

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD 31:05:06

TO DISCUSS PREVENTATIVE MEASURES /
INSTALLATION OF WOODEN POSTS ON THE HIGH STREET FOOTWAY

PRESENT: D. W. Folkes (in the Chair)
M. C. Andrews
R. W. Banks (who disclosed a non-prejudiced interest)
R. G. Bryant
R. Haslam
N. Hilton
N. Robinson
Mrs. S. Stephenson
Mrs. J. Stock
C. Toye

APOLOGIES: L. Keane and L. Auden

ABSENT: F. Penny

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. D. Lavender, Worcestershire Highways Partnership in
Wychavon

Nine members of the public

The Chairman asked Mr. David Lavender of the Worcestershire Highways Partnership in Wychavon to give a short presentation on what was proposed.

Mr. Lavender stated that the County Council's first duty was that of public safety, and gave a personal account of what that meant when he was talking with a colleague on the High Street when someone drove around the inside of them completely on the footway and then drove out. First of all there would be a problem with a pedestrian walking out of a building, and it is also an offence to drive on the footway. If something was not done to stop this and someone was injured or, in the worst case, killed, Mr. Lavender would find it a very hard job to stand up in a coroner's court and say why something had not been done to stop this. One of the defences would be that posts cannot be installed because of businesses, but that is no defence in law. There had also been complaints of the condition of the footways. The slabs were never designed to be driven over, and black tarmac has been used to repair them very quickly in view of public safety. Highways have been requested to do certain high useage, footways under a central government scheme and if this is done up to a certain standard more money is received from central government. The footway in Broadway is one which a certain standard has to be reached, and at the moment there is some money in a central fund to carry out this work. Some of the money is for the slabs and some is for the areas which did have gravel on and is now black tarmac, which would have a resin type material put down again. The

Council is now changing and there will be cuts and black tarmac will be the order of the day. People may not like the posts but it is the only way Broadway is going to keep their Cotswold stone paving slabs. This can be done because there is the money, and the cars have got to be kept off. The one thing that has been mentioned is deliveries, and the precedent has been set by Budgens whose deliveries are around the back and off the High Street. The posts going in still give a car the chance to get off the road if it needs to, and will be to keep Broadway safe, and also to ensure that at least there is a decent footway for the next ten years at least but this sort of money will not be spent again. Although the posts may not be liked it is the best way to keep Broadway's appearance and everyone safe. This is a consultation with the Parish Council but, if pushed, the County Council as the Highways Authority, can put the posts up.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Lavender for his presentation and asked for any questions from those present.

Councillor Haslam remarked that it seemed there was no choice, and Mr. Lavender said that if there was a problem it must be borne in mind that if the posts are not installed and the footway is repaired and gets damaged again, it will be re-repaired in black tarmac. It is for safety reasons as well as protecting the footway that these posts should be installed.

Councillor Andrews had reservations about the installation as he felt it was tantamount to blackmail by saying either they are put in or it will cost a lot in the future and he could not accept that. The remark that any repairs would never be to our satisfaction is a threat. Mr. Lavender replied that the posts were needed if the footways were to be maintained in the same manner, but there is not the funding. Councillor Andrews felt that drivers would still try to get through the posts as they do outside the Post Office and the Bank, but Mr. Lavender refuted this as the posts would be closer together.

Councillor Banks admitted the County Council was short of funds, but he could not possibly envisage wooden posts in the High Street and totally agreed with Councillor Andrews' remarks. He added that he felt priorities were wrong and that it was the job of the traffic wardens and police to keep vehicles off footways, and if it was felt that this was not being done properly then these were the people to whom the Parish Council should be talking.

The Chairman remarked that the police and traffic wardens were not here twenty-four hours a day. Mr. Lavender said that the traffic wardens had limited powers – they can enforce the orders but they cannot among other things prosecute for obstruction. The Police have been asked to enforce this but have declined. Mr. Lavender suggested that if this problem persists, then perhaps the Beat Manager can be contacted to get a statement from the District Commander as to why they have declined. It is the old story of waiting for someone to be injured or killed before they will take any action.

