

A5 M1 Link public inquiry.

The Public Inquiry for the A5 - M1 Link road took place in February 2012 and was held over two week, in the Woodside Estate in Houghton Regis.

People who had previously objected to any aspect of the road scheme would have been invited to the inquiry and were able to speak at the inquiry.

Chalton Parish Council's view is that the road is inevitable, but object to the fact that there will be no access to the by pass or the M1 via the proposed new junction 11a.

The whole road will be 2.9 miles long, from the M1 to the A5. It has been discussed for a number of years, this latest incarnation has been around since 2005 and was pulled in October 2010 due to the Governments spending revue. It was bought back to life with a cash injection of £45million from developers and £5million from Central Beds Council.

Without the local roads being connected to the by pass, we feel that the opportunity to provide a lorry ban in the area that will benefit all of the villages to the north of Luton, including Chalton will be missed.

I went along to the Inquiry to represent the Parish Council. I read out the statement which covered our objection and case, followed by a break, to allow the Highways Agency to answer the statement. I could have sent the statement in before the inquiry took place, but I chose to give the Highways Agency as little time as possible to look at our case and counter it. They had seen our original objection, which had not changed anyway, so they should have been prepared regardless.

The Highways Agency then tried to come up with reasons why our case was not a good idea, according to them. I, in turn, felt I was able to give a reason for all of their points. For example, they state that the local roads link to the scheme would cost over £10million pounds,

but as a percentage of the overall scheme and taking into account how these costs raise well above normal inflation rates, that this is not a significant cost. The Highways Agency then suggested that to include this link would need a two year study to consider all of the implications. I felt this was them trying to make us feel guilty for any delay which may arise. I dismissed this by stating that as they knew of our objections and that it was the same as some others, it was remiss of them to have not done this work already.

At the end of the session, we both summed up our views and adjourned. The inquiry then continued for another week, which was attended by Cllr Keith Featherstone on behalf of the Parish Council. Our feeling is that the Highways Agency have made up their minds up with what they want to do and have intention in changing anything.

The Inspector will give his response to the inquiry in the summer, although no fixed date was agreed on. We will pass on the outcome when we find out.

Russell Currell, Chairman, Chalton Parish Council.

Pensioners Lunch at the Star

The Chalton Parish Council's annual pensioners Christmas Lunch took place on January 9th and was held at the Star, as has been the case for the last 5 years. There where about 40 people who enjoyed the usual meal and drinks, which was funded by the Parish Council and the Star.

As you may know, the Star is under new management, but the standard was as good as before and the hospitality was excellent. I would like to thank Audrey and her team at the Star for putting on a great event and look forward to next years event.

Russell Currell, Chairman, Chalton Parish Council.

Railway Track passing point.

Network Rail are proposing to build a section of track on the east side of the existing track, between Harlington and Chalton, to provide a place to hold goods trains bringing material from Derbyshire to London. It will be one of three Loops being built between Derbyshire and London.

The loop will be about 2 miles in length and Network Rail state that they do not need planning permission to carry out the work. However, they intend to bring loads of material by road, through our village.

Construction of the loop will begin in August 2012 and be completed by Christmas 2013. The first stage of construction will require the importation of earth to build up the widened rail embankment. They say that this will require 70 loads a day for 6 months, that would in effect be 140 trucks per day, 70 full and 70 empty. After this there would be requirements for trucks to carry equipment on an occasional basis.

The Parish Council, along with our neighbouring Parishes strongly object to the use of local roads for this kind of scheme and the numbers of truck movements. This is the same situation we had in 2001 when the then Beds County Council wanted to put 120 lorry movements on our roads to carry material to the Sundon Quarry.

At the same time that the rail loop is being constructed CBC are allowing surplus spoil from the guided busway contract to be used to increase the depth of cap on the Sundon landfill. They estimate that there will be approx 110 truck per day. These will use the M1 and haul road access by Poplars they will / should not pass through Chalton. The busway contractors are paying CBC for permission to do this.

Russell Currell, Chairman, Chalton Parish Council.

AGM

Our next meeting is our Annual General Meeting, held at the school at 7.30pm on the 14th May. You are all welcome to find out more about what is going on in the Council and the area.

Parish Council Meetings, 2012.

14th May, AGM

11th June

6th August

8th October

3rd December

Football

If you are a keen footballer, regardless of ability and would like to play for fun, come down to the field behind the Star every Sunday morning from 10.00am (ish) to 12.00 (ish) for a run around and get to meet other villagers. Age is from about 10 to over 60.

CVA

We held the AGM in the village hall on 7 February and it was a pity that more villagers did not attend. The committee remains the same. The Quiz held later in the month was successful with Richard Wood as quizmaster.

There will be a Race Night on Saturday, 23 June. The village fete will be held on Sunday, 15 July with games, tombola, bar-b-q, and possibly football or cricket. Please make a note in your diaries and we hope to see you all at these events.

I know it's a bit early to think about December, but just to let you know that the Toddington Band has been booked to play for us on 7 December from 7.0 pm to 9.0 pm where we will have carols etc. Soup, rolls, mince pies, mulled wine will be available so come along and get in the Christmas spirit.