

**MINUTES of the Highways & Streetscene Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 at Crown Chambers, Melksham at 7.45p.m.**

**Present:** Cllrs. Alan Baines (Committee Chair), Richard Wood (Council Chair), John Glover (Council Vice-Chair), Paul Carter, Mary Pile and Paul Taylor.  
Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Jo Eccleston (Parish Officer).

Greg Coombes as an observer  
Wiltshire Cllr. Phil Alford and two members of the public.

**Housekeeping:** Cllr Baines welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.

422/17 **Apologies:** Cllr. Joanne Pattison who had the flu. This reason for absence was accepted by the Committee.

423/17 **Not Present:** Cllr. Terry Chivers.

424/17 **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr. Glover declared an interest in agenda item 7c) as a resident of Wellington Drive.

425/17 **Dispensation Requests:** None.

*The Council suspended Standing Orders for a period of public participation.*

426/17 **Public Participation:**

Wiltshire Cllr. Alford wish to speak in support of agenda item 7a), request for 20mph limit on Sandridge Lane. He stated that this was a single track lane with high hedges on either side, with approximately 24 properties scattered along it. He stated that residents had raised concerns with regard to speeding on the lane and he asked whether the Parish Council would consider supporting a 20mph limit here, and if not possible whether additional signage at the beginning of the lane from Sandridge Hill could be installed to advise drivers of the need to drive slowly as it's a single track road.

A resident concurred with Wiltshire Cllr. Alford, stating that the construction of the Lane meant that there was a long stretch of straight lane with no properties and that drivers speed until they get to a bend at the halfway point, when they then consider slowing down. In his opinion the speeding drivers were mostly delivery vehicles, with a few being residents. He reported that there were no "slow" signs anywhere along the lane.

The resident also wished to comment on agenda 7b) with regard to making Sandridge Lane access only. He stated that it was his understanding that the fields on either side of the lane were designated for market gardening purposes, however, he reported that extremely large combine harvesters were harvesting at 10.00pm for biomass fuels. He felt that the massive combine harvesters were destroying the edges of the lanes and the drainage systems as they were too large to use the lane. The resident felt that as well as destroying the edges of the lane, that this equipment

left a large amount of mud on the road, which made it unsafe to ride a bicycle or motorbike down the lane. He also stated that the people who work on these fields make no attempt to clear the mud off the road.

Cllr. Alford asked whether there was the possibility of making this lane for residents only.

*The Council reconvened and the members of the public were invited to stay to hear discussions under agenda items 7a) and 7b).*

#### 427/17 Documents & Correspondence:

- a) **Minutes of the last Highways & Streetscene Committee Meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2017:** The Committee noted the minutes of this meeting.  
**Arising from Min.334/17 – Installation of a new “Bowerhill” Sign on A365 Devizes Road:** Cllr. Baines reported that he had attended a site meeting with the Town Clerk, the Town Deputy Clerk and the Wiltshire Highways Engineer where the siting of the new Bowerhill sign was agreed; this was to be adjacent to the 30mph sign coming off the Bowerhill/Spa Road roundabout.
- b) **Wiltshire Council Highways Newsletters for December 2017 & January 2018:** The Committee noted these newsletters; of note was the following:
- Rural grass cutting commences in late May.
  - Bins – Wiltshire Council do not replace or provide new bins. Parish and Town Councils can however install new bins and seek sponsorship for the cost of emptying it.
  - Bus Shelters – Wiltshire Council will remove any broken glass from its shelters, but will not repair any damage, and if damaged and dangerous will remove the shelter altogether.

It was noted that bus shelters can be requested as part of the S106 Agreements for new developments.

A query was made over how much weed spraying could be carried out by the Parish Steward. It was noted that there was not a limit, however, the Parish Council needed to measure the need for this against other jobs it wished carried out, and against the fact that the Parish Council already paid a contractor to weed spray the parish once a year.

A query was raised over whether the Parish Council could have bus shelters provided by Adshel, however, it was noted that this had been looked into before and the advertising companies did not usually install them in rural areas as they did not get enough coverage for their adverts. It was felt however, that if a bus shelter in the parish required replacement that this could be investigated. It was noted that the Council held a specific “Contingency – replacement/renewal of council assets” Reserve for replacing such things as Bus Shelters, to cover both those currently owned by both the Parish Council or Wiltshire Council.

