

## **Report on the Meeting of the South West Wiltshire Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group**

The quarterly meeting was held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 at the Nadder Centre.

David Button and Paul Shaddock, local highways engineers, were present and the meeting was chaired by Councillor Bridget Wayman.

Two reports were noted for Tisbury which were:

- i. Request to convert a limited waiting parking bay in the High Street to a disabled parking bay – The Traffic Regulation Order consultation is provisionally scheduled to start on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023.
- ii. 20 mph speed limit project - The Traffic Regulation Order consultation is provisionally scheduled to start on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023.

These consultations are the first part of the process as there is a requirement for consultations to be carried out on all traffic regulation orders which are legal statements to change what currently exists on the highway at these locations. More information can be found here:

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/2954/Traffic-Regulation-Order-consultations>

Once the consultation has ended, the engineers and legal department will review the responses and, if agreed, the highways engineer will submit 'works orders' to Wiltshire Council's contractor for the work to be done. Milestone (its new term contractor) will then put them into their schedule which may have a 3 or 6 month lead time.

David Button provided a Highway Maintenance Update to the meeting which included the following:

- As at 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023 the budgets available for the 2023/24 financial year had not been confirmed to officers. They were also not aware of what funds were available to them for the larger highway schemes because the Department of Transport had not yet advised the Council of the sum being provided and the rumour was that there would be a cut of 20% on last year's figure.
- The funding for white lining was only available once a year and this was not yet known. It remains to be seen whether the Highways Team will receive any budget for 2023/24.
- Wiltshire Council has changed its term contractor from Ringway to Milestone so all works scheduled to be completed in March may not be completed by Ringway by 31<sup>st</sup> March and may have to be picked up by Milestone.
- On footpaths, kissing gates were available for installation through an application being submitted to the footpaths team.
- Parish Stewards were playing catch up, which was the reason why they were not operating to the schedule circulated as they were doing pothole filling. From December onwards, the number of potholes to be filled had increased significantly.

- The gulley tanker was also playing catch up with its schedule because the officers who drive the tanker also drive the gritting lorries and with the greater need for gritting lorries in January and February, clearing the gulleys became a lower priority. Another vactor machine has been added to the fleet to improve the availability of machines to clear gulleys.
- David recommended for parishes which need individual gulleys emptied that the other 'sewers@wiltshire.gov.uk' team is used as they may have spare capacity.
- For the larger highways schemes, a new clerk of works has been appointed.
- Significant work is being done to survey all major highway routes for trees with Ash Dieback disease. Hundreds have got to be felled but there are often added complications depending on the ownership of the land if they are close to the highway. This can involve enforcement action on owners of the trees on private land and a protracted legal process but needs to be done. However, this takes a huge amount of time and effort as well as cost.
- The Highways Team itself is short of a engineer and a technician and so the existing engineers and technicians are covering a fourth area in addition to their own.

The next meeting is scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023.

**Bev Cornish**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**