

MINUTES of the Highways & Streetscene Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 30th April, 2018 at Crown Chambers, Melksham at 7.45p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Alan Baines (Committee Chair), Richard Wood (Council Chair), Paul Carter, Mary Pile, Paul Taylor and Terry Chivers.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Jo Eccleston (Parish Officer).

Cllrs. David Pafford and Greg Coombes as observers.

Invited Guests: Paul Millard (Wiltshire Council Senior Rights of Way Officer) and Brian Flynn, Brian Micklam and Peter Henden from the West Wilts Ramblers.

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

575/17 **Apologies:** Cllr. John Glover (Council Vice-Chair) was on holiday; this was accepted.

576/17 **Declarations of Interest:** None.

577/17 **Dispensation Requests:** None.

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

578 /17 **Public Participation:**

Brian Micklam explained that the West Wilts Ramblers did not see themselves as just a walking group, but also as a maintenance group. He stated that more and more Wiltshire Council were reliant on volunteers. He reported that the West Wilts Ramblers have a working party every Tuesday morning, where they address issues with Rights of Way (RoWs), such as overgrown footpaths, repairs to stiles and the installation of kissing gates. He and his Rambler colleagues had attended this evening's meeting to see if they can work with the Parish Council to assist in addressing issues with RoWs in the parish. He explained, showing photos to the members, about the top ten RoWs in the parish that they consider need attention. Peter Henden reported that one of the biggest issues was the planting of Maize Crop. This is a significant factor in blocking RoWs due to its height and density and walkers avoid using footpaths rather than pushing their way through. It was noted that it was the landowner's responsibility to ensure that the footpath is kept clear. Brian Flynn asked whether the Parish Council were able to assist by writing to landowner's and farmers reminding them of their responsibility to keep footpaths clear and to provide a definite cut out through crops.

Paul Millard informed that landowners and farmers get a reminder from the NFU about crops and RoWs and that often informal chats with farmers is the most effective way to keep the RoWs clear as when they are busy they often don't have time to respond to postal requests. However, he stated that Wiltshire Council were currently in the process of developing a formal proforma which Town and Parish

councils could send out to landowners. He advised that Wiltshire Council were obliged to provide 25% of the cost of maintenance of RoWs with the other 75% being the responsibility of the landowner. He advised that parish volunteer groups, with 4/5 volunteers working with a representative of the Ramblers working party was the most effective way of addressing some RoWs issues. It was noted that the Parish had some very active community groups that may wish to get involved and Brain Flynn stated that he would be happy to walk the paths in the parish with anyone from the Parish Council to show them where action was required. It was noted that the Parish Council were due to put their quarterly newsletter in the Melksham News and would use this to appeal for volunteers.

The Council reconvened and agenda item 9 was brought forward for discussion.

579/17 **Footpaths and Rights of Way:**

a) **Parish Priority RoW for Restorative/Maintenance Works:** Cllr. Baines advised that 20 years ago there had been a "Path Hierarchy" map with RoW that were particularly useful and linked settlements taking maintenance priority, and that he still had the map which indicated this. It was noted that there are 4,000 miles of RoWs in Wiltshire with currently only 5 RoW officers. Wiltshire Council are due to have a staffing restructure and this will increase the RoW officers to 6, however, they will also be responsible for Country Parks and part of the Wilts & Berks Canal. It was considered that as the Parish Council already worked well with volunteers in the community that work should be carried out on a RoW that could be easily addressed so that success could be quickly shown and that more support from the community could be garnered to move onto the next footpath. It was noted that once footpaths had been cleared the challenge would be to keep them clear. It was felt that once clear it would encourage people to use these footpaths and keep them worn and open. Members considered correspondence from Broughton Gifford Parish Council who wish to put forward a scheme to clear the RoW from Broughton Gifford into Melksham so that the public can walk in using a route avoiding the road. This route includes a RoW in the Town parish and also a section in Melksham Without, MELW118. **Recommended 1:** *A working party meeting was scheduled to review the hierarchy map to select which footpaths would be the most used and best to address. 2. The short section of MELW118 to be cleared first to assist the parish of Broughton Gifford to achieve their scheme.*

b) **RoW Requests made by Residents:**

(i) **Wiltshire Council Request Number 2017/03:** Creation of a new RoW in the Woodrow Area. A circular route spurring off of MELW66, around most of No.1 Forest Farm holding.