#### 428/17 CATG (Community Area Transport Group) Meeting, 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2018:

- a) **Actions/Log of CATG meeting:** Cllr. Baines gave an update on the following issues:
- (i) **From Issue 5040 – Extension of 30mph Limit, Woodrow Road:** The shared cost of this issue had been agreed by both the Parish Council and CATG and would now be going to the next Area Board meeting for approval.

- (ii) **From Issue 5178 – New Bowerhill Sign near to Mallory Place on the A365:** This issue had now been approved.
- (iii) **Major Maintenance List:** Cllr. Baines reported that he had drawn attention at the last CATG meeting to two issues on the Wiltshire Council Highways Major Maintenance List for 2018/19. One was for carriage way repairs to the A3102 Sandridge Road to the Eastern Relief Road, which had been referred to in the documentation as the “Bypass” rather than “Eastern Relief Road”. The resurfacing due was for the section not affected by the new Barratt development. The second issue was for potential treatment in future years; Pathfinder Way was on this list for potential future surfacing, however, this road was due to have highway alterations under the approved planning application for 235 dwellings and land for a primary school (16/00123/OUT). It was noted however, that this was a reserve scheme which would address the sections not affected by the development. Developers only need to address the section of road that is affected by their development. A suggestion was made over whether the developer could undertake these works at the same time as they were constructing highways works for their development, and that an arrangement be made between Wiltshire Council and the developer over an appropriate discount from the CIL to be provided for that development. It was clear that Wiltshire Council would be paying to undertake this work at a later date, with the costs of the additional Traffic Management too, and some economies of scale and less disruption to road users a distinct benefit if work was undertaken at the same time. **Recommended:** *The Parish Council pursue this idea with their Wiltshire Councillors.*

- b) (i) **From Issue 5381 – Bus Stop Hardstanding, Top Lane, Whitley:** An initial quote had been received which included a bench, something that the Parish Council had not requested. A revised quote had now been received for a hardstanding with dropped kerb (6m x1m) without the bench, at £3,277.78, plus £350 for bore holes to check for any utility services. If approved, the Parish Council would be required to contribute £1,209.26, its 1/3<sup>rd</sup> share. It was noted that the approved Budget for 2018/19 had a £5,500 provision for contributions for Highway improvement projects; to be funded by CIL. **Recommended:** *This issue is supported and requested to be actioned by CATG with the Parish Council committing to paying 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the costs.*
- (ii) **Request for Signage by National Grid at Westlands Lane: Arising from Min.336/17b):** A reply had been received from the National Grid stating that they had 25 staff vehicle movements every day, plus large delivery vehicles. Cllr. Baines reported that he had made a site visit and that there was a definite problem with visibility when exiting the site. He felt however, that signage was not necessarily the answer and that hedge maintenance to reduce the height and width would improve visibility. **Recommended:** *The Parish Council respond to CATG, as the query had been made via them, to say that they acknowledge that there is a visibility problem here, but feel that signage is not necessarily the answer. They suggest that the hedge adjacent to the junction at the bottom of the railway bridge is reduced in height and*

width to improve visibility, and that investigations are made as to the ownership of this hedge.

