

Calne Without Parish Council

9<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Agenda Item 8.3

**A4 Road Closure for Ash Dieback**

Following the A4 Road closure at the end of October for the removal of Ash trees and the subsequent traffic issues through Church Road Derry Hill Cllr Malpas, French, Rees and Cook sent the letter shown at appendix 1 to Cllr Bridget Wayman at Wiltshire Council and Chief Constable Keir Pritchard.

The responses received so far are also shown in the appendix.

Cllr Malpas has suggested that the Parish Council now write a formal letter to Cllr Wayman.

To cover the following points:

- concern about the planning and implementation of the closure,
- lack of coordination with the police to ensure abuse of Church Road and Studley Lane and the impact on residents was minimised.
- acknowledge good points - engagement by the contractors, early restoration of the road, how tidy it has been left and improvements to the footpath.
- acknowledge Matt Perrott's efforts to improve signage as issues emerged.

Recommendation: That the Clerk and Cllr Malpas draft a letter from the Chairman to Cllr Wayman to cover the points identified in the report.

Appendix 1  
**Councillors Letter**

26<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Councillor Bridget Wayman,  
Wiltshire Council  
Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport, Waste and A303**

**bridget.wayman@wiltshire.gov.uk**

**Chief Constable Kier Pritchard,  
Chief Constable, Wiltshire Police**

**[kier.pritchard@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:kier.pritchard@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk)**

Dear Councillor Wayman and Chief Constable,

**CLOSURE OF A4, NEW ROAD, DERRY HILL**

We are writing as Parish Councillors for the wards of Calne Without Parish Council (West Ward and Pewsham Ward) most affected by the current closure of the A4 New Road at Derry Hill.

The Parish Council will be considering the issue collectively at a future meeting but ahead of this we feel obliged to make urgent representations on behalf of the many residents of our community impacted by the closure. In particular to register our concerns about the planning and implementation of the closure of the A4. You are probably already aware from individual representations and social media posts of the issues that have arisen. Specifically: long tail backs caused by existing traffic calming in Church road, increased traffic on the A342 making a turn-out of the village difficult, abuse of the weight limit by HGVs, and speeding when traffic in the opposite direction to any queues is light or light both ways. Buses have also made unscheduled stops to decant passengers in driveways. Access to and from driveways on Church Road has been significantly inhibited and made perilous.

The scale of works on the A4 is significant and must have been some time in the planning given the involvement of Wiltshire Highways, the landowner, the contractor and we must assume the Police. Can you please provide a full explanation why the Parish Council, and residents, only became aware of this when a sign notifying the impending closure was erected on the A4 on 12<sup>th</sup> October. At that time the Parish Council had not received any explanation about the nature of the works, the reasoning behind the timing and why periodic, timed closures or traffic controlled through traffic were not feasible. Information it would have been helpful to provide to residents.

More importantly, given the obvious constraints of the roads in Derry Hill and Studley why did the diversion signage approaching, and at, the A3102 and A4 junction at Chilvester Hill in Calne not clearly state that proceeding on the A4 at that point was for residents and businesses only? Similar signs could also have been placed on the A342 at the junction with

Church Road, Derry Hill, at Studley crossroads at the turnings for Studley Lane and Church Road and, at Stanley Bridge for the Studley Hill. A 'Diversion Ends' sign was also placed on the A4 leaving Calne in the direction of Derry Hill, causing obvious confusion and leading to at least two HGV's having to make a dangerous reverse and turn at Studley crossroads. Surely a 'Not Suitable for HGV's' sign would have been helpful on the A4 leaving Calne.

We recognise that unfortunately there will always be people who defy directions about closures and diversions and apply local knowledge. But Wiltshire Council already has data about speeding on Church Road and its abuse by 'rat runners' so some targeted police presence for speed enforcement around known peak times may have helped reduce this. Even though the work has been scheduled for half term the traffic volumes in the village are significantly higher than the norm; half term also means more village children are out and about during the daytime and so speeding and increased traffic is of a greater, not lesser concern.

An increased police patrol presence and a few questions by officers about the purpose of using the roads in the restricted period again may have re-enforced the message about using the signed diversion. We are sure residents would not object to being asked politely the purpose of their need to access the village. Was there any liaison with the police about this given you are well aware of the issues in Church Road?

It has been disappointing to learn that when a resident rang 101 to report use of the road (restricted limit 7.5t) by HGV's they were advised it was not a matter for the Police and appeared to have had the phone put down; perhaps Mr Pritchard would wish to comment on this and about speed enforcement?

It is also disappointing that in any information you have provided to local radio for their traffic announcements, you have not asked the broadcasters to clearly state that Church Road, Derry Hill and Studley Lane are not suitable alternate routes and that road users should follow the signposted diversion.

We do recognise the necessity and importance of the work on the A4 from a road safety as well as a landowner liability issue however, we believe it could have been planned and communicated more clearly and certainly executed more effectively.

We should be grateful if you could provide a comprehensive explanation about the planning of the closure, the time this commenced and why there was inadequate notice about your plans so that the Council could make appropriate representations based on local knowledge and known behaviours. It would also be helpful if you could address all the specific issues raised in this letter. A similar explanation from Mr Pritchard would also be helpful. We will, of course, share this with residents as we have this letter.

In addition to yourself and Mr Prichard we are copying this letter to the Bowood Estate, Angus Macpherson and Matt Perrott.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Alan Malpas – [alan.malpas@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk](mailto:alan.malpas@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk)  
Councillor Jim Cook – [jim.cook@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk](mailto:jim.cook@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk)  
Councillor Ioan Rees – [ioan.rees@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk](mailto:ioan.rees@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk)  
Councillor Richard French - [richard.french@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk](mailto:richard.french@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk)

Copies to:

Angus Macpherson  
Police and Crime Commissioner  
Wiltshire Police  
[pcc@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:pcc@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk)

Matt Perrott  
Highway Engineer  
Covering the Area Boards of Calne and Malmesbury  
Local Highways, Highways and Transport

[Matt.Perrott@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:Matt.Perrott@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Marcus Lee, The Estate Manager, the Bowood Estate  
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Ed Jones Chairman, Calne Without Parish Council – [ed.jones@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk](mailto:ed.jones@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk)

Sarah Glenn, Clerk, Calne Without Parish Council -[sarah.glen@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.glen@calnewwithout-pc.gov.uk)

Response Received from Wiltshire Police  
Good afternoon Cllr Malpas

I have taken advise from the Force Traffic Management and Road Safety Officer, Mr Appleton, and asked him about the points you raised in your letter to the Chief Constable.

Mr Appleton has already been in communication with Wiltshire Council Highways about the situation on the A4, Derry Hill Road closure. Due to the tree cutting which should be completed by the 1<sup>st</sup> November, the circumstances deemed the closure done under Section 14 of the Road Traffic Regulations Act which is for roadworks. These do not follow the same legal requirement as Permanent TRO's and there is no legal requirement to consult with the Police. Generally, the Force is informed of most of the major works as a matter of courtesy, but sadly not in this instance.

The Force is aware of traffic not adhering to the posted diversion and taking a short cut through Derry Hill village, particularly the large goods vehicles. Mr Appleton has contacted the Roads Policing Unit and the Local Community Policing Team for their attention.

Unfortunately, the police cannot stop traffic legally using the short cut except those not complying with the 7.5ton weight limit and those committing other offences.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, appearing to read 'Alisa'.

**Alisa Wickens**

Executive Assistant to Chief Constable Kier Pritchard