

## A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling Scheme TR010036

### 8.11 Statement of Common Ground with the Church Commissioners for England

APFP Regulation 5(2)(g)  
Planning Act 2008  
Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed  
Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009  
June 2019



Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

**The Infrastructure Planning  
(Applications: Prescribed Forms and  
Procedure) Regulations 2009**

**A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling  
Scheme**

Development Consent Order 201[X]

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**STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND**

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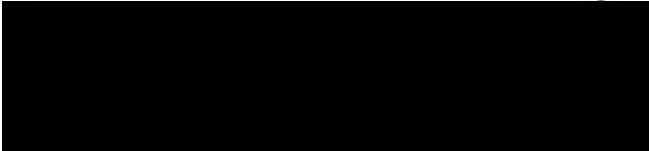
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Rev A	January 2019	Draft for Deadline 2
Rev B	June 2019	Final for Deadline 8

**STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND**

**This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared and agreed by (1) Highways England Company Limited and (2) The Church Commissioners for England**

Signed   
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**Senior Project Manager**  
**on behalf of Highways England**  
**Date: 10 June 2019**

Signed   
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**on behalf of the Church Commissioners**  
**for England**  
**Date: 10 June 2019**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Purpose of this document**

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground ("SoCG") has been prepared in respect of the proposed A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling ("the Application") made by Highways England Company Limited ("Highways England") to the Secretary of State for Transport ("Secretary of State") for a Development Consent Order ("the Order") under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 ("PA 2008").
- 1.1.2 This SoCG does not seek to replicate information which is available elsewhere within the Application documents. All documents are available in the deposit locations and / or the Planning Inspectorate website.
- 1.1.3 The SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority where agreement has been reached between the parties to it, and where agreement has not (yet) been reached. SoCGs are an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and so focus on specific issues that may need to be addressed during the examination.

### **1.2 Parties to this Statement of Common Ground**

- 1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared by (1) Highways England as the Applicant and (2) the Church Commissioners for England.
- 1.2.2 Highways England became the Government-owned Strategic Highways Company on 1 April 2015. It is the highway authority in England for the strategic road network and has the necessary powers and duties to operate, manage, maintain and enhance the network. Regulatory powers remain with the Secretary of State. The legislation establishing Highways England made provision for all legal rights and obligations of the Highways Agency, including in respect of the Application, to be conferred upon or assumed by Highways England.
- 1.2.3 The Church Commissioners for England are a registered Charity with land holdings across the country. The Commissioners' Yeovil estate is predominantly divided into two farms, Higher Farm and Courtry & Speckington Farm. Both farms sit in close proximity to the current route of the A303 and access to parts of the two farms are heavily dependent upon it.

### **1.3 Terminology**

- 1.3.1 In the tables in the Issues chapter of this SoCG, "Not Agreed" indicates a final position and "Agreed" indicates where the issue has been resolved.
- 1.3.2 It can be taken that any matters not specifically referred to in the Issues chapter of this SoCG are not of material interest or relevance to the Church Commissioners for England, and therefore have not been the subject of any discussions between the parties. As such, those matters can be read as agreed, only to the extent that they are either not of material interest or relevance to the Church Commissioners for England.

## 1.4 Record of Engagement

1.4.1 A summary of the meetings and correspondence that has taken place between Highways England and the Church Commissioners for England in relation to the Application is outlined in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Record of engagement between Highways England and the Church Commissioners for England

Date	Form of correspondence	Key topics discussed and key outcomes (the topics should align with the issues tables)
29 February 2018	Attendance at consultation event	Land acquisition and the location of accommodation works.
May - June 2018 Various	Email	Land acquisition and the location of accommodation works.
19 October 2018	Meeting with Charles Cox of the Valuation Office Agency and Chris Setters of Mott Macdonald and subsequent email correspondence	Discussion of accommodation works, including the provision of fencing, drainage works, and the possible change in the land acquisition area.
November 2018 – January 2019 Various	Email and verbal	Land acquisition. Discussion relating to the possible moving of the site construction compound south of the A303.
February 2019 – June 2019 various	E-mail	General dialogue in relation to addressing outstanding points on SoCG.
June 2019	Teleconference	SoCG reviewed in full and items closed out in preparation of Deadline 8

1.4.2 It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key meetings and consultation undertaken between (1) Highways England and (2) the Church Commissioners for England in relation to the issues addressed in this SoCG.

