

6 HERDMAN PLAYING FIELD: VERGE PARKING

UPDATE

At an additional EPC meeting held on 29.7.26, Members considered ESCC's proposed scheme – as well as its signage proposals and request for a view on protecting other sections of the verge with bollards.

Following the meeting, the Clerk advised EPC that:

- 1 Those attending the meeting were opposed to bollards. Reasons included: cost; some may get damaged by vehicles; aesthetically unpleasing; verge used partly by those with mobility issues (shorter walk to the playing field pedestrian access and pavilion); risk of vehicles parking on the carriageway if the formal parking provision is fully occupied.
- 2 There tends to be more vehicles seeking parking when organised football is scheduled – and quite a few parents arrive in works vans – which are, obviously, longer than most cars. The scheme provides for parking parallel with the carriageway. The design appraisal estimated that formal parking could accommodate 10-11 cars. There is a concern that the presence of vans will reduce the formal parking occupancy to 7-8 vehicles. Vans could be accommodated if the Grasscrete was deeper at the Rectory (NE) end (where the verge is deeper).
- 3 Given that ESCC – as the Highways Authority – is responsible for the safety of users of the public highway, the Parish Council does not see why it should be contributing 50% of the cost (via the Community Match scheme) of relocating/replacing advisory signs.
- 4 EPC appreciates that drainage is still being assessed – however, the plan does not show the ditch (somewhat infilled now) that runs alongside the hedge (verge side). The plan indicates that the area it occupies would be infilled with spoil and suggests also that the Grasscrete should have a fall of 2.5%.

Highways' (summarised) response on 13.8.26 was as follows:

- 1 Some kind of deterrent is needed to avoid the undeveloped sections of the verge being damaged.
- 2 Deepening the Grasscrete would increase cost and create a safety issue (drivers reversing out 'blind' on to the carriageway).
- 3 It is considered reasonable that both parties contribute (via Community Match) towards the safety benefits derived from relocating warning signage.
- 4 ESCC needs to be confident that the scheme will not create a drainage issue.

It added that deviations from the current proposal would increase costs and that it needs to be certain that EPC remains supportive of the project before continuing to work on it (including assessing drainage implications).

Given that EPC had no scheduled meeting until mid-September – and the Clerk's impression that none of the concerns raised on 29 July was considered to be a 'deal breaker' - the Clerk sought Members' views informally.

On 25.8.26, the Clerk advised ESCC that:

- EPC remained keen to see the project through to completion.
- EPC – as well as local community members – are opposed to bollards being placed on the undeveloped verge. (Damage could be assessed after the formal parking scheme had been in place for a while.)
- EPC accepted the signage cost being included within the overall scheme cost.
- EPC accepted that varying the design proposed would incur additional costs.
- EPC wanted ESCC to continue to take forward the scheme – and acknowledged that ESCC considered it necessary give further consideration to drainage implications.

On 8.9.26, ESCC responded as follows:

Good morning Richard,

I hope you are well.

I wanted to make you aware of some additional costs that have arisen in connection with the Ewhurst Layby Improvements scheme.

Following the Parish Council's review of the proposals, a number of queries and comments were raised relating to drainage, layby capacity, signage, verge posts and other design matters. These points required further investigation and discussion between WSP (the designers), Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP), ESCC and other stakeholders to ensure that the concerns were properly considered and addressed.

As a result, WSP has submitted a compensation event for the additional designer time, coordination work, meetings and technical responses that were required. The cost identified by WSP is £743.89.

There are also likely to be additional costs from BBLP associated with their involvement in reviewing and responding to the comments. These have not yet been confirmed, but are currently expected to be less than £1,000. Once we receive the formal quotation, I will be able to provide a more accurate figure.

I appreciate that raising queries and concerns is an important part of the consultation process, and the Parish Council's engagement has helped ensure that the scheme has been thoroughly reviewed. However, the additional work required to investigate and respond to these matters fell outside the original scope of the commission, which has resulted in these unforeseen costs.

At this stage, the WSP compensation event has been submitted and we are awaiting confirmation of the associated BBLP costs. Once we have the full cost information, we will be able to confirm the total additional cost to the project.

In the meantime, I would be grateful if the Parish Council could confirm that it is content to accept these additional charges in principle, recognising that they relate to work undertaken in response to the comments and queries raised during the review process. This will allow us to continue progressing the scheme while the final cost information is being confirmed.

I've attached the compensation event documentation for your information. Please do let me know if you have any questions, or if it would be helpful to discuss any aspect of this further.

Kind regards,

Jess

Jess Willetts

Project Officer (Highways)

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Suggested questions for ESCC (assuming no charge):

- 1** Why was EPC not warned that answering ESCC's request for its views would incur charges?
- 2** Will ESCC be sharing additional costs (It has a £5k contingency)?
- 3** How much – in addition to the £25k contribution EPC agreed originally – has EPC actually (or is likely to have) incurred thus far?
- 4** When will the final scheme cost be known? (The ongoing drainage design work risks becoming a 'blank cheque')