Councillor Robinson remarked there were no posts on the plans outside the Horse and Hounds and the Lygon Arms. Mr. Lavender said that the Lygon Arms was private. He also stated that Highways responded to the Parish Council on the Post Office side of the High Street for public safety, so there is conflict in that why is it alright on the one side but not on the other.

Councillor Andrews asked what the members of the committee considered to be the object of the meeting. The Chairman replied that the elected members would make the decision. At the last Council meeting a working group was formed consisting of three councillors who recommended that these posts should not be put in. The Chairman reminded everyone present that not only did they represent the traders they also represented all members of the village, and it was for their benefit as well as the traders in that they can walk the pavements in safety.

Councillor Mrs. Stephenson asked what the gravels were for if not for parking and unloading and said the pavements might as well be extended. Mr. Lavender said that when the scheme was originally carried out that is what should have happened in his point of view. The scheme was not well thought out as there were areas where one cannot physically drive a car and keep off the pavement. He felt it should have been posted up at the time.

Councillor Hilton felt that the row of posts proposed between the Swan and, say, Russells, would probably be visually obtrusive by the number of them, and instead of putting the posts along the pavement suggested that the posts be put across the entrances to the access points instead which would be less obtrusive. Mr. Lavender said that emergency vehicles would need access. This way a vehicle could actually back in. Councillor Hilton asked whether it was possible for a lower number of posts but Mr. Lavender said this would leave enough width for a driver to get through and posts would then get knocked down.

Mr. Stuart Bates felt that this was indeed a tricky matter. He felt that the posts which had been installed had served some purpose, and the majority of people who drive into that area near HSBC are more careful than they were in the past. He felt that posts do have an effect and, therefore, it should be possible to achieve the object but with fewer posts. There is much greater damage outside Picton House because the gravel area is too narrow and posts are clearly required there to stop vehicles driving round on the gravels. Mr. Bates felt this could be achieved both there and also outside Cotswold Trading, again with fewer posts. An ad hoc committee was created last year on which there were representatives from the Parish Council, the Traders, and the Broadway Trust, and the remit of this committee was to look into matters regarding parking among other issues, and one of the things which came out of that were the additional posts. Mr. Bates asked whether this committee could be reactivated because he felt that it would be difficult in a meeting such as this to agree on the details of how many posts and where they should be. That committee could be given authority to discuss with Highways Officers and reach a conclusion for submission to a further Parish meeting. The Chairman stated that this

money had to be spent within a certain time and Mr. Lavender said that this should have been spent last year and he was directed to have the work done by the end of August.

Councillor Banks asked how long it would take for this committee to be reconstituted if that was the compromise, and surely the committee could meet and decide something could be done within this time scale. The Chairman said that there were members of the Traders and three members of the Trust present this evening, and comments would be welcomed at this time, and surely the councillors could make a judgment on any comments and reports given. Councillor Andrews agreed that last year's committee looked at this matter in another way and it might help to reconstitute that committee, but it has already been referred to a working group who in turn has referred it to the Council so why go back again to another committee. The Chairman said it must be remembered that some traders requested posts to prevent ramraids and the like but Mr. Lavender said that wooden posts would not deter ramraiders.

Mr. Peter Riley commented that the reason the posts were put outside the Post Office was because the footpath was very narrow. He asked how many people had been injured outside the Swan up to say, Russells, during the last twenty years? He also stated there was no damage to the paving slabs outside Russells from cars – the damage had been done by services being put in and should be reinstated (Section 106).

Councillor Haslam noted that the paving slabs were not Cotswold stone and offered to raise funding, source, and store a quantity, to be held for future use.

After further discussion it was proposed by Councillor Andrews that posts should not be installed. The Chairman asked whether anyone wished to propose an amendment as there was a real risk of the posts being installed anyway, and this would at least give Council the opportunity of negotiating on their number. However, as no amendment was forthcoming, the original proposal was seconded by Councillor Haslam and there were six votes in favour and four votes against, resulting in the proposal being carried by two votes.