

HANNINGTON PARISH COUNCIL- Special Meeting
DRAFT Minutes for Tuesday 28th February 2017 at 5.00pm
in Hannington Village Hall

1. Background

The meeting was called by the Parish Council, following its meeting held on Tuesday 21st February, specifically to discuss the extremely poor condition of the footpath FP7106a 'Bertha's Lane' and what action the Parish Council should take.

A Report outlining the situation was circulated in advance of the meeting. The Report presented the key issues under the following headings:-

- What is the issue/problem?
- Why the Urgency for a decision?
- Whose responsibility is it to repair the footpath?
- Why is Hannington Parish Council getting involved?
- Can Hannington Parish Council get involved?
- What is to be done?
- What is the cost?
- What are outstanding issues?

2. Apologies for absence & declarations of interest

All Parish Councillors were present. Borough Cllr Donald Sherlock attended.

19 members of the public attended.

There were no apologies and no declarations of interest.

3. DRAFT Minute of the meeting held 21st February

DECISION: after having discussed the above at great length, the Council DECIDED TO DEFER A DECISION pending:

1. Cllr Hertz meeting with Tim May, Kingsclere Estates, to establish if he is willing to contribute towards addressing the poor state of the base of the footpath caused by his vehicles, and what, if any, actions he is willing to take to prevent, or at least minimise a recurrence in future, (Cllr Hertz to follow up),

4. Feedback by Cllr Hertz on his meeting with Tim May, Kingsclere Estates

Cllr Hertz met with Tim May at 20:30, Monday, 21st February 2017.

Cllr Hertz explained that the HPC are contemplating taking on the repair of Berthas Lane and are to make a decision on the following day [Tuesday 28th February], and that they would like his input prior to making that decision. A number of questions had been raised, and the Cllrs would like his views.

Cllr Hertz then read out from his detailed notes of the meeting. He qualified them with 'these are the gist of the responses from Tim and they are not verbatim responses to the questions raised with him'.

It should be noted that Tim May did not attend the meeting, so it was not possible to confirm or otherwise, the feedback given by Cllr Hertz.

4.i Do Kingsclere Estates have any objection to the HPC carrying out the repairs to the whole length of the Berthas Lane?

Response: No they do not – the HPC can do whatever they want to do, however, the advice would be to leave the repair of the track to the ‘farmer’ who uses it for farm traffic. *“Due to the nature of the very wet ground and the continued use by farm traffic it is highly unlikely any repair or resurfacing that the HPC carries out will last”.*

4.ii. There is concern that that track is potentially not in a fit state for the Village Fair traffic?

Response: The repair of the track is not an issue for the Village Fair at present, closer to the date the repair may be resolved by the farmer.

At this point, Tim proposed that the money could be better spent to create a ‘metre strip’ of raised walkway for pedestrians, as long as a minimum 3 metre vehicular width is left for farm traffic. The separation between the vehicular traffic and pedestrian strip can be provided by the use of railway sleepers placed upon their edge. Once retaining post are in place, the sleepers provide the containment for the hard core and surface material. The raised pedestrian strip should preferentially be located alongside the Michaels Field hedgerow.

4.iii. There have been complaints that it is the farm and shoot traffic that is causing the flooded potholes on Berthas Lane is there any likelihood of:-

- a. A significant reduction or no heavy farm vehicles using the track, e.g. tractors?***
- b. The shoot vehicles no longer using the track?***

Response: The Estate intends to continue to use Berthas Lane as this route is the major and fastest route at harvest time – the Estate has ‘rights’ to use the track. Few farm vehicles use the track in winter, however, the ‘Shoot’ will continue to use the track as this is the route to approach various ‘drives’ on the Estate.

4.iv. The parishioners have offered to contribute £1,200 of their own money towards material costs. Would you agree to contribute towards the supply of road planings?

Response: Yes, I will contribute in ‘kind’ i.e. 60 tonnes of road planings but cannot guarantee delivery – the source depends on availability. The contribution would be for the 1m pedestrian track.

4.v. The HPC would like your permission to lay material from Mike Shortts gate to join Berthas Lane?

