

MINUTES of the Highways & Streetscene Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 22 July 2024 at Melksham Without Office Space (First Floor), Melksham Community Campus, Market Place, Melksham, SN12 6ES at 7.40pm

Present: Councillors Alan Baines (Committee Chair), Terry Chivers, Mark Harris, Martin Franks, David Pafford (Vice Chair of Council and Committee Vice Chair) and Robert Shea-Simonds

In attendance: Councillor Richard Wood and 4 Members of public (for part of meeting)

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

124/23 Welcome, Announcements & Housekeeping

As the outgoing Chair of the Highways Committee, Councillor Baines welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through the fire evacuation procedures for the building and that the meeting was being recorded to aid the minutes, which would be published on YouTube and deleted once the minutes had been approved.

125/24 Chairman & Vice Chair of Highways & Streetscene Committee for 2024/25

a) To elect Chair of the Highways & Streetscene Committee for 2024/25

Resolved: To elect Councillor Alan Baines as Chair of the Highways & Streetscene Committee for 2024/25.

b) To elect Vice-Chair of the Highways & Streetscene Committee for 2024/25.

Resolved: To elect Councillor David Pafford as Vice Chair of the Highways & Streetscene Committee for 2024/25.

126/23 To receive Apologies and approval of reasons given

Apologies were received from Councillor Glover who was on holiday.

Councillor Wood was in attendance to observe the meeting regarding item 10(b) on the agenda relating to Semington Road.

Resolved: To approve and accept the reasons for absence.

127/23 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.

128/23 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.

129/24 Public Participation

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

Two residents of Semington Road were in attendance to express their concern at traffic issues on Semington Road:

- Speeding traffic. Whilst appreciating the parish council has looked at options to try and resolve the situation feel the only solution would be to install speed cushions or something similar, in order to slow traffic down from the roundabout near the mobile home park to the Police Station.
- Semington Road is used as a rat run due to employment development at Hampton Park, particularly during shift changes throughout the day. Whilst it is appreciated people have every right to drive down Semington Road, it causes issues for residents.
- There are chicanes to try and slow traffic down, unfortunately, it encourages bad driving. One resident had experienced a driver not stopping at a chicane, despite the resident having right of way.
- The chicanes have become an opportunity for people to park in front or behind them, which causes issues and obstructs cyclists from using the cycle lane, therefore they have to go out into the middle of the road to get around vehicles.
- Whilst one resident expressed concern at the lack of Police enforcement, the other resident with a background in policing appreciated resources were stretched and therefore not to expect a great amount of enforcement by the Police or any

other agency.

- There is a lot of on-street parking, particularly on one stretch of Semington Road on a blind bend which causes visibility issues for drivers trying to negotiate them.
- The road is busier now than previously given new residential development with even more due to take place.
- Cycle Route 403 runs along Semington Road, however, there is only about 50 yards of actual cycle way. There is a considerable number of cyclists using Semington Road, therefore, a cycleway should be provided all the way along it, particularly as people may be less likely to park on a cycleway than they would a single white line or double yellow lines for instance.
- Parking on pavements is an issue and causes an obstruction.

Councillor Chivers expressed concern at installing speed humps as there were examples elsewhere in the County where they had been installed, only for people to ask for them to be removed once in place due to the noise made particularly by lorries driving over them in the middle of night.

A resident was in attendance to discuss the condition of a stile in Beanacre on MELW97 which was rotten and falling down and needed replacing and expressed concern if it did fall down, their horses would access the A350. The resident also asked as well as being repaired if there was a possibility the stile could be replaced with a kissing gate, particularly as they were registered disabled and the person who owned the land also had mobility issues. Concern was also expressed the stile had been screwed to the back of the stable wall and if the stile fell even further the stable would go with it.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

With regard to the issues on Semington Road, Councillor Baines stated as follows:

Speeding

This was a problem everywhere, noting Semington Road qualified for a speed indicator device and Community Speedwatch.

