

Minutes of a Public Meeting held on 16th September 2008 at 7:30pm in the Village Hall

Present: Parish Councilors M.Thomas,R.Heckford,A.Belgrove,B.Hallam,
County Councilor G.D.Collett
Rugby Borough Councilor R.Hazelton
Parish Clerk
61 Residents of Willoughby

Apologies Parish Councilor T.Thomas
A.M.Mitchell
B.Hallam

Chairperson Parish Councilor M.Thomas

Opening of Meeting The chairperson opened the meeting saying that at the Parish Council Meeting on 9th September a number of residents of Lower Street had raised concerns with the Parish Council on the proposed introduction of Yellow lines (by WCC) in Lower Street as a viable solution to solving congestion issues in Lower Street and hence giving an opportunity for a bus service to be reintroduced through the village.

As a result of this representation and the fact that the proposals affected all the Residents of Willoughby the Parish Council elected to hold a Public Meeting to which all residents would be invited and encouraged to express their views.

He further briefly outlined the background history *as* to why the bus service had ceased coming through the village in Sept 2004, the actions that this Council and previous Parish Councils had taken in attempting to have the bus service reintroduced so as to meet the continual requests by villagers for this amenity.

The Chairperson read out the proposal from WCC Traffic Department to the meeting so that a full understanding of what was being proposed was understood, this in itself showed that contrary to some information circulating around the village double yellow lines were only on both sides of the road at the pinch points (lengths thought to have the biggest affect on congestion) and not for the whole length of the road.

The Chairperson opened the meeting up to all in attendance

Mrs. R.Settle - Stated that she had no objections to yellow lines as such but felt that the present proposals were a sledge hammer to crack a nut, she was also concerned about parking in Lower Street for funerals and weddings

Mr. N Oates - Said that the congestion in Lower Street affected Lorries, four wheel drives and tractors as well as bus's, he also believed that parking outside the cottages in Lower Street should be clearly marked and for residents only

Mr. M Henson- He believes that service bus's should be routed back through the village

as it was extremely dangerous for elderly people and young children to cross the A45 when using the bus in the Daventry direction *as* traffic were often traveling at speeds in excess of 50mph. He suggested a bus stop in Lower Street by the triangle and that customers using the Hairdressers could park farther down Lower Street towards the pond. **Mr. W Hewitt-** Stated that bus's (school) often pass the pinch points with no problems although he agreed that this was not at peak times

Councilor B.Hallam- Recalled that recently a School bus had occasion to reverse back into Main Street *as* it could not pass the pinch point by the Hairdressers

Mrs. D Johnson - Said that the parking of cars was the problem not the existence of the Hairdressers (a point which the meeting agreed with).

Mr. N Whittaker- Was unhappy that although his address was White Barn Close one of his perimeter boundaries was in Lower Street and felt that he should have received notification from WCC re the proposals. He believed that the policing of yellow lines would be a problem and as such they would be ineffective.

County Council G.D.Collett- Informed the meeting that the monitoring of yellow lines was a RBC responsibility and as such this was one of the reasons for double yellow lines rather than single yellow lines which would have had to have had time limits placed on them making enforcement much more difficult.

Mr. A.Gasser- Said that he lived opposite the Old Post Office in Main Street and even now had difficulty in getting out of his drive if residents of Lower Street could not park by there houses they would probably park in Main Street and make it even more difficult for him to reverse out.

Chairperson- Said the proposals catered for every resident in Lower Street to have parking for at least one car either on the road or on there drives

Mr. B Hawkins - Stated that extra cars would almost certainly park in Brookes Close

Mrs. S Cleaver- Said single yellow lines would be preferred with no waiting between 9am and 6pm

Chairperson -Said that WCC had proposed double yellow lines as the best viable solution to solving the congestion problem the Bus Company were adamant that they would not consider coming back through the village without yellow lines. The Parish Council had asked WCC to look at the best options available to them.

Mr. A Sutton-Considers that the bus company was using congestion as a convenient reason for not coming through the village and even if this was resolved they would then find another reason not to come through which in itself would leave Lower Street with yellow lines (never to be removed) and no gain for the village

Rev Jane- Requested a copy of the WCC proposal letter

Mr. M Henson- Said that a speed reduction in Lower Street of 20mph would make the road a lot safer for residents

Mr. B Hall- Would like to see bus's come back through the village but there were times when the congestion in Main Street particularly by the village hall was as bad as Lower Street and the bus's would not have been able to come through the village anyway hence were there any proposals to have yellow lines in Main street and if so how would the residents of Main Street react .

Would it not be possible to remove the triangle opposite the village hall and have the bus's turn round there, alternatively had it been considered that the bus service could be

routed through Grandborough and then it would be able to make a safer return back on to the A45 at Grandborough turn rather than at Longdowne Lane or Main Street He believed that far too many bus's were scheduled by the bus company and if this number was reduced it would enable the schedule's to include Grandborough without serious effect on the service to everyone

It was his belief that single lines would have been adequate and this would have enabled friends and relatives of residents in Lower Street to visit and park easier.

In regard to the danger of crossing the A45 by elderly people and children a pelican crossing would help and this would probably be no more expensive than painting Double yellow lines.

County Council G.D.Collett - stated that the Grandborough option had not been considered as Grandborough was on the routes serviced by another bus company under the complete control of WCC .The Willoughby route was controlled jointly by WCC and NCC and as such WCC had only a part interest in controlling the present bus company however this could change at the licence renewal if the present bus company continued to fail the needs of Willoughby. In relation to a Pelican crossing the Willoughby Parish Council had tried to have a crossing introduced but had been unsuccessful due to failing to meet the criteria in regard to perceived need

Mrs. S Waddington- Concerned about anticipated increased parking in Brooks Close but asked why the needs of elderly village people could not be met by local villagers driving the Community bus.