(ii) **Wiltshire Council Request Number 2017/04:** Creation of a new RoW in the Woodrow Area. A duplication of MELK 6, which goes through the housing estate to Methuen Avenue, across to the river, over Black Bridge and into Murray Walk.

Members felt that the history of RoWs was for people to walk from settlement to settlement for a function, rather than circular routes, and that given the current condition of some of the existing RoWs that these should be concentrated on rather than creating new RoWs.

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Paul Millard explained that there had been a claim put in for both these routes based on 20 years of use. It would be up to Wiltshire Council, based on the evidence provided of this use, as to whether this is added to the Definitive Map. Landowners may object in which case there will be a Public Enquiry and a Planning Inspector will make a decision whether the footpaths are added to the Map. He did not believe that the Parish Council would be able to object to this, but they would be able to give their opinion or any additional evidence. It was noted that any works under the Wilts and Berks Canal route would also have an impact on RoWs in this area, as the tow path would become a RoW. He considered that the RoWs network was continually evolving and that now they were more about recreation and dog walking. He advised that if successful there was a two-year process for new RoWs to be approved and put into place.

(iii) **RoW Diversion at Tan House Farm:** It had been raised in public participation at the last Full Council meeting that a landowner in the Redstocks area was looking to request a diversion of a footpath at Tan House Farm, south east of the Solar Farm at the junction of two bridle ways, MELW25 and MELW25A. Paul Millard reported that the landowner had approached him with regard to a diversion, although no application has been submitted yet. It was believed that a barn was being converted into a residential dwelling under permitted development, and that the majority of walkers did not like walking through the gardens of properties. There has been a long-standing query on the Parish Claim route and the Definitive Map route of MELW25. As an application had not yet been submitted he couldn't clarify, however, there could be an opportunity to tidy up these anomalies.

The Council reconvened and went back to the meeting agenda order. The invited visitors and Cllr Pafford left the meeting.

580/17 **Documents & Correspondence:**

a) **Minutes of Last Highways and Streetscene Committee, 29th January 2018:**

The minutes were noted and that issues raised had been actioned.

b) **Wiltshire Council Highway Newsletters – (February, March, April & May):**

The members noted these newsletters. The Clerk drew attention to the May Newsletter and the "Introduction of a Town Discretionary Gully Service". This proposed a trial service for Town Councils to provide a highway gully emptying facility to enable them to clear problematic gullies which do not meet Wiltshire Council's intervention level for priority emptying. It was felt that priority should not just be given to towns, and that rural villages were at a higher risk of potential flooding due to the inevitable silt and soil residues left by farming practices. The Clerk advised that she would raise this at the forthcoming Highway meeting for Town and Parish Councils.

581/17 **CATG (Community Area Transport Group) Meeting, 8th March, 2018:**

a) **Actions/Log of CATG meeting:** The progress of the following issues was noted:

(i) **From Issue 5381 – Whitley Top Lane – Request to Improve Bus Stop**

Hard Standing: The Parish Council had committed to one third contribution to

the cost of this project. The CATG recommended that they award the other two thirds at £2,418.52.

(ii) **From Issue 5040 –Melksham Woodrow Road – Request to Extend 30mph Limit:** This had been approved and a construction pack issued for works to be implemented.

(iii) **From Issue 5718 – A365 Nr. Mallory Place – Request for Bowerhill Name Plate:** The Parish Council had approved a spend of £300 for this project, but the cost had come in at £320. CATG had requested that Cllr. Baines confirmed that this was acceptable.

(iv) **From Issue 6166 – Sandridge Lane – request for Road Safety Signs:** This was a new issue, and Wiltshire Council to advise what signs might be useful/appropriate.

b) Actions Arising from CATG Meeting:

(i) **From Issue 5718 – A365 Nr. Mallory Place – Request for Bowerhill Name Plate:** *Recommended: The Parish Council agree to paying the extra £20 for the works to be undertaken.*

(ii) **From Issue 6167 – Wellington Drive, Bowerhill – No Through Road Sign:** Cllr. Baines advised that there may not be a charge for this sign, as there was previously a no through road sign at the entrance to the road which was now missing.

