



Summary of ACC Meeting with Steve Bengel, Group Engineer (Highways) at Pembrokeshire County Council and Members of the Local Community

Weds 4th March 2020 Angle Village Hall @18.30

Present: Cllr S Williams (chair), Cllr D Richards, Cllr E Howells, Cllr E Parker, Cllr K Watkins, County Cllr Alderman, Mr S Bengel, Mrs A Randall (clerk), plus 39 members of the local community and a representative from Hundleton CC

Welcome, Introductions and purpose of the meeting: Cllr Williams welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Mr Bengel, highways engineer at PCC. She explained that the meeting would be open and that it had been arranged to get PCC's perspective on the proposed changes to the junction leading to the Valero site on the B4320. A number of questions had already been submitted in advance, which she hoped would be answered during the course of the discussion.

Vehicles driving too fast through the village

Cllr Williams explained that residents were concerned about vehicles driving too fast through the village, which might result in a serious accident unless something was done to reduce the speed limit. She had started investigating whether the village met the criteria to get the limit reduced to 20 mph but would like an expert opinion on the subject.

Action Point – Mr Bengel offered to look into reducing the speed limit for the village and will report back to Cllr Williams

30 mph road sign at beach end of road

The 30mph signpost at the beach was knocked over some time ago and is lying on the ground. Although the damage was reported before Christmas it has not been repaired.

Action Point – Mr Bengel will look into getting the signpost repaired and will report back to Cllr Williams.

Valero Junction

Cllr Williams introduced the subject by explaining that Stephen Thornton, Public Affairs Manager for Valero, met with Community Councillors in January to hear their views on the proposal to change the priority for traffic at the junction of the B4320 and the road to the Valero site. Community Councillors at the meeting made their views known that they were not in favour of this proposal for a number of reasons, ie if this went ahead the waiting time for vehicles travelling away from Angle (and for traffic at the other junctions on the B4320) would increase substantially. They also raised concerns that this would reduce road safety as drivers would continue to drive too fast, and suggested a number of alternative solutions to deal with

the increased number of workers due towards the end of 2020. Details of the meeting are in the minutes from the meeting accessible via Angle CC website.

1 Concerns over removal of hedging

Cllr Williams went on to explain that ACC had received a planning application to translocate the hedging at the junction during the week before Christmas but on the same day had received notification that a planning application to translocate the hedging had been withdrawn. This led ACC to believe that there were no imminent plans to remove the hedging. When the hedging was removed unexpectedly Cllr Williams contacted PCC to establish what had happened. She discovered that the application and withdrawal had different reference numbers and that ACC had never received the planning application that had been withdrawn.

Cllr Williams subsequently wrote to Mr Popplewell at PCC's planning department to set out her concerns about the means by which this was undertaken and is waiting for his response.

Mr Thornton said he was not aware of any application to remove hedging when he attended the meeting with ACC in January.

Mr Bengier explained that the hedging had been removed at this early stage to pre-empt the seasonal nesting period for birds and that Valero had purchased the land at the junction and removed the hedging themselves after obtaining the correct licensing, as would be their choice. The hedge has not yet been replanted, just removed, ie not translocated. It was agreed that this has understandably caused concern with residents that the proposal was going ahead without their views and concerns being taken into account. He tried to reassure residents by explaining that removal of the hedge at this stage does not automatically mean that changes to the road layout will be approved.

2 Valero's justification for change to the road layout

Mr Bengier explained that Valero's justification for making changes to this junction include concerns that drivers leaving the site are using some of the 'back' roads and lanes in the area to avoid the junction, especially around Rhoscrowther, which can be hazardous.

Valero has arranged and paid for the plans to be drawn up, plus the ecology work, and has asked PCC to investigate the scheme.

3 PCC's viewpoint

PCC has discussed a number of alternative solutions to the problem with Valero and will be conducting their own traffic survey at the junction in March. This will include the direction of travel and speed of vehicles. Residents were keen to see the traffic survey extended to other junctions along the road to the Fingerpost junction and to be conducted at various times during the day.

Mr Bengier went on to explain that technically Valero has the highest volume of traffic to and from their site.

4 Residents' views

Cllr Richards explained to Mr Bengier that during the 60 years that an oil refinery has been located at this site there have been no fatal accidents at the junction. However, to his knowledge there have been 5 fatal accidents elsewhere along the B4320, mainly due to drivers

driving too fast along the road and this is the issue which needs to be addressed. The junction currently slows drivers down as there is a give way sign and they have to stop before joining the B4320. Rather than make changes to the junction he suggested reducing the speed limit to 40 mph, paint double white lines in the middle of the road and for 'rattle lines' to be set into the junction for traffic leaving Valero. Residents were very much in agreement with him.

Cllr Williams went on to explain that the plans to change to junction would increase the amount of traffic on the road, which is against Welsh Government proposals. One way to mitigate this would be for Valero to provide a park and ride service for contractors to travel to and from the site, similar to the process in place for contractors working at Hinkley Point in Somerset. This would significantly reduce the number of vehicles on the road and subsequent emissions. Mr Bengier explained that although they could suggest and encourage Valero to use a park and ride service or to stagger start and finish times they would not be able to enforce either of these. Alternative options, such as installation of a roundabout or traffic lights might not be viable due to the site's proximity to the national park.

Cllr Williams explained that changes to the junction did not form part of the Local Development Plan recently published by PCC, so this seemed to be purely down to a request from Valero and no local committees in the area had put this forward.

5 The way forward

Mr Bengier explained it is still early days in this process and there is still some way to go. Final plans have yet to be submitted and there are significant preparatory investigations, including traffic surveys, to be completed and evaluated, the results of which cannot be pre-empted. PCC will have the final say on whether the plans would be approved and whether changes will go ahead. The outcome will not be decided until the latter part of this year.

He confirmed that the designation for the road to Angle would stay the same as now (B4320) and that this would not change, even if the priority at the junction was.

Proposals to make changes to the junction are not yet at the point to go to public consultation but people will be made aware when they get to this stage. Residents raised concerns about how much/little their views would be taken into account in making the final decision. Both Valero and PCC are now aware of the strength of feeling Angle residents have about this. Mr Bengier acknowledged that removing the hedge at this earlier stage has not helped and has actually 'stoked the fire'.

Residents would like now like to meet with Mr Thornton from Valero to help him understand their point of view so Cllr Williams will try to arrange this. In the meantime, Mr Bengier is working with Mr Thornton on this and will feed this meeting back to him.

Cllr Williams thanked Mr Bengier and fellow residents for attending the meeting and drew the meeting to a close at 19.50.