

B4224 Combined Parish Meeting: 11th November 2020

Notes

Present:

Hampton Bishop Parish Council: Lynda Wilcox (Chair), Cllr Mark Frankland

Fownhope Parish Council: Cllrs Kevin Braybrook, Stuart Eames, Ed White and Tim Campbell (HWG) and Helen Tinson (Clerk)

Dormington and Mordiford Parish Council: Cllrs David Lloyd and Derek Hughes

How Caple, Sollershope and Yatton Group Parish Council: Cllr Elizabeth Glover

Upton Bishop Parish Council: Cllrs Brian Spencer and Keith Cornwall

Herefordshire Council: Ward Cllr John Hardwick, Cllr John Harrington and Clive Hall

Apologies – Cllr Christina Harris, Holme Lacy PC; Cllr Paul Crumpton Linton PC; Ward Cllr Barry Durkin.

Lynda Wilcox opened the meeting and welcomed all those attending. It was proposed that the main topic for the meeting was to discuss the draft Memorandum of Understanding with Herefordshire Council and establish areas for further development. The draft MoU proposes collaborative working between each of the local councils, Herefordshire Council (HC) and West Mercia Police (WMP). It was noted that contact has not yet been made with WMP but the group is intending to do so. Cllr Harrington expressed initial support but warned that whilst HC might like to support all areas, they may need to be ranked in order of priority.

Speed:

- 1.1 Develop an holistic approach to reduce traffic speeds along the whole length of the B4224, from the A40 at Lea until it reaches Hereford.

It was agreed that PC's could provide support in terms of financing and operating Speed Indicator Devices, Community Speed Watch schemes and installing village gateways along the route. Given that CSW schemes can only operate in 20, 30 or 40mph areas, HC were asked about TRO's to reduce speed limits accordingly.

D&M PC reported on their current TRO, currently undergoing public consultation, noting that previous proposals to reduce speed limits in their parish had been turned down. They confirmed they are in the process of setting up a CSW scheme in the parish. Cllr Harrington (JH) responded by confirming that HC are the ultimate decision makers with regards to TRO's but would not necessarily wish to override the views of other consultees.

Clive Hall (CH) reported that the most successful route to speed reduction is to change the environment so that drivers believe they need to go slower. It was noted that changing the

nature of the environment and the feel of the road was viewed positively by WMP when considering TRO applications, and JH suggested that villagers could be asked to tend the grass and verges outside their properties, and parish councils could consider installing village gateways, to enhance the feeling of a residential area. Cllr Harrington further reported that BBLP are looking at training for parishioners for tasks historically undertaken by others.

Fownhope PC (FPC) reported an existing and successful CSW scheme and that the Lengthsman is already contracted to trim signs and manage verges. It was reported that many drivers are directed onto the B4224 through Fownhope by sat.nav. systems, and FPC requested HC support in encouraging drivers to use main trunk roads instead. Journey times were considered crucial in this, as sat.nav. systems often direct drivers to the fastest route. It was felt that reduced speed limits throughout would result in slower journey times which would inform sat.nav. systems. The removal of 50 and 60mph limits along the B4224 would also enable a co-ordinated programme of CSW sessions which would, in turn, influence driver behaviour.

In terms of Speed Indicator Devices, it was noted that BBLP are currently required to assess appropriate sites and it was felt that this incurred quite a high cost. HC were asked if this could become a faster and less costly process, and if parishes could use their own contractors to lay the concrete for the SID installation. Cllr Harrington reported that he has authorised the purchase of SID's to obtain data needed to monitor traffic in the county and, in terms of using SIDs to warn drivers of current speeds, would speak with BBLP and report back. CH expressed the importance of selecting the correct site for SID installations and the importance of the frequency of deployment to aid its effectiveness.

Hampton Bishop PC (HBPC) noted their SID data did not hold up this principle as it showed the SID continued to be effective in reducing traffic speed when the SID had unintentionally been left operational for longer than scheduled. HC were asked how often the data is reviewed and whether HBPC could submit their data for consideration.

CH accepted it is hard to ignore something flashing up at you, but also the counter psychology that shows drivers start to ignore something that is permanently there. However, it was agreed that he would look at the data, resource depending. It was noted that the effectiveness of SIDs could also be dependent on the frequency and type of travellers, noting opposing reports from other parts of the county, and that the design of the SID may also be a variable in its success (or not). Cllr Ed White from Fownhope PC is currently undertaking a report on the Evolis Speed Indicator Device and offered to share his findings with the other parishes in the group.

Motorists

2.1 Discourage B4224 as a commuter route or short cut between Hereford and Ross on Wye.

HC were asked for thoughts on how signage could be used to discourage traffic and whether this will feed into sat.nav. systems. CH responded by acknowledging that first and foremost these are all public highways and that all road users can choose to use any of them for their journey. He also noted that signage has limitations, identifying examples of drivers ignoring the current road closed signs on the B4224. Cllr Harrington expressed an interest in understanding how much traffic is local and how much is from the M50. Cllr Brian Spencer of Upton Bishop PC (UBPC) expressed concerns about the safety implications of a large number of heavy vehicles

currently driving through Bromsash and Upton Bishop. CH noted there are no consequences for such traffic unless there is a weight restriction in place, and felt this was a good illustration of how drivers ignore signage. However, CH confirmed that road closures are logged on a national framework which informs the sat.nav. systems and which should be taken into account when planning a journey. It was noted that many drivers blindly follow sat.nav. directions having undertaken no pre-journey planning.