429/17

**Resident's Requests:**

- a) Request for 20mph Limit for Sandridge Lane:** The members had concerns with regard to the effectiveness of 20mph limits, and that fact that there was no fixed penalty for speeding in a 20mph zone. Additionally, 20mph limits can not be used to slow traffic down; to have a speed limit reduced to 20mph, traffic already needs to be travelling at 24mph or less. A metro count would be required to prove the speed of traffic on this road at a cost of £2,500. It was noted that there was already signage at the entrance to this road from Sandridge Hill which showed that this was a no through road.  
*Recommended: The Parish Council raise speeding on Sandridge Lane as a CATG issue, asking whether any additional signage would be able to be installed, and if so what would be permitted or recommended.*
- b) Request to Make Sandridge Lane Track for Access Only:** As Sandridge Lane is a rural cul-de-sac, it was queried who apart from residents and farmers were using this lane. Additionally, members felt that farmers could not be denied access to their fields, and that it was up to them what they plant, as they were unaware of any particular agricultural requirements for these fields. It was considered that it was access that was taking place.
- c) Request for No-through Road at Entrance to Wellington Drive, Bowerhill:** It was noted that there was a turning circle at the end of Wellington Drive, which was suitable for small lorries to turn, but not HGVs. There have been occasions when Sat Navs have instructed HGVs down Wellington Drive, as historically there used to be access to the A365, prior to barriers being installed. Additionally, a resident who lived adjacent to this turning point had contacted the Parish Council with regard to a vehicle parking either on her driveway or across it at school pick up time. Officers had advised her to keep a record of these incidents and to then report them to the police. An abandoned car had also recently been removed by Wiltshire Council, after concerns that emergency vehicles would not be able to use the turning circle or access properties. *Recommended: The Parish Council support the request for a no-through road sign at the entrance to Wellington Drive and raise this as an Area Board issue.*
- d) Request for Grit Supplies in Locking Close, Bowerhill:** It was noted that in December a resident had demanded a supply of grit for Locking Close, stating that he had watched people falling over and hurting themselves on the icy paths, and that people were struggling to access the canal path to walk their dogs. The Clerk reported that she had explained to the resident that the Parish Council would be unlikely to support gritting to assist residents walking their dogs, as it would be more of a priority to grit paths towards local amenities such as the shop, bus stops and village hall. She also highlighted to the resident that if footways in Locking Close were gritted, that it would not then assist residents once they reached Falcon Way. It was noted that the Parish Council had had great difficulty in getting Mitchell Drive on the gritting route and this road is on the bus route. Additionally, Wiltshire Council do not grit footways as in order for the grit salt to work it requires lots of traffic or foot passage to mix it in with the ice to be effective. The Clerk had explained to the resident that if BRAG (Bowerhill Residents Action Group) wished to take on

the responsibility of spreading the grit, getting the grit bin and producing a snow plan then she would assist in arranging getting some grit from Wiltshire Council.

- e) **Request for Measures to Reduce Dog Mess in Bowerhill:** An issue had been raised at the last BRAG meeting about the about of dog mess on the cycle path to the canal from Bowerhill, and on footpaths and gardens near to Locking Close and Brabazon Way. They considered that the main culprits were professional dog walkers with several dogs all off the lead, some of whom come to the area in vans which they park in Brabazon Way. The Parish Council considered that this was more a matter for the Wiltshire Council Dog Warden, but that they could ask whether there was a supply of “clear up after your dog/no dog fouling” signs that could be requested. **Recommended: 1.** *The Parish Council inform the Wiltshire Council Dog Warden of the concerns raised by BRAG. 2. The Parish Council contact the Wiltshire Council Dog Warden to enquire whether there are any “clear up after your dog” stickers that they could supply to their community/action groups. 3. If the Dog Warden is unable to supply any stickers then the Parish Council purchase 300 stickers at a cost of £30 per 100 stickers (excl. VAT) plus delivery charge; some of these stickers to be put up at the Bowerhill Sports Field and other land owned or under the maintenance of the Parish Council.*
- f) **Request for Dog Clear Up Stickers/Bins for Shaw:** The members noted correspondence from residents in Shaw about dog fouling on the footways enroute to the school. **Recommended:** *The Parish Council provide CAWS (Community Action: Whitley Shaw) with stickers as per Recommendations 2 and 3 under Min. 425/17e.*
- g) **Request for 6 x Sets of dropped Kerbs in Bowerhill Industrial Estate:** Cllr. Carter gave some background information to this request. He stated that at the last CATG meeting, a request for two dropped kerbs in Hercules Way to allow a disabled resident to access the Bowerhill Sports Field and the Milk Churn Public House was closed. He reported that he was given to understand from the Wiltshire Council member that one of the reasons that Wiltshire Council Highways were against this request was that two further dropped kerbs would be required to enable a safe route over to the Sports Field and onto Portal Road. Cllr. Carter felt that this was not the case, as he said the resident could cross the road between Hercules Way and Lysander Way as there was one dropped kerb and another section of kerb that had dropped as was only 2” high. He had raised the issue again with the Melksham Community Engagement Manager, and a site meeting took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> January with CATG members and Cllr Baines as the Parish Council representative. The area was surveyed and the Wiltshire Council Highways Officer recommended a safe route which would require 6 x dropped kerbs, which would now need to be approved by the Parish Council to be raised as a new Area Board issue.
- The members discussed this request at length, and the advice of the Highways Engineer which was that 6 dropped kerbs were required to provide a safe route; residents should not be encouraged to use inappropriate and unsafe routes created by highway defects. This resident had requested a dropped kerb at De Havilland Place, which the Parish Council supported, and this work was carried out. However, there were complications with a man hole, which caused the job to be more expensive. It was noted that there

