

A303 Legacy Project Proposals:- March 2018 - January 2019

A Cycling Track for Winterbourne Stoke and South Wiltshire

The idea for a cycle track is based on the model of Odd Down Cycle Track, Bath., and would provide a unique facility for South Wiltshire (one is planned for Swindon, but is even further away than Odd Down and too far to travel for most in the south of the county). The cycle track would be designed to be used by individuals and teams by young and old, able-bodied and the disabled, individuals, families, schools and groups. A small, multi-purpose building, could act as a clubhouse, coffee room, village hall and meeting room.

Its purpose would be to teach cycling to beginners in a safe environment, to give those individuals with little opportunity under other circumstances to ride and to provide training facilities up to competition level.

Where possible, it would make use of the existing A303 infrastructure. Land between the arms of the "ideal" model, could be used for other community projects such as a village orchard or allotments. Regular use of this land would deter its use by criminal elements, could generate funds and be a positive asset for the county

Supported from: British Cycling, COGS, Help for Heroes, Wiltshire Council, Salisbury Schools, Disability Groups and Schools in South Wiltshire

A Village Orchard and Allotments

The proposal is to use some of the chalk spoil from tunneling to raise the level of the sunken lay-by to the west of Scotland Lodge on the A303 up to the level of the A303 and to overlay this with a reasonable depth of good soil. The area to be donated to the village in perpetuity and used for a village orchard and possibly allotments (many of the houses in the village have small gardens and villagers are travelling miles on a regular basis to make use of allotment space in the surrounding area)

In addition to providing a long-term amenity for the village, the scheme would reduce the chances of this area being used, as it is now and would be more likely to be used in the future, as a base for rural crime. Recent arrests and confiscations of vehicles and animals as part of Wiltshire Police's Operation Artemis have shown the vulnerability of this area.

Low funding as Highways England will already have materials and plant close to hand. Once terrain is suitable, village could continue with voluntary effort to provide and plant saplings, etc.

Provision of a Village Meeting Space for Winterbourne Stoke

Winterbourne Stoke has no village hall and no public space within the village, other than St Peter's Church which has a dwindling congregation. The Church is cold, difficult to heat and ill-suited for use as a meeting room. The proposal is to construct a free-standing "pod" within the western end of the nave. This would be large enough to accommodate a meeting of the Parish Council, a small village event or the running of clubs and societies. The eastern end would open up fully to the rest of the nave, so the entire space would be available for weddings and other religious services as needed.

The objective is twofold. To provide a long needed facility for the village, whilst at the same providing a degree of long-term security for the under-used historic church building. This is possibly the only way the village could afford to run a small village meeting room on an ongoing

basis. Additional functions could be as a local tourist information hub and as an electric bike drop-off point.

The village has no capital other than its annual precept. We may be able to raise a little money locally, but would require grant-funding for the bulk of the cost. Estimated cost - £100k-200k?

“Boris Bikes” for the World Heritage Site

One of the primary achievements of the A303 Stonehenge to Berwick Down scheme is the increase in safe cycling in and around the World Heritage site. This, coupled with the desire to get people out of coaches and cars and into the broader World Heritage landscape is an ideal opportunity to provide electric mountain bikes for hire - along the lines of the London “Boris bikes”. Hubs with bike parks and charging points would be provided initially at: Amesbury, Durrington, Larkhill, Shrewton and Winterbourne Stoke, together with the Stonehenge Visitor’s Centre and closer to Stonehenge itself, near Byway 12.

This should be largely self-financing if a bike company with experience in this type of activity could be attracted to the project. Some limited funding for project validation and setup might be required.

