

Raglan Community Council
Minutes of the Special Meeting held on Friday
24 June 2022. This meeting was convened at the Fellowship Centre,
Usk Road, Raglan
at 10:00 am

5114 Present

Cllr Richard Moorby (chair)	Mr Graham Kinsella (Monmouthshire Highways)
Cllr Penny Jones (RCC & MCC member)	Mr David Chan (SWTRA)
Cllr Pennie Walker (RCC) member	Mr Gareth Day (Head of Operations, WG Transport)
Cllr Richard John (MCC) member	Mr Julian Dyer (Mitchel Troy Community Council & Resident)
Cllr Jayne Mckenna (MCC) member	Ms Jay Francis (MP Office Manager)
Mr Peter Fox (MS for Monmouthshire)	Cllr Francis (Mitchel Troy Community Council)
Mr David Davies (MP Monmouthshire)	

5115 In attendance:

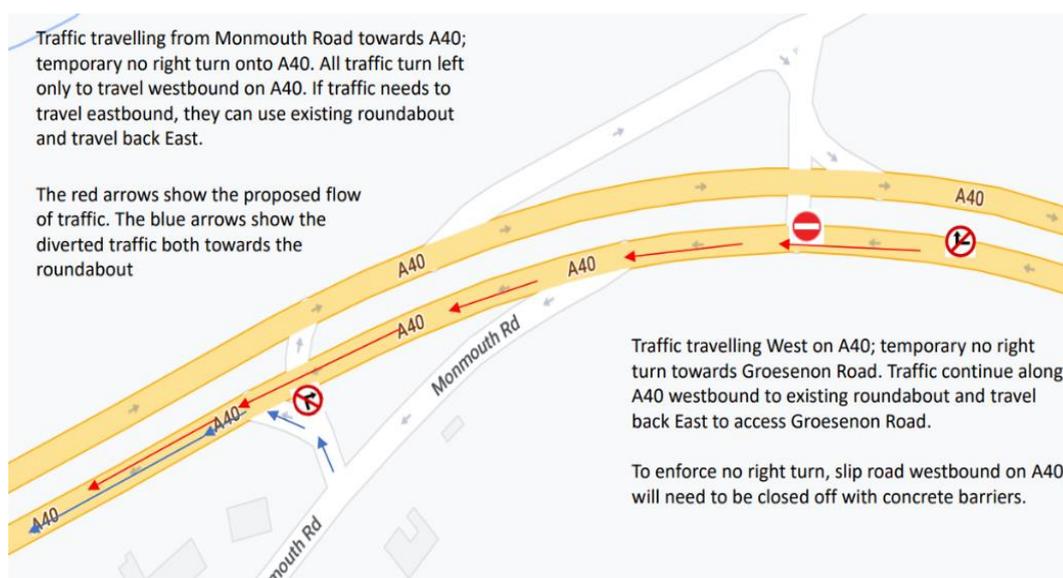
Adrian Edwards, Clerk to the Council

5116 Apologies for absence

Cllr Hazel Leacock, Cllr Nick Ramsay, Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby Monmouthshire County Council, Lara Jones MS

Cllr Richard Moorby thank those in attendance for attending and asked if everyone could introduce themselves.

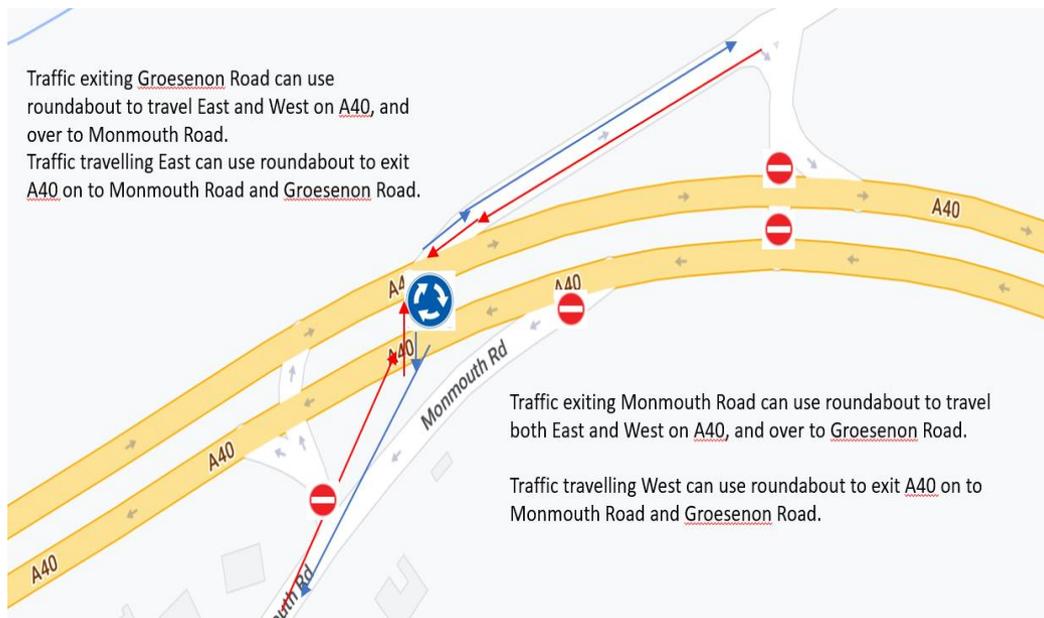
Cllr Moorby explained that the Clerk to Raglan Community Council will present a short power point highlighting several concerns. The Clerk explained that it is important that everyone understands the dangers at these junctions.



