**MINUTES OF WOORE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**Monday 10th July 2017**

**Held at Woore Victory Hall**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr M. Cowey (Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Meeting), Cllr A. Allison, Cllr H. Blake, Cllr A. Ford, Cllr G. Irwin and Cllr J. Mitchell

**IN ATTENDANCE**:

Shropshire Cllr R. Aldcroft, Mr G. Cantler (Director of Place and Enterprise at Shropshire Council (SC)), Ms N. Fisher (Senior Community Enablement Officer (North) at SC), Mr R. Johnston (Area Manager at HS2), Mr. M. Dalton (HS2), Ms R. Moore (HS2), Ms R. Lewis (Stakeholder Manager at HS2), Ms P. Whittaker (HS2), Ms S. Tyson and Ms C. Bedson, Tree and Path Wardens, and Ms S. Pimlott, Clerk to the Parish Council (PC).

**PUBLIC**

Approximately 180-200 members of the public attended the Meeting.

**17095 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllrs M. Blake (Chairman of the PC), K. Chell, J. Higgin and H. Lightfoot had sent apologies for being unable to attend, all for personal reasons. It was resolved to accept those apologies.

**17096 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

No Cllrs declared a pecuniary interest as, prior to the Meeting, the Clerk had granted dispensations to all Cllrs present in respect of Agenda Items 17097 and 17098 and in respect of any discussions about HS2 which the PC might conduct at is Meetings until the next Annual Meeting of the PC in May 2018.

**17097 AND 17098 HS2 AND OPEN FORUM**

Mr Johnston introduced himself to the meeting as the Area Manager at HS2. He explained that the government, in 2013, had decided to accelerate the construction of the link between Birmingham and Crewe, by 6 years, to 2027.

HS2 were part way through the evolution of the design of the scheme. The proposed design for the route of the railway between Birmingham and Crewe had started 18 months ago and, following consultations over that period, the design had evolved to the proposed route set out in the High Speed Rail Bill. The target for depositing that Bill with Parliament is 17th July 2017.

Mr Johnston said that a draft environmental consultation had been carried out. There had been little contact with Woore. HS2 were now looking at Woore in greater detail. That construction of HS2 would require a limited amount of roadworks to be carried out in Woore. Following the Bill being deposited, more detailed information about those works would be made available.

Mr Johnston indicated that, going forward, there will be a formal consultation process which will provide an opportunity for locals to go into the detail of HS2’s current proposals. There will be a period of eight weeks for this stage in the process, following which HS2 will have four weeks to write up the results of the consultation.

It is anticipated there will be a party briefing towards the end of the year and a second reading of the Bill before or after Christmas.

Mr Johnston said that those with concerns about the plans will then still have an opportunity to petition Parliament and appear before the Committee to advise what, in their view, is right or wrong about the detailed proposals and what should be changed. It should take nine months from the Bill being deposited to the petitioning process being completed.

He said that HS2 now needs to get an understanding of what people are unhappy about and to review what is fit for purpose and what works. HS2 also need to be certain about what other works will be going on in the area and about the ongoing development plans of Cheshire East and Staffordshire. HS2 also want to go into detail about the proposed road plans to ensure that they will operate safely. If, by next spring, there are still concerns, input will still be possible until 2019. Preliminary work will start in 2020-21 and the railway should be completed by 2027.

In terms of traffic volumes, HS2 have carried out assessments and those details will be available next week following the Bill being deposited with Parliament.

At this point, the Chairman declared the Open Forum open and called for questions to be put to Mr Johnston and the other representatives of HS2. He said that the parishioners of Woore should be permitted to raise questions first and that questions could then be raised by other members of the public.

A number of questions were then raised, namely:

* What would be the extent of the increase in pollution in the village caused by HGVs and other construction traffic?
* Why had the detailed documents (such as designs and plans) not been made available at an earlier stage? The parishioners only became aware of the proposals following HS2’s contractors, Mouchel, putting up notices on land in the Parish. These notices had caused consternation, anxiety and fear to those whose land had been singled out and to parishioners generally. Why hadn’t there been more consultation and community engagement before the Bill was published?
* Why were HS2 going to route the construction traffic through Woore at all?
* How many lorries would be going through the village and for how long would HS2 be using the roads through Woore?
* What will the lorries be carrying?
* Where will the lorries be going from and to?
* Has the proposed route through Woore been chosen purely for commercial reasons (i.e. cheapness and speed) when other possible routes, which were less cheap or quick, had been discounted even though they might have less impact on residents?
* Where would the consultation events be taking place?
* Were there any plans for land in Woore to be used as landfill sites or for depots?
* Would HS2 build any new roads to provide a bypass for construction traffic?

