included on the schedule for the older device (Solagen), which did not record data.

iii) To note update on SID installation from Council's contractor and consider a way forward.

The meeting was informed there had been no deployment of the council's SID devices for several months, as the contractor had failed to deliver their service.

It was unclear if the devices had not been deployed due to staff shortages or the agreed costs being uneconomical.

The Clerk explained investigations had been made into potential alternative contractors and the costs involved, bearing in mind two people would be required to install each device every two weeks and require a Streetworks Licence. The Clerk explained as part of due diligence, the importance of any contractor having a Streetworks Licence, given the work involved which required use of a ladder and given where they would be working.

Recommendation: To write to the current contractor explaining that if they do not initiate deployment of the council's SID devices within 10 days, that the contract will be terminated and for them return both SIDs and other equipment associated with the devices to the parish council.

c) Community Speedwatch

Members noted the number of '1st letters' issued by Community Speedwatch for speeding during July 2020-November 2023:

Shaw & Whitley:	504
Beanacre:	35
Berryfields:	70

d) Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) consultation. (Deadline extended to 5 February). To consider proposed response to Wiltshire Council's consultation.

The Clerk explained at Full Council on 4 December 2023, Members had provided a few comments on the consultation and given her delegated powers to add further comments which were included in the agenda pack:

- Comments from the Neighbourhood Plan consultants.
- Various comments the Clerk had made following a briefing on the LCWIP, which highlighted areas missed within the consultation document, such as how would children from Semington Road walk to Pathfinder Way School, as there is no footpath along the A365 and therefore, having to walk a circuitous route via Longford Road.

The Clerk reminded Members the parish council had asked how children would get to Pathfinder Way from Semington Road in December 2022 and as yet had received a reply from the Head of Sustainable Transport. Therefore, on the recommendation of Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder had written to Samantha Howell, Director Highways & Transport and Caroline Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport.

- The comments the parish council made in July and September 2023 as part of the Stage 4 safety audit of the Hilperton to Melksham route, as well as comments made in September 2022 to a pre consultation on the LCWIP.
- The proposed route for a new pedestrian/cycle way to the rear of Melksham Oak had not been included on maps.
- Information on the Priority for People survey, a project commissioned by the Town Council.
- A link to the Neighbourhood Plan Green and Blue Infrastructure Evidence Report.
- To highlight S106 funding available from the Pathfinder Place (16/01123/OUT) development to improve the footpath from the A365 to Burnet Close.

Thanks were given to the Clerk for collating a comprehensive response to the consultation.

Recommendation: To submit the response to the LCWIP as collated by the Clerk.

e) Road Safety Working Group.

Members were reminded the next meeting of the Road Safety Working group was scheduled to take place on Monday, 29 January at 7.00pm.

The Clerk explained Stefano Patacchiola had been a member of the group before his resignation at the end of last year. However, he had indicated he was happy to be involved with parish council work and therefore, as this was a working group, sought a steer from Members if they were happy for Stefano to be invited to continue as a member of the group.

Recommendation: To invite Stefano Patacchiola to join the Road Safety Working Group.

378/23 Parish Steward.

The Clerk informed the meeting the parish council have been successful following several requests in receiving an additional parish steward day each month, meaning the parish council now had 4 days allocated to it, rather than 3.

Meeting closed at 9.48pm

Signed:.....
Chair, Full Council, 22 January 2024