

Winterbourne Stoke

Parish Council

Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish

held in The Education Room of the Stonehenge Visitor Centre,

on Tuesday 13th August 2024 at 7 pm

In Attendance:

Chair: P Smith

Parishioners: 70 (Including those from other local parishes)

Others: Parvis Khansari – Corporate Director at Wiltshire Council
Cllr Kevin Daley – Wiltshire Council Till Valley
Cllr Robert Yuill – Wiltshire Council Amesbury South
Cllr Mark Verbinnen – Wiltshire Council Amesbury East and Bulford
John Berry – Shrewton Parish Council (Chair)
Richard Harris – Shrewton Parish Council (Vice-Chair)
Paul McKernan – Shrewton Parish Council (Traffic/Roads)
Virginia Neal – Chitterne Parish Council
Dom Simmons – Stapleford Parish Council
Carole Slater – Stapleford Parish Council
Derek Kelly – Berwick St James Parish Council
Carolyn MacDougall – Berwick St James Parish Council
Steven Bush – Berwick St James Parish Council
Steve Hedge – Amesbury Town Council
Paul Clifton – BBC South Today Traffic Expert
Christine Sawyer – English Heritage / Shrewton Resident

**Agenda
Item: 1**

Welcome from the Chairman and Rules of the Meeting

Welcome everyone to the meeting, we are here because of the recent decision by the government to cancel the Stonehenge bypass, and we as a community need to decide what we would like to do going forward as the government currently has no plan B.

At this meeting we have representatives from Wiltshire Council, Cllr Kevin Daley, Cllr Robert Yuill and Parvis Khansari, a corporate director at Wiltshire Council.

National Highways declined their invite to the meeting, but stated that they are looking into plans for the future, and will let us know in due course. Furthermore, if any questions are raised in this meeting that need to be posed to National Highways the Clerk for Winterbourne Stoke will do so.

Representatives from other parish councils are here; Shrewton (Chair, Vice-Chair, and traffic/roads expert), Chitterne, Stapleford, Berwick St James, and Amesbury.

Additionally, Paul Clifton is a local expert on traffic and roads from his work at BBC South Today.

Apologies from MP Danny Kruger who could not attend because he is currently away on holiday. Hopefully he will be able to attend a meeting in the future.

We would also like to thank English Heritage for the use of the Education Room at the Stonehenge Visitor Centre.

All attendees must behave in a civil and respectful manner, all questions are to be directed towards the chair, and questions should be concise.

Moreover, Winterbourne Stoke residents have priority in this meeting as it is a meeting of their parish.

The aim of this meeting is to be about one hour long, but will run longer if necessary.

<p>Agenda Item: 2 & 3</p>	<p>Statements from Parishioners and Guests regarding the recent cancellation of the Stonehenge bypass and what they would like to do going forward.</p>
	<p>Parishioner Question – Is MP John Glen coming to the meeting?</p> <p>The Chair – MP John Glen is no longer our MP, the MP for Winterbourne Stoke is now MP Danny Kruger who represents Wiltshire East.</p> <p>Winterbourne Stoke Parish Councillor Andy Shuttleworth – I have lived in Winterbourne Stoke since 1985 and am a part of a local traffic group, so have seen many Stonehenge bypass schemes come and go. I am fully aware that answers will not be found today. Some people want revolution, and some people want to completely give up. I feel the answer lies somewhere in between. I fear the traffic through Winterbourne Stoke and the surrounding villages is only going to get worse. I suggest that we try snarling up the traffic during busy periods, for instance we could constantly use the traffic light crossing, and communicate with each other so we can keep everyone safe and know if we're having an impact. Creating a jam is easier than clearing one.</p> <p>Parishioner Question – When we first heard about the scheme not going ahead, the government said that it had been cancelled, but some experts have said that the scheme has been postponed not cancelled, which is it?</p> <p>Parvis Khansari – We've heard cancelled, not postponed.</p> <p>Paul Clifton– I have heard from the Minister of State that the scheme is cancelled. The project director has also said cancelled, not likely to have another scheme in place in our lifetime. It is dead.</p> <p>Cllr Mark Verbinnen – The scheme is definitely cancelled. I wrote an email to the government to try and get more information on the traffic situation, what will be done in the future and to tell them how bad the traffic truly is in this area. I also said that the locals would like a commitment and how beneficial a bypass would be to people.</p>

Six weeks later I got a response, they said that the previous government has left us with a £22 billion deficit so they cannot afford a bypass as it provides little value for money. They go on to say that they will be reviewing transport proposals in the future and wish to keep the roads as best as they can be.

