

Milverton Parish Council

Traffic Issues Working Party Report for November 2024 Meeting

Measures have been considered by the WP to address the congestion in the village as well as the use of the B3187 through Milverton of HGVs. The WP proposes the following approach:-

1. Village congestion generally

A review of the parking arrangements in the village has been undertaken due to recent poorly parked vehicles in Fore Street, etc and the congestion at the Creedwell Orchard junction. The proposal is to promote the installation of additional double yellow lines as below:-

- a. Fore Street - from Parsonage Lane jct to just past the opposite side of Creedwell Orchard jct. A compromise on this would be to limit the extent of these lines to only be put in in the vicinity of Creedwell Orchard junction as cars tend not to park on this side of the road due to the pavement wall.
- b. Fore Street - from opposite Parsonage Lane jct to Creedwell Orchard jct (same side)

It should be pointed out that Highway Code Rule 243 prohibits stopping or parking opposite or within 10m of a junction (except in an authorised parking space or when forced to do so by stationary traffic), so the addition of double yellow lines near Creedwell Orchard/ Fore Street junction is just emphasising this law anyway.

To further discourage rogue parking elsewhere in this vicinity – to add DYL's to -

- c. Silver St (N side) from North St jct to meet current DYL's
- d. Sand St (NW side) from current DYL's (near shop) to Butts Way jct.

Please note that in each of these cases 'no parking' restrictions are proposed, not 'no loading or parking' restrictions.

2. HGV traffic control

RB and TP have had a meeting with Somerset Council Traffic Management and it is proposed that HGV control measures will most readily be implemented as below:-

- a. The B3187 is already designated as a route that is unsuitable for HGVs on Somerset Council's Freight Route Map and there are advisory signs at the Milverton roundabout and in Wellington telling HGVs to travel via Taunton to get to Wiveliscombe, etc and Wellington, i.e. not to go through Milverton. Somerset Council are prepared to reinforce this message by installing 'Unsuitable for HGVs' signage in Wellington and at the Milverton roundabout to further discourage HGV traffic from passing through Milverton. RB has sent photographs of potential sites and available signposts to Somerset Council for their consideration. We have been advised that this process should take about 3 months to complete if new posts are needed (which it seems likely they will be). The proposed signage will be at the Milverton roundabout and just passed the Lowmoor Business Park turning in Tonedale, so vehicles using business parks there from Wellington will not be affected.
- b. The imposition of a 7.5t weight restriction was discussed too with Somerset Council. Their view as that as there is no overriding H&S issue (we may not agree on this), they would not fund the work needed to set this up. However, they advised

that this would cost in the region of £20-30k to implement and could take 18 months to 2 years to put in place.

- c. A one way system was also discussed. This would be even more involved than the imposition of a weight restriction and, whilst taking a similar length of time to impose, would likely cost upwards of £100k, due to consultation process, extent of illuminated signage, etc. required.

It is the recommendation the Working Party that a traffic survey is undertaken to start as soon as possible to monitor the number of large vehicles that pass through the village. Somerset Council has advised that they will provide the equipment which can be set up at each end of the village on B3187. This will provide the data that will be needed to support action beyond the installation of 'Unsuitable for HGV' signage. We will also progress with the installation of the 'Unsuitable for HGV' signage and then obtain actual data to show the extent of the ongoing HGV problem. If it still persists we will then see how the PC may fund the 7.5t weight restriction and take that forward. Given the cost associated with a one way system it is recommended that this is not considered any further, at this stage at least.

For each of the steps recommended above we will need to undertake consultation with local businesses and neighbouring parishes to keep them advised of what we are doing, as much from a courtesy as anything else. It is possible that restrictions may push more HGV traffic onto other unsuitable roads too, so we will need to be mindful of that risk, particularly with the weight restriction option.

In order to reinforce the concern about HGVs passing through the village, it has been suggested that a press release is issued outlining the problem.

With regards to enforcement, following the installation of the signage in 2a above, it is suggested that should any HGVs be seen coming through the village photos could be taken to identify the businesses involved and the PC could then follow this up enquiring why their drivers ignore clear signage, etc., bearing in mind that it is not a legal offence for HGVs to ignore this signage.

Please note that none of the above HGV restrictions will apply to local firms and farms (agricultural vehicles) as we do not wish to unduly impede the running of their businesses. However, it is proposed that letters are sent by the PC to all businesses and farms in the parish emphasising the narrowness of roads in the area and that in many cases they are now wide enough for large vehicles and asking them to do what they can to use smaller vehicles.

Areas of Discussion at Meeting

1. Agreement to extent of new double yellow lines proposed, and whether or not to adopt the compromise option outlined in 1a. above.
2. Agreement to remainder of traffic management measures proposed above
3. Agreement that articles should be placed in the press about the issue.