

Burton Green Parish Council

Clerk to the Council: Paul Knight

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10th February 2021

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a remote meeting of Burton Green Parish Council on Monday 15th February 2021 at 7.30pm. If you are unable to attend, please forward your apologies to either myself or the Chairman.



Paul Knight
Clerk to Burton Green Parish Council

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies:** To receive apologies and approve reasons for absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest:**
 - (a) Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.
 - (b) To declare any interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
 - (c) To receive and consider written requests for new DPI (disclosable pecuniary interests) dispensations on items relating to the Agenda.
3. **Minutes of previous meeting:**

To approve the minutes of the remote Council meeting held on 18th January 2021. The minutes of the meeting to be signed off by the Chair as soon as is convenient after the meeting.
4. **Community Reports:** To receive reports, and agree any action, from:
 - 4.1 County Councillor – Lapworth & West Kenilworth – Cllr John Cooke
 - 4.2 District Councillors – Kenilworth Abbey and Arden – Cllr George Illingworth
 - 4.3 Burton Green C of E Primary School – Cllr Lucy Hatton
 - 4.4 Burton Green Village Hall Committee – Cllr Deeley
 - 4.5 Burton Green Residents' Association
 - 4.6 Kenilworth Greenway
 - 4.7 Warwick University – Cllr Grant
5. **Public participation:** To adjourn to allow public participation.

Residents are invited to give their views and raise questions to the Parish Council on issues on this agenda or raise issues for future consideration at the discretion of the Chairman. Members of the public may not take part in the Parish Council meeting itself and the Parish Council cannot

pass a resolution on matters raised during public participation. Upon restoration of standing orders, the Parish Council may discuss and agree actions to be taken on any matters raised.

6. Slow Ways Project: To endorse the project to link a network of public rights of way across the country.

7. School drainage: to discuss and agree matters relating to the provision of adequate drainage at the school including problems with the internal drainage system and connection to the mains.

8. HS2: to discuss and agree any matters relating to HS2.

8.1 The proposed pedestrian crossing and traffic lights on the Red Lane Hobb Lane junction.

9. Road Transport matters

9.1 Speeding in the village: to consider matters relating to the issue of speeding in the village.

9.2 The A46 Link Road: to discuss issues arising from the construction of the A46 Link Road and to agree the appended response to the WCC Consultation on the A46 Strategic Link Road proposals.

9.3 To consider writing officially to the University about our concerns especially on the possible construction of a football stadium and to seek support from the Kenilworth Town Council.

9.4 Participation in a pilot to promote SAfER (Safe and Active travel focusing on the Environment and Road Safety) in the community.

10. Burton Green Village and Neighbourhood Design Statement: to discuss and consider matters relating to the work of the Burton Green Village and Neighbourhood Design Statement Steering Group.

10.1 To approve the response to the recent updates from the section 16 consultation to the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

11. Housing: to consider housing related matters.

11.1 Cala Homes

11.2 Land to the south of Westwood Heath Road

11.3 Land to the west of Cromwell Lane

11.4 The Kings Hill development

12. Future Parish Council Spending Plans (including CIL)

13. Finance:

All payments and associated evidence to be checked and initialled, and cheques signed and countersigned as soon as is convenient after the meeting (the use of cheques may be superseded by the availability of electronic banking).

13.1 To consider and approve accounts for payment.

Creditor	Purpose	Total (£)
Paul Knight	February salary	606.68
WCC Pension Fund	Employer contribution - February 2021	149.31
WCC Pension Fund	Employees contribution - February 2021	38.92
Paul Knight	Tax Refund - February 2021	62.00
Paul Knight	Office costs and expenses - January/February 2021	29.10

13.2 To consider a grant award to Burton Green Residents' Association of £2625 to cover annual expenses.

13.3 To approve a £50 leaving gift for the Clerk.

14. Communications: to receive and discuss communications received not mentioned on other parts of the agenda and comment/action if appropriate.

