

**Meeting of the Valley Parishes Alliance (Highways sub-committee)
with Highways England ('HE')**

10:45, Tuesday, 11th October 2016

The Inn at Freshford

Present

VPA Members/Representatives

Hugh Delap (Freshford) (Chairman), Anna Beria (Claverton PC), Des Wighton (Monkton Combe PC), Lyn Alvis (Monkton Combe PC), Ruth Fulton (Limpley Stoke PC), Andrew Orme (Freshford PC), Chris Clemence (Hinton Charterhouse PC)

Highways England

Sean Walsh (Asset Manager)

1) Condolences

Hugh referred to the recent death of Chris Jensen, past chairman of Claverton PC and member of this committee. All expressed their sympathy and sadness.

2) Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2015 were approved.

3) Matters arising from minutes of previous meeting (not covered in the agenda)

a) Work on the A36

- i) At the last meeting parishes referred to the poor state of the surface of the A36 south of the Monkton Combe viaduct. Sean said he'd take the matter up with the maintenance team. Since then it has been completely resurfaced all the way to its junction with Church Lane. The meeting thanked Sean and the team for the swift action.
- ii) Sean reported that there are no further signs of the need for more major work further north on the A36.

b) Parish concerns

- i) Sean and Anna reported that the vehicle-operated speed signals at Claverton are, at last, in place and working. Anna said that the problems with parking on the verge alongside the A36 were as bad as ever during the summer swimming season. It became slightly more organised by parking tending to be in echelon but that brought with it a new danger as departing vehicles backed out onto the road.

4) Route Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2) for works post 2020

- a) Sean said that the period for receipt of the identification of problems (not solutions) that the strategy should take into account ended in July. A consultation is due to begin on 7th November with a first report due to be published during spring 2017, with the likelihood of an A46/A36 link being included. There is the possibility that the A350 from the M4 to the A36 could also be considered as a strategic route.. And there is the further possibility of the most important projects for 2020-25 being announced in twelve months' time in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

- b) Hugh said that the VPA's position is to oppose any link between the A36 and A46 that would spoil that part of the Cotswold AOB that is the Avon valley between Bath and Bradford on Avon and impose additional traffic on an already inadequate A36. What was proposed twenty-five years ago and has been suggested again more recently fails on both counts. Further details of the VPA's position will be set out on the VPA website (www.valleyparishesalliance.org.uk). Dependent on events this may lead on to the use of social media.

5) Situation and HAIL reports

- a) Residents are reporting incidents to HE and Skanska but not always via the preferred forms, which were attached for convenience to the email that the first draft set of minutes accompanied. Parishes are asked to advertise the fact that these forms are available and should be used

Apart from a fatal accident at the junction of the A36 with Branch Road that was widely reported two other observations were brought to the meeting's attention

- i) A resident driving north close to Pipehouse Lane was confronted with an Audi SUV overtaking a coach. The resident avoided a collision by swerving onto the verge. It was suggested that, frustrated by having to follow the coach up the Limpley Stoke hill, the driver of the Audi took the first 'chance' he saw to overtake because the centre line was dotted and the 40mph speed restriction was lifted.

Sean was asked how many incidents like this have to occur before a speed limit is imposed and a double white line painted. Chris asked if a speed limit of 50mph could be imposed as far south as the county boundary by the Farleigh filling station. Sean reminded the meeting of what had been said before: because of competing demands for funds any alterations, even as seemingly minor as these, require that there are at least six accidents within a length of 100 metres over a period of five years. There are clear guidelines for speed limits and centre-line painting, which are intended to strike a balance between safety and keeping traffic moving. There are no guidelines which can prevent a small percentage of drivers from acting inappropriately. Sean reminded the meeting that HE have been set a target of reducing killed and seriously injured accidents by 40% by 2020.

Chris told the meeting of a planning application for major alterations to the entrance to a large house not far from the A36. It was clear from the application that it would generate significant additional traffic; could HE impose conditions? Post meeting note: Sean has looked at this and what is proposed appears to be permitted development upon which HE can have no influence

- ii) A resident drew attention to a length of the A36, in the same general area, where foliage was overhanging the footpath and limiting lines of sight from joining roads. Post meeting note: Sean has drawn this to Skanska's attention who are working on it.

6) Parish Concerns

- a) Limpley Stoke and Claverton. Both parishes have concern that the drivers of vehicles leaving the A36 and turning onto minor roads in their parishes (specifically Woods Hill and Claverton Hill respectively) have no sense of the unsuitability of the roads. Are there signs that HE could put on the trunk road that would give a warning? Sean said that it is not HE's practice to put up such signs or allow anyone else to do so. It would have to be something for the local council to do – on the local road.

7) Severance Study

- a) Sean said that funds had been found for the severance study that he had spoken of at the last meeting. Keith Marsh of HE has been appointed to undertake it and Sean invited any information that VPA parishes might have to be fed to Keith via Hugh and Sean. Keith is required to complete his study and report by the spring of next year, 2017.

8) Route Treatment Study

- a) Also, Sean spoke of a route treatment study of the A36 that has begun. This is looking in particular at any physical hazards to traffic with a view to reducing or removing them. The idea is to raise the overall safety of the route. Examples would be trees that could be removed or signs that could be made of material that yielded to impact or are 'passive'.

9) Date of next meeting

Tuesday, 21st March 2017, starting at 10:45, at The Inn at Freshford