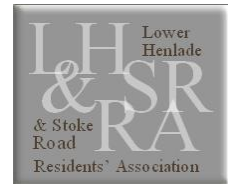


LOWER HENLADE AND STOKE ROAD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
MEETING HELD ON
02 October 2019, 7.30 pm
Mount Somerset Hotel



NOTES OF THE MEETING

In attendance: 27 residents plus 2 from Greenslade Taylor Hunt

1. Q&A session with Greenslade Taylor Hunt regarding A358

Philip Hodgkin and Graeme Biffen of Greenslade Taylor Hunt (GTH) have been involved in this project since Christmas 2016. They already represent some landowners along the route and are offering their services to domestic and agricultural property owners in our area who may be affected by the proposed new A358 route. They gave a brief overview of their understanding of the current situation and possible courses of action open to landowners.

Main points:

- Preferred route has been outlined but is now subject to minor changes as part of the design process.
- Ecological surveys are being conducted by Mott MacDonald along the proximity of the route.
- Design and build contracts for the next phase are out to tender, with an expectation of preferred bidder being announced towards the end of 2019.
- DCO (Development Consent Order) application is likely to be made at the end of 2020, though this may slip. Secretary of State for Transport is likely to approve this 18 months later subject to challenges and concerns raised during consultation process.
- Once the preferred route has been announced (as it has been in this case) a Blight Notice can be served by an affected owner unable to sell a property directly as a result of the proposed development; this is effectively a request to Highways to purchase the property.
- To be successful in a blight claim, hard evidence is required including proof of marketing the property for a minimum of 13 weeks without receiving any offers within 15% of the unaffected (ie 'no road scheme') value.
- Once lodged a blight claim is assessed within 6-8 weeks.
- If the claim is successful, the decision is valid for a period of three years and compensation will amount to the full unaffected value of the property.
- Discretionary Notices for those who may not qualify for a Blight Notice are sometimes awarded, but the standard of evidence required to satisfy such claims is even more stringent.
- Anyone who has land taken, either permanently or for temporary use during construction, is in a stronger position; others further away are only eligible for a 'Part 1' claim.
- Part 1 claims can only be made 12 months after road completion / road opening.

- Part 1 claims for devaluation of property must be based on physical factors (light, fumes, smell, smoke, noise, vibration, artificial light etc), and NOT the physical presence of the road; these can be difficult to assess.
- To make a Part 1 claim for devaluation it is not necessary to actually market a property; owners can have market appraisals done (preferably by 2 or 3 valuers/estate agents) to gather evidence. Owners are advised to ask for this to be done on an 'unaffected' basis and they normally would not have to pay for this service.
- It is a good idea to do this immediately and repeat the process at different points over time. GTH would be happy to do this, as would other estate agents.
- GTH are willing to do a 'bulk' appraisal in our area.
- It may be advisable to have a 'pre-development' noise level assessment.
- If a property is split into more than one Land Registry title, Highways may only offer to purchase one title, so if this is the case it is worth thinking about uniting them into one.
- There is no compensation for inconvenience caused to local traffic network during the build process.
- There are currently no provisions for the wider impact on personal health.
- Highways England will take reasonable steps to mitigate effects, e.g. planting schemes etc.
- Suggestions regarding mitigation can be made during the consultation period that occurs between submission and approval of the DCO.
- If property owners are offered individual mitigation measures, e.g. soundproofing, serious consideration should be given to accepting this as refusal may affect any possible future claim.
- Highways will pay for affected property owners' reasonable consultancy costs, so if landowners engage the services of GTH or other professional advisers, the likelihood is that Highways England will cover their reasonable costs. Although it is rare that individuals are liable for any costs, this cannot be guaranteed. Any potential charges would be highlighted before they were incurred.
- There is merit in the Residents' Association, as well as individuals, lodging concerns during the consultation process.

Mr Hodgkin and Mr Biffen were thanked for attending and providing useful information.

2. Election of Officers

The following officers were unanimously re-elected for a further two years:

- Gill Ellis, Chair;
- Paul Stroner, Vice Chair;
- Mike Westlake, Treasurer;
- Shirley Cozens, Committee Member;
- John Ashbaugh, Committee Member ;
- Karen Goldstone, Committee Member.

3. Treasurers Report

MW reported that subscription payments of £75 had been received and the current balance stands at £661.

4. Chair's Report

GE reported that we have 25 fully paid up households, with a further 4 paid at the meeting and a realistic prospect of a further 6 to 9, giving a potential total of 35 to 38. Some elderly residents without email had been given 'free passes'. 1 household had been suspended for non-payment.

5. Neighbourhood Watch

MW reported that communications from the Police were much reduced of late. MW reiterated the message that residents should remain vigilant and keep sheds etc locked. It was reported that there had been a theft of heating oil from a property in Ruishton recently.

6. AOB

Following discussion about the benefits of clearing the ditch which runs alongside the road in Lower Henlade and the confusion regarding ownership, Jacqueline Cairns undertook to contact Highways.

The issue of lorries in the village which exceed the 7.5-ton weigh limit was discussed. It was agreed that those residents who were happy to report such incidents (telephone 101) should do so, and that dashboard cameras could be useful aids in this respect.

The issue of pot hole repairs was discussed and residents are advised to report them to the Council as necessary.

Further to the advice given at Item 1 by Greenslade Taylor Hunt, a resident suggested the Residents' Association could buy a decibel meter to monitor sound levels in the area, and this was thought to be a good idea.

For links to Highways England booklets on compensation and details of who to contact at Greenslade Taylor Hunt please visit the [Issues Page](#)