15. **Councillor's reports and items for future Agenda:** Councillors are requested to use this opportunity to report minor matters of information or action, not included elsewhere on the Agenda, and to raise items for future Agendas. Councillors are respectfully reminded that this is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.
16. **Planning:** To consider and ratify responses to planning matters including those responded to using delegated powers:
17. **Date of Next Meeting:** 15th March 2021

ENDS

Councillors are reminded of their legal duty to consider all aspects of equal opportunities, crime prevention, unlawful discrimination, biodiversity of the natural habitat and other practices when making decisions at the meeting.

**Response by
Burton Green and University of Warwick Parish Council
to
A46 Strategic Link Road Option 3 consultation by WCC
February 2021**

The adjective ‘Strategic’ only seems to have been added to the title of this proposal in recent times, for a written statement presented by Warwickshire County Council in November 2016 to the Warwick District Council Local Plan Examination was simply titled ‘A46 Link Road’#.

The WCC document explained then: *“Coventry City Council has recently delivered a comprehensive package of Local Pinch Point capacity improvements at key junctions along and in the vicinity of the A45 corridor. In the case of the A45/A429 Kenilworth Road junction, the Pinch Point improvements were originally only envisaged to provide short term relief, with grade separation of the junction expected to be necessary in the future in order to provide continuing long term congestion and growth benefits to this area of the city and wider sub-region.”*

But the same document went on to state: *“The proposed A46 Link Road will reduce the need for any further major improvements to A45/A429 Kenilworth Road for the foreseeable future, as Phases 1 and 2 of the A46 Link Road are expected to deliver similar or greater benefits in terms of congestion reduction and growth to the A45 corridor. This will allow sustainable growth to come forward in future Local Plans in both the city and adjoining area of Warwick District.”*

It is therefore apparent that, even without a possible Phase 3, Phases 1 and 2 alone of the A46 Link Road were considered sufficient to avoid the very costly (£30/50M??) need to provide a grade-separated junction in Coventry at the A45/A429 intersection.

The document also stated: *“There is an emerging need to improve local and strategic connectivity from the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region to the University of Warwick and the key employment sites in its vicinity, in order to support the substantial committed and planned growth of this area over the next 10-15 years (i.e., to 2031).”*

It added: *“Current access is constrained by the need to travel through already congested networks and residential areas within south west Coventry and parts of Warwickshire.”*

Notwithstanding this, however, **it is clear that, even as long ago as 2016, the primary intention of Phases 1 and 2 of the A46 Link**

Matter 7c: Proposed housing site allocations, safeguarded land and direction for growth (Edge of Coventry), Written Statement from Warwickshire County Council, A46 Link Road, by Adrian Hart, Team Leader – Strategic Transport Policy and Projects, Warwickshire County Council

Road – in order to avoid the need for a costly grade-separated junction in Coventry at the A45/A429 junction – was (and is still now, as evidenced in the current proposal) to re-direct traffic between the A45 at Eastern Green and the A46 at Stoneleigh via the local road network (i.e., Pickford Green Lane, Hockley Lane, Broad Lane, Banner Lane, Station Avenue, Cromwell Lane and Westwood Heath Road) before joining a new alignment through the remaining Green Belt to the Crackley Gap, crossing the A429 to the Stoneleigh Road/Dalehouse Lane/A46 junctions.

This was and still is a highly unorthodox proposal – namely to divert traffic from the strategic road network onto local roads between Eastern Green and Westwood Heath/Burton Green in order to reduce congestion elsewhere on the main road network.

Relationship with the University of Warwick

It is also clear from the WCC document of November 2016 that the new road alignment between the A46 and Westwood Heath Road was (and clearly still is) intended to be of assistance to the University of Warwick, viz: *“This infrastructure will support the University of Warwick’s emerging revised master plan along with any longer term housing and employment proposals for the area (including the land identified under Policy DSNEW2 – Site S1 (South of Coventry) within the Local Plan). It will also help reduce the inappropriate use of minor roads within the area (e.g. Crackley Lane) for traffic wishing to access the University and its environs.”*