582/17 Resident's Requests:

a) **Request for Further Action re Speeding Traffic on Semington Road:** The members noted the response from the Senior Traffic Engineer to the Council's queries about priority road signs at the road calming chicanes, as per Min.333/17 and Min.336/17d. He had stated that although there were no vertical signs indicating priority that the arrangement is signed by road markings and the right of way is defined. The members considered that this signage is not explicit and is unclear to some motorists who has priority.

Recommended: The Parish Council support the installation of 4no. priority signs, one at both ends of both sets of road calming chicanes in Semington Road, and that this is raised as an Area Board Issue.

b) **Request to Relocate Bus Stop Opposite the Pear Tree Public House, top Lane Whitley:** A resident felt that this was a poor location for a bus stop and had requested via Wiltshire Cllr. Alford that it was moved. It was acknowledged that when the bus stopped it did block the entrance to First Lane, but that it was not for long and did assist in slowing down traffic on Top Lane. It was considered too cost prohibitive to move the bus stop and in addition had recently had works undertaken to improve it. *Recommended: The Parish Council do not support this request.*

c) **Request to Move Telegraph Pole on A3102 opposite new Road to make Footway Wider:** It was noted that this was not a telegraph pole, but an electricity pole. It would therefore be too difficult and costly to move. It was noted that this footway was installed for access to the old Forest and Sandridge School, previously located on Sandridge Common, and that this pole had always been there. It was acknowledged that the vegetation could be cleared to the pole to make the footway wider. *Recommended: The Parish Council do not support the request for the electricity pole to be moved, but they do add clearance of vegetation around the pole to the Parish Steward list.*

- d) **Complaints about Increased Parking Outside the Toast Office, Top Lane, Whitley:** It was noted that concerns had been raised about parking outside of the Toast Office as buses and large vehicles were damaging the ditch opposite as they tried to pass parked vehicles. It was noted that the parking had increased and become an issue as the Toast Office now serves food, so its customers were parking for extended periods outside of the shop. The effectiveness of this ditch was being compromised as larger vehicles were pushing the road verge into the ditch. This issue would be further compounded by the increase of further bus journeys in each direction using this route every day. There would now be 25 buses in each direction on the new D3 service on weekdays, plus a possible 4 each way on the Zig-zag (between Purlpit and First Lane) giving 50 buses a day past the Toast Office. This area had been subjected to severe flooding in the past, with the wall of the post office being knocked over by the swathe of water, and internal flooding to property. This had resulted in two residents having to vacate their property. It was felt that yellow lines would not be effective in this area and would take at least two years to be considered by Wiltshire Council.
Recommended: *The Parish Council approach the Toast Office stating that they are pleased to see that this new business is doing so well, but that its success means that there is now a problem with parking which is causing damage to the kerb and ditch opposite. Highlight to the Toast Office that this could potentially cause flooding to their property and others in Top Lane and therefore request that they encourage their customers to park so that buses and large vehicles can pass easily.*
- e) **Request for 30mph Repeater Signs on Shaw Hill and Corsham Road and reduced Speed Limit on Bath Road:** **Recommended:** Officers had replied to the resident's request stating that 30mph speed limit repeater signs were not permitted by law as there are street lights on both Shaw Hill and Corsham Road which denote that this is a 30mph limit. The legal requirements for speed limit changes had also been explained and Officers had stated that this could be put forward for consideration by CATG if supported by the Parish Council. It was noted that the resident had not responded to say that they wished this issue to be taken forward.
- f) **Request for Reduction of Speed Limit on Norrington Lane:** An Area Board request had been raised for a reduction in speed limit on Norrington Lane from the national speed limit to 30mph. It was noted that only a short section of Norrington Lane was in the parish. The members considered that there had not been any material changes to this road to support a metro count which would be required as evidence of speeding, and that only one resident had requested this. **Recommended:** *The Parish Council do not support this request.*

9.30pm – Cllr. Pile left the meeting.