I do not believe a word they say!

Parishioner Question – They have put air pollution monitors down the end of the village? Is the A303 considered a main road when going through Winterbourne Stoke?

Winterbourne Stoke Parish Councillor Andy Shuttleworth – They were put on the A303 and along the far end of Church Street.

Parishioner Statement – The government claims that Winterbourne Stoke is an urban area so is classed differently.

Parishioner Question – Can't they build a dual carriageway 200-300 meters south of Stonehenge?

£60 million a mile instead of £2 billion, world heritage status be damned! Dresden in Germany chose to construct a bridge to help traffic in 2004 and lost their world heritage status because of it, but it has made no difference to them tourist wise.

You could put the car park west of the stones so it is still out of view, maybe put a viewpoint there so people can see the stones.

This would be so much cheaper to achieve. Dual carriageway from the A360 roundabout to north of Winterbourne Stoke.

The Chair – Unfortunately, the World Heritage Site is a box around Stonehenge, from the MOD land down to the Woodford Valley, so a dual carriageway is not possible, hence the tunnel.

Parvis Khansari – This is the second attempt at trying to solve this problem. Many agencies discussed the different bypass options against their criteria. In total they came up with 60 different bypass options and then scored them using their criteria. The current scheme that was just

scrapped scored the highest. All the other schemes are not viable options.

Parishioner Question – If the tunnel is gone, why not a dual carriageway that has a cover over it? This would be much cheaper and easier. Currently everyone is suffering from the road!

The chair / Paul McKernan – Something similar was tried in 2003 but was scrapped in 2007, it was not a good option because of the damage that would be done to the World Heritage Site.

Virginia Neal – What exactly are Wiltshire Council going to do about the cancellation?

Parvis Khansari – The government were very brief with their explanation, we know nothing more than you do currently.

The idea from the government was to make Stonehenge an expressway, in 2014 they devised 8 schemes that would achieve this. The government wanted the A303 to support the M4 and M5 as a main road to the south. But over time these schemes all got cancelled, for instance the A358 dualling scheme was cancelled because covid made everything too expensive.

This scheme was cancelled with no reason, I believe it is all down to the political landscape. In 2011-2013 people lobbied the government to get this scheme off the ground, specifically Devon, Somerset and Dorset Councils lobbied Westminster. At the time it was a coalition government, then it became a conservative government, and now it's a labour government and we are in a conservative area.

In the future smaller schemes may help to improve traffic flow, we as Wiltshire Council have to re-assess everything and decide what plan B is. In 2011 there was much more enthusiasm than there is now.

Paul McKernan – I think we should keep pushing for the tunnel. The cancellation is just a political move, and thus we should not disregard the tunnel scheme. No other plan will get approved, and everything is already in place.

Just get on with it!

Don't accept that the tunnel is dead, it has already been accepted. I don't believe there is no money. The levelling up fund exists. Keir Starmer said pre-election how important this bypass was. The cost isn't that high when compared to other options.

Keep pushing for the tunnel!

The Chair – Who do we push?

Parishioner Statement – We should wait for the results of the appeal, the results should come out late September/October. The Development Consent Order shows that there is a need for this scheme. I have already contacted Wiltshire Council about Rollestone Crossing. Legally everything is there. It's too early to accept defeat. Politics is the only thing stopping it. It just depends on how you look at the funds.

Don't accept cancellation!!!

Parishioner Statement – The tunnel won't happen, will never happen. We should push for a bypass from Longbarrow Roundabout to Wyllye Down. This would be much less expensive.

The Chair – It would be down to money again.

Parishioner Statement – I agree with Paul McKernan, we've come this far with the tunnel, we should focus on getting it back on the agenda. We need to be collaborative to get it back. It would be good for businesses west of the stones. Currently it is not a fit road for the level of traffic or the lorries. Rat runs are also not fit for the level of traffic, if this problem was happening in London, it would have been sorted by now. We need to ensure people know how important this bypass is, we need to come together and make the government know that we all want it. I don't want to protest, but I want to make it clear how important this is. We should put cameras on the rat runs to stop the traffic.