Encourage Salisbury Reds to divert N-S Bus Services via the Stonehenge Visitor Centre

Visitors to the Stonehenge Campsite either walk to the Stonehenge Visitor Centre, or take their private transport. We believe if Salisbury Reds could be convinced to change the route of their Salisbury to Devizes services between Winterbourne Stoke and Shrewton (and the reverse) this could generate additional revenue for Salisbury Reds and a facility that could benefit thousands of tourists per year. Instead of travelling north from Winterbourne Stoke on the B3083, we propose the bus should first go east on the A303, then north on the A361 to the Stonehenge Visitors centre, before cutting back west on the A361 to Shrewton, before rejoining the current route. This could benefit staff travelling to work at Stonehenge and reduce pressure on their car park; particularly at peak season. This could be implemented as an advance project as it would have immediate benefits for the area

We believe little or no funding would be needed if Salisbury Reds could be convinced to take a small commercial risk and involve a few minor time-table changes.

East-West Transport: From Berwick St James to Amesbury via Local Villages and the Stonehenge Visitor Centre.

Amesbury is a growing commercial centre in the vicinity of the A303 Stonehenge to Berwick Down scheme and is likely to continue to grow further as a result of organic growth reinforced by Army re-basing activities to the north. As a consequence, access to and from Amesbury for shopping, entertainment, etc, is likely to be in increasing demand from local villages and from tourists wishing to access Stonehenge by public transport from Amesbury. Currently, there is no public transport service operating in this area, only the Salisbury and Amesbury Taxibuzz Service co-funded by Wiltshire Council.

The proposal is to use the current Taxibuzz service as a stepping stone to a fully viable commercial service operating a route running from: Berwick St James, via Winterbourne Stoke, Stonehenge Visitors Centre, Shrewton, Rollestone Crossroads, Larkhill, Durrington to Amesbury, with request stops at key locations. This idea could be implemented immediately to give benefits to the community during the construction period.

Would require support from Wiltshire Council and other external sources until model could be established as self-financing or, at least, part self-financing

Provision of Brown Tourist Signage to Local Businesses

Brown, tourist information signs should be provided on the A303, at exits from the eastbound and westbound A303 and on the northbound and southbound A360 at the new Longbarrow Roundabout. These would point to local services, over and above the Stonehenge Visitor Centre and include:

The Stonehenge Campsite, The Bell Inn, The Stonehenge Filling Station, The Barn (Wedding Venue), etc and any other businesses created prior to the completion of construction.

This should be paid for by Highways England, at least in part. Parish Council and individual businesses may be prepared to contribute.

Introduction of Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) and Sloe (aka Blackthorn - *Prunus spinosa*) into newly created chalk downland

Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) and Sloe (aka Blackthorn - *Prunus spinosa*) were characteristic plants of chalk downland for centuries, but modern farming practises and disease have reduced the range of both plants. Indeed Porton Down, to the south of the A303 is one of the few sites where both exist and yet, even here, the Juniper is threatened and attempts are being made to reintroduce it.

The proposal to re-create some chalk downland close to the Parsonage Down English Nature site is the perfect opportunity to introduce these two species as it is created. This would serve to increase the biodiversity of the area from the outset and increase the likelihood of other chalk downland species colonising in a shorter time period.

Funding should be minimal - mainly for the materials and oversight. Volunteer effort could be employed to plant the Juniper and Sloe saplings.

Production of A303 Gin

The Stonehenge to Berwick Down Scheme passes through a unique part of the British countryside with its own very specific flora. Historically though, one key species - Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) has largely disappeared from this chalk downland environment and attempts are being made to reintroduce it in other parts of Wiltshire. Another legacy proposal to Highways England will be to support the reintroduction of Juniper on the new chalk downland being created at Parsonage Down, Winterbourne Stoke.

The proposal here is to create a bespoke gin using sustainable botanicals from the chalk downland around the A303, using a local gin distillery to produce the product. Sales of the gin in local shops, by English Heritage at Stonehenge, etc., could be used to part-fund the reintroduction of juniper (the primary botanical of 'normal' gins) and monitor their growth to maturity. This would have the broader benefit of improving knowledge of the broader chalk downland environment and encourage other species of flora and fauna to move into the area - impacting directly on Community, Environment, Heritage and Economy.