Mr Johnston responded by saying that HS2 were proposing to route traffic through Woore and to do so HS2 would need to make limited road alterations to the roads in Woore. The notices which had been erected in Woore were to identify who owned the land which might be required for those alterations The HS2 Bill is solely about achieving the building of the new railway and it can acquire land compulsorily.

HS2 were proposing to use the roads in Woore as it wanted to keep as much traffic as possible in the footprint of the railway. The proposed alignment of the railway cannot vary more than 25 feet to the left or right.

In terms of consultation, Mr Johnston reiterated that the detailed information would be made available following the deposit of the Bill. There was then an eight week period for people to make their representations. HS2 would be holding two events to speak to people about the detailed plans in the Bill. The information HS2 receive from those events will lead to a review through the parliamentary process.

Mr Johnston said that, since April this year, HS2 had been carrying out assessments to measure traffic volumes. He was unable to answer how many vehicles were expected to go through the village until the Bill was deposited on 17th July. He was unable to say for how long the HS2 traffic would be routed through Woore. The lorries would be carrying construction materials, not spoil or waste.

Mr Johnston said that the lorries would be using the A53 on their way north to the A515 and then the A51 to get directly to junction 15. HS2 also planned to use junction 16 and the A500. In terms of road widening, the main A roads were the best option. The objective was to minimise traffic on local roads. HS2 was aware that local roads were already very busy. Mr Johnston said that HS2 needed to manage safety and minimise traffic for all those affected.

It was put to Mr Johnston that, since the HS2 track was to go through Madeley and Whitmore, then, as all those present realised, the quickest route to M6 junction 15 was not through Woore. Mr Johnston replied that HS2 vehicles would be using a number of different local routes. Mr Johnston also indicated that HS2 would be using only two miles of roads in Shropshire. The proposed plan was to adapt the roads in Woore for the assessed volumes of construction traffic. The next stage for HS2 was to consider with SC the details of the road changes detailed in the Bill.

Concerns were raised by those running businesses in Woore who were worried that the roads in Woore might be closed and that this would affect their business. Mr Johnston responded by saying that there were no plans for HS2 to close roads in Woore.

Mr Johnston was informed that SC had carried out road improvement works in Woore in 1994-95 to improve road safety at the junction of the of the A51 and A52 and to try to improve road safety along the A51 through Woore. These works had included reducing the width of the roads and widening pavements. The aim was to get vehicles driving through Woore to slow down. The HS2 proposals appeared to reverse these changes, thus making the roads more dangerous and less safe for pedestrians and road users. The changes would make the residents of Woore more vulnerable to accidents. Mr Johnston said that the HS2 proposals would not be allowed to make the roads less safe than they are now.

Concerns were expressed about the effect of additional pollution on the primary school and the safety of those attending the school. It was suggested that HS2 representatives should visit the school. Mr Johnston indicated a willingness to do so during the consultation period.

Mr Johnston caused consternation when he stated that the consultation events in August would take place in Crewe (Cheshire East) and Whitmore (Staffordshire). Those present made it clear that this was unacceptable to everyone present. There should be a meeting in Woore so that all residents of Woore had the opportunity to attend. Mr Johnston said that following the Bill being deposited the residents of Woore would be able to consider the detailed plans in detail and make representations about the proposals in the Bill.

Mr Johnston went on to state that HS2 had no plans at present to use land in Woore to deposit waste or spoil arising out of the construction of HS2. The waste or soil would be dug out and used to build the railway embankments. In some areas, HS2 will have to use spoil from elsewhere. HS2 will identify a main route for heavy haul materials within the footprint of the rail track. The stage for changing the alignment of the rail track had now passed.

The next stage for HS2 was to develop a more detailed design. Over the summer, HS2 would be excavating boreholes to update the borehole history.