Cllr Kevin Daley – I have emailed the prime minister and invited him to come and meet the villagers and see what the set up is here.

Unfortunately, a lot of people on Facebook are against the tunnel, so I

am not sure if the tunnel is the answer. However, every other scheme was denied. The tunnel was accepted because it would only cause 2% damage to the environment, every other option was much worse. It is the only scheme on the table. We need to look at all of our options and we need to talk to Highways England to see what we can do, and what money we have available. We have not got unlimited money. I don't believe the scheme is dead, will keep emailing to find out what the plan going forward is.

The Chair – How does the Parish support Wiltshire Council?

Cllr Kevin Daley – We need to know what the community wants, everyone should keep emailing the government so they know you want this.

Parishioner Statement – Keep banging on the door. It's not a coincidence that the scheme was cancelled when the politics changed. We need to pitch it as an economic/financial reward to the government. We need to say companies move hundreds of millions of pounds down the A303. We need to make labour aware of the financial gain instead of villager feelings.

Cllr Kevin Daley – I agree, we can't develop the area without the tunnel. This is a good path to take.

The Chair – Exeter and Plymouth are both Labour, this could also be a part of the pitch.

Parishioner Question – Why does the speed camera not work? Why are there lorries going through the village if the road is unsuitable? We need to divert the lorries, and make it a 20MPH speed limit.

The Chair – The cameras are run by Wiltshire Council, but the treasury got the fines, so Wiltshire Council stopped operating the cameras.

Parishioner Statement – 40 MPH is too fast, no one does it, and they ignore the crossing.

The Chair – We could potentially lobby for the speed limit to be reduced to 20 MPH.

Cllr Kevin Daley – A 20 MPH speed limit could be lobbied, but I am not optimistic it would work, as for a 20 MPH speed limit to be considered, the average speed of the traffic has to already be BELOW 20 MPH.

Winterbourne Stoke Parish Councillor Tony Pywell – School children have to cross the road, the lorries don't stop at the crossing. My 13-year-old has almost been runover multiple times.

Cllr Robert Yuill – You should report incidents like that to the police. If the police receive enough reports, they will act upon them. This has previously worked in Amesbury.

Parishioner Statement – The police have come before and parked in the lay-by, it did nothing!

You need to either add a 20 MPH speed limit or create a bypass. The tunnel might be too expensive, but something needs to be done. Lorries idle in traffic and create fumes, we bought our house on the idea that the tunnel would get done.

Winterbourne Stoke Parish Councillor Andy Shuttleworth – This is the second scheme that has been cancelled. We need to keep an eye on the current DCO court case. We could look into private funding like how the M6 toll was built with private funds. Nothing is going to happen quickly.

In the short term, we also need traffic lights at the end of Church Street, as it is very dangerous. The B3083 turning and Berwick turning also need traffic lights. Additionally, there are not enough signs warning people of the 7.5 tonne limit when turning off the A303 onto the B3083 towards Berwick.

When it comes to rat runs, we could implement an ANPR camera system like they have on the Merseyflow. This would mean that when anyone who is not a villager goes through one of the rat run villages,

they have to pay a toll. There are many long-term and short-term solutions, but we need to get the politicians back to the table.

Christine Sawyer – There have been several fatal accidents and lots of near misses in Shrewton. This is often because there are often no pavements and no streetlights, it is incredibly dangerous!

The Chair – It is hard to get data on things like this.

Cllr Robert Yuill – Sadly National Highways puts things like this at a low priority.

Christine Sawyer – Villagers need to do something! Parishes need to find the data to show how dangerous it really is.

Parishioner Statement – The police only make a record when there is an injury.

Cllr Robert Yuill – It is unacceptable that incidents are only reported when there is an injury. You can ask the police for the information, they have it, you just have to ask for it.

Parishioner Statement – You get a different story from different people.

Paul McKernan – I have looked at the Shrewton accident data. It doesn't require looking into because if there aren't fatalities it isn't worth considering.

Parishioner Statement – When the road is busy the rat runs are busy, when the road is quiet it's too dangerous to walk. Additionally, since the Longbarrow roundabout was redesigned, the traffic has been much worse.

Parvis Khansari – This is a big concern for us, though we thought the tunnel would solve this issue.

Cllr Kevin Daley – I am quite optimistic that now the tunnel scheme is gone things like this should get solved.

