

St Leonards & St Ives Parish Council
Minutes of the Public Meeting held on Wednesday 10th March 2010, 7pm
In the Main Hall, Braeside Road St Leonards

Councillors in attendance: Cllr Mrs S Smith, Chairman
Cllr R Bryan; Cllr R Dudman; Cllr M Dyer; Cllr N Hindmarch; Cllr Mrs J House; Cllr Mrs A Warman; Cllr R Warman.
Mr D Diaz and Mr J Turner Presenting and answering questions
Clerk: Mrs Ann Jacobs

The meeting was well attended by approximately 200 people.

Purpose of the Meeting: to receive a presentation from Dorset County Council on the need and planning of the project to resurface the A338 from Ashley Heath Roundabout to the Cooper Dean roundabout, a 6 ½ mile stretch.

An opening address was given by Cllr Mrs Smith.

The meeting then heard from Mr D Diaz the Project Manager, Dorset County Council.

Need: This part of the A338 was built in around 1968-1969 and had a life expectancy of 20 years. It is now well past its life expectancy and costs to maintain it are running at around £1m per year. These costs are set to increase due to the failing of the concrete layer underneath the tarmac. A bid to rebuild has been put in to the government, this included a business case. A final decision is expected on the bid on 25th March. We remain confident that this will be awarded.

Plan: We plan to rebuild the surface, and install a concrete central crash barrier. Project is scheduled to start September 2010 and due to finish by the end of April 2011. The project is scheduled in six phases. The Ashley Heath to Blackwater will be done first and then Blackwater to Cooper Dean. The A338 will remain open with only one lane in each direction. Traffic will be redirected on main A roads, including the A31. Local traffic will know other routes but we will do all we can do direct traffic on the A roads.

The recent clearance of the verges was needed to capture hibernating reptiles and move them out of the way of the work zone. This is required by European Legislation. We are looking at future plans for the verges to prevent having to carry out more clearance work. In addition we are reclaiming the ditches to prevent flooding. The Natural Environment team are looking at what planting can be put back which will grow quickly and suit the environment. Mr Diaz asked residents to provide information on problem areas.

7.25pm the presentation ended and the public were asked for questions.

Questions and statements from the public:

1. What speed limits will be in place whilst work is in progress?

Will probably be 40mph or 30mph.

2. The A338 only has two lanes what about breakdowns?

This will be difficult and we have contractors who will let us know how they will assist with recovery and how they will deal with breakdowns.

3. Those living close to the A338 and trying to sell their properties have lost sales due to noise, are you installing quieter tarmac?

The current condition of the road makes it worse, but we are considering it although, just resurfacing will help if done properly. The new surface should last 20 years, but we need to ensure it is a reliable surface.

4. We all know people will use Boundary Lane and Matchams. Will you put up weight warnings?

Weight limits are easy but managing them is very difficult. But we will discourage as much as possible. Possibly by taking away signs. We will be looking at traffic management.

5. Crash barriers from the Ashley Heath Roundabout. Since removal of trees accidents will go into the ditch. I believe a crash barrier from the Ashley Heath Roundabout down the A338 is essential. You could reuse the centre barrier to do this.

6. Wildlife from SSSI's are departing since the vegetation has been reduced. I believe you should have a noise reducing surface. You should lay at least the first 1 ½ miles where there is some housing.

We are currently considering the difficulties on leaving the Ashley Heath Roundabout to get on to the A338. This is solely a maintenance scheme. A requirement of the grant must be no betterment, that is specified by the Government and will be queried. The reuse of the crash barrier is an interesting suggestion and may be a viable option, depends on safety and suitability. We have stipulated a quieter surface but I cannot tell you exactly where. We will advise you once know. Sound barrier fencing we

would have to look to fund ourselves. We will be looking closely at vegetation planting in the hope of improving.

7. I am pleased that the reptiles are protected, but what about residents in Matchams Lane? Any measures to protect them?

No unless we can manage traffic speed for walkers and cyclists. It is a valid point and a concern.

8. You have a programme underway, what happens if no funding from the Government?

We cannot continue with the annual £1m maintenance cost, so if we do not get the 26m we are looking at what else we can do as we believe having committed so much already our view is that we cannot sit and wait we must get funding. We complied with all requirements of the bid, and have been ahead with preparation. All the work done was needed, if we do not start in September then we will start in the next 12 months.

9. I am surprised at the time you have planned for the work, would Spring/Summer not have been better?

There are embargos on Summer work, for Tourism. They will be licenced to work 24 hours a day 7 days a week if need be and this can be accommodated.

10. The quieter surface, will it be the whole stretch and not just patches?

We will look closely at and will come back to establish areas. Will consult on the details.

11. Betterment – due to the amount of work the sound level will be worse would argue any betterment?

I can only do what I can do, but will have to come from DCC not the 26m bid. WE can look at it but can't say.

12. Some months ago I raised the issue of getting on to the road at the Ashley Heath Roundabout, was told would be considered in respect of work on the A338.

I know some concerns received but I do not know if it is what you are referring to. I will need to talk to you later. We cannot do improvements as it would be betterment. Will take that issue back to colleagues in Traffic Management.

13. Also asked about lane markings on the AHR. Will traffic lights be brought in at key points?

They are looking at various routes in traffic management. Particularly re: manipulating signals, dependant on traffic. We can manage Blackwater. Parley Cross very little we can do as it is at capacity and needs more significant improvements.

14. I am afraid that rush hour will be a disaster. Is there anything to ensure two lanes are open in main direction? Or an extra lane?

