

## Highways, Transport & Road Safety Working Group Old Derry Hill Barrier Extension

### 1. Background

On 16th August 2020, a significant road traffic accident occurred on the A4 near the bottom of Old Derry Hill, resulting in the deaths of four young men.

The properties on this sharp bend are protected by a conventional “Armco” barrier with steel posts and a single rail, terminating at its northern end with a sloped rail and concrete toe. This was insufficient to protect No.1 Old Derry Hill. Indeed, it is likely that the barrier directed contributed to the nature and severity of the accident.

This issue was considered in the Parish Council’s Road Safety Feasibility Study, which was completed in September 2022.

In February 2023, the Parish Council endorsed a Highway Improvement Request Form for submission to the Calne Area LHFIG (Local Highways and Footpaths Improvement Group). This request was for Wiltshire Council to extend the barrier north-westwards, with an appropriate end detail to promote passive safety (such as a high visibility “fishtail” end), or alternatively, for the barrier to be extended and turned into the wide verge before the small copse of woodland.

After consideration by LHFIG, representatives of the Parish Council attended a site meeting with officers from Wiltshire Council, on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Following this meeting, the responsible officer advised that the current arrangement complied with their standards and they were not prepared to make changes, unless through a political instruction.

### 2. Recent Developments

In the early hours of 22nd June 2024, there was a further serious accident on the A4 at the bottom of Old Derry Hill. Vehicles involved hit the crash barrier on the bend, with one vehicle catching fire outside No.3 Old Derry Hill. Fortunately, it is understood that there were no serious casualties.

The barrier itself was seriously damaged in the accident, requiring the need for repair or replacement.

Following this accident, I wrote again to the Wiltshire Council officer, asking if would be possible for the barrier to be extended in conjunction with the repair or replacement work.

As Wiltshire Council will be seeking recovery of costs through insurance, they would only be able to carry out a like-for-like replacement, but offered to get a price for the cost of extending it if the Parish Council were willing to fund the betterment.



### **3. Discussion**

A price for extending the barrier, in conjunction with repair, has now been provided by Wiltshire Council and is estimated at £4,821.34. For comparison, the cost of just the barrier as a standalone activity would cost £6,695.15.

The extension will comprise of a total length of 11.3m which consists of 2 x 3.4m sections of beam and 1 x 4.5m full height terminal. There is now some flexibility with the newer design codes, which allows for full height departure terminals to be installed and this is the recommendation from Wiltshire Council's specialist contractor. The terminal would be energy absorbing so that, in the unlikely event it was hit "end on", it would absorb the energy to avoid the vehicle coming to an immediate stop

Extending the barrier would provide reassurance to the local residents that their properties are properly protected.

Urgent approval is required to prevent further delay to the repair of the barrier.

### **4. Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Parish Council approves funding an extension to the safety barrier on the A4 at the bottom of Old Derry Hill, by Wiltshire Council, for an estimated cost of £4,821.34.

Cllr John Barnes  
Highways, Transport and Road Safety Working Group