All of the proposed new highway alignment between Westwood Heath Road and the point in the Crackley Gap where it would intersect the A429 is within the Burton Green and University of Warwick Parish – yet there has been no consultation with the Parish Council regarding the University’s future plans and any possible campus extension(s) westward into the parish’s remaining Green Belt area. *And, while the present Warwick University Transport Assessment and Travel Plan, 2018, involves developments at the campus within Coventry CC’s area, there has been no consultation about the recent suggestion that a football stadium for Coventry City FC might also be developed in conjunction with the University. Yet this involves a potential site both within the Green Belt and within the Burton Green and University parish, and is a project that would clearly be facilitated by the proposed Phase 2 Option 3 of the Link Road.*

The WCC document of November 2016 also stated: *“There is an emerging need to improve local and strategic connectivity from the Coventry and Warwickshire sub-region to the University of Warwick and the key employment sites in its vicinity, in order to support the substantial committed and planned growth of this area over the next 10-15 years (i.e., up to 2031).”*

In this respect, since the Warwick Local Plan Examination in November 2016 and the Plan’s adoption a year later, proposals have emerged from the County Council for development in the longer term of a new railway station and interchange, locally referred to as Coventry South Parkway (on the Leamington-Coventry mainline), with access and car parking connected to the junction of the new Link Road and A429, and with the Link Road also providing access from the Stoneleigh Road/Dalehouse Lane and A46 junctions.

But it is not at all clear how and/or when the new railway station and interchange project might be related to accessing the University or be associated with the possible provision of a Very Light Rail (VLR) facility (using technology developed at the University) between the proposed interchange and the University. However, it is noted that in Option 3, following completion of Phase 2 of the Link Road to Westwood Heath Road and its spur into the University campus, Gibbet Hill Road could then become a cul-de-sac, with no access to the campus, and Stoneleigh Road might be restricted to residents-only access – which would mean the primary means of accessing the University from the south and the A46, also the parkway station and interchange, would become via the new Link Road, which conceivably could also provide the alignment for the VLR track(s).

Sustainable transport

The current consultation document merely states: “... in order to deliver a more sustainable transport network, infrastructure improvements are also essential to enable more journeys to be undertaken by public transport and active modes (such as walking and cycling). Improving connections to existing walking and cycling links, as well as unlocking the potential for a new station and interchange (enhancing access to buses, local rail services and active modes to the south of Coventry), will make it easier for people to travel by more sustainable methods.”

However, it seems premature at this stage to make detailed plans for the proposed Phase 2 of the Link Road without at least developing further and agreeing comprehensive plans for the University and options for its future access, both from the proposed interchange and parkway station and from Coventry city centre.

In any event, if the primary purpose of Option 3 is to provide an alternative access from the south to the University, why also include the three possible links to Westwood Heath Road rather than only a link towards Kirby Corner and the Business Park?

Moreover, building new roads can actually make traffic congestion worse, rather than the opposite intended effect, because any road space freed up by increasing road capacity is likely to induce new traffic. This is because, when demand for road space exceeds potential capacity, it becomes suppressed due to congestion, leading some drivers to travel less or to use alternative modes even though they would prefer to drive. Consequently, although increasing road capacity through building new roads may lead to a reduction in traffic volumes on existing routes in the short term (as intended by the A46 Link Road in respect of the A45 Kenpas Highway and A45/A429 junction), over time it may be expected this would allow the suppressed demand for road space to be released and traffic volumes to increase, until congestion forces it to find a new equilibrium, leading to further proposals for additional capacity.

The problem is that the stated objective of the A46 Link Road is to reduce congestion (unrealistic for reasons stated above), rather than reduce traffic volumes and associated air pollution and emissions. It is strange, therefore, that Warwickshire CC is continuing to propose new road building at a time when it has declared a Climate Emergency, as has Warwick District Council.

Research has shown that the most effective way to reduce traffic volumes is through traffic restraint, for example through road closures, road space re-allocation and parking reduction and controls. Such measures, when implemented alongside quality public transport and cycling infrastructure, can help increase modal shift away from car-use.