Parishioner Question – What happens if the bridge collapses? Has it been strengthened? We need to ask National Highways, I do not think it is suitable.

Parishioner Statement – The bridge has been strengthened.

The Chair – The width is the issue, not so much strength.

Parishioner Statement – The Home Bargains lorries run all night along that bridge.

Steve Hedge – There was a plan for a flyover countess roundabout, and even then, Winterbourne Stoke was always going to be an issue. They should add a flyover countess roundabout and then a dual carriageway past Stonehenge.

Cllr Mark Verbinnen – This was considered, but was thrown out. It is not practical because of the landscape. You can't build a dual carriageway further south because of the Roman Fort. You can't make the road wider because there are some old laws that prevent it. These same laws stop us from building a fence. The tunnel was the only option.

Paul McKernan – Wiltshire Council could increase LHFIG's funding. There are a lot of things discussed here that could get done in the next 3-5 years.

If the DCO fails, we should consider crowd funding a challenge to the government. The government doesn't like when the population disagrees with them.

Parishioner Statement – We have a strong voice, but are not being heard. We have lots of good ideas, but no one is listening to them.

The Chair – Who do you go to? MP Danny Kruger already took it to parliament and was ignored. We are very thankful to Wiltshire Council for giving up their time to answer our questions.

We need to get our voices heard, not just for us but for the entire southwest.

Paul Clifton – Wiltshire Councillors need to be on the same page as us. They are the ones going to the government, whether that be for big things or small things. We really need Wiltshire Council to help us, they are our only option.

Parishioner Statement – This needs media attention. I agree with Andy that we should play on the crossing.

Parishioner Statement – The government fundamentally wants growth, our plan of attack should be to tell them the southwest cannot grow with the A303 as it is.

Parishioner Question – I think we should keep the tunnel. What is the criteria to get a 20 MPH speed limit? What can we do to alleviate the rat runs? I have seen three accidents at Longbarrow Roundabout this year, the lines are faded, the markings need to be made much clearer.

Parvis Khansari – You should come to the LHFIG meetings and raise these points there.

Winterbourne Stoke Parish Councillor Andy Shuttleworth – I sit on LHFIG and we have hundreds of requests to look at.

Parishioner Question – So should we go to the LHFIG meetings? Andy doesn't seem to think it's worth it.

Parvis Khansari – LHFIG has a limited budget, but Wiltshire Council can fund bigger projects separately.

Cllr Kevin Daley – Parish Councils would have to contribute money to actually get things done.

Numerous Speakers - The Parish contributes 25% to LHFIG projects.

Virginia Neal – A 20 MPH speed limit doesn't address the wider issue. Chitterne is ruined by rat runners. Going to LHFIG is not good enough.

Cllr Robert Yuill – We haven't spoken about what English Heritage and The National Trust think. Stonehenge needs to be preserved and the landscape is arguably ruined already. What impact are English Heritage

and The National Trust going to have? Are they going to help lobby? Or are they going to retreat? We need to get them both on side as they are both powerful.

Paul Clifton – They were also shocked by the cancellation.

Parishioner Question – There have been big issues and small issues discussed today, I am more interested in the small issues. People slow down on the A303 to look at Stonehenge, could we possibly put up a fence to block the view?

The Chair – This has been considered, and rejected many times. Not least because the sight lines make it impossible.

Parishioner Statement – The lane system going to Longbarrow Roundabout is bad and should be changed. It should be the left lane to go towards Stonehenge and to continue on the A303, and the right lane should only be for A360 traffic towards Salisbury. This would cause much less accidents.

The Chair/ Cllr Kevin Daley – This would be a good idea.

Parishioner Question – Has anyone actually checked under the bridge? The council could get a structural survey done.

The Chair – We'll look into it.

Parvis Khansari – All bridges will be inspected for weight limits, so this shouldn't be a problem.

Parishioner Question – When was it last inspected?

The Chair – I will email National Highways about that and find out.

Final Statement from The Chair – I understand how important this is, but we have no authority. Nevertheless, we will be your voice. Thank you all for coming.

Parishioner Question – Will there be a follow-up meeting?

	<p>The Chair – The MP is doing a tour of the constituencies, so if we combine voices, we will hopefully be able to get a meeting set up with him in the near future.</p> <p>Cllr Mark Verbinnen – I will inform the MP about this meeting.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 8:26 pm.</p>
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P Smith

Chairman of the Parish Council