It was explained that there are two slides, one that provides some suggestions for a fast fix, and another which provides a solution for road safety at this junction. The Clerk presented the power point and explained that the images will show several concerns.

The proposed fast fix relating to Groesenon Road, over the A40 trunk road is shown above. This would be one solution that could be implemented at a lower cost. The slip road would need concrete barriers to stop HGVs or white van users pushing cones to one side.

The slide below indicates a more permanent solution by constructing a roundabout between both junctions on the A40.



There was some discussion and concerns were expressed regarding large vehicles which have executed U turns at the Groesenon Road and not driving west bound and using the existing roundabout. It was explained that some HGVs have left the A449 thinking the slip road was

the junction to the services and executed a U turn to re-join the A449.

One of the slides showed a 7-ton vehicle approaching the Monmouth Road junction, but there was a car overtaking the 7-ton vehicle. A driver may think they could cross the two lanes to the centre reservation without noticing the car travelling at speed.

The Clerk explained that he has used the term blue sky thinking when considering the improvements at these junctions. Everyone is aware of budget restraints on Welsh Government and their agents, but Raglan residents are demanding safety for residents and visitors to the area.

One person asked about the other vehicles that use these junctions, being agricultural vehicles and buses transferring school pupils. It was explained that the size and length of some of the agricultural vehicles, if stopped on the centre reservation, the trailer is stationary on the fast lane of the east bound carriageway. It was explained that a lot of farmers use this junction as they have no other alternative, and consideration must include those road users. There was some discussion about this, and several views were expressed. One question was asked if the proposed blocking of the access points could be achieved cost effectively, how that would affect businesses in the village. It was explained that the Community Council are considering convening a meeting with businesses to get their views.

One person said as a councillor and a resident they do not use the junction, they use the roundabout, so they don't need to cross the dual carriageway. Another person said that they are of the opinion residents would have no objection to making the junction safer.

A resident from the Tregar side of the junction said the proposals would make the junction safer and give residents piece of mind when using the road in this location. The proposal wouldn't make the junction 100% safe. When you are currently using the junction, you would need to look for traffic travelling from the Castle, traffic turning right from the A449 and traffic continuing towards Abergavenny, having to think about three traffic movements not two, therefore the proposal would reduce one element of danger.

One person said that the presentation has captured the concerns of residents using the junction from the Tregar community. It was explained that there as to be way in resolving this ongoing road safety concern in this location. It was felt that the short-term measures would help with the ongoing safety.

The Clerk explained that the Deputy Minister for Climate Change is encouraging use of public transport, cycling and walking. How can this junction be made safe for all users? It was explained if you are on foot, on a bicycle, car, or public transport you still need to cross this junction. It was explained that people on foot, or on a bicycle cannot climb over the barriers to cross the carriageway. That is something the Deputy Minister for Climate Change and his agents will need to consider.

Several other proposals were presented including the reduction of the speed on both carriageways on the A40 between the roundabout at Raglan village and the intersection of the A449. An example of this is the A465 from Abergavenny to Hereford, around the Pandy area where the speed limit has been reduced as traffic passes through the village, and this could be done in this location. Reduction in the speed limit to 40 mph on the slip road(s) off A449 entering A40 westbound would help.

Consideration should be given to installing hatched road markings on the outer lanes on A40 to encourage traffic to remain in the inside lane. The carriageway would become a single lane towards Monmouth Road/Groesenon Road junctions.