Highly unlikely, the working area left to carry out the work is very limited. SSSI on both sides limits us. We are looking at signing further back in the hope that people will manage their journey better. In terms of delivery of the scheme in the time we've got, we will have to restrict lanes.

15. Could you have a word with the Chief Constable, to relax rules as regards accidents? If 2 vehicles involved ½ hour delay, if an injury 6 hours before they can move the vehicles. I am sure something could be relaxed.

An accident is actually a crime scene, so until evidence is captured the vehicles cannot be moved.

16. You are DCC, are you liaising with Hants CC?

We will be liaising closely with Hants to ensure we co-ordinate work to try and minimise disruption. Alternative routes will only be A roads not B roads. WE will do our best to sign lorries – strong messages will be signed.

17. I am concerned, I am just off the A31 and the volume of traffic is incredible. The A31 is the alternative, you have the Hospital, and large park home sites trying to get on to the A31, it is already difficult because of the large volume. What can be done to help Hospital workers and park site residents get out onto the A31 safely?

There will be a lot of displacement, I will take this back to see if speed limits could be implemented. Speed limits do not work without a filter system, will take back.

18. Traffic lights in Peak period. Could there be temporary lights? The build up of traffic is going to be awful it needs looking at.

We will try and manage traffic. We know Hurn Roundabout will be used, we know of problems and will do our best to manage. We are looking at what can be done.

19. Blackwater Junction. Is it not possible to rephase Traffic lights through Hurn?

Yes they are looking at reconfiguring, it may mitigate some problems.

20. Has any consideration been given to getting urgent medical treatment through?

We have consulted with Bournemouth Hospital and agreed to regular meetings to ensure access. Will be closely looked at have opened and will continue with dialogue.

21. Avon Castle Noise – you mentioned environmental barriers?

They vary but help with sound. There are new types of barrier, but the bid states straight replacement.

22. Your MR document suggests an improvement in noise reduction with the replacement fencing.

Resurfacing will make noise better.

23. Any consideration on installing a hard shoulder?

By installing a new central crash barrier some room will be gained but will be insufficient to achieve enough for whole length hard shoulder. Once lanes sorted my be some space.

24. Are the verges SSSI?

No we are allowed to work within our highway boundaries. If we start taking land to form hard shoulders then we get into SSSI area.

25. Would reducing speed limit assist with reducing sound?

The noise will be reduced due to the new surface. We would not consider it appropriate to reduce speed from Blackwater to Cooper Dean. We have looked at it.

26. Have you looked at doing one whole carriageway first, would it not be better?

27. Worried about the volume of traffic that will build up we already have a problem.

We feel people will find most suitable route themselves. We have little option.

28. Any consideration about providing a park and ride service?

It would at an early stage have helped us considerably but there was difficulty in finding an appropriate site. It would need to be close to the A338 and we discounted it at an early stage. We know of events and will work outside of the air show date.

29. I respect what you have done tonight. It will be chaos. I find it incredible that you spend huge sums clearing vegetation, protecting animals yet have not got funding. The road system in Dorset is appalling, as the ex Chair of business link it is appalling you are taking no consideration about getting to the airport or business in Bournemouth yet the vast majority of the verge is not SSSI. Publish the law you are working to. Tell us when you are likely to get a decision from the DFT. 3 miles of cones ahead of one man sat in his digger. Would like to see 100% vigilance to ensure workers are doing a full day's work it will be done quicker.

The verges are not SSSI – the protection is on the reptiles. A lot has been published about protecting the animals. A lot of the work and clearance was to clear ditches, which is needed as a result of a lack of maintenance. Our design team and our contractors work together looking at what design of the road will give us the longest life span. Airport has been discussed, the new link already discussed is not affordable. The economy of Bournemouth, I feel suffers due to the current condition of the road.

30. Pricing is it going to be open tendering?

No target cost. And it will not go to PFI

31. Recently the time it took to get to Wareham from here was 3 to 5 hours. The roundabouts will be absolutely congested. Years ago you would have used a Policeman. Would it not be possible to control traffic with Contractors?

I take your point.

32. Have DCC or Bournemouth Council worked with GSI to start reprogramming signs? The way lanes are shut here in England is strange and very different to the continent. They put cones early and do it very different and manage it better.

Will take this back. We do try and encourage use of both lanes.

33. Travelling along Hurn Road now lights coming up the Spur Road can be seen. This is very dangerous.

We are installing some fencing to mitigate and looking at some other areas. Please let us know if there is a particular spot.

34. I would support that comment. As a result of extensive vegetation removal there are now various points. This is a very urgent safety concern and could cause an accident.

Colleagues are aware of certain sections, would like to know exactly where to ensure that we capture all.

35. Hurn Road is quite hilly which is causing some of the problem.

I will make sure we target this.

36. Bearing in mind that it is a 6 mile stretch – at times in event of an accident could there be some access?

An accident management plan is being looked at carefully. Emergency crossover points are being looked at.

37. Matchams - Thank you for redoing our road. With extra traffic will there be consideration for additional measures for traffic calming? Cannot understand that when we are paying 26m, we are not looking at improvements. Surely improving Blackwater should be done as it is the main junction for the airport?

We have looked at the Airport and possible improvements that is why we are doing speed tests. Looking from Parley Cross to Cooper Dean and take future possible needs into account. Blackwater options are being discussed due to possible future development and input from developers is being sought.

The Chairman then concluded with thanks to Mr Diaz and the public meeting closed at approximately 8.40pm. Mr Diaz stressed that anyone with queries should contact him direct. Contact detail slips were available at the door. Mr Diaz continued to answer further questions on a one to one basis whilst the assembly gradually left.