

Report of Village Meeting Concerning Parking Restrictions – 8th June 2010

The meeting was called by the Parish Council and attended by 71 residents.

Purposes

The meeting was held for the following purposes:

- To give residents a chance to express concerns and hear each others' concerns.
- To make sure people have accurate information as it is known so far.
- To make sure there is an effective means, supported by the PC, of staying on top of wind-turbine-transport developments as they happen until the matter is resolved.

Resume of the situation – a statement from the Chair

Clive Skelton outlined the situation so far, mentioning: the initial proposal to transport wind turbine components through Eardisley; the Village Meeting held 31.03.10 which left many residents unclear about what would happen; the trials on 4th and 5th May; and that if this route is chosen, parking restrictions will be required in the village to enable wide loads to pass easily. Clive thanked everyone for efforts so far, especially the people and scarecrows on the street on the trial days – they have made HC and the Power Contractors take notice of the seriousness of the difficulties faced by Eardisley.

John Hope reported on a Transportation Working Group meeting following the trial runs. The key points from that meeting were: concerns were expressed about the passage of the vehicles through Eardisley, about the safety of pedestrians, and the implications of parking restrictions; Herefordshire Council (HC) indicated they would only accept the route if all other routes were found to be physically unable to accommodate the loads. There will be trials of routes from Ellesmere Port later in June.

John Hope stated that if this route is chosen HC is duty bound to implement parking restrictions, probably in the form of yellow lines. There were strong objections to this statement. Many people made it clear that if Mr Hope was supporting the principle of yellow lines on both sides of the road, he was not representing the views of the meeting.

Many points were made, questions asked, anxieties expressed and alternative solutions offered. The theme throughout was 'our village is at risk – we need our community to be protected'. Background information was offered by the working group members wherever possible. However, because there has not yet been a report of the trial or any decision made, this part of the meeting was inconclusive.

Key points arising from this part of the meeting were:

- The police have been in favour of parking as a means of slowing traffic for years and are not supportive of parking restrictions for the purpose of wind turbine transport
- The initial loads are supposed to run for a 9 month period but there are indications that turbine transport could go on for as much as 5 years – parking restrictions could be permanent
- If the route is chosen, there will have to be real out-of-the-box thinking applied to finding a parking solution that doesn't damage the village. Options will be investigated with the HC decision makers. Such a solution may not exist.
- Compensation for shopkeepers or a car park could only be considered later as inadequate or partial measures
- Tourism is important for Eardisley shops and for Herefordshire; it should be encouraged not hindered
- Some communications from HC are being copied to Bill Wiggin MP who is interested in our case
- Other villages have resisted initiatives that would cause 'serious harm to the character of the community' – we can contact them. We will need political help and legal support if we have to fight on these grounds

Two questions were put to the group to gauge strength of feeling:

1. How many people do NOT want wind turbine components to be transported through the village?
23 of 71
2. How many people do NOT want yellow lines in the village? **69 of 71**

Residents' concerns related to parking restrictions

These concerns were listed on a chart at the meeting. They were gathered, prior to the meeting from residents directly or indirectly affected by the proposal, by telephone calls, emails, letters and face to face, following a brief item supported by the Parish Council in the May Offa Tree News.

When Clive Skelton brought these concerns to the attention of this meeting, there was agreement to all. They appear below as on the chart with small additions for clarification.

- **Shops will close** – they rely on visitors and passing trade which will be wiped out by yellow lines
- **Village Hall daytime activities will be limited** – making it difficult for the Hall to stay afloat financially
- **Speed of vehicles in the village will increase at night as well as day** – if the traffic calming effect of parking is removed
- **The numbers of HGVs will increase** – as Eardisley becomes known as ‘the bypass’
- **Some residents' front doors will be within one metre of fast moving heavy traffic** – no longer protected by parked cars
- **Pedestrians will be in greater danger on pavements and crossing the road** – risks from wing mirrors, extremely wide loads, pavement mounting and shear intimidation as well as fast moving heavy traffic
- **Residents with no off-road parking will be unable to park near their homes** – limiting access to homes for their own and guests' cars and delivery vehicles will cause severe inconvenience
- **Vehicle access from private drives and side roads will become more dangerous** – especially backing into fast moving traffic
- **Historic buildings could be damaged** - English Heritage acknowledges that heavy traffic does adversely affect buildings in historic settlements like Eardisley
- **The value of houses on the main road may decrease and be harder to sell** – with yellow lines, increased levels of traffic and no local businesses
- **Increased carbon footprint as well as inconvenience** – since every newspaper or pint of milk will mean a trip to Kington, and residents will be adding more trips in their own cars to the total traffic volume
- **Loss of community** – Eardisley will no longer be a place where people stop to chat on the way to the shop.
- **Will there be compensation** – compensation cannot replace the community that has been lost. It will mean only that we have been unsuccessful in preventing the introduction of parking restrictions and are having to live with the consequences.

The way forward

Clive Skelton stated that our first position is to resist having the loads run through Eardisley at all. The PC will only consider parking restriction options if it is absolutely unavoidable. He observed that the situation is likely to change in between the bi-monthly meetings of the Parish Council, especially in the light of the new trials from Ellesmere Port. He suggested that a small group be formed to monitor what is happening on a daily basis, to continue to collect information and negotiate with appropriate bodies in between meetings, to report to the Parish Council and a call a public meeting when one becomes necessary.

The four community members, who have taken the lead in finding out information and establishing the facts so far, were thanked by the meeting. The point was made that they are not formally representative of the community as a whole. Clive asked for people who represent different parts of the community and who are willing to work on a daily basis or be part of the representation / communication process to contact him. The meeting ended.

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A small Working Group consisting of **Clive Skelton, Nick Baker, Don Killick, Avril Killick, Derrick Rowland and Nancy James** has been set up and charged with collection of further information, and negotiation with appropriate bodies as above. Clive reiterated that the 4 community members on this Working Group have been making contacts and gathering information with the support of the chairman of the Parish Council since the 31st March meeting.

In addition, people who represent various parts of the community, such as the shop keepers and the school, will be asked to be part of the communications process. The Working Group will stay in close touch with these representatives and will report to the Parish Council regularly. Additional public meetings will be called as things develop.