could be two further complications with man holes to be worked around if this latest request was taken forward, which could incur additional costs. It was noted that the ball park figure for 6 x dropped kerbs was £6,000. The usual format was that the parish council would be expected to pay 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of this cost, however, the CATG members who had attended the site meeting had indicated that CATG would not support the installation of 6 x dropped kerbs for one resident to access leisure facilities. Therefore, there may be the expectation that if the Parish Council supported this request then it may have to fully fund it. There were concerns that if 6 x dropped kerbs were provided for one resident that other residents in the parish would have an expectation the Parish Council could keep providing dropped kerbs, which funds would not allow. It was also noted that this area is an industrial estate not a residential area.

It was noted that the Parish Council were currently seeking Area Board funding to install a new footway at the Hornchurch Area of Public Open Space to connect the existing footways to create a circular all-weather route, for the benefit of all residents. It was questioned whether there was a particular reason why the resident wished to access the Sports Field as the Hornchurch Road open space was in the new development on Bowerhill where dropped kerbs had been installed by the developer. Cllr. Carter stated that the resident didn't just want to access the Sports Field, but also the Milk Churn public house. **Recommended:** *The Parish Council do not support the request for 6 x dropped kerbs in Hercules Way.*

- 430/17 **Highways Issues Outside Schools in the Parish:** Correspondence had been received from a resident of Corsham Road, Whitley with regard to parked cars on Corsham Road just past First Lane, blocking visibility for residents emerging from their driveways at school drop off and pick up time. The resident had also contacted the school, who had said that they would raise the matter of inconsiderate parking again in their school newsletter. Additionally, the school had invited residents to attend a meeting with regard to their revised travel plan, but that no residents had attended. The resident had also been offered the opportunity to attend this evening's meeting to give her views. It was noted that there are similar situations in all schools in the parish. **Recommended:** *The Council reply to the resident stating that they are pleased to see that the school are addressing the issue via their newsletter and have been reviewing their travel plan.*
- 431/17 **Footpaths and Rights of Way:** A resident of the parish had offered to report to the council the condition of footpaths in the parish. He had produced some fantastic spreadsheets highlighting issues. Of note, was the fact that two stiles on two different public footpaths had been removed, namely MELW30 And MELW47, which had been reported to the Rights of Way Officer who was investigating this. Additionally, the resident had highlighted that many directional discs were missing and had offered to install new ones if they were supplied to him; the Rights of Way Officer was happy with this. **Recommended:** *This comprehensive list of footpath issues was forwarded to the Rights of Way Officer for reference and that a letter of thanks was sent to the resident.*
- 432/17 **Flooding in Whitley:** Cllr. Baines gave an update on the recent property flooding in Whitley on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2018. This flooding was due to a blocked gully; swift action

was taken to clear the gully by Wiltshire Council, with further action planned to clear the watercourse. The update from Wiltshire Council Highways was that the jetting machine attended the gully on 22<sup>nd</sup> January and had restored some flow, however, the discharge headwall was covered over and restricting the flow. A JCB was due to attend the site on 25<sup>th</sup> January to clear the headwall and resort the original flow. Some work may be required in the neighbouring field and the landowner had given permission for Wiltshire Council to gain access. It was noted that this area and the property in question had never flooded before.

The Clerk reported that one of the Flood Wardens had come into the office today and discussed the previous comments made by Cllr. Chivers that access to the CAWS CEG (Community Action Whitley Shaw Community Emergency Group) equipment could not be gained on the 21<sup>st</sup> January and that a pump had to be borrowed. The Flood Warden informed that Cllr. Chivers was incorrect in his statement and wanted to make it clear that the Flood Wardens were in attendance on that evening and that it was the CEG pump and equipment that was used to pump the water out of the property. All the Flood Wardens have access to the CEG storage facility, and only they should be able to take and use the equipment, it should not be available to the general public. Additionally, the CEG have a robust system for communicating with each other and being available to deploy the equipment. The Flood Warden reported that this gully had been blocked by stone, rubble and sludge, which appears to have been washed down stream.

It was considered that this gully should be added to the list of vulnerable gullies.

