

# SEMINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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**Notice is hereby given that a Virtual/Remote meeting of the Semington Parish Council will be held on 6 January 2021 at 7.30 pm. and you are invited to attend.**

**This meeting is being held using Zoom technology**

## **AGENDA.**

**Prior to the commencement of the Parish Council meeting, members of the public will be given the opportunity to make any representations that they wish the Parish Council to note.**

**Public Participation.**

## **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING.**

### **1. Apologies.**

To receive and to accept apologies for non-attendance.

### **2. Declaration of Interests.**

Councillors to declare any interests.

### **3. Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 25 November 2020 and Decisions taken remotely (post – Lockdown).**

- a. To agree and sign the minutes of the meeting as an accurate record.
- b. To endorse the decisions taken remotely (see details at end of Agenda).

### **4. Wiltshire Council Report.**

To receive a report from Wiltshire Council, Cllr. J Seed.

### **5. Chair's Report.**

The Chair to update the Council on developments since the last meeting.

### **6. Planning and Development**

- a. To decide the comments to be sent to Wiltshire Council in respect of any planning applications received after 30 December 2020.
- b. To decide the response to the Melksham Joint Local Plan consultation. Please see attached report by Cllr Scott.
- c. To note the result of Planning Appeal APP/Y3940/W/20/3253180 (Planning application 20/01306/OUT) and to agree the Proposal for further action. Please see attached report by Cllr Scott.
- d. To note any developments with respect to the Wiltshire Council Local Plan Review and to decide on any necessary action.
- e. To note any other planning and development related matters.

### **7. Environment and Streetscene.**

To note any current issues and to decide the action necessary.

**8. Transport and Traffic.**

- a. To decide the response to the proposed A350 Bypass consultation. Please see attached report by Cllr Wade.
- b. To note any current issues and to decide the action necessary.

**9. Recreation and Wellbeing.**

To note any current issues and to decide the action necessary.

**10. Community and Communication.**

To note any current issues and to decide the action necessary.

**11. Finance.**

- a. To note the report from the Clerk on the current financial position.
- b. To agree the Financial Budget for FY2021/22 and the Precept required.
- c. To increase the Clerk's hours from 6 to 7 hours per week w.e.f. 1st October 2020, at a half year cost of £375 (full year £750) and to continue monitoring his working hours; and to review his working hours again as part of the 2021 pay review, and annually thereafter.
- d. To agree the payments to be made.

**12. Website.**

- a. To note the launch of the draft website, and to seek feedback on any aspect of it.
- b. To decide whether the "Meet the Council" page should have individual pictures of councillors, together with a phone number and a brief (30 word) biography.
- c. To note that the logo for the site has yet to be chosen, and to consider how best to do this.
- d. To consider the appropriateness of the picture on the Home page and, if a replacement is thought necessary, to consider how best to choose the preferred picture.

**13. Standing Orders.**

To approve Standing Orders for Semington Parish Council Meetings, Issue 1, 6 January 2021.

**14. Date of the next meeting.**

To agree the date of the next Ordinary Parish Council meeting – 10 February 2021 proposed.

Roger Coleman  
Clerk to Semington Parish Council

30 December 2020

**Decisions taken remotely by Semington Parish Council – Subsequent to Contingency Plan 17 March 2020 and Post Parish Council Meeting held on 25 November 2020.**

1. Payment of £185 to Southview Nurseries (Christmas Tree).
2. Payment of £9.94 to C Wade (Tacklestore Ltd – Eyebolt for Christmas Tree)
3. Payment of £50 to P Scott (Donation to Dorothy House – Christmas Tree collection)

R P Coleman  
30 December 2020

## The Melksham Joint Local Plan – report for Semington Parish Council

I've read the various documents associated with the Melksham Joint Local Plan with a view to how it might affect us, and in relation to how we might comment as a Parish Council.

