

BISHOPSTEIGNTON PARISH COUNCIL

For the full council meeting to be held Monday 18th January 2021

Appendix H – Development/Enhancement at Ware Barton Roundabout (A381/A380)

EMAIL sent by a member of the public on 9th December 2020. Forwarded to all BPC members by the Clerk:-

I attach a recent email communication to a local Devon County Councillor for information. While the structure is quite possibly located beyond the Parish Boundary, this junction does act as a gateway to the Parish and wider Teign Estuary. Happy for you to circulate to Parish Councillors and respond to any points either via email or at a Parish Meeting.

Dear Councillor,

I would be grateful for Devon County Council's view on the recent 'improvement' works at the above-mentioned road intersection. Specifically, the erection of black metal sheeting near to the road junctions - particularly adjacent to the A381 Bishopsteignton access/egress.

I appreciate there may be a need to slow traffic at the junctions due to excessive approach speeds. I assume that previous highway design standards have now changed so expansive visibility splays are no longer in vogue.

However, is the use of lengths of black metal sheeting in a highly environmentally sensitive rural area, a location that acts as a gateway to one of the County's premier holiday destinations, appropriate? It seems to me that this is a 'highway solution' more fitting for Beirut or the US/Mexico border!

Does not the County Council have an environmental audit system for highway schemes? If so, I find it difficult to believe that such an insensitive structure could have been approved. If there is a need for visibility restrictions, surely this could have been achieved by planting and/or vertical timber sleepers - maybe even with some design input of an undulating 'wave' top. Any planting could have provided a habitat for insects and food for birds and would be a lot less offensive to look at than sheet metal (which is not even straight!). I can think of no reason why a narrow belt of dense, evergreen vegetation or combination of sleepers/planting could not have been provided. A more environmentally friendly solution, surely, given the County's declaration of a 'climate emergency' should have been provided. Even a sleeper wall itself can be designed for use as a 'home' by solitary bees and the like ... I do not think much wildlife will make a home on sheet metal!

A further concern is that there is a real risk, in my opinion, that provision of street 'furniture' of this nature, by virtue of perceived 'urban creep', can only act to make it more difficult for those who successfully fought development of fields on the estuary side of this junction to resist future development proposals. Some may regard the structure as having a relatively small-scale visual impact. However, collectively, a number of such like 'improvements' can seriously harm the relatively unspoilt rural character and qualities of a location.

Additionally, I consider the timing of expenditure on this type of highway 'improvement' for vehicles is highly regrettable when funds for the desperately needed (not least, on highway safety grounds) Teign Estuary Cycleway appear unavailable.

As a conclusion, being a qualified planner and landscape architect, it is my professional

judgement that the County Council could, and should, have done a lot better in providing a design solution to this highway issue.

I have copied this email communication to Bishopsteignton Parish Council for their information. I look forward to receiving the County Council's response.

It was requested by Cllr. Merritt that this item be included in the January BPC agenda for the councils consideration consideration.