

**PUBLIC MEETING RE A47/BROADEND ROAD JUNCTION**

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at 6.30pm**  
**held at All Saints Church, Walsoken**

**Present** – Elizabeth Truss MP, Catherine Brookes (Highways England), Cllr Fred Leach, Cllr John Woolley, Cllr Andy Houghton, Cllr Barry Sisson, Cllr Simon King, Cllr Michael Hill, Bridget Wall and approximately 15 members of the public.

**Cllr Leach** welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. He explained that the last Public Meeting was held in January 2014. He gave Cllr Brian Long's Apologies as he was stuck in traffic and passed on his views that the modifications and lineage were the main problems at the junction.

Cllr Leach had been using the junction at least 30 times a day during the last few weeks and had seen a lot of bad driving and close calls. Yesterday he had been waiting to turn left into Broadend Road and had been overtaken by an articulated lorry. He reported that there had been a couple of minor accidents last week and in August a bad accident had caused tailbacks.

**Elizabeth Truss** thanked everyone for attending. She first became involved in 2010 and had visited the dangerous junction on the busy A47. She had been working with other MPs involved in dualling the A47 in and around Norwich and considered that the A47 should be dualled the whole length to help traffic movement and improve safety issues.

Different solutions had been suggested and flashing signs had been erected but concerns had been expressed that they were too close to the junctions. She asked Catherine what the intended long term solution is to reduce accidents and fatalities and short term what is intended in respect of the flashing lights.

**Catherine Brookes** advised that she felt passionately about safety. The Feasibility Study, which is available on the website, had prioritised 6 schemes for the next 5 years along the A47 but Broadend Road junction was not one of them. When prioritising the following criteria were considered – safety, congestion, environment and economic growth.

Broadend Road was included in the second stage of priorities to be considered over the next four years and information will be gathered from the local community and councils. Everyone will have the opportunity to feedback through stakeholder events and consultation processes and Catherine will advise the Parish Council of these events.

She continued that the only possibility of having a roundabout at the junction will be if the houses in the Local Plan are going to be built, and there would be an expectation of the developer putting in some funding towards it.

The signs had been placed in their present position because of a problem with ditches, overgrown vegetation and risk avoidance to maintenance engineers, but had nothing to do with funding. They are within suggested distances and standards. On balance, she had personally decided to leave the signs where they are in the short term but is able to reverse this decision.

A Road Safety Audit (RSA) will be undertaken 12 months (RSA 4A) and 36 months (RSA 4B) after the installation. RSA 4A will advise if extra work is needed. The Audit can be brought forward at any time. The 4A stage is due in the summer of next year and Catherine confirmed she will come back to the community and talk through it.

Catherine advised that she has a challenging target of reducing the number of people killed by 40% of 2009 figures which means 26 fewer people killed each year.

She finished by saying that she is always happy to come and update the Council and local residents.