Parking

This was also an issue elsewhere but had sympathy for the concerns, given the curve in the road making visibility difficult. However, there were no restrictions on parking on Semington Road at present and to get these installed would take considerable time.

The issue of vehicles parking adjacent to chicanes and obstructing the cycleway could be raised with the local Police.

Police Enforcement

Unfortunately, there was no Police enforcement, even with the necessary restrictions in place.

The lack of visible cycleway

Wiltshire Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) (on the agenda for discussion) included a proposal for improved cycleway on Semington Road into town.

The Clerk informed the meeting she had met with the Police and PSCO the previous week and they had specifically asked for where speeding occurred in the parish. Therefore, had provided them with the speed indicator device (SID) schedule for their information and agreed to forward the shift change timings of businesses on Hampton Park, as mentioned earlier in the meeting.

Councillor Franks informed the meeting he had witnessed commercial vehicles from Hampton Park using Semington Road and felt being good neighbours they should be encouraged to use the by-pass.

Councillor Baines suggested speed cushion (raised surfaces) was probably the best option as these would not impact the buses as Semington Road was used as a bus route, noting traffic calming on Forest Road caused issues for buses and this was something to forward to LHFIG for consideration.

The Clerk explained the Road Safety Working Party had looked at safety on Semington Road and had come up with a list of suggestions to try and improve the situation with recommendations for consideration later in the meeting. One suggestion was consulting with residents of Semington Road, via the Berryfield Buzz local publication, on what they felt about traffic calming, particularly as this can be quite contentious.

Councillor Baines agreed speed cushions often created noise and additional pollution due to vehicles slowing down and speeding up to negotiate traffic calming.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow a resident of Semington Road to speak to this item.

The resident explained due to parked vehicles already outside their property this meant they were already suffering with noise

and pollution from vehicles waiting to pass them, and therefore it would not make a difference if traffic calming was installed.

Councillor Baines queried if parking vehicles were already causing vehicles to slow down whether additional traffic calming would help in slowing vehicles down.

The resident felt if speed cushions were installed people would be aware and therefore would slow down.

Councillor Baines suggested the way forward was raising the matter of additional traffic calming to the Local Highway & Improvement Group (LHFIG) and referring parking issues, speeding, particularly at shift change, and parking on the pavement to the Police. To also write to businesses on Hampton Park, to politely request that to be good neighbours they advise their employees and visitors to use the Bypass where possible.

Councillor Harris asked in writing to the Police to ask them if they could clarify the law with regard to parking adjacent to build outs/chicanes.

It was asked if item 10 regarding recommendations from the Road Safety meeting on 10 June 2024 and item 9(b) regarding a request for a new kissing gate at Beanacre could be moved further up the agenda which was agreed. With the minutes recorded at Min 133/24 and Min 132(a) respectively.

130/24 To note Minutes of last Highways & Street Scene Committee meeting held on 8 April 2024 and updates on actions taken.

a) Condition of Footpath from Redstocks to Bowerhill.

Correspondence had been received from the Highways Officer and Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder on the schedule to undertake repair and resurfacing work.

Members noted work was currently being undertaken to widen the footpath by clearing back the encroaching vegetation and any defects revealed to a large extent had been repaired as best they could without resurfacing the whole path.

Thanks were expressed to Wiltshire Councillor Holder and the Area Highway Engineer for lobbying Wiltshire Council to get this work undertaken.

b) New white lining request on A365/Hornchurch Road junction.

The Clerk informed the meeting she had enquired with

Wiltshire Council in April how to get the revised road markings installed when the A365 was resurfaced later in the year to be informed the request should be sent through the Local Highway & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) for consideration. However, this request had previously been submitted to them but paused as there was now a housing allocation in the draft Local Plan adjacent to Melksham Oak school that will change the road layout here, and a and a petition for a 20mph speed limit outside the school. Therefore, suggested re-submitting the request through LHFIG as the parish council were struggling to find a mechanism to get the white lining installed as part of the resurfacing work as the white lines will be painted then.