Cllr Harrington gave his apologies to the meeting but needed to leave early to fulfil other commitments. Before leaving, he confirmed that in principle he supported the proposals, noting the type and volume of traffic is affecting local communities. He was positive about the approach of the Strategy group and keen to meet the aspirations of the group, though stressed that expectations must be tempered. Cllr Harrington agreed to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding with officers, and offered a further meeting in 4-6 weeks to discuss again.

Cllr Harrington left the meeting at 7.51pm.

CH continued the topic of weight stating that the most important thing is to understand the true objective when considering imposing weight limits. He reiterated the view that weight limits over a long length are difficult to enforce and many premises along the route may need legitimate access for HGVs. He suggested that if the concern was HGV's using the B4224 to access Rotherwas via Holme Lacy, perhaps we could consider if the weight limit on the B4399 could be redesigned to discourage traffic. Mordiford Bridge has a more enforceable weight limit so if this is the concern, perhaps we could consider how to make it more enforceable. A concern of traffic travelling through Mordiford and Dormington to access Hereford, Ledbury and Leominster may potentially be a harder problem to solve but, fundamentally, we need to truly understand the problem we're trying to solve.

It was agreed that a series of shorter lengths would be more enforceable and have been proven to be effective. CH stressed the importance of considering the location of the short stretches to ensure no unintended consequences for local traffic.

UBPC suggested that width is perhaps a more significant problem on narrower roads and that if a vehicle cannot drive entirely within one side of the road, then it should not be able to use that road, and suggested the use of chicanes to discourage large vehicles. CH agreed that width is an issue, however, introducing physical barriers or obstructions may inhibit legitimate access and warned again of unintended consequences for local traffic.

Parishes asked if they could help to enforce instances such as those reported by Cllr Spencer, but currently this is a police power only. However, it could be possible for parishes to notify police if vehicles are using the roads against recommended signage on a regular basis. HC were asked if they are able to give a package to incentivise businesses to use trunk roads and CH explained that they have in the past made connections with local business and freight management companies to encourage the use of certain parts of the network and to understand why some parts are not being used. Although this has currently been scaled back, it had been found that the provision of rest areas and services encourages the use of certain routes. CH advised that Central Government are considering the identification of a major road network, which is the next level down from the strategic road network that might further encourage the use of these roads.

Cllr Elizabeth Glover from How Caple Group PC (HCGPC) noted that an out of area parish (Barton under Needwood PC, (BuNPC)) employs a warden to write to companies to ask them to use alternative routes if they are not delivering within that parish. Elizabeth has made contact with the Chair of BuNPC who has finally achieved success in making their roads safer, and who has offered to talk to this group about their journey. The group were in favour of asking her to speak at the next meeting.

There was a brief discussion about the bypass. CH noted that anything that makes north/south travel on the A49 more efficient may encourage more people to use it.

Signage:

3.1 Develop a local/regional signage package to guide motorists away from the B4224 and on to the designated trunk roads serving Hereford and Ross.

It was agreed that this is perhaps a long-term goal but could parishes pay for any new signage and HC pay for the installation? Further discussion followed; CH noted signage could form part of the solution but that it shouldn't be done just because it can, and doesn't mean it will necessarily be adhered to. All signage must comply with national guidance.

Locally Proposed Solutions:

4.1 Compile documents.

UBPC have produced an excellent document identifying their traffic problems and proposing costed traffic calming solutions. Some concerns were expressed about the difficulties encountered with BBLP and the time it has taken to get this far. CH offered to look at the document and understand the reasons for the delays, and it was agreed that the Clerk (HT) would forward it after the meeting.

It was agreed that more collaboration will overcome potential difficulties. Local parishes and HC share the same objectives, we just need to find the right route to achieve them.

Lynda Wilcox thanked Clive Hall for attending the meeting and for his support and advice. It was agreed that Cllrs Harrington and Hardwick and CH would discuss further and that each parish would take the MoU to their next Parish Council for consideration. It was suggested that a timeline of some sort is added to the MoU which is kept updated.

Clive Hall left the meeting at 8.41pm.

The remaining parishes had a brief discussion about setting precept and the possibility of including funding for traffic calming into the 2021/2022 budget. Opportunities for grant funding were also noted and Lynda recommended Dave Tristram at HC to help source appropriate grants.

The date of the next meeting was suggested as Wednesday 16th December 2020, 7pm, via Zoom.

There was no other business and the meeting was closed.

Actions:

Cllr Harrington:	Discuss BBLP charges for SID assessments and report back
Clive Hall:	Consider HBPC SID data
Clive Hall:	Consider UBPC traffic calming document and investigate reasons for delays
ALL:	Take draft MoU to next Parish Council meeting for consideration
Hampton Bishop PC:	Forward SID data to HC for consideration
Fownhope PC:	Share SID report with other parishes in the group
How Caple Group PC:	Contact chair of Barton under Needwood PC to invite to the next meeting
Lynda Wilcox:	Send Dave Tristram's contact details to Brian Spencer
Helen Tinson:	Ask Cllr Harrington for availability for next meeting and then confirm to group
Helen Tinson:	Forward UBPC traffic calming document to CH for consideration