It was explained the slip road exiting the A449 has hatched road markings, reducing the carriageway width and, this could be an extension. It was also explained that due to the speed of the traffic travelling east, over the last several months vehicles have lost control and hit the barrier, and some have gone over the barriers. It was said it may be a coincidence, but it seems the same section of the barrier has been repaired several times in the last several months.

It was also explained that warning signs should be installed alerting road users to pedestrians crossing the carriageway by the Castle. It was felt it is fortunate that no-one has been injured. Signage to be installed in this location is very low cost. It was explained the Community Council have agreed the Community Council would purchase the signs and Monmouthshire County Council highway teams install them, with the agreement of SWTRA.

Within the presentation there are several comments that have been made on social media.

One person said that in the short term, if the speed was addressed and reduced to 40/50 MPH and restrictions are considered, that could be steps in the right direction. These improvements would be most welcome. It was explained in the past when Monmouthshire County Council have met with officers from Welsh Government, they have said that a roundabout is a nonstarter. It was said again the most practical solution at this stage would be to restrict access and reduce the speed.

It was said that one resident has suggested that traffic leaving Groesenon Road, should turn left onto the A449 towards Newport, then leave the dual carriageway by the "Golf Club" down the service road and re-join the highway network from Station Road in Raglan. There was some discussion around this, and no further comment was made.

Mr Day addressed those present and addressed some of the items in the presentation. He explained that the Highway Authorities need to follow the guidance and procedures that are in place.

It was explained by blocking the slip road could cause several other incidents like backend shunts, due to vehicles stopping in the carriageway. It was explained at this stage, on face value, this would need to have some consideration before agreeing to any changes.

It was explained that some people will still try to cut through the system rather than using the roundabout. It was explained that there is no reason that it couldn't work in time and a survey should be considered.

An explanation on the statistics and the way Welsh Government uses those statistics was provided. Mr Day said that he would send a link to the road standards that are used in the design of roads and junctions. It was explained that a new standard has been introduced for junctions like the Groesenon Road junction.

There was some discussion relating to blocking up the access and egress from Monmouth Road, as the access can be achieved via the access through the village.

He explained that Welsh Government and all Highway Agencies use a design manual. It was explained that the new proposed design for a junction like this junction will not be introduced at this junction.

It was explained that any near misses are not reported, and Welsh Government does not react to those reports or incidents. The incidents that are reported and are reacted to are KFO / KFI. It was explained this is where there is loss of life.

A report is made of the location and the area around that location where incidents have taken place. Those incidents are included in a five-year analysis and study on incidents. This is then reported and included in the programme.

It was explained that there were no reports on Groesenon Road junction, and there were two reports on the Monmouth Road junction.

Mr Day said that he has ridden a bicycle and crossed the junction. He has manoeuvred it safely but it's not a good junction to ride a bicycle over. There was some discussion on vehicles using the junction to U turn if they have taken the wrong turning. It was explained that consideration should be given to install a roundabout sign informing drivers that a roundabout is X meters further along the carriageway.

It was explained there will be a need for a road safety audit on this section of the network. There was some discussion over this, and the time it is taking, as safety audits should have been undertaken four or five years ago.

It was said that Raglan Castle and CADW are looking at improving the visitor attractions to the Castle and grounds. It was said that a pedestrian crossing has been looked at and the vehicle movements back some time ago. The Groesenon Road junction was constructed to allow traffic to turn to return west along the A40. WG are revisiting this, to consider how improvements can be accommodated for traffic movement in and around this location.

It was said if WG are looking to make improvements this would be the time to construct a roundabout to improve the tourism numbers and this would make the junction safe for residents in and around Raglan. It was then said that the active travel arrangements need to be considered in any improvements.

Mr Day explained that this would be for the road safety engineer to look at and make the proposals for consultation and approval for the appropriate standards.

One person asked for confirmation, that WG don't have any records of accidents in this location. It was explained that Groesenon Road junction has no recorded accidents and there were two recorded accidents at the Monmouth Road junction. All those that live in and around Raglan are aware that several accidents have occurred at the Groesenon Road junction in the last two or three years, and multiple people taken to hospital. Mr Day said that there is a delay in the reports from the other agencies being reported to WG.

One Councillor expressed concern that this information should be available immediately and not five years post hence. It was explained the agents for a property developer held a preplanning advice meeting and they

also said that there was no evidence that accidents have happened in this location. So can someone explain where the information and statistics are going.

It was explained that the information is broken down into incidents. One Councillor asked how seriously you need to be injured to be included in any of the statistics. A seriously injury, is a life changing incident. It was said again that WG will be undertaking a study on this section of the highway.