583/17 **Traffic Orders:**

- a) **Feedback from meeting with Taylor Wimpey – re Pathfinder Way (Planning Application 16/01123/OUT):** The members noted the notes from the meeting as follows:

Notes from Meeting with Developers Taylor Wimpey – re: Closure of Pathfinder Way for Highways Works being undertaken for Planning Application 16/01123/OUT & 17/06285 (reserved matters relating to access) – Wednesday 18th April at 10.15am at Crown Chambers.

Present: Cllrs. Richard Wood (Chairman), Paul Carter, Alan Baines and David Pafford.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) and Jo Eccleston (Parish Officer).

Taylor Wimpey Representatives: Steve Baker (Engineering Manager) and Ben Hodges.

Mr. Baker gave an update on the progress of the reserved matters application which they were hoping to submit very shortly. The plans now show that the children's play area, LEAP (Local Equipped Area of Play), has been relocated on the east of the site next to the attenuation pond. The Parish Council had requested this and welcomed the fact that this was now on the same side of the road as the majority of housing.

He informed that Pathfinder Way will require a road closure for the highways works to be undertaken and wanted the advice of the Parish Council with regard to potential routes for diversions. He explained that Taylor Wimpey had been in discussions with Wiltshire Council Highways Officers with regard to a Section 278 Highways Works Licence. It was hoped that work would commence in August/September with a 3-month duration. The linkage in services between the west site and east site would be done first before the highways construction of Pathfinder Way, and the current overhead high voltage electricity cables will be placed underground. There are five sets of Toucan Crossings to be installed and there will be three phases to the highways works:

1. Pathfinder Way
2. Spa Road
3. Western Way

Mr. Baker stated that it was their view that these works would be carried out in succession, but only Pathfinder Way would require a complete continuous road closure, as the other works would be carried out using temporary traffic lights. He informed that Taylor Wimpey use a separate contractor to carry out their on-site groundworks to that of their highways work. Therefore, once the access arrangements to Pathfinder Way were complete they could then commence works on site, whilst the highways works to Spa Road and Western Way continued. He stated that for site construction there would be a compound for materials in the south western corner of the eastern site, and that there would probably be a compound for materials in the northern end of one of the sites for the highways works to Pathfinder Way.

The Parish Council explained that Pathfinder Way was on Wiltshire Council's "Major Maintenance" List for future repairs and resurfacing. This was explained during an earlier meeting with other Taylor Wimpey representative. The Parish Council felt that it made sense for any maintenance work to Pathfinder Way to be carried out by the developer at the same time as the works undertaken as part of the planning application for the development, and that this could be negotiated with Wiltshire Council. Otherwise the CIL contributions made by the developer could very well end up being spent at a future date on the section of Pathfinder Way not addressed as part of this planning application. Mr. Baker concurred, as Taylor Wimpey did not want their newly constructed road dug up at a later date.

Additionally, with this approach the Parish Council hoped to prevent two separate road traffic management issues and the inevitable inconvenience to residents. The Parish Council informed that HGVs should only use Portal Road to access the Industrial side of Bowerhill and signage informing of this should be extremely clear so that Sat Navs do not send lorry drivers through the residential side of Bowerhill via either Hornchurch Road or Falcon Way. The signage should also make it clear that there should be no site traffic using these two residential roads either. It was noted that due to the on-street parking of lorries and trailer units on Lancaster Road and Lysander Road, that it is currently difficult for large vehicles to pass each other. There were concerns that with all HGVs having to use these roads to enter the industrial estate that it could lead to congestion, and the parked lorries would prevent two HGVs from passing each other. The Parish Council suggested that Lancaster Road and Lysander Road were made one-way in a clockwise direction for the duration of the closure of Pathfinder Way to prevent potential congestion and possible queuing on Portal Road.

The Bus routes were discussed, and it was felt that the local buses would not want to use the east side of Halifax Road past the school through the road calming measures to create a circular route. It was considered that in order for all the stops on the bus route to still be served that the best route would be for buses to still use the west side of Halifax Road, but to then completely go around the Halifax Road roundabout and return back down the west side of Halifax Road. The Parish Council stated that it was extremely important that Taylor Wimpey and Wiltshire Council consulted with residents and local businesses with regard to the Road Closure. It was noted that there were approximately 150 businesses on Bowerhill which could be affected, in addition to Christie Miller Sports Centre and other sporting and recreational facilities. The Clerk informed that there was a security company on the Industrial side of Bowerhill, Security 2000, which at least half of the businesses on Bowerhill contributed to, and that they would also need to be informed.