The Clerk reported that the Parish Steward had gone out at 7.00am on the morning that he was due in the parish checking that all the vulnerable gullies were working and clear. There had also been concerns in Westlands Lane, Beanacre with the water level in a watercourse to the rear of some of the properties getting very high with a couple of gardens with some flooding. However, there was no internal property flooding. The Wiltshire Council Drainage Engineer attended the site and discovered that there was a blocked drainage pipe that was running under the gardens of several properties in Westland Lane, and under riparian ownership rules, the homeowners will be written to and asked to clear this drainage pipe.

***Recommended: 1. A letter of thanks to be sent to CAWS CEG stating that it is most unfortunate that their efforts have been undermined by uninformed comments. 2. The gully in Whitley which caused internal property flooding to be requested to be added to the Wiltshire Council list of vulnerable gullies.***

#### 433/17 **Transport:**

**a) GWR Franchise Consultation:** It was noted that the current GWR Franchise had already been extended, and was being extended again to give them time to deliver the electrification of the network. The re-franchise of the whole network in the South West would then take place. The response to the consultation from the Melksham Rail Users Group were noted. Cllr. Glover had attended the public presentation event held in Trowbridge, and felt that the information given by the DfT (Department of Transport) was very interesting, stating that if additional trains were considered to be required that this had to be backed up with evidence of the need. Members felt that with new rolling stock that reliability of service would increase. It was considered that diesel trains should not be run along the Southampton to Brighton electric line, and that with some co-ordination of timetabling of services and connections at Fareham, this line could run without

any diesel trains. It was felt a necessity that co-ordination of services was built into the franchise.

The Consultation suggests that the Metro West around Bristol could pick up local service to Gloucester and Westbury. Members felt that this could also run to Chippenham to serve the re-instated Corsham Station, otherwise there is no train service which could provide a stopping train to Corsham, unless the Bristol to Oxford line was re-instated, but this had run into Fpathing problems at Swindon and Didcot. These suggestions require infrastructure change, where Network Rail would need to work more closely with the train operator and co-operate to agree changes to accommodate both passenger and freight over the same infrastructure.

The main requirements specifically for Melksham were considered to be improvements to the platform which were scheduled to take place this year, a move towards an hourly service in each direction and a later train, to address the requirements of the people of Melksham. In the longer term, the residents of Melksham could benefit from removing the 3 franchises from Swindon down to Southampton Airport, and making that potential route a joined-up route, giving the ability for residents to access the South Coast and Salisbury more easily as well as Southampton Airport.

The Intercity train on the Hampshire and Thames Valley line currently stops at Great Bedwyn a couple of times a day, which continues down to Westbury and the West Country. But there are virtually no trains that go from Westbury to Great Bedwyn. The suggested proposal is that the train does not terminate at Great Bedwyn, but that the line is moved on to terminate at Westbury to give people the opportunity to commute from East Wiltshire to West Wiltshire, and for people from North and South Wiltshire to be able to get to East Wiltshire. This would also provide a vastly improved service at Pewsey.

There is a suggestion within the consultation for an hourly service from London to Exeter, calling at Westbury, Castle Cary and Taunton, and if this is a stopping service then it would be possible to pick up stops at Newbury, Great Bedwyn and Pewsey. This would enable the proposal for the re-opening of Devizes Parkway Station to take place.

**Resolved:** *The Parish Council responds to the GWR Franchise Consultation supporting all the comments made by Graham Ellis in the response made by TransWilts, and adding any additional comments raised by the Parish Council at this evening's meeting.*

- b) Possible Loss of National Express Service from Melksham to London and Return:** Cllr. Chivers had suggested that due to the redevelopment of the Market Place that the National Express Service from Melksham to London, and return, may be in jeopardy as it no longer has anywhere to stop to pick up passengers. It was noted that this service dropped passengers off at the entrance to the Factory Outlet Shop, and it was queried why passengers could not also get on board here. Members felt that they were unable to make comment without further information.

434/17 **Parish Steward:**

- a) List of Completed Tasks:** This list was noted.  
**b) List of New Requests:** The Committee noted the list of new requests to be actioned in February when the Parish Steward was back in the parish.

**Recommended:** *Clearance of the drainage grip opposite the entrance to the*

*National Grid in Westlands Lane to be added to the list, after it has been checked with the Highways Engineer that this would be effective and not have a negative impact.*

435/17 **Traffic Orders:** The Members noted the new Wiltshire Council car park charges effective from 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2018.

Meeting closed at 10.08pm

Chairman, 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2018