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**Minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting of the Parish Council
held at Coddington Church on Monday 17th September 2018 at 7.30pm**

Present: Councillors Julia Boyle (Chair), Julie E Baker, Joe Hayes, John Joyce-Townsend, Tim Newsholme, Sue Ransford, Charlie Ferrier, Sven Bosley and Liz Cooke

In attendance: Emma Thomas – Parish Clerk, Cllr Tony Johnson – Ward Councillor, Mr. Clive Hall – Head of Highways at Herefordshire Council and Mr. Richard Perkins – Asset Manager for Balfour Beatty.

Public: 4

1. **To Accept any Apologies for Absence and Note the Reason**
Apologies were RECEIVED and ACCEPTED FROM Cllrs: Patrick Whitehead, Gian Carlo Paganuzzi and Rachel Lovering. All had previous engagements.
2. **To Record any Declarations of Interest and Consider any Requests for Dispensations**
None
3. **To Consider the issue of the Storesbrook Bridge closure.**
The public were asked if they wished to make any comments or ask any questions. They did not.

Mr. Clive Hall gave a brief overview of the condition of the bridge – as follows:

- There is substantial corrosion to the bridge. If nothing is done to it soon, it will need to be closed on safety grounds. The bridge is over 100 years old and until the structure is taken apart the true situation will be unknown. This bridge is part of a series of bridges earmarked for refurbishment across the county.

Cllrs posed several questions. The nature of the questions and the responses received are as follows:

- Why is the bridge going to take 16 weeks to replace? – *A site must be established as well as a secure base for a crane. Removing the old deck, lifting in a new deck and final surfacing of this deck would all be two day jobs. The work needed to refurbish the abutments is the time consuming element.*
- Why was it that the Parish Council knew nothing about this closure until about 10 days ago when an email arrived with the closure written at the very bottom? *It was sometimes easier to let people know nearer to the time.*
- Had the three large businesses by the railway bridge been consulted about this closure – given the enormous impact this will have on their transport logistics. *No they had not been individually consulted.*
- Why can't the old abutments be replaced rather than refurbished? – *This would be too costly and probably take longer.*
- Why can a temporary bridge not be put in place first? *This would cost too much and the bridge was now in such a critical state that it may have to be closed anyway before the temporary bridge could be put in place.*
- Could the SAS not be utilised to help? *The SAS could only be utilised in the case of a civil emergency – although even then the bridges used by the army are not of a standard required for public use.*
- Why has the bridge been allowed to get into such a critical state when it was first earmarked as needing work in 2012? – *There are only limited funds for such projects and other more urgent schemes have had to be prioritised.*
- Will the bridge be made wider at the same time as the refurbishment? *No – as this would need an alteration of the abutments and add to the cost.*
- Is 16 weeks a true reflection of the time the project will take? *16 weeks allows for an element of risk from weather etc to be built in.*
- Why did the Gantt chart show a 2 week closure period over the Christmas holidays? *This was for the construction industry break. Mr. Hall agreed this should be looked at and re-evaluated.*
- Why is the refurbishment work taking place in the winter? *The contractors are bound by ecological issues and have to avoid*

- What traffic management systems have been put in place to mitigate the impact of these works? *The alternative route for traffic will be via the Trumpet Inn along the A417. The intention is to put a "closed except for access" sign on Rhea Lane to prevent traffic using this lane as an alternative. It is hoped traffic will disperse across the area.*
- Had HC looked at other highway measures such as a one-way system along the smaller lanes to mitigate the effect of the 3500 diverted vehicles using them? *No, this had not been considered. Mr. Hall was happy to consider it although such schemes are very hard to enforce and are not usually viable options.*
- In order to make any diversions easier for vehicles, could all side roads have their hedges cut, passing places cleared and potholes filled? *Mr. Hall agreed to look at this, although he thought this may increase speeds of vehicles using these roads.*
- Could gritting routes be diverted along these smaller lanes? *Yes.*
- Could HC look at helping with school transport? *67% of pupils at Bosbury Primary School come from Ledbury. Their journeys will be very difficult as a result of this long closure. Mr Hall replied that he was happy to look at options although there was no finance to assist with this.*
- Has HC looked beyond the budget and offset it against the cost of repairing these smaller lanes and compensation demanded from effected businesses? *Mr. Hall confirmed that options have been looked at. The cost of this project is £450,000.*
- Will the emergency services have to use the diverted route too? *Yes they will – they are used to re-arranging routes around road works.*
- Where will the roads be closed? *Just by the bridge itself.*
- Will cyclists and pedestrians have to use alternative routes? *Yes the bridge will be closed to all.*
- Is the overall cost of the project analysed and questioned? *A comprehensive procurement process is followed. The scheme was put on the open market to obtain the best price. All costs can be benchmarked against similar projects and HC follows an open book policy on transparency of project costs.*
- Is there a penalty clause on the contractor should the project overrun its timeframe? *No*
- When was the date of closure? *1st November 2018 for 16 weeks.*

Following this question and answer session the following resolutions were made:

- It was RESOLVED that Mr. Hall would email the clerk a copy of the traffic management plan linked to the project. Councillors will email the clerk crucial routes that will be used as diversions in order that they can be added to this plan, cleared and made ready for the increase in vehicles using them over the coming weeks.
- It was RESOLVED that Mr. Hall would ensure the clerk was kept up to date with progress on the project as well as projected time-scales throughout the duration of the project.
- It was RESOLVED that Mr. Hall would individually contact the businesses in Ledbury and Bosbury that will be affected by this project and road closure.
- It was RESOLVED that Mr. Hall would work at decreasing the amount of time the project would take.
- It was RESOLVED that Mr. Hall would consider assisting with school transportation to Bosbury Primary School.
- It was RESOLVED that Cllrs could continue to send mitigation ideas to Cllr Tony Johnson (via the clerk) for consideration.

The meeting closed at 9pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

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