### Question and Answer session

- What improvements do you foresee in the next 5 years?  
(CB) There is a strong possibility that the houses will be built so a roundabout will be installed. Highways and the Local Plans are sharing and using each other's evidence.
- (ET) Is dualling envisaged during that period? A by-pass would seem sensible with the work being carried out in one go.  
(CB) The Feasibility Study will look at what can be done.
- (ET) When will this take place?  
The Feasibility will take place during 2017/2018 to see what/how things can be done in 2020/2025. Evidence is being gathered now.
- How is safety a priority when in the last 14 years there have been 12 deaths and numerous injuries at the junction?  
(CB) Statistics are higher on other sections of the A47 and we need to prioritise where we can gain the biggest benefit. There are so many needs which have to be prioritised.
- Action is needed now. The problem is speeding and overtaking on the wrong side of the road.  
(CB) We could have put central reserve bollards in but then there would be problems if someone hits them. We have to protect all drivers.
- (ET) If there was no risk to staff in maintenance, would you move the signs?  
(CB) Consideration has to be given to the physical environment, ditches and vegetation. The recommendation is between 50 to 100 metres. One sign is sited 51m and one 69m from the junctions, but it was no cheaper to position them closer. The signs flash if the radar picks up a car travelling at 40mph or more and the loops in Broadend Rd have detected a car waiting. They will also flash anyway if a car is approaching over 60mph.
- (ET) The signs were installed in February, what do the statistics show to date?  
(CB) The view is the traffic is behaving better than it did. Published accident statistics take 12 months to get validated but I'm aware of reported accidents.
- Nothing has changed, cars are still trying to overtake, why can't bollards be installed?
- On A17 all the junctions have bollards and Ely has a by-pass.
- Travelling to Leicester and back there are numerous examples of raised refuges in 60mph zones and they force the traffic to slow down.  
(CB) They were strongly considered but it was too much of a hazard, we have to balance the risk of every driver, people can make mistakes.
- (Steve Green local resident) Everyone is in agreement that the junction is dangerous. Why has £16M been spent at Guyhirn building a roundabout to simply ease mild congestion.  
(CB) *Will send him the Feasibility Study to show why.*
- Highways stated 2 years ago that double white lines weren't feasible but they are now in place. They do need to be extended though.  
(CB) The scheme was installed in accordance with standards but the lines have been extended anyway.
- (ET) Elizabeth reiterated that the junction should be upgraded and she will put forward the argument. She considered it a positive step forward that it's on the list for consideration but needs to be prioritised more. She wants to see evidence that the signs are working. She thought it encouraging that there will be a roundabout if the houses are built, but finds it frustrating that the raised refuges can't be implemented. *She confirmed that she will be*

writing to the Minister of Transport asking for these suggestions to be prioritised.  
Elizabeth also said she will take forward comments that learner drivers don't have enough experience driving through staggered junctions.

- A suggestion was put forward to install additional flashing signage on Broadend Road to warn drivers.  
 (CB) Will look into this.
- (ET) What is the definition of an unsafe junction?  
 (CB) There is no definition, we look at accident statistics such as if there are 3 personal injuries within 100 metres within 12 months plus take into account broader aspects. This is only part of the figure as for every accident recorded there are 7 near misses.
- A suggestion was made to use the old Guyhirn/A47 road.  
 (CB) Will look into whether this has been considered.
- A comment was made that the flashing sign is hidden behind other signs.  
 (CB) Will take this information back and investigate.
- Who is responsible for the overgrown vegetation?  
 (CB) Service providers are contracted to cut this back unless it is on someone's land and then it is the landowner's responsibility.
- Will the roundabout be built before or after the proposed houses are built?  
 (CB) When the planning application is received Highways are consulted and will set conditions together with developer's contributions.
- There are 2 large potholes around the bend on the junction.  
 (CB) Will get these reported.

**Elizabeth Truss** summarised saying that she had noted the frustrations about the long term safety developments but will work with the Parish Council and local residents to promote the scheme. She will write to the Transport Secretary. She considers the short term solutions to be flimsy and won't stop people being reckless. She thanked everyone for attending and asked that they keep on pushing. Elizabeth then left for an arranged meeting.

- Are you prepared to do something immediately after 12 months?  
 (CB) We will have to act on the findings and recommendations of the report, and will act straight away. The Police will have to be fully supportive in respect of speed limits.

**Cllr King** advised that the Parish needs to watch the Local Plan and make sure a case is put forward for a roundabout and get the County and Borough councillors on board. The Plan hasn't yet been adopted in Norfolk but Fenland has already done so. He was aware that Kings Lynn Borough Council has been using plans 20 years out of date and developers won't use these plans.

**Bridget Wall** advised that the A47 Alliance group had recommended that there should be a roundabout at Broadend Road junction.

**Cllr Leach** thanked Catherine and everyone for attending stating that everyone wants to see a continued improvement at the junction.

**Catherine Brookes** stated she found it helpful to come to Public Meetings.

The meeting ended at 7.50pm

Annette Williams  
 Clerk to Walsoken Parish Council