The Parish Council explained that the A350 was exceptionally busy at commuter times, with queuing traffic on a daily basis. It was felt that any diversion signage should be placed further afield than Melksham to enable drivers to consider alternative routes, rather than driving through Melksham if that was not their final destination. It was explained to Taylor Wimpey that there are other housing developments in the Parish, either currently underway or at reserved matters, and that they may wish to contact these developers to coordinate any S278 works. Additionally, they should make it very clear via their signage where their development was so that site traffic and deliveries did not end up at one of these other developments. Mr. Baker thanked the Parish Council for this information and stated that he would get in contact with the other developers. He informed that the marketing name for their development was "Pathfinder Place". The Parish Council advised that in order to integrate this new development with the rest of Bowerhill that street names should follow an RAF theme. The developers were happy with this.

The recent meeting with the Wiltshire Council Public Art Officer was also discussed. It was explained that the Parish Council would like to see the history of Bowerhill as an RAF base incorporated into the Public Art with perhaps a sculpture of some kind. It was noted that the new Air Ambulance HQ were installing a skeleton sculpture of a helicopter at their entrance. The Parish Council

were thinking along similar lines, but with a skeleton sculpture of an aeroplane. The Public Art Officer had asked that the mountings or poles to attach any public art were installed during the construction phase, as this was easier than a retrofit. Mr. Baker was happy with this approach and asked to be kept informed about any Public Art Scheme.

b) Pre-consultation for Speed Limit Changes and Introduction of pedestrian Crossings on Various Roads around Bowerhill (as a result of Pathfinder Way Application): *Recommended:* *The Council reply to the consultation with the comments made in their notes from the meeting with Taylor Wimpey on 18th April, 2018.*

c) Wiltshire Council Consultation on Proposed Traffic Regulation Orders for Off-Street Parking: *Recommended:* *The Parish Council do not make comment on this consultation.*

584/17 **SID (Speed Indicator Device):** It was noted that the SID was currently in West Hill, erected on the metal pole by the children's day nursery. The CAWS CEG (Community Action Whitley Shaw – Community Emergency Group) had been monitoring the device as there had been reports that it was not activating properly. It was noted that the device was reacting at the last minute to approaching traffic that was speeding. It was considered that this could be due to the angle of the device in relation to the traffic which was travelling uphill. It was felt that if the top attachment bracket was loosened slightly that this could rectify the problem. It was additionally noted that this was the only metal pole in Top Lane and therefore the only viable location for the siting of the SID. It was considered that although it was slow to react to speeding traffic that it was still a deterrent. ***Recommended:*** *West Hill remains a location for the SID and when it is next scheduled for deployment that the Town Council Caretakers are asked directly if they could loosen the top brackets when attaching the device.*

585/17 **Parish Steward:**

a) List of Completed Tasks: It was noted that the Parish Steward had been seconded to road gritting and pot hole repairs, and thus recent tasks had not been undertaken.

b) List of New Requests: The Committee noted the list of new requests to be actioned when the Parish Steward was back in the parish. A new request for clearance of brambles from the kissing gate at Brabazon Way was considered. It was noted that this kissing gate led to a permissive path and was not under the usual remit of the Parish Steward. However, the RoW Officer had installed it and some steps due to concerns over the steep bank and the potential for pedestrians to slip into the road in wet conditions. ***Recommended:*** *The clearance of brambles from the kissing gate on Brabazon Way to be added to the Parish Steward list.*

c) Priority of Requests: The Clerk advised that the Officers had delegated powers to prioritise requests based on the following:

1. Prevention of Flooding to Internal Property
2. Health & Safety concerns (not considered serious enough for Wiltshire Council to action)
3. Other

As the officers were receiving numerous requests for the Parish Steward to address issues, she sought clarification that the members still wished jobs to be allocated

according to these priorities. **Recommended:** *The Officer's delegated powers to allocate jobs to the Parish Steward based on the above priority to continue.*

Meeting closed at 9.55pm

Chairman, 14th May, 2018