



1 April 2022

Ribble Valley Borough Council
Planning Department
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 2RA
FAO John Macholc

BY EMAIL

planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk

Dear Mr Macholc

RE: Planning Application No: 3/2021/0660 and 0661 - Marl Hill Section of works to the Haweswater Aqueduct

I write in my capacity as Clerk to West Bradford Parish Council. As you will recall, in July 2021 the Parish Council submitted a detailed consultation response with regard to the above applications submitted by United Utilities (UU). At their meeting in March 2022, parish councillors have asked me to contact you once more on a topic which is clearly the source of major local concern. (I am however unclear as to whether the submission of further information by UU has triggered a further round of formal consultation; I have seen a reference to consultation made by other interested parties, but West Bradford Parish Council has not in itself been invited to submit a consultation response. In any event, the Parish Council would wish to formally register its position with the Local Planning Authority at this stage).

On 4 March, the Clerk received the following positive update from the HARP Stakeholder Relations team:

“Following significant support for Route Option 2 (the Ribble Crossing), we have adopted the temporary haul road and bridge over the River Ribble as our proposed main access route to the Bowland and Marl Hill compound areas.”

This news was very much welcomed by West Bradford residents as it reflected the preferred way forward as set out in our letter of July 2021. However, the message went on to state:

“To enable us to build both the Ribble and Hodder Crossings during the enabling works period, we are seeking to use the existing road network for around 9 months at the start of construction and during this period we would implement temporary traffic management measures to facilitate the safe use of local roads.” [my emphasis]

The HARP consultation website provides a little further detail, confirming that:

“The [purple] route through Chatburn, Grindleton and West Bradford would only be used by exception for vehicles that are unable to travel under the low bridge. The infrequent use of this route avoids the need for road modifications and sustained traffic management through Chatburn, Grindleton and West Bradford, and as such these modifications have been removed from our planning application. There would also be infrequent occasions where our vehicles would have to cross either the West Bradford or Newton-in-Bowland bridges to access the north banks of the River Ribble and River Hodder to enable bridge construction. The crossing of the existing bridges and use of the purple access route by HGV’s for our construction would be subject to prior agreement from the local highway authority and advance notice would be given to local residents.”

The Parish Council is at a loss to understand how the construction of a temporary bridge over the River Ribble could take the 9 month period claimed. This seems an excessive length of time for a structure which we have been repeatedly told will be taken down when the project is complete (which in itself is scheduled to last 5-6 years). It seems perverse to residents that the construction of the temporary bridge will take up c15% of the time allowed for the entire length of the project, which we understand is the second largest infrastructure project in the County within the last 50 years!

During this 9-month period, the residents of West Bradford will be obliged to endure the passage of heavy traffic through the village, with all the inconvenience and traffic hazards that will ensue. To compound this problem, UU seems to have withdrawn its intention to implement “road modifications and sustained traffic management”, which will lead to major disruption on the narrow roads which lead through the village to the Marl Hill site, as well as passing directly by Waddington and West Bradford Primary School. (These concerns were fully articulated in my previous letter).

As such, the Parish Council wishes to formally challenge the 9-month period cited for construction of the temporary bridge, with all its associated negative impact on the local community, and would ask that UU be required to reconsider its stance on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of the Parish Clerk.

Parish Clerk