

AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER 2026

Present: Councillors Charlie Regnart (Chair), Paul Wentworth (part of meeting) (Vice Chair), Jim Shephard, Heather Sandison, Nigel Marsh

Apologies: Jim Farquharson, Shirley Bragg, John Holloway (Parish Clerk)

In attendance: Bryan Puszkas (SSEN), Jason Kinchinton (SSEN), Marcus Jay (CIUS), Gavin Meaden (CIUS), Samantha Paulley (Dorset Council Traffic Team), Sherry Jespersen (Cllr)

Members of the public: 48 members of the public present

Welcome and opening remarks

The meeting commenced at 2pm with the Chair welcoming attendees and giving a brief overview of the reason for the meeting.

Road closures are to take place between 12/10/26 to 18/12/26 whilst cables are laid.

Main concerns of the Parish Council and Residents:

- The length of time of the road closures and the fact that they are 24/7
- The cost of re-routing for residents and local businesses
- Risk of additional time taken for the emergency services to access or depart the village

Background

The Chair provided a brief overview of sequence of events.

- Proposed road closure notice received end of July with a date of 08/09 for Stakeholders to voice concerns
- 02/08 site meeting
- 04/08 Parish Council meeting – road closure deemed unacceptable
- 05/08 Asked Dorset Council to attend an extraordinary PC meeting
- 06/08 Dorset Council declined meeting. Concerns don't warrant consideration.
- August – asked villagers to raise concerns with local MP
- 20/08 – Dorset Council said that road closure licence had been issued on 06/08 despite stakeholders having until 08/09. (NB later in the meeting SP gave further details on this)

Connect It Utility Services

The phases of work were shown on diagram and explained.

Phase 1 – Above Church footpath entrance to Church car park

Phase 2 – Church car park to Forge entrance

Phase 3 – Small section by Forge

Phase 4 – Forge to School Lane (access by turning left out of school lane)

Phase 5 – School Lane to Bugle Horn House (access by turning right out of school lane)

(NB later in the meeting it was agreed that Phases 2 and 3 could be merged as long as work vehicles are not parked on the road outside the Forge to allow resident parking and access from the road rather than their driveway. Marcus confirmed that this could save at least 3 days from the timescales given).

CIUS considerations:

- Unsure of ground type and existing services
- Aware flint in the area, may prove a 'tough dig'. If ground is easy timescales could be quicker.
- Some "fat" has been built into the timescales
- If Phases are quicker than expected they will move onto next Phase.
- End date is fixed – for example, if works are finished in 8 weeks they will still need to come back at 10 week point to finish but the road will be made good in the interim.

Dual lay dig. 900 mm deep dig.

Coming down middle of the road as can't use heavy machinery near fragile wall and trees.

Q: Could each stage be done during a week and then the road opened at weekends?

Ans: (Gavin & Marcus) Tarmac must be sealed and can't be guaranteed to be ready to open road.

Phase 1 – 4 cannot be merged as access to church has to be maintained.

Guided by road widths and safety.

Q: What happens in the event of a funeral and access to church required?

Ans: (Marcus) Access would be given.

Q: Why are you digging in the middle of the road?

Ans: (Marcus)

- Main road has BT and drains.
- No scan has been done yet of the Church Hill road.
- Plant width dictates.
- They must have a minimum of 3m outside of their work zone.

Q: Why is Church Hill road taking 4 weeks?

Ans: (Gavin & Marcus) 4 weeks is justified by length and depth of works. 900mm deep. Need to maintain 300mm separation between ducts. Duct is continuous from field to Bugle Horn.

Q: Is there a problem of heat in the ducts?

Ans: (Marcus & Jason) SSEN decide whether open trench or ducting. SSEN design has determined how works are to be carried out. There is no cable overheating problem envisaged.

Q: How long is needed for the last connection point?

Ans: (Gavin) Scheduled 1 week. If the job is finished early they will come back 3 days before the set end date to prep the works/cables before joining.

Q: Could the road be opened in between Phases?

Ans: (Gavin & Marcus) It would take a day to demobilise and reinstate at the end and beginning of each working week so it is not time effective to open road.

Q: Could road plates be used to enable access? It is believed that the private client would prefer to keep access open and disruption to a minimum.

Ans: (Marcus) This would cause delays to the job and the area to be covered is too large. There may also be issues with the quality of the surface and punctures from the road plates.

It was conceded that in the event of funerals road plates would be used but this would be temporary and over a smaller area.

Q: Farmers from Tarrant Hinton need to get through Tarrant Gunville. What consideration has been given to this?

Ans: no answer

Q: Is there any contractual incentive to finish the job quicker?

Ans: (Gavin & Marcus) Workers are paid a certain amount. Timescales have been worked out by pre determined templates.

Q: Why not connect in the field as it would reduce the work and disruption?

Ans: (Gavin & Marcus) Area surrounding the Bugle is grade 2 listed so it was not able to be done in the field.

Q: What will the hours of work be?

Ans: (Gavin) Weekdays 8am – 4pm. Saturdays 8am – 2pm.

Q: The road has too much traffic as it is. Are there any other road closures or closure licences that will impact the village?

Ans: (Samantha) Apart from Dinahs Hollow there will be no other road closures that would impact the village.

(Bryan) As part of the process of approving this road closure other road closures in the area would have been considered.

Q: If Stubhamptom floods what will happen?

Ans: (Marcus) No contingency plans are in place for this. If this were to happen the works would stop.