Recommendation: To re-submit the request for white lining on the A365/Hornchurch Road junction to the Local Highway & Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) to enable the work to take place when the white lines are reinstated as part of the resurfacing work later in the year.

c) Replacement of halos on belisha beacons on Corsham Road, Whitley.

Members noted both halos on the belisha beacons on the crossing on Corsham Road near Shaw School would be replaced with new ones.

The Clerk asked if it was worth writing to Wiltshire Council to suggest these were installed in the next 6 weeks during the school holidays, with Members agreeing to this suggestion.

131/24 Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG)

a) To note Minutes and action log of Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) meeting held on 7 May 2024.

(i) Issue 9-22-17: Melksham Without (various roads) request for Parking Control Measures

The implementation costs of £4000 were being asked to be shared between Melksham Without Parish Council, Melksham Town Council, Semington Parish Council and the Local Highway & Footway Improvement Group.

Recommendation: To approve the £1000 share of the £4,000 implementation costs associated with parking control measures.

(ii) Issue 9-23-4: ANPR Camera, Semington Road

It was noted the ANPR camera had now been installed at the bus gate on Semington Road, with the Clerk reporting 103 drivers had been caught driving through the bus gate in the week since it was installed. Tickets had been sent out that day mainly to Trowbridge addresses, with one person caught 8 times.

Councillor Chivers suggested the Melksham Independent News be made aware of the number of people who had been caught since the camera had been installed, with Members agreeing to this suggestion.

Councillor Baines noted someone who had a key for the bus gate had advised that they were going to cut keys for their neighbours which was in contravention of the Traffic Order, as they were not farm vehicles accessing agricultural land or Wiltshire Air Ambulance agreed uses, with the resident being informed as such by the Clerk.

The Clerk informed the meeting a resident of Semington Road beyond the bus gate had asked if they could have a key to the bus gate, having been informed previously this was not possible. Therefore, sought a steer from Members if they wished this request to be included on the Full Council agenda for consideration, as this request had not been included on this agenda as received after publication.

The Clerk highlighted the costs associated in changing the legal order to allow the resident access through the bus gate would be between £2,500 to £3000.

Councillor Franks felt the resident was part of the parish and therefore cut off as the bus gate was located in the wrong place.

Councillor Baines informed the meeting the parish council had assisted the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Trust in requesting the bus gate be moved when they had their Headquarters constructed. However, Wiltshire Council required significant sums of money in order to do this and both Wiltshire Air Ambulance Trust and the parish council could not justify the expense to move the bus gate.

Recommendation: To refer the resident to Wiltshire Council.

iii) Issue 9-23-10: Weight Limit Signage, Corsham Road, Whitley.

Members noted the new signage had been installed, however, additional costs had been incurred for additional traffic management of £218.23 which the Clerk had approved. Whilst there was an increase in costs for this project, it was noted the parish council had saved costs from other highway improvement project requests elsewhere in the parish.

132/24 To consider requests for support by the Parish Council including requests for the Local Highways & Footpath Improvement Group (LHFIG) next meeting on 15 August 2024

a) Valentia Court, Bowerhill and issues exiting driveway due to parked vehicles.

A request had been received for an 'H' Bar opposite a resident's driveway on Valentia Court, however, the resident had subsequently withdrawn their request as they were now looking to move.

Councillor Baines noted 'H' bars were only to preserve access to a dropped kerb and not to stop vehicles parking opposite someone's drive.

b) New kissing gate, Beanacre. To consider replacing stile with kissing gate

Correspondence had been received from a resident requesting a broken/unsafe stile on MELW97, Beanacre be repaired and/or replaced with a kissing gate.

