

TINTERN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT

Chair Cllr Stephenie Shewell, Cllrs Steve Evans, Tony Hayward, John Hoskins, Vivien Richards

County Councillor Ann Webb

12 members of the public and business community

APOLOGIES

Cllrs Lindsay Cobb and Alan Hillard

Discussion

Cllr Shewell asked for Councillors to introduce themselves and outlined the reason for the meeting which was called in response to correspondence from Monmouthshire Highways. MCC Highways has outlined four methods of handling the road closure required for the safe correction of loose rock adjoining the A466. (Attached as appendix to these minutes). She clarified the options for the work time table and asked members of the community their input as being representative of business and private villagers.

Comments

- The shortest closure possible is best but as a final solution
- The most important concern was the management of the whole operation
- Through traffic should be separated from community traffic by encouraging routes away from the Wye Valley including the Prince of Wales Bridge and the A4293
- The signs used during previous closures were hard to read and were, in any case, ignored by sat-nav users
- Issue of possible problems if concurrent works fail to finish on schedule and the problems of travel during the Winter
- Option 1 would be preferred to get the work over with
- The works could adversely affect the Fete
- The lanes on the alternative routes must be road worthy and potholes must be filled
- Why can't option 2 start in March to reduce the effect on business
- Signage should start further along the valley in both directions and state clearly that Tintern is still open for business
- CADW does not publicise the Abbey enough and could install signs from the Severn Crossing to Monmouth so as not to deter visitors
- MCC should liaise with Gloucestershire CC to avoid repetition of multiple closures
- Business is needed during the summer months in order to survive the leaner winter months
- A winter closure would be preferred
- We don't understand why bats are more important than humans
- Alternative route is unsuitable during winter months
- Safety concerns with commuters travelling in the dark winter months
- A one way system could be implemented to reduce frustration

- Danger inherent in many more vehicles using the narrow routes
- Permanent traffic lights
- Coordination of closures
- September to November would be the best time
- In the past the progress of the work was not communicated and this must be corrected
- Can the works could be carried out without a closure
- The whole issue is outrageous after the third year of closures with traffic lights in place for 2 1/2 years
- Too long a period for surveys, etc
- The two mile blockage would result in a 35 minute detour
- There should be compensation for businesses
- Will the works would be carried out 7 days a week or not
- During the snow fall during the last closure the alternative route was difficult even in a 4x4 vehicle
- The route must be made safe with correction of the bad surface, edge erosion and clearing of overhanging trees as a priority
- Query why climbers were allowed to park where we are not allowed to drive
- Can a way could be found for access to the cottages
- Why can't a new road be created

At this juncture, after some reiteration of points already made, Cllr Shewell asked for a show of hands for each of the options available. Option 1 was unanimously chosen.

The members of the community left the meeting and discussion followed among the councillors present as to their preferred option. After consideration of the comments from the community the councillors agreed that option 1 would be the best way forward, especially for the businesses in the village.

Following this decision it was decided that we would communicate this choice to MCC Highways with the following conditions taken into consideration:

- Maximum number of days work each week (prefer 7 days)
- Longer working days
- Easter opening if possible
- Proper signage and advance planning
- Alternative routes
- Separate language signs well in advance of the closure before drivers are committed
- Signage to include businesses open and access to the Abbey
- Maintenance of roads before and after the closure
- One way on alternative route if possible
- Change of speed limit during the closure
- Address issues arising from sat-nav routing vehicles incorrectly
- Liaise with others such as utility companies, Gloucestershire CC, etc.
- Give notice 28 days in advance
- Public statement by public meeting and presentation
- Weekly updates to TCC for publication
- Businesses compensated by at least a rates holiday

Actions

County Cllr Webb was asked to request that Steve Baldwin and Roger Hoggins attend the next meeting of TCC to explain which option they are going to follow, the criteria used for the decision and to respond to our conditions.

Cllr Shewell to convey the above conditions to MCC Highways.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8:40pm

Signed Chairman

Date

APPENDIX

Ecology work

The ecology work for Site 1 is just being wrapped up and there is a bat emergence survey to be undertaken on Site 2 over the next couple of weeks.

Site 1 this will enable the Habitat Regulations Assessment to be undertaken and submitted to Welsh Government for determination. This will cover the proposal for removing the remaining unstable rock face and forming a 1 in 1 batter back from the road. As well as dealing with SSSI/SAC and Annex 1 habitat of the woodland area there is the presence of bats within the cliff face and surrounding area. Because of this any works can only take place outside of hibernation periods in the active season which is typically April onwards until September. Works are expected to take about 6 weeks and due to the nature of what needs to be undertaken will require a full road closure.

Site 2 works are likely to take the form of a netting and anchor solution. The design is currently being looked into in more detail but it is envisaged the top half of the slope, which is well fractured and loose, will be netted. The bottom half which is made up of more competent material will be stabilised with anchors. Because space is limited and the rock face adjoins the road directly any anchor or bolt head will have to be recessed into the rock face to minimise dangerous protrusions into the road space. These works are expected to take about 4 weeks and again because of the type of work and the size of plant required to form the anchor recess points the road will have to be closed while this is being undertaken.

The work

Both sites on same contract Assuming that both sites are undertaken under the same contract, as the Livox Cottage properties are located between the two sites it will not be possible to run these sites concurrently without removing all access. Running the sites consecutively and allowing for contingencies this would require the A466 to be closed for a period of around 12 weeks.

Options

We do have a number of options and these are listed below the timings of which will be dependent on having the Habitat Regulation Assessment/Licences in place for Site 1 and the results of Bat Surveys for Site 2

- 1 Commence Site 2 in March 19 followed by Site 1 in April (Closure period March/April/May)
- 2 Commence Site 2 in April 19 followed by Site 1 (Closure period April/May/June)
- 3 Delay Site 1 works until September 19 and follow on with Site 2. The works must be complete by Nov 19 and the bat hibernation season. (Closure period Sept/Oct/Nov)
- 4 Commence Site 2 in March (April dependant on bat surveys) and Site 1 in September (Closure period March (or April) then Sept/Oct)

Considerations

The following considerations apply:

- For Option 1 apart from the lengthy closure it is unlikely due to the bulk excavation works required at Site 1 that the road could be reopened at Easter
- Under Option 2, although a delayed start would push the works into June, by commencing Site 2 first it may be possible, due to the type of work, to reopen the road for Easter but this will have to be confirmed
- Option 3 works are likely to run into November and bat hibernation and the implications of this will have to be investigated
- Option 4 splits the work and would lessen the overall impact on the spring/summer months especially if Site 2 can be commenced in March. Even if Site 2 is delayed until April it still may be possible to reopen the road over the Easter period. Option 4 however will require the lights at Site 1 to be in place for another year.