Response: Leave it to the ‘farmer’ to resolve, focus on the pedestrian strip. (see proposal under 4.ii. above)

Conclusions:

- a. The ‘doyens’ of the farming community in the locality agree with Tim May’s advice that the proposed approach to repair by the HPC is unlikely to be successful or be ‘value for money’. *‘Due to the nature of the very wet ground and the continued use by heavy farm machinery, it is highly unlikely any repair or resurfacing that the HPC carries out will last.’*

- b. The alternate approach, as suggested by Tim May and others, of creating a raised one metre strip has been researched with the following comparative cost outcome,

Proposal I: repair of the whole track - total cost estimate is **£4,500**

Proposal II: creating a raised 1m wide pedestrian footpath on Berthas Lane is **£6,700**

- c. The cost increase for the suggested alternate Proposal II is £2,200, nearly 50% higher than Proposal I, and the Parish Council does not have the financial resources to undertake it, nor could it justify spending such an amount of money.
- d. The costs estimates and technical considerations in creating the 1m wide pedestrian footpath, leaving sufficient width for farm and shoot vehicles have been reviewed with Pat Sarsfield-Hall this afternoon [28th February]. Apart from some minor considerations, the logistical and content that comprise the cost stands up to scrutiny. All material and hire costs have supporting quotes from the suppliers.
- e. Detailed cost estimates were supplied to the Cllrs.

5. DISCUSSION

The Chairman suggested that the bottom line was that Kingsclere Estates and the Shoot will not curtail their use of Berthas Lane – due to their 'prescriptive right' to use the lane – so, the current level of heavy traffic will continue.

That Proposal I was no longer a valid proposal due to:-

The 'doyens' of the farming community in the locality agree with Tim May's advice that the proposed approach to repair by the HPC is unlikely to be successful or be 'value for money' it is highly unlikely any repair or resurfacing that the HPC carries out will last due to the nature of the very wet ground and the continued use by heavy farm machinery. "

The Chairman then opened the meeting for questions, comments, suggestions,

Discussions initially centred on Tim May's alternative suggestion of a 1 metre wide raised pedestrian strip. This was quickly dismissed due to the high costs; £6,700 (the killer here was the cost of the sleepers £3,100 incl bracing pegs plus the related labour costs). The 'raised nature' was necessitated because without it the nature and construction of the remainder of the track would still result in water/puddles, and without the sleepers there would be nothing to stop the vehicles driving onto the path.

The meeting considered:-

- i. a lower specification 'not so highly raised' solution ie only one sleeper rather than two, but that was still too expensive and there was no guarantee the current problems would be resolved; and it was still estimated to cost in the region of £5,000.
- ii. 'Unraised' solution without an improved base construction, that is a 1 metre wide path initially covered by Terram material (a geotextile membrane) which prevents mud resurfacing was to be laid on the current concrete/brick and other unknown materials, and partial earth - then covered over with aggregate or other surface material. This was discounted as the meeting was advised the stones and

- boulders in the ground would quickly tear into the Terram and the surface would disintegrate.
- iii. Tim May has intimated that he would be willing to 'fill in the holes'. However, the experience to date, most recently with the use of concrete slabs, has made the situation worse not better for walkers.

6. The Final Solution?...

A suggestion was raised and discussed with the thought that a 'dog friendly' footpath could be created along the hedgerow in Michaels Field. Representatives from the Michaels Field Management Committee said they would look into that idea. Their initial concerns were that:-

- i. it is illegal to allow dogs on a playing field; so any track would have to be fenced off, and,
- ii. they would probably need the agreement of the National Playing Fields Association.

7. The Parish Council DECIDED

- 7.1 **Proposal I was dismissed** as it is unlikely to be successful or be 'value for money' it is highly unlikely any repair or resurfacing that the HPC carries out will last due to the nature of the very wet ground and the continued use by heavy farm machinery.
- 7.2 **Proposal II was dismissed** due to cost, as was the lower specification.
- 7.3 **To support the New Proposal to create a 'dog friendly footpath along the hedgerow in Michaels Field'; noting the need for further investigation and support from the MFMC.**
- 7.4 Cllr Hertz to liaise with Tim May to try to firm up his intentions, and in particular to ask for remedial work to the potholes caused by his farm and 'shoot' vehicles to be undertaken as soon as possible including the removal of the concrete slabs.

Chris Pottinger,
Clerk, Hannington Parish Council

1st March 2017