What is envisaged in the plan does not affect us now, but three aspects, if developed, would likely do so:

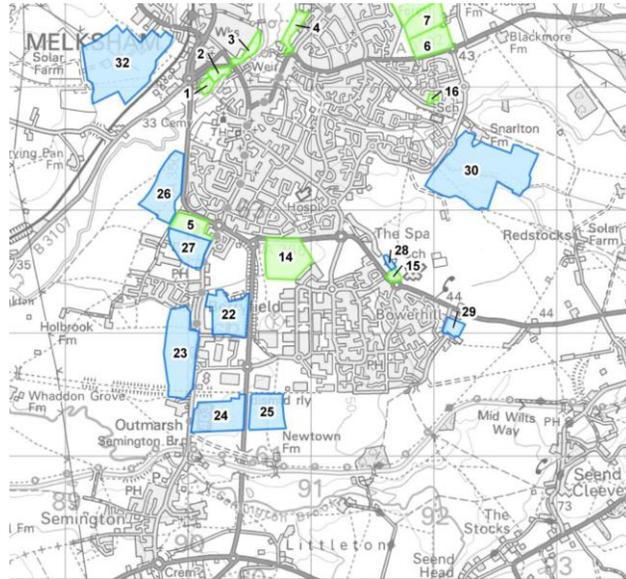
1. By-pass routes 10c and 10d to the east of the town, would likely open land up for development and possibly bring building much closer to the parish boundary along the towing path east of the A350 up to Giles Wood and the Seend parish boundary. Wiltshire Council is driving this development.
2. The construction of the Melksham Link canal to the west of the old A350 from the K&A canal to the River Avon would have a marked impact because of the development of much of the land between Berryfields and the K&A, and most particularly through the development of land immediately adjacent to the canal between the canal bridge and the aqueduct.
3. The construction of housing on land on either side of the old A350 south of the old railway line has been identified as suitable for housing. A site assessment report says:

### Site 24

Landscape sensitivities, heritage issues and access concerns provide constraints to what is otherwise a relatively unconstrained site. Providing the constraints can be overcome, the site is considered suitable for small scale mixed-use development of high quality design. 202 houses.

### Site 25

The main constraints to development include the access concerns, the potential impacts to landscape and townscape character, and the locally important priority habitats. Providing the constraints can be overcome, the site is considered suitable for small scale mixed-use development of high quality design. 185 houses.



Site 24 is likely to be part of the land identified by the Melksham Link developers for the new canal which is a key priority for the Plan. The current Wiltshire Core Strategy safeguards the route of the Link in Core Policy 16. The Local Plan says: “The project is an opportunity to improve the Green Infrastructure network both within the Plan area and the wider Melksham Community Area with associated benefits such as increased walking and cycling routes and linked to this is the opportunity to promote tourism within the town, and to generate renewable energy harnessing energy from the river.” What it doesn't say is that none of this will happen unless there is significant housing and other development along the Link route, because that is the only way in which the construction can be afforded.

A planning application for the Melksham Link was submitted in 2012, but this has not yet been determined, owing to unresolved environmental concerns raised by the Environment Agency. New housing does not form part of that application.

The irony of the Melksham Local Plan is that there are two very large infrastructure developments in the offing, to the east and to the west of the town. These will significantly extend the town boundaries and hence the size of the community in ways that the Plan cannot yet identify. These are both being driven by Wiltshire Council policies which will impose development on Melksham whatever the local plan has to say.

My recommendation is that our response to the local plan ought to stress that the priority for Semington is to maintain as much undeveloped ‘green’ space as possible between the Kennet and Avon (the Semington parish boundary) and Melksham, Bowerhill and Berryfields. In doing so, it would be politic to stress that we are doing this to protect the canal and its hinterland, rather than to protect the village.

## Land North of St George's Road 20/01306/OUT<sup>1</sup> APP/Y3940/W/19/3236860

After a successful appeal, outline planning permission has been granted for “residential development of up to 20 entry-level affordable dwellings with associated car parking, access, internal roads, public open space, landscaping, drainage and other associated infrastructure”.

The Section 106 agreement<sup>2</sup> between Greystoke, the developer, and Wiltshire Council provides details of the financial contributions that will be made to the community.<sup>3</sup> These include:

- Education: £75,302 to go to Wiltshire Council for St George's school.
- Leisure: £4720, for the upgrading of the tennis court which presumably will come to the parish council.
- Open Space: £1200 per unit (£24,000) to provide or upgrade open space provision, location to be agreed. It is not clear which space is referred to here, or where the money goes.
- Wessex Close Play Area, £258.42 per unit (~£5180) which presumably will come to the parish council to assist in running costs.
- New Play Area: 1.77 m<sup>2</sup> per unit (35 m<sup>2</sup>) within the new development. It is not clear who will have responsibility for this.



The PC will be consulted, along with parishioners, when the developer submits the full (detailed rather than outline) application. But by then, conversations with Wiltshire Council officers on conditions and reserved matters will have happened and, we can assume, largely been resolved, as we are not statutory consultees for this process. The only way we might hope to influence the development is to seek constructive engagement with Wiltshire Council and Greystoke.