(Samantha) Council would stop the works.

Q: Why are the works being done at this time of year when there will inevitably be bad weather?

Ans: (Gavin & Marcus) Works will continue whatever the weather. If bad weather did stop work the road would be made safe for access.

Q: Will you be getting rid of dug up material and bringing in new materials to infill?

Ans: (Gavin & Marcus) Yes

Q: Where will the spoil be going? Which direction will it be taken? Through Tarrant Hinton or Stubhamptom?

Ans: (Gavin) It has yet to be determined where the spoil will be taken and therefore unable to say which direction it will be going.

Q: Will there be any compensation for farmers who cannot get through the road.

Ans: no answer.

Comment: Businesses and Community groups use the village hall. It will be hard for these groups to meet and certain Christmas events are unlikely to happen. This could mean that people will find alternative locations moving forward having a long lasting impact on the village/village hall

Q: Will pedestrians and cyclists be able to get through.

Ans: Yes, pedestrian and cyclist access will be 24/7 but no access for horse riders.

Q: Can cars be left the other side of the works and pedestrians walk through to prevent big diversions to car journeys. Could pads be put in a field for use by cars?

Ans: If the road is closed then cars could be left on the side of the road.

Q: Why are the works happening?

Ans: (Bryan) The project is an upgrade to a supply for a local private customer.

However, there will be a benefit to the village in that electricity only comes into the village in one direction at the moment. This job will ring the network. This will mean that there are 2 ways in future to solve any issues with the network. A form of future proofing.

Q: Is this “non essential works”?

Ans: (Bryan) SSEN are obliged to carry out the works as a condition of their licence to upgrade or connect to the network

Q: Has it been considered whether any other sub contractors could do the work quicker? Why were no other companies asked to tender for the job?

Ans: (Bryan) Other sub contractors have not been considered. SSEN tender for a period of years rather than each specific job. Based on experience it is felt that CIUS are well suited for the job.

Q: Will there be two routes for electricity into the village after this job?

Ans: (Bryan) Yes

Q: Have alternative routes through farmland been considered?

Ans: (Bryan & Jason) All routes have been looked at, this is the only possible route. Landowners have been asked.

NB – a landowner present at the meeting said they had not been asked.

NB – later in the meeting it was agreed that Bryan & Jason will further investigate whether other routes were considered and whether landowners were asked.

ACTION: Bryan & Jason – to feedback to Charlie Regnart what other routes were considered and who was asked.

NB – later in the meeting a timescale was requested for this feedback. Agreed 11/09 at the latest, earlier was requested.

Q: Why is the work being done at this time of year?

Ans: (Bryan) Projects are carried out all through the year. Growth in loads on networks means works are continuous. A summer road closure would also have been bad for local businesses. There is never a good time.

ACTION: Bryan – It was agreed that a weekly update would be issued on the progress of works.

Q: Has it been considered that all residents and businesses will be financially impacted?

Ans: (Bryan) SSEN appreciates the inconvenience caused. No costs or compensation to residents or businesses can be passed on to the end customer.

ACTION: Bryan – Bryan would like to look into whether any gesture of goodwill can be made to the village hall in respect of the inconvenience caused.

Q: Previous discussions with SSEN in 2020 regarding the installation of heaters into the Church involved quotes where supply did come across fields. The plan was to lay a cable from the HV Transformer by the road between Bugle Horn House and Park Cottage across the field to St Marys Church. (Quote Ref ERP 603). This establishes that this is a possible route for works. A landowner offered their garden so there is surprise in the village when it is now said that field access has been considered and discounted. Could this be looked in to again?

It was also noted that the Grade 2 listed property is not a consideration as the present HV cable route goes under listed property.

It was felt that other routes had not been properly considered as there would need to be compensation for private landowners but no compensation needed for tax paying residents and local businesses.

Ans: Bryan and Jason have an action to feedback what other routes were considered.

Q: Has it been explored as to whether if money was thrown at the project could it be done quicker?

Ans: (Bryan) **ACTION** – Bryan to look into whether increased workforce could speed up the project. However, they are limited to how many people can work on site at one time. Double resource has already been committed for 6 weeks.

Q: If SSEN tender with sub contractors on a five year package has this project been in the pipeline for a long period of time? If so, why is liaison with the community so last minute?

Ans: (Bryan) The five year package will have a rough idea of what works will be included but not full detail.

Q: SSEN give CIUS permits to do the work but if the private customer did some of the work, could the timescales and impact be lessened?

Ans: no answer.

Q: Is the road closure licence going to be suspended due to the open questions and concerns over the processes that have been followed?

Ans: (Samantha) Permit approval has to happen within certain timeframes. The road closure is still open for comments from stakeholders until 08/09. Only if SSEN said they wanted to look at the job again would Dorset Council stop the permit. Highways have no reason to revoke any licences that have been given.

Q: Do concerns need to be raised in writing or is this meeting enough?

Ans: No answer was given.

Q: Could you go back to the private client to say that the consultation process has gone wrong?

Ans: (Samantha) Consultation has followed procedure. SSEN may decide to carry on or delay.

(Bryan) Minutes will be issued and reviewed and concerns will be looked at.

NB Bryan was honest with the meeting in stating that as far as he was aware the project would be continuing as per the original plan.

Q: Is the private customer aware of the residents concerns?

Ans: (Bryan) Yes.

Q: Is there no way access can be given at weekends?

Ans: (Gavin & Marcus) No.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.