Councillor Baines noted the cost of replacing a stile with a kissing gate would be approximately £500 and felt this particular right of way was not well used and suggested asking the Rights of Way Warden to investigate.

With regard to using it to access any equestrian facility, he felt there must be other means of accessing the facility which did not require the use of the right of way and therefore on this ground alone could not justify seeking the installation of a kissing gate on what was potentially an obsolete right of way.

Councillor Pafford sought clarification at the costs associated with repairing the stile.

Councillor Baines clarified any costs associated with repairing a stile would be the responsibility of Wiltshire Council. However, if it were to be replaced by a kissing gate this request would have to go to the Local Highway & Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) for consideration and presumably the parish council would have to contribute towards the costs as with other requests.

Councillor Baines highlighted there were other public rights of way which if kissing gates were installed would help more people and suggested this request was a matter of the resident wanting to use it as a separate access to their equestrian facility.

The Parish Officer clarified Wiltshire Council had already been contacted some time ago to ask that the stile be repaired.

Recommendation: Not to progress this request and to ask the Rights of Way Team to fix the broken stile as a matter of urgency.

c) To consider a request for a Brown Tourism Sign directing people to community facilities on Top Lane, Whitley

Councillor Baines noted Brown Tourism Signs were only for tourists and the rules regarding provision of such signs meant that facilities had to be something which catered for visitors and was advertised. It would also have to be proven how many visitors they had. Businesses would also have to pay for the Highway Authority for the signs to be provided. A document regarding Brown Tourism Signs was available on Visit Wiltshire's website.

Given the criteria, Councillor Baines noted the community facilities would not be eligible for such signage, both the Pear Tree and bike shop and café may qualify. However, they needed to be advertising outside the area and drawing outside visitors to their facility, which he felt was not the case.

The Clerk agreed to forward the eligibility criteria to both The Pear Street and Spindles for their information.

d) To consider replacing rotten finger post on the canal tow path directing people to Tesco/Pilot Pub.

The Clerk explained Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG) had been successful in receiving funding via the Pathway Improvement Grants Scheme (PIGS) for a finger post which had been installed on the canal tow path quite a few years ago.

Unfortunately, the finger post had become rotten and had been set to one side awaiting repair, however, had since disappeared.

BRAG was currently talking to the Melksham Shed group on whether they were able to make a new sign, however discussions were still on-going, therefore the Clerk suggested putting in a request to the Local Highway & Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) for a new sign and if the Shed group were able to help, this request could be withdrawn at a later date.

Recommendation: To submit a request for a new finger post to the local Highway & Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG).

e) Semington Road, Berryfield

A resident of Semington Road had written to the parish council concerned at road highway safety issues due to the volume of parked vehicles restricting the view of drivers.

Concerns regarding parked vehicles was discussed under item 10 regarding road safety (Min 133/24).

133/24 Road Safety (standing item)

a) To approve the notes of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 and make recommendations to Full Council regarding Semington Road suggested improvements.

As the list of recommendations was extensive, it was agreed this needed to be prioritized in what was feasible.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow a resident of Semington Road to speak to this item.

The resident explained local businesses were being blamed for their employees etc speeding along Semington Road, however, a lot of the speeding traffic included other traffic avoiding the congestion on the A350.

Resolved: To approve the notes of the meeting held on 10 June 2024 and to submit the following recommendations to Full Council on 29 July for approval:

- To submit a request to the Local Highway & Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) to review the traffic calming measures on Semington Road and consider additional traffic calming measures, such as speed cushions, due to the speeding traffic and the material change to the road

due to the new housing development, both that already occupied (Bowood View) and that in construction (Buckley Gardens) and development with planning permission (to the rear of Townsend Farm).

- To write to businesses on Hampton Park West as good neighbours, seeking their assistance in trying to resolve the issue of speeding along Semington Road.
- To write to Highways to ask they look at the feasibility of installing a footway opposite Townsend Farm and incorporating a bus stop within this, noting the developers of Townsend Farm had to improve bus stops as part of their S106 Agreement.

