

Briefing Note - Shurnhold & Dunch Lane, Melksham

Wiltshire Council are holding contributions received from the George Ward Gardens development. These contributions are to be used primarily to:-

- Upgrade the footway along the A365 to improve access to Shaw School, £25,000.
- Provide traffic management measures relating to the access from Dunch Lane to the A350 (Beanacre Road). To regulate parking on Dunch Lane, £45,000
- Provide pedestrian and cycle signing to the town centre and other key locations, £15,000.

Some lateral thinking may be required to spend this money appropriately, whilst working within these parameters.

It is noted that improvements are to be for the benefit of the wider community as well as the residents of the new development. Wiltshire Council has been given up to ten years to implement changes using this funding stream, with work to be completed by 1st November 2026.

Background information

- The lane is subject to a 30 mph speed limit.
- There is a 7.5t structural weight limit, with no exemption for access, due to concerns about the integrity of the bridge over the railway.
- The lane is currently closed to all motor vehicles, Monday to Friday from 8.15 to 8.45 am and again from 3.00 to 3.30 pm, imposed to create a safe route to the former school site.
- The lane provides vehicular access to residential properties on Addison Road, Northbrook Road, Southbrook Road and Dunch Lane.
- The lane also provides a link between the A365 and A350, although through traffic is not directed along this route.
- Some properties have off street parking but there is also a demand for on-street parking. There are currently no parking controls provided.
- The lane is predominantly single track at its Eastern end, from Southbrook Road to the A350.

In 2017, the Town Council undertook an initial round of consultation with residents asked to give their views on the following set of options:

- Revoke the part time closure for all motor vehicles.
- Amend the part time closure for all motor vehicles at peak times.
- Regulate on-street parking.
- Permanently close its Eastern end to all motor vehicles to prevent use by through traffic and to create a safe route for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.
- Introduce a one-way traffic order at the Eastern end to limit through traffic, (which way would traffic flow)?
- Do nothing in the short term except to monitor the use of the lane until the George Ward site is fully occupied.

The consultation revealed some support for the closure of the lane at the eastern end (A350) and / or to make this single-track section one way, but no clear preference had emerged.

The Town Council therefore recommended that the part-time closure be revoked, and consideration be given to the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit.

Melksham Without also registered their concerns about restricting access to and from the lane as this would likely have an adverse effect on the volume of traffic using Westlands Lane as an alternative route.

Current Situation

Since the consultation took place, the CATG has been happy for this project to sit dormant whilst prioritising other issues within their community area.

To make changes on the ground, a period of between 2 to 3 years should be allowed to undertake further consultation, develop proposals, implement traffic regulation orders (as necessary) and to undertake construction work. As such, there remains plenty of time for this project, and the decision on whether to prioritise this work, for the time being, remains with the CATG.

Mark Stansby
Senior Traffic Engineer
16/03/20