Mr. W.Hewitt- Believes that parked cars in Lower Street have the effect of slowing traffic down and hence making it a safer road.

Mr. N Whittaker- The bus company (G.A.Amos) are a commercial company and *as* such a high official at WCC should be applying more pressure on them than they are in order to achieve our wishes without the need for yellow lines, it was possible that the tranquillity of the village could be destroyed. on a promise by G A.Amos He questioned if a demand exercise as to the need for a bus service through the village had been carried out

County Council G.D.Collett- again said that we could be talking about a different bus company in the future .

In regard to demand the whole focus by Government National and Local in regard to transport was that every one had a right to transport particularly the elderly and clearly if the present bus company was not coming through the village then this right. was not being met .For those who had difficulty in using the present route (e.g. elderly or disabled) then the Parish Council has a duty to take this into account and try to improve the situation including the provision of an improved service or extra facilities if required . He could see no objections to a Bus stop at the triangle or just past the pond in Lower Street if requested. In regard to bus's reversing this was considered unsafe by the authorities.

Mr. N.Whittaker Asked County Council G.D.Collett to exert pressure on WCC

Mr. N Oates- Brought to the attention of the meeting a letter received by the Willoughby 60's Club on 30 11 2004 from G.A.Amos in which it was stated that;

They regretted that it is not possible to consider bringing bus's back through the village due to the complexities of the timetable and passenger loadings

He further added that some obvious ambiguity existed in what this letter says and what

they were telling WCC / WPC therefore he doubted if even with yellow lines the bus's will ever come back through the village.

Mr. I Jones - Believes that traffic is slowed down by allowing parking both sides of Lower Street, the introduction of yellow lines will no doubt ease congestion but encourage speeding along Lower Street. He also believes that the whole affair is a bit of a rouse by Amos.

Mr. M.Henson - The real problem is the unsafe crossing of the A45 and the Police need to take more action to catch speeding motorists.

Mr. W.Carlisle - Stated that he was in favor of Double yellow lines outside his house and it was not just Bus's that were affected by the present congestion but clear passage was needed for Fire Engines and Ambulances.

Mrs. B Walton - confirmed that the minute that the Clerk read to the meeting in relation to G.A.Amos `s reason for ceasing to operate bus's through the village was correct.(Mrs. Walton was a member of the Parish Council at this time 2004)

Mr. J Walton - Said there was only one footpath in Lower Street from its point by the Hairdressers down to Main Street hence if cars were still allowed to park on both sides on this stretch often with cars on the pavement then this meant that mothers with pushchairs or elderly people in wheelchairs were forced to move out into the road to get past. **Councilor R Heckford** - Said that he had lived and worked in the village and he could understand Why G.A.Amos had difficulty at the pinch points as often he could not get through himself with tractors etc.

Mrs. S Hume - Asked why G.A.Amos could not use smaller bus's

Mrs. O'Donnell - said that in her experience although the bus's seemed to have only a few passengers on board when passing Willoughby they picked up substantially more passengers at Braunton and Only.

Mrs. J Dodds - Stated that the bus service could not be called a village bus service as it only came along the A45 ,the crossing of the A45 at the Main Street junction was dangerous and there was no provision of a pull in order for passengers to stand back from the road when using bus's going in the Daventry direction.

Mr. B Hawkins - Stated it was either yellow lines or no Bus's

Mrs. S Hume - asked why a time limit could not be placed on Yellow lines

Mr. W Hewitt- said that lots of questions were being asked but no answers were being given to them

Mr. I Jones - Believes that the village is being held to ransom by G.A.Amos and more pressure should be applied on them by the Parish Council ,RBC and WCC the proposals went to far on what was in effect only a promise from G.A.Amos.

Councilor R Heckford - Asked County Council G.D.Collett if at the WCC meeting on 25thSeptember the introduction of yellow lines if approved could only be then actioned if G.A.Amos agreed to come back through the village

Mr. N.Hodges - Informed the meeting that he had spoken to work colleagues at Leicestershire Traffic Department and in their opinion WCC had complied with the normal rules in trying to ease the congestion in Lower Street

Mr. B Hall - again queried why the proposal required double yellow lines down both sides of the road, could not double yellow lines on one side only have been proposed. His measurements at the pinch point outside his property indicated a narrowing of only 20 cms in the road width when compared with the stretch farther down

Chairperson - Confirmed that WCC Traffic Department had made the proposals for both sides in order to address the pinch points.

Mrs. D Johnson - Asked how she was expected to police the parking the congestion by parking on both sides of the road outside her Salon had increased with the introduction of the Beauty Salon alongside her business

Ms **J Bateman** - Was worried that Double yellow lines would prevent deliveries of logs to her property and also cause problems for people wishing to feed the Ducks at the pond

County Council G.D.Collett - advised Ms Bateman that there was a 15minute time period allowed for deliveries on yellow double lines, he said it was time for the villagers to decide if they wanted a bus service through the village or not(yes/no).

Mr. B Hall - Stated that villages did not know of the proposals until a letter had arrived from WCC inviting comment on them. It was his understanding from a local estate agent that properties with double yellow lines outside them would devalue by at least 5%

Chairperson - Reminded villagers that the Agenda for Parish Council Meetings had included items on Yellow Lines and the Bus Service for at least 18months to his knowledge and Parish minutes indicated such items since September 2004. The Agenda for Parish Council Meetings and the minutes of these meetings were always displayed on the Parish Notice Board outside the village hall, everyone had an opportunity to raise issues with the Parish Council by attending meetings or speaking to Councilors In regard to the devaluation of property his enquiries with a local estate agent had indicated that no devaluation would be expected.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9:10pm