Both residents of Semington Road and Councillor Wood left the meeting after this item.

b) To consider any items/projects for review by the Road Safety Working Group.

The Clerk suggested having noted in the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) it had details of fatalities and near misses of pedestrians and cyclists if this was something the working group could review to ascertain any accident hotspots.

Recommendation: For the Road Safety Group to review the data on pedestrian/cyclist fatalities and near misses in the LCWIP for any accident blackspots in the parish and to consider what measures could be put in place to address issues identified.

c) Westlands Lane, Traffic Survey Results.

Members noted the average 85th percentile speed of traffic following a traffic survey undertaken between 15 April and 21 April was recorded as 31.7mph and therefore did not qualify for Community Speed Watch or the deployment of a Speed Indicator Device (SID).

d) To receive progress report on new Community Speed Watch team for Bowerhill

The Clerk informed the meeting whilst volunteers had come forward to form a community speed watch team, this had stalled at present. Therefore, both herself and Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder had offered to help, but whilst they were aware of some of the volunteers, they did not know who Pathfinders Residents Association had recruited, therefore this was still work in progress.

e) Buckley Gardens.

The Clerk informed the meeting no response had been received from Wiltshire Council to the request for a meeting to discuss S106 highway improvements and suggested she contact the Area Ward Member, Councillor Jonathon Seed and Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder, Cabinet Member for Highways to assist in progressing this, which Members agreed.

f) New Road

The Clerk expressed frustration in trying to find the appropriate person at Wiltshire Council in order to discuss future improvements from proposed housing developments, particularly as Bloor Homes were keen to discuss what future highway improvements were required on New Road, therefore suggested she contact Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder, as both Ward Member and Cabinet Member for Highways to move this forward.

g) Berryfield Park

Members noted Selwood Housing had undertaken resurfacing work which was welcomed.

Councillor Franks informed the meeting various pothole repairs had been undertaken on Berryfield Lane between the cottages at the end of the lane and the A350 by Wiltshire Council.

134/24 Bus Shelters/Stops

a) To note response from Wiltshire Council to relocate the shelter adjacent to Telford Drive further back on Semington Road and consider a way forward.

Councillor Baines noted the bus shelter had been installed in the sight lines for the road junction of Telford Drive with Semington Road and therefore this issue needed to be resolved by Wiltshire Council, particularly as it had been installed in the visibility sight lines of an approved planning permission for Bowood View development and therefore should not have been located in its current position.

Members felt removing one of the end panels as suggested by Wiltshire Council, in order to provide better visibility was not an option, as anyone waiting in the shelter would also obscure visibility for drivers exiting Telford Drive. The parish council had therefore requested that the bus shelter be relocated in the correct position, with the recent correspondence giving a cost of this at £5,414.80 with only £2,450 left in the budget for s106

funding; the highways officer had asked the parish council to reconsider the option of replacing the side panel with a quarter panel again. The Clerk noted that the surplus s106 funding had previously been intended for RTI (Real Time Information) in the bus shelter, which had been requested at the time, but not installed due to the time implications of installing an electricity supply at the time; with it still being a desire of the council for all new bus stop/shelter installations.

Recommendation: To inform Wiltshire Council the shelter has been located in the wrong place and needed to be relocated further back at the cost of Wiltshire Council and to copy in Councillor Jonathon Seed as the Ward Member and Wiltshire Councillor Nick Holder, Cabinet Member for Highways.

b) Real Time Information displays (RTI).

Following a request for suitable locations for RTI in the parish, various locations had been put forward from various community groups and councillors, which the Committee reviewed.

Councillor Baines noted the parish council was still awaiting notification from Wiltshire Council if they had approved the use of battery operated RTI, noting where requests had come through, the shelters did not include an electric power supply.

Councillor Chivers left the meeting at 9.16pm during discussion on this item.