The MS said that he has written to the Chief Constable asking Gwent Police what their perspective is and if WG is taking soundings or advice from Gwent Police. It was explained that the reduction in the speed limit could be something that could be implemented immediately subject to the traffic orders.

Mr Day explained that WG and their agents have undertaken works, removing vegetation, therefore improving access and visibility along the highway. The condition of road markings has also been considered, and WG will be looking at other alternatives. A question relating to speed bumps was asked, but this isn't a matter for trunk roads.

It was explained that WG have introduced speed restrictions on the M4 around Newport, and accidents are being recorded, and that's work in progress.

The suggestion was that a no entry sign should be placed on the egress from Monmouth Road onto the A40. It was explained that businesses and residents would not be happy with Monmouth Road being considered as a full closure. The suggestion was to maintain the egress from Monmouth Road west on the A40 and restrict the right turn across onto the A40 east bound. This would increase traffic in the village.

It was explained that the Community Council will be convening a meeting with businesses to ask for their views followed by a meeting with residents to allow residents to express any views they may have.

A question was asked if the network is split into sections to record incidents or any road traffic accidents. It was explained that all accidents are recorded and WG and outside agencies draw a "polygon" around the accident area to identify any accidents in the last five years. It was explained that information cannot be made public due to personal data being recorded.

One person said that he was concerned that there is no record of any accidents at the Groesenon Road junction, when everyone in the meeting is aware of several over the last couple of years. It was explained that at least three people in the meeting witnessed the accident on the 4 June 2022. It was explained that a journalist contacted Gwent Police asking about the accident and Gwent Police denied that an accident had occurred in this location.

It was explained that the fatality that occurred some weeks ago was included on the PFI data. It was said if there are two vehicles involved in an accident that would not be included on the PFI or any other data recording. It was explained that the incident that occurred on the 4 June could appear on the data recordings, but its not recorded at this moment.

It was said that there was a lag from the time the accident occurs, and the accident being recorded on the data base. It was said that WG officers accept that there is concern about these junctions. It is accepted that this is for the Minister to consider and direct WG officers. It was asked what WG officers are going to put forward to reduce the occurrence of any further accidents like the one that was witnessed on the 4 June 2022 especially as some of the points that have been presented could be a quick win, The WG officers were asked what are the chances of improvements in these locations.

It was explained that other policies will need to be followed, safety audits will need to be undertaken and road safety planners will need to consider all the workings of the suggestions. It was said, everyone understands that an investigation or study will need to be done, but what are the timescales for this work to be done as a matter of priority.

The funding which the Highways Department has will be used for the current programme of works. It is acknowledged that these junctions are a priority for residents of Raglan and surrounding areas, but WG has a list of programmed works all over Wales that are ongoing. It was explained it would be expected that this could be included in the next round of funding, and officers from WG are investigating to see if there will be a further round of funding for this current year. It would be hoped that these junctions will be included in that funding programme and there is no reason where that wouldn't be the case.

A question was asked if there was an impact study undertaken when the A465 improvements were in the planning stage and the impact this was going to have on the approach roads to the A465. It was explained that the A465 is ongoing with section 5 and 6 under construction and the A465 will be one of the main transport links between east and west. It was said that the current junction layout like both these junctions are of some concern with new guidelines, and WG are installing supplementary signage.

One person said traffic will automatically slow down exiting the A449 due to the road layout, but traffic increases its speed as soon as it is on the A40, as it's a dual carriageway. It is essential that speed restrictions are put in place as the speed as the traffic is automatically slower on the slip road.

A comparison was given, that these junctions are very similar to the junction on the A4042 and A472 at Little Mill. WG changed the junction layout and installed a traffic light system, and traffic needs to use the existing roundabout if traffic wishes to travel to Abergavenny along the A4042. These junctions are very similar. It

was said that traffic levels in Raglan village cannot be increased, if as suggested the egress onto the A40 from Monmouth Road was made a no entry.

The officer from Monmouthshire County Council Highways explained that he didn't have any great concerns with a no right turn on the egress from Monmouth Road, as the slip road already exists. He explained that the next batch of traffic orders are going to revolve around speed limits along with amendments which will be "amendment six" around the autumn or winter of 2022. He believes this could be considered within amendment six. There was some discussion about the timelines to consider any changes.

The chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting was closed.

5116 Signed by _____
Chairman
Date July 2022

Please note: these minutes are a summary of the above meeting, and a record of the decisions or resolutions moved.