

SHORNE PARISH COUNCIL

**Notes of the Extra meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee
Meeting held on 20th April 2017 in Shorne Village Hall**

PRESENT Mrs S Lindley (Chairman)
Mr R Bugg
Mr R Theobald
Mr R Cooper
Mr R Lane
Mr M Redfern
Miss P Clifton

APOLOGIES for absence were received from Mr R Hardy
and Mr C Rea

1. The Lower Thames Crossing 2016 Consultation decision and legal challenges:

There was general discussion about the decision and whether Shorne Parish Council itself could or should launch a legal challenge. The outcomes of the previous two meetings with legal specialists had been surprising in that it had been stated that there would not be sufficient grounds arising from the Consultation to win a legal challenge – this does not mean that it wasn't flawed or incorrect or that all our other criticisms were not valid but is about the strength of the evidence and therefore the probability of winning, and the balance of risk. The Environmental lawyers had been concerned about matters such as air quality and international laws about that and the environment in general but their angle on these issues was way above our own, which are concerned principally about local damage and pollution.

It was concluded with reluctance that Shorne Parish Council did not itself have the knowledge and personnel numbers as well as the funding to take on being the prime movers of a high level legal challenge however it was clear that the Environmental lawyers and other national organisations did have the ability and funds to continue with/take over that aspect. It was agreed that the Parish Council's on-going role in any future legal challenge would optimally be to support and provide information and input to others.

It was considered that the Parish Council's primary responsibility is concerned with the lives and livelihoods of our Parishioners, and that our efforts would best be directed towards reviewing the new documents and engaging with Highways England to as much as possible ensure the best outcome for our parishioners as regards the design and mitigation of the new road etc.

2. Meeting with Highways England:

Highways England had already offered to start engagement meetings and we had taken up their offer. It was agreed that a core team of those who had already been most closely

involved in the project (Robin Theobald, Susan Lindley, Bob Lane) plus also ensuring Shorne West representation should undertake these meetings and report back to the Parish Council.

It has to be remembered that it is Highways England's process, meetings etc. While we will do what we can to influence all relevant matters it is they who are in control.

3. Plans as currently known:

For avoidance of doubt, it is recorded that the route now proposed is the Western Route crossing the Golf Course and Thong Lane to join the A2 at the old ESSO garage site.

4. Mitigation:

Standard general mitigation of noise and pollution is assumed through low noise road surfaces, acoustic fencing, earth banks and bunds, trees and bushes etc.

It was commented that the noise mitigation of the A2 at present is poor, and that is something we could look to getting improved as part of the project.

There are obvious major design mitigation measures that will be sought over moving the tunnel portal as far south as possible, maximal green bridges and cut-and-cover, omitting the A226 junction and completely redesigning the A2 junction.

5. Informing parishioners:

There was discussion about how we can best inform Parishioners about the outcome and make sure that we know their concerns.

Previous discussion had included whether to send out another letter but it was believed that general communication routes through the website, Parish Magazine and social media are now good enough to spread the word adequately so it was proposed to have an update and question session for an hour starting at 7pm before the Annual Parish Assembly on May 11th, the time of that would be put back by half an hour. We would use the large hall and not have any post-meeting catering.

6. Various points:

- The route severs a lot of footpaths, and the main cycle route along the A2, these will take considerable work over re-routing suitably, bridges etc. GROWC are likely to be involved.
- We will collaborate with all other groups and entities as required including GBC, KCC etc.
- Golf Course is private, unknown what their intentions are, SL has e-mailed them but not received a reply.
- Legacy projects will need some thought.