Recommendation: To recommend the following as a priority list for the installation of real time information (RTI):

- New bus shelter at the New Inn, Berryfield
- The bus stop opposite the Pear Tree, Top Lane, Whitley
- Bus stop, western side, Corsham Road, Whitley
- Bus stop opposite Beltane Place, Shaw
- New bus shelter in layby, Beanacre (near Westlands Lane)
- Bus shelter on western side of Pathfinder Way, Bowerhill
- Beaufort Close, Bowerhill bus shelter
- North bound bus shelter near Halifax Road/Pathfinder Way roundabout.
- Falcon Way (new bus shelter if installed)

135/24 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP). To consider response to the consultation on improved networks:

Concern was expressed at the quality of the LCWIP document and the number of inaccuracies within it.

The Clerk had compiled a response to the consultation which Members reviewed and provided additional comments which would be put before the Full Council meeting on 29 July for approval.

Councillor Baines left the meeting briefly during this item and asked Councillor Pafford to take over chairing the meeting.

Recommendation: To submit the response to the Full Council meeting on 29 July for their approval.

136/24 Speed Indicator Device (SID) (standing item)

a) To review the SID deployment schedule (as per point 16 of the Practice Notes – To review every 6 months)

Councillor Baines noted that following new contractors taking over the installation of the SID devices, the programme seemed to be going well.

Recommendation: To keep the current SID schedule.

b) To receive update on SID Data programme

The Parish Officer explained data collected from each location over a two-week period from the Evolis device was now being downloaded and sent directly to the Police for analysis. Having briefly reviewed the data provided the following highlights for the following locations:

Pathfinder Way (device facing Melksham traffic):

951 vehicles had been recorded over the 30mph speed limit.

The highest speed recorded was 81mph at 6.30am on Friday, 10 May, with another vehicle recorded doing 80mph on Thursday, 16 May at 1.30pm. Quite a few vehicles were recorded doing over 70mph.

Beanacre (facing traffic from Chippenham)

613 vehicles had been recorded over the 30mph speed limit.

Whilst quite a few vehicles were recorded doing over 70mph, the highest speed recorded was 86mph.

Outside Melksham Oak School (facing traffic from Melksham)

900 vehicles were recorded doing over the 30mph speed limit.

One vehicle was recorded doing 78mph at 8.30am on Monday, 15 July on the same day one vehicle was recorded doing 70mph at 9.00am, with another recorded doing 76mph at 12.30pm. However, the highest speed was recorded as 82mph on Monday, 8 July at 11.30am.

It was noted some of the higher speeds recorded may be attributed to emergency vehicles.

Councillor Baines noted the batteries on SID 2 whilst outside Melksham Oak School had run out within 10 days. Therefore, suggested if having the device set to record speeds over 30mph as per current guidelines meant the batteries would be continuing running out and asked if the device could be set to record speeds over 35mph, as per the previous guidelines and enabled the batteries to last the full two-week period and therefore be more effective.

Recommendation: The Clerk to discuss with Highways if the Evolis device could be set to record vehicles travelling over 35mph as per previous guidelines.

137/24 Proposed A350 Bypass (Standing Item):

The Clerk informed the meeting there were no updates since the last meeting and would write to the new Minister for Transport for an update.

138/24 To note Q & A list from Area Board Highways focused meeting held on 6 December 2023.

Noted.

139/24 Discretionary gully cleaning

Members noted the discretionary gully cleaning which had been undertaken in the parish and subsequent updates.

140/24 Weed Spraying

The Clerk explained this was still outstanding in the parish due to the level of rain experienced recently but was chasing when this would take place with it due at the beginning of August.

The Clerk drew to Members' attention the council may have to consider if any weed spraying takes place in September if weed spraying was undertaken in August.

Meeting closed at 10.00pm

Signed:.....
Chair, Full Council, 29 July 2024