**Proposal:** In order to optimise benefits to the village community, and to advance the opportunities for members of existing Semington families to live in the development, the parish council approaches Wiltshire Council seeking [i] to clarify any ambiguities in the planning permission and the S106 agreement. and [ii] to participate in the full planning permission process.

Immediate actions: Consult Councillor Seed and following this, the planning officer responsible for the development.

<sup>1</sup> [unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/Search/DSA,908288](http://unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/Search/DSA,908288)

<sup>2</sup> [unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/File/MjAvMDEzMDYvT1VULDEONDIOMzc=](http://unidoc.wiltshire.gov.uk/UniDoc/Document/File/MjAvMDEzMDYvT1VULDEONDIOMzc=)

<sup>3</sup> There is a lot of other detail in the S106 which needs careful scrutiny.

## Melksham A350 Bypass Consultation – Semington PC comments

The PC comments apply to the route options that are within the parish boundary or the neighbouring parish boundary. Each of these routes are considered in turn.

Route 8b: this is the long western bypass option. This route would cross the flood plain from the river Avon and come through farm land to join A350 south of Bowerhill. It would need to be raised to prevent flooding and would therefore be very visually intrusive in the surrounding countryside and from the canal. There is also likely to be significant noise impact on both Semington and Berryfields with this route. Semington would suffer noise impact from the North West, North and East, rather than just from the East with all other options. Where it crosses the Semington Road south of Berryfields would create a potentially hazardous junction for the national cycle route along this road. It would also create a tempting “rat-run” for vehicles to cut the corner and come through the village of Semington rather than go three sides around the village. This route would pass very close to the Wiltshire Air Ambulance HQ. Route 8b will probably require part of Route 7C from the point where it joins the A350 south to the roundabout with the A361. Semington PC would not be in favour of this option because of the environmental impact and the likelihood of a significant increase in through traffic within the village.

Route 7C: This is the upgrading of the existing A350 to the south of Melksham. This road has been designed to be dual carriageway capable and can be improved without significant impact on the environment, other than an increase in noise. Some additional sound screening would be sought by the PC if this option is used.

Route 10C: This is Eastern bypass option which skirts Bowerhill and joins the A350 at or to the south of the old railway line. This option does not change the risk of increased through traffic within the village. The environmental impact is believed to be lower with this option than any of the other long route options. The noise impact will be worst close to the industrial estate of Bowerhill and as such is the least worst option. This route could be supplemented with part of route 7C if traffic volume justifies it. This is the option that would be preferred by Semington PC.

Route 10D: This is the long eastern bypass route which continues south to join the A361 at some point TBD between the Strand and the Littleton roundabout with the A350. This option will have a significant environmental impact on the Littleton area, with additional crossings of the canal and Semington Brook required. Where the A350 and the A361 are shared would probably require improvement with this option. The Semington brook area around Littleton is a particular wildlife haven with otters, water voles, Buzzard, Red Kite and Ravens seen this year. The route would pass close to listed buildings. Semington PC would object to this route based on the environmental impact on both the Brook/canal and the noise impact for Littleton residents.

### Summary

Of the new road options being considered, Semington PC would prefer 10c. However, for all options we request that justification for the scheme is looked at again in the post COVID era, where working from home is likely to become more established within society and could lead to long term reductions in traffic volumes. The surveys were conducted before the Farmers roundabout improvement scheme was implemented, which may affect the cost/benefit cases as presented. All costs quoted in the reports are historic and can therefore be assumed to be under-estimates of the true cost. Who bear the risk of cost increases? Semington PC would oppose this risk falling on Wiltshire rate payers, in particular as this appears to be an attempt to raise the status of the road to “trunk” strategic importance, particularly with the closure of the A36 to HGV traffic at Cleveland Bridge.

Finally, we would recommend that Wiltshire Council review other evidence and analysis emerging post Covid and in the light of the increasing understanding of the global climate emergency, for

example the UK government Climate Change Committee's report (<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/>) of 9th December 2020 that foresees "a reduction in demand of 7-16% of total car-kilometres in 2030 and 12-34% by 2050 compared with baseline demand" and "a reduction in the amount we use cars by 2-5% per decade" with the consequent need to review all road building schemes. The same report outlines an increase in public transport, walking and cycling, which would point towards investing the available funds in the lower numbered options rather than the road building options, a move that Semington PC would actively support