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Dear David,

HOLT MANOR, HOLT - NEW ROAD SIGNING

Further to our recent telephone conversation I write to set down my involvement with the above proposals and my findings.

As you are aware FMW Consultancy prepared the submission for new road signing in the vicinity of Holt Manor. However FMW were also working on the Tannery site in Holt and the client for that project became concerned that the parish council's hostility to the Holt Manor signing proposal could prejudice consideration of the Tannery project leading to the decision for FMW to stop acting for Mr Harris on the matter.

I was appointed prior to the Bradford on Avon Area Board meeting on the 18th July 2012 to provide a second opinion on the FMW Consultancy submission and if I was broadly in agreement with the submission to support the proposals at the Area Board meeting.

I have reviewed the FMW submission, read the response by the Parish Council and driven and walked the roads concerned. I would like to make the following observations:

1. The proposed change to signing would direct drivers unfamiliar with the local road network travelling to Great Chalfield along Leigh Road and Summer Lane rather than along the road past Holt Manor as currently signed. The proposals are not to prohibit traffic using the road past Holt Manor and local people who know the local road network would continue to use the road past Holt Manor as at present.
2. The proposal is also to improve the alternative route by providing formal passing places. During my site visit after a period of heavy rain the verges on Summer Lane used for passing were heavily rutted and muddy and I am not confident that my car (Ford Focus) would have negotiated them. This clearly showed the benefit of the proposed formal passing places. I consider that Summer Lane would benefit from a couple of extra passing places to those currently proposed, one between the proposed passing place and the junction with the road past Holt Manor shown on drawing FMW0647-AK004 Rev A and one between the eastern passing place proposed on drawing FMW0647-AK003 Rev A and the one shown on drawing FMW0647-AK004 Rev A. Mr Harris has confirmed that he would be happy for the additional passing places to be included in the proposal.
3. The alternative route is some 600m longer but given that the signs are for the benefit of non local people this is likely to represent a small proportion of the journey length.
4. The evidence relating to problems experienced by residents at Holt Manor identified in the FMW submission is anecdotal but plausible. I certainly felt that I was entering private property when entering the road past Holt Manor from the south so can understand some confusion being caused.
5. I understand there are proposals to improve facilities at Great Chalfield Manor which is likely to increase the number of visitors and hence drivers unfamiliar with the local road network driving the route past Holt Manor

6. I consider that highway standards are better along the proposed alternative route (Leigh Road/ Summer Lane Road route) which would be subject to improvement for the following reasons:
- Driver visibility at the Leigh Road/Summer Lane junction is better than at either of the two terminal junctions of the road past Holt Manor. Visibility northbound on Leigh Road on the approach to Summer Lane is substandard but it improves significantly at the point that you need to turn right.
 - The section of road past Holt Manor between The Dower House and Summer Lane is very narrow with no verges and limited visibility. It is not possible for two vehicles to pass and meeting vehicles are required to reverse a significant distance where visibility is poor. I understand that this route is popular with pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders who would be particularly vulnerable to reversing vehicles. I consider that highway standards along this section are worse than on any part of the alternative improved route.
 - The route past Holt Manor requires negotiation of two very substandard junctions where visibility is poor rather than one. This is relevant as accidents tend to cluster at junctions because of conflicting movements.
 - The parish council, in its response, appears to suggest that the relative highway standards, visibility in particular, on each route are not a particularly important consideration and that drivers simply drive according to the conditions. Visibility standards relate to safe stopping distance and in my experience visibility is one of the prime considerations of highway authorities when considering highway safety implications.
 - There are very few opportunities for cars to pass on any of the road past Holt Manor, there are no formal passing places although a couple of accesses provide some opportunity. Generally meeting cars require one driver to drive on the adjacent grass/verge and potentially leave mud on the road which is detrimental to highway safety.

I ask that my findings are drawn to the attention of the cabinet member in your report. I also request that a site visit is undertaken by the cabinet member as conditions are only really apparent from such a visit.

Yours sincerely,

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