Mr Johnston said that he thought it very unlikely that HS2 would use any land in Woore for depots or compounds. At this stage, he was unaware of any such plans for Woore. The current plan was for three compounds, at Crewe, Stone and Heywood. It was suggested to Mr Johnston that a larger number of smaller depots or compounds would reduce the volume of construction traffic and that a close examination of construction sequences should drive the number and location of depots. This could only be examined when the detailed documents were available. Mr Johnston said that the final route of the track would drive the locations of the compounds or depots.

In terms of building a new road or by-pass, he said that HS2’s proposals were to come up with a design that was fit for purpose for the railway and that this currently envisaged moving the traffic on existing roads. Some of the roads used by HS2 traffic would need to be improved so that they could take the increased volume in traffic. It was up to SC, as the Highway Authority, to decide if the road layout in Woore, as altered for HS2, should be reinstated afterwards. In respect of a bypass, again it was for SC to look at HS2’s road alteration plans and see if they sat comfortably with SC’s future proposals for roads in Woore.

Mr Johnston said that he was aware that both Cheshire East and Staffordshire Councils had met with the Secretary of State to discuss bringing forward their proposed future highway improvements and plans on the back of the HS2’s proposed plans for roads in their areas. Both Councils may try to get funding from government to advance their own schemes locally. HS2 will now be formally consulting with SC.

Mr Johnston was asked to confirm that it was not intended to demolish any houses in Woore. Mr Johnston said that there were no plans to do so. In answer to a question about compensation, he indicated that any land or houses which had to be acquired by compulsory purchase would be compensated. This would include land acquired for the planned road alterations in Woore.

Mr Johnston was also asked if any research had been carried out on the effect the construction of HS2 and the roadworks in Woore would have on property prices. Mr Johnston said this had not been done but that, as a result of the construction of the new line in Kent, property prices had been effected prior to and during the construction of the railway. However, following completion of the construction process, prices had returned to normal

Mr Johnston was asked whether the Trentham quarries would be re–opened and also whether HS2 had considered using the Market Drayton to Stoke railway line which was still available and could be used as an alternative to transporting all of the construction materials by road. Mr Johnston said that he would report these matters back to HS2.

Mr Johnston was asked whether HS2 would still go ahead. Mr Johnston said that HS2 had had cross party support but he could not predict what governments would do. All he could say was that HS2 had been included by the government in the Queen’s Speech which indicated the government wanted HS2 to go forward.

Those attending the meeting criticised HS2 about its lack of consultation with the residents of Woore before the deposit of the Bill and expressed concern that the meeting had been arranged at a time when HS2’s representatives attending the meeting considered they were unable to share any information which was in the Bill prior to its deposit on 17th July. Mr Johnston reiterated that he had attended the meeting to provide the residents with a timeline of the process following the Bill being deposited. Mr Johnston said that the PC and residents of Woore would be consulted over the next eight weeks and that they would be able to make representations about HS2’s plans for Woore.

**17099** **PLANNING**

The PC considered planning application **17/02462/FUL** which was for the erection of an extension to an existing garage at 59 St Leonard’s Way, Woore CW3 9SS. Cllr Irwin was the Lead Councillor for this application. She reported that she had visited neighbouring properties on three occasions but no-one had answered or contacted her in response to her leaving notes that she had called. No-one had left comments on SC’s Planning Portal. From her own observations, it appeared that, whilst the extension would be close to the property’s boundary, it was unlikely that neighbours would be adversely affected by it. In addition, the Applicant had taken pre-application advice from SC. It was resolved to support the application.

The Meeting closed at 9.45pm.

**DATE OF NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: MONDAY 24TH JULY 2017 AT 7.30PM**

**RECORD OF VOTING FOR WOORE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10TH JULY 2017**

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| **Agenda Item** | **Motion** | **Cllr** | **For** | **Against** | **Abstain** |
| **17099** | To support this planning application. | Cowey M | **X** |  |  |
| Allison | **X** |  |  |
| Blake H | **X** |  |  |
| **Prop: Irwin****Second: Ford** | Ford | **X** |  |  |
| Irwin | **X** |  |  |
| Mitchell | **X** |  |  |

**SIGNED: ………………………………. (CHAIRMAN / VICE CHAIRMAN)**

**DATED: ………………………………….**