Yet within the last few days it has emerged that Warwickshire CC is contemplating **extending** the A46 Link Road southward around Stoneleigh village to connect with the B4113, and is to part-fund (£409,000) a bridge over HS2 in Stoneleigh Park to facilitate this. According to reports “The council's transport planning Unit has a proposal to construct a new **strategic link road** through Stoneleigh Business Park connecting the B4113 Stoneleigh Road with the B4115 Ashow Road, C32 Birmingham Road and the A46 Stoneleigh junction. The new road will address the long-standing issue of congestion through the village of Stoneleigh, protect the Grade II listed bridge over the River Sowe and facilitate economic expansion by improving connectivity to Stoneleigh Business Park

itself, the University of Warwick and allocated residential development at Kenilworth and King's Hill.”

Whilst a bypass of the village of Stoneleigh is not a matter for Burton Green PC, it is this Parish Council's view that it is premature to be developing “strategic” plans for the Link Road, including an extension to the A4113, without knowing how employment numbers and working practices will change post-Covid-19 at the University, which has been a major trip generator, and the impact such changes will have on traffic flows and demand for transport modes and services in future.

Furthermore, it is not yet clear how emerging Government decarbonisation policies and strategies will impact on transport demand and modal share.

Environmental impact

The present consultation document states: *“Initial analysis demonstrates that Option 3 (i.e., Phase 2 to Westwood Heath Road) would likely result in a substantial reduction in journey times across the local network, during both AM and PM periods. Therefore, it is likely to reduce congestion and deliver network-wide benefits, as well as more localised benefits along critical parts of the network, such as the A45 and A46. These improvements in local network performance and connectivity may support the delivery of housing and employment growth allocated within Local Plans as well as the aspirational growth of University of Warwick.”*

And the 2018 Warwick University Hybrid Transport Plan states that “Coventry City Council has transferred potential funding streams allocated to the A45 to the A46 Link Road scheme in recognition of the benefits to Coventry of the A46 Link Road scheme and their desire not to encourage long term growth of the traffic along the A45. ***The implementation of the A46 Link Road, as intended by the local authorities, will provide substantial extra highway capacity for the local road network.***”

But it is obvious that this would only be achieved by a **serious worsening of environmental conditions** in neighbouring areas, including Burton Green, also Westwood Heath and Tile Hill, as a result of traffic which would have used the A45 around the south of Coventry (Kenpas Highway) diverting instead to the local road network through Eastern Green and Tile Hill to Cromwell Lane and Westwood Heath Road to join the new Link Road.

And the situation in Burton Green would be worsened, not only by northbound queues on Cromwell Lane approaching the junction with Westwood Heath Road, but also by additional traffic attracted to Westwood Heath Road and the Link Road from the sizeable forthcoming housing developments included as part of the Solihull MBC Local Plan for the Berkswell/Balsall Common area.

Moreover, if the Balsall Common Relief Road, allowed for in the latest Solihull Local Plan, were to proceed it would intersect Hob Lane and result in that narrow, winding road going past Burton Green School, becoming an additional ‘rat run’ route to reach Cromwell Lane and Westwood Heath Road.

Yet the Solihull Revised Local Plan includes no reference whatsoever to, nor plans for, any Phase 3 alignment of the A46 (Strategic) Link Road to alleviate these detrimental factors arising from use of the local road network as part of the A46 Link Road strategy. (*See Phase 3 concerns, below*)

Basis for traffic forecasts/modeling

Burton Green PC is also concerned that planning and modeling for the A46 Link Road will have been based upon the approved Local Plans for Coventry and Warwick District. But these plans, and therefore the assumed population changes and resulting traffic forecasts, have been based on population projections which Burton Green PC and several other such bodies around Coventry, as well as the West Midlands Combined Authority's Mayor, have persistently argued are seriously overstated and unreliable, being based on projections by the Office of National Statistics that cannot be sustained by actual evidence.

Burton Green PC was one of the signatories of a letter of complaint last November to the UK Statistics Authority – initiated by Sir Andrew Watson, Chairman of CPRE-Warwickshire, together with Andy Street, the West Midlands Mayor, and supported by five Coventry and Warwickshire cross-party MPs – about the ONS's projections. This resulted in the Statistics Authority replying promptly and stating it would “undertake a review of the population projections and population estimates produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and how they are used.”

