

Swavesey Parish Council

Minutes

Parish Council Meeting, held at The Memorial Hall
Monday 19 January 2004, 7.30pm

PRESENT

Mr M Johnston (Chairman)

Councillors : A Day, J Dodson, V Ladds, P Marriott, S Rogers, R Owen, W Wright

Clerk : Mrs Rogers took Minutes in the Clerk's absence

Parishioners : 9 in total: 5 public, 3 Byways Committee members (Glyn Jones, John Johnson, Keith Wilderspin) and South Cambs District Council Drainage Manager Mr Pat Matthews

County Council: County Cllr Mrs S Johnstone

County Council Rapid Transit Team: Mr Matthew Curtis, Guided Bus Project Manager and Mr Richard Caton, guided bus property consultant (Ardent Management)

APOLOGIES

Mrs Miller (Clerk), J Foster, C Houghton

The Chairman welcomed County Council representatives, Mr Curtis and Mr Caton, to the meeting.

AGENDA 2

Declarations of Interest

Everyone in the room declared an interest in the Swavesey Byways.

AGENDA 3

Footway, bridleway and byway crossing points within Swavesey parish, along the route of the proposed guided-bus scheme

Mr Curtis introduced the County's proposed solution so that vehicles could still access land north of the old railway while allowing the County to close the three Swavesey Byways crossings (Mow Fen Drove, Middle Fen Drove and Lairstall Drove) to vehicles.

The solution is to build two new access tracks, to similar standards of surfacing as the existing Swavesey Byways, with a vehicle width of 4m. One track will run from Lairstall Drove towards Station Road along a field perimeter. The other track will run from the north side of the present level crossing, westwards through privately-owned land, parallel with the railway to and over Middle Fen Drove, carrying on north of the railway to end at Mow Fen Drove. The existing railway crossings in Lairstall and Mow Fen Drove will be closed to vehicles and remain only open as footpath crossings. The crossing in Middle Fen Drove to close to vehicles and remain open only as a bridleway crossing.

Bridleway crossings will be an open design, 4m wide dog-leg approach, while footpath crossings will be an open design, 2m wide, straight-on approach.

Mr Curtis told the meeting that he had met with Cllr John Shepperson and South Cambs DC Drainage Manager Pat Matthews, both representing Swavesey Byways Committee prior to the Byways Committee annual meeting on 13 January 2004.

Mr Matthews reported from the Byways Committee meeting that four points were raised:

1. The Byways Committee does not want responsibility for long term upkeep of these tracks
2. There was unease over the proposed changes but it was generally accepted this was the best solution in the circumstances
3. The new track should be classified as bridleway for riders and cyclists to use
4. When building the tracks, their levels should be same as the railway to avoid being flooded.

Mr Curtis replied on the points:

1. Maintenance. The County needs to consider this and come back to parish council.
2. Pleased to hear it's generally acceptable.
3. County happy to be steered by parish council on how you want these tracks to be classified for the general public to use
4. County will investigate this as part of more detailed studies later on.

Open discussion then followed.

The Parish Council reiterated that Swavesey Byways were unique within the Country and that these Byways are and have always been used as public routes and are used by pedestrians, cyclists, horseriders and motor vehicles. Although this use and long-term public right of access has never been recorded on the County's Definitive Rights of Way Map.

County Councillor Shona Johnstone and the guided bus team are to investigate 2 items so that Mrs Johnstone can report back at next Swavesey Parish Council meeting.

1. Are County Council prepared to take on maintenance responsibilities of new tracks?
2. Can the County Council clarify the Swavesey Byways' status. (The Parish Council believe if vehicular use by the public is accepted by the County Council, then the parish council have a better chance of keeping the three byways open to vehicles).

Meeting closed 9.00pm.

Minutes approved & signed as a correct record by the Parish Council on 26 January 2004