Ed Humpherson, UKSA's Director General for Regulation, stated in the reply that: “We are aware that with the next Census taking place in March 2021 and the recently closed consultation from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on changes to the planning system, which includes proposed changes to the standard method for assessing local housing need (LHN), a different picture may emerge of the housing need across England. We will therefore be looking at what broader lessons can be learnt on how these data are used to support decision making.” On 2 February, the UKSA advised the Coventry & Warwickshire Keep Our Greenbelt Green (KOGG) group of parish councils and residents associations that it plans to produce an interim report during March, i.e., only a few weeks hence.

In these circumstances, Burton Green PC considers that the possible reconsideration of population projections and the forthcoming National Census to be further reasons why it is premature to pursue development of the A46 (Strategic) Link Road at this time.

Phase 3 concerns

Burton Green PC is also concerned that, although no work is said to be taking place on the previously-suggested Phase 3 of the Link Road, completion of Phase 2 and the resulting unacceptable growth of traffic, noise and pollution along local roads in Burton Green and Westwood Heath, also in the Tile Hill and Eastern Green areas, will result in growing public pressure for some form of phase 3 to be developed.

Burton Green PC is aware that earlier planning considerations had contemplated a Phase 3 alignment alongside the route of HS2 to Burton Green. The Link Road route would then turn west towards Balsall Common (Hall Meadow Road). The suggestion had been that the Link Road would cross over or under HS2 with its onward trajectory crossing Red Lane and Hob Lane. But this was subsequently made impossible by Alternative Provision 4 of the HS2 Act of Parliament and by the final version of the Warwick Local Plan, resulting in that part of the proposed route becoming instead the site of the new Burton Green Village Hall and part of the site of the new Cala Homes development now nearing completion.

Nevertheless, it is feared by many that a Phase 3 alignment could still be continued alongside HS2 on its northeastern boundary through Burton Green with grave

implications for properties in Hodgetts Lane and those in Cromwell Lane near to Hodgetts Lane. Even if a Phase 3 alignment were placed like HS2 in a green tunnel, it would be necessary to remove the properties in and around Hodgetts Lane to enable construction. **Burton Green PC therefore seeks assurance that such a scheme, even in the long term, is not being considered nor will be considered.**

But Burton Green PC also holds the view that – because, if Phase 2 were to be developed, it would inevitably lead to pressure for a third phase – a clear plan should be identified for a possible Phase 3 route, which should then be protected in the appropriate Local Plan(s) and thus avoid widespread and long-term planning blight throughout a wide area.

Conclusion

In brief, Burton Green Parish Council strongly opposes Option 3 of the A46 Strategic Link.

- The strategy of the link road is questionable as it is based on diverting traffic from strategic routes onto the local road network.
- Although Option 3 of this link removes the traffic problem for residents on Stoneleigh Road and Gibbet Hill Road, it is at the expense of residents at Westwood Heath and Burton Green.
- There are far too many uncertainties for this plan to progress. What will be the implications of a railway station and interchange, and will a football stadium be built? Will employment numbers and working practices change significantly at the University post Covid?
- It is almost certain that traffic forecasts have been modelled on baseless population forecasts. Surely it would make sense to wait for the UKSA's examination of ONS projections and the 2021 Census to be completed.
- There will be a serious worsening of environmental conditions and a further erosion of the Green Belt.
- Before any proposal for a Phase 2 link, a decision MUST be taken NOW whether a Phase 3 link should be built and, if so, WHERE. The process should be transparent, carefully considered and, on no account, made on the hoof.

For all the reasons stated above, Burton Green Parish Council does not support current proposals for Option 3 of Phase 2 of an A46 (Strategic) Link Road, and believes further consideration should be given to whether the proposal is necessary at all or should be reviewed and revised at a future date.

Alan Marshall
Deputy Chairman
Burton Green Parish Council
3 February 2021