## 2. Issues

### Part 1: General

Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
1.1 General	(a)	The Church Commissioners for England agree that the proposed development will benefit the local communities and that there is a need for the scheme.	-	<b>AGREED</b>
1.2 General	(a)	The Church Commissioners for England have no objection to the layout and design of the scheme other than those issues highlighted below.	-	<b>AGREED</b>

### Part 2: Land acquisition

Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
2.1. Land acquisition at Courty & Speckington Farm (South of A303). (Title Number <b>WS46097</b> )	(a)	In respect of land to be permanent acquired, the land take in respect of parcel 2/5c appears somewhat excessive (in the southern portion), perhaps by up to 0.2 hectares. It also provides the field with a more awkward shape to farm which will further reduce the area that can be cropped. The Church Commissioners disagree that the amount of land take is reasonable in this location.  Following a further discussion with Highways England, the Church Commissioner accepts that this land take is required.	The General Arrangement Drawings (APP-102), highlight that this plot is required for works associated with the construction of the B3151 Link, including drainage and landscape planting works.  Highways England notes the Church Commissioner's position.	<b>AGREED</b>
2.2 Land acquisition at Courty & Speckington Farm (South of	(a)	The land parcel also includes a works and material storage compound under parcel 2/5b. This area is at least 4.8 hectares and seems rather excessive for the proposed use. The allocated area almost appears somewhat arbitrator. Our client would request justification to show why such a large area is required by the scheme for the purpose outlined. Our client	Highways England have commissioned buildability advice from its contracting supply chain. Its advisors have identified this plot as the most appropriate location and size	<b>AGREED</b>

Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
A303). (Title Number WS46097)		<p>would also request detail of proposed ground protection measures and detail of what temporary drainage provision will be provided on the site to protect our clients neighbouring land from run off. The land is low lying with a heavy soil. During winter months, ground conditions can be extremely challenging.</p> <p>My client would therefore question whether this parcel of land is indeed suitable for a site compound. If the land is utilised, my client and their tenant farmer will require access to the retained land to the west through the works site. Our client disagrees that the amount of temporary land take is reasonable in this location.</p> <p>The Church Commissioners notes that discussions have moved on and that a lease is currently being agreed with Highways England.</p>	<p>for the main construction compound.</p> <p>As noted, a lease is now being agreed with the Church Commissioners.</p>	

### Part 3: Drainage

Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
3.1. Drainage at land at Higher Farm (Title Numbers, WS46264, WS46259, WS46247)	(a)	<p>Our client is concerned by the suggested outfall from pond 1 (Plot reference 1/4a), which appears to lead to their land under title number WS46264. From our review of the proposed drawings, this could lead to 3.47 hectares of the Highway area draining onto our client's land, which already low lying and suffering from poor drainage. This is significantly more than at present. We would contest that this is not a suitable place for such an outfall and it would be advisable to move the outfall to allow water to flow significantly further west along the highway in the direction of the Podimore roundabout. This could potentially connect to the existing culvert at the Higher Farm Lane overbridge,</p>	<p>The drainage strategy, including outfall locations and control measures for flood risk and pollution, is contained within the Drainage Strategy Report (APP-060).</p> <p>Highways England explained that the 100% of the runoff from the proposed road will be attenuated and that an additional 40%</p>	<b>AGREED</b>



Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
		<p>instead of the culvert running across my clients' land. The proposals by Highways England do not appear to show any works to the existing watercourse (ditch) which this outfall will flow into, to ensure it is of a suitable capacity. The proposals as they stand will have an adverse impact on our clients' land. Our client disagrees with the provision of drainage for the scheme.</p> <p>Following an explanation stating that 100% of the runoff from the proposed road will be attenuated and an additional allowance of 40% for climate change has been included, the Church Commissioners are now satisfied.</p>	<p>allowance has been made for climate change.</p>	
<p>3.2 Drainage at Land at Courty &amp; Speckington Farm (South of A303). (Title Number <b>WS46097</b>)</p>	<p>(a)</p>	<p>The Church Commissioners for England are concerned that a significant portion of the new scheme is intended to be drained using the ditch that traverses their land under this title (and leads further west to their title under title number WS46228). This field is already particularly wet and no proposals are made by Highways England to improve this ditch to ensure that it has suitable capacity (together with the waterways which it leads to). In total, an area of 24.34 hectares (catchments 2 &amp; 3) together with existing drained area will eventually drain into this ditch. The Church Commissioners have significant concerns as to whether the existing field drainage and ditching will be able to cope with additional run off. We would invite Highways England to submit modelling to our client to demonstrate that there will be no adverse impact from the drainage proposals onto our clients' land. The documents submitted by Highways England do not appear to demonstrate that the impact on this ditch has been modelled. Our client disagrees with the provision of drainage for the scheme.</p>	<p>The drainage strategy, including outfall locations and control measures for flood risk and pollution, is contained within the Drainage Strategy Report (APP-060).</p> <p>Highways England explained that the 100% of the runoff from the proposed road will be attenuated and that an additional 40% allowance has been made for climate change.</p>	<p><b>AGREED</b></p>

Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
		Following an explanation stating that 100% of the runoff from the proposed road will be attenuated and an additional allowance of 40% for climate change has been included, the Church Commissioners are now satisfied.		

#### Part 4: Accommodation Works

Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
4.1 Accommodation works: Land at Higher Farm (Title Numbers, WS46264, WS46259, WS46247)	(a)	Our client welcomes the inclusion of an accommodation access running from Higher Farm lane to serve their land under title number WS46247.	Noted. Arrangements for access to these plots are shown on <b>sheet 1 of the Rights of Way and Access Plans (REP7-004)</b> . The proposals are for these plots to be accessed from Higher Farm Lane via <b>Tracks 1 and 2</b> . Entry into these plots from Tracks 1 and 2 is at proposed access points <b>2 and 2A</b> .	<b>AGREED</b>
	(b)	Our client disagrees that that the access provides them with a suitable alternative means of access. To ensure that the track is suitable for modern agricultural machinery, and provides a similar access provision, our client request the following:	Noted. Specific responses are below:	-
	(c)	That the access track is completed to at least 4.5 metres wide with cleared margins on either side of at least 1 metre. This is to allow the safe transition and manoeuvring of large machinery, such as a combine harvester.	Tracks 1 and 2 are 4m wide with 0.5m clear margins either side. The vehicle used to check the layout of the tracks and accesses is a 9m	<b>AGREED</b>

Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
			long combine harvester with a track width of 3.7m.	
	(d)	All gates should also be of an appropriate width accordingly.	Gates currently specified for accesses 2 and 2A are steel double field gates with a post-to-post clearance of 5.02m. Highways England would be happy to continue liaising with the Church Commissioners for England on this matter as details of gates will not be finalised until the detail design stage.	<b>AGREED</b>
	(e)	<p>That the access track is constructed with a suitable hard wearing surface which shall require minimal maintenance. A reinforced concrete surface would be advisable to ensure that the high load of agricultural machinery can be accommodated.</p> <p>It should be noted that the Church Commissioners and their tenants enjoy access to this land parcel directly from the highway, unencumbered, at any time, using a good quality bound surface. If an unbound surface is used this will result in a reduction in value of their retained land.</p>	The specification of Tracks 1 and 2 is currently 200mm of unbound sub-base foundation layer overlain with a surface course of unbound asphalt planings. Highways England would be happy to continue liaising with the Church Commissioners for England on this matter as details of surfacing of access tracks will not be finalised until the detail design stage.	<b>NOT AGREED</b>
	(f)	That a gate is installed along the boundary of the accommodation access and title WS46247 to ensure that access can be gained to the retained land.	Agreed. Gates are as specified in item 3.4 above.	<b>AGREED</b>

Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
	(g)	Access points should be configured to allow a vehicle (with trailer etc) to turn in and out from either direction.	Agreed. Access 2A has been configured such that it can be access from both directions.	<b>AGREED</b>
4.2 Accommodation works at land at Courty & Speckington Farm (South of A303). (Title Number WS4609)	(a)	Our client is again pleased to see that their needs for access to the western section of the above title have been considered and that an accommodation access is proposed from the B3151 to the east.	Noted. Arrangements for access to this plot are shown on <b>sheets 1 and 2 of the Rights of Way and Access Plans (REP7-004)</b> . The proposals are for this plot to be accessed from the B3151 via <b>Tracks 4 and 9</b> . Entry into these plots from Tracks 4 and 8 is at proposed access points <b>5 and 31</b> .	<b>AGREED</b>
	(b)	However, proposed access 31 does appear somewhat convoluted, and a long way from the public highway. It is also located in a very wet area of land which will make it difficult to use at certain times of the year. If possible the proposed access should be moved further east. We would welcome further dialogue on this point.	Noted. Highways England will continue to liaise with the Church Commissioners regarding the exact location of access 31 as the design develops.	<b>NOT AGREED</b>
	(c)	Proposed access 5 also appears somewhat convoluted, and a long way from the public highway. We request confirmation as to why the accommodation access to this parcel cannot be taken from the west in the direction of Podimore village.	Highways England have investigated the potential for accessing this parcel from the west. It has been determined that, in order to accommodate this within the proposed DCO boundary, a retaining structure would be required. This would be in	<b>NOT AGREED</b>

Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
			close proximity to a proposed diversion of a major fibre optic cable route. Due to programming, sequencing and working space issues regarding the proximity of these two elements an access track at this location has been discounted.	
	(d)	<p>If the access to point 5 cannot be taken from the west, the Church Commissioners suggest that an accommodation access may not be required if a section of the ditch running through this title could be piped and a small section of hedgerow removed. Thus providing a means of access to the parcel. This would enable our client to farm the entire area of land within this title as one block and reduce accordingly the area of land take required. This would mitigate losses to my clients and have a significant reduction in the cost of the scheme to Highways England. We would welcome the opportunity to review this further with the project team.</p> <p>The Church Commissioners note the response by Highways England and accept the proposal.</p>	Highways England explained that this would not be possible to accommodate within the DCO and as such, propose to leave the access as currently proposed.	<b>AGREED</b>
	(e)	If the accommodation access is to be provided as detailed, then my client would request that the specification is the same as noted in respect of accommodation access serving the land at Higher Farm (see above comments).	Tracks 4 and 9 are 4m wide with 0.5m clear margins either side. The vehicle used to check the layout of the tracks and accesses is a 9m long combine harvester with	<b>AGREED</b>

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			a track width of 3.7m.	
			Gates currently specified for accesses 5 and 31 are steel double field gates with a post-to-post clearance of 5.02m. Highways England would be happy to continue liaising with the Church Commissioners for England on this matter as details of gates will not be finalised until the detail design stage.	<b>AGREED</b>
			The specification of Tracks 4 and 9 is currently 200mm of unbound sub-base foundation layer overlain with a surface course of unbound asphalt planings. Highways England would be happy to continue liaising with the Church Commissioners for England on this matter as details of surfacing of access tracks will not be finalised until the detail design stage.	<b>NOT AGREED</b>
4.3 Accommodation works for land at Courtry & Speckington Farm (South of	(a)	Our client was significantly concerned that their current access from the B3151, on the most eastern tip of this land parcel, appeared to have been stopped up without a substitute in the original DCO application. This is a key access to the field for large machinery. My client does benefit from another access further	A substitute access has now been provided as part of an update of the Rights of Way and Access Plans during the DCO examination. Proposed access to this plot is from the	<b>AGREED</b>

Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
A303). (Title Number WS46097		west along the B3151, but this is not suitable for agricultural machinery in its current form. Our client invites Highways England to consider options for suitable access provision to this parcel so that a wider parcel of land is not de-valued.  The Church Commissioner is satisfied with the substitute access.	B3151 via Tracks 4 and 9 and access ref 31.	
4.4 Accommodation works for land at Courty & Speckington Farm (North of A303). (Title Number WS46095)	(a)	The Church Commissioners for England welcome the provision of an accommodation access that can serve their land, as the current entrance directly from the A303 will be closed.	Noted. Arrangements for access to this plot are shown on the <b>Rights of Way and Access Plans (REP7-004)</b> . The proposals are for this plot to be accessed from the proposed Downhead Lane <b>Track 2</b> . Entry into this plot from Track 2 is at proposed access points <b>8</b> .	<b>AGREED</b>
	(b)	The Church Commissioners request that the specification for this accommodation access as it leads from its most eastern extent to their land in the west, is the same as noted in respect of accommodation access serving the land at Higher Farm (see above comments).	Track 2 is 4m wide with 0.5m clear margins either side. The vehicle used to check the layout of the tracks and accesses is a 9m long combine harvester with a track width of 3.7m.	<b>AGREED</b>
			The gate currently specified for access 8 is a steel double field gate with a post-to-post clearance of 5.02m. Highways England would be	<b>AGREED</b>

Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
			<p>happy to continue liaising with the Church Commissioners for England on this matter as details of gates will not be finalised until the detail design stage.</p>	
			<p>The specification of Track 2 is currently 200mm of unbound sub-base foundation layer overlain with a surface course of unbound asphalt planings. Highways England would be happy to continue liaising with the Church Commissioners for England on this matter as details of surfacing of access tracks will not be finalised until the detail design stage.</p>	<b>NOT AGREED</b>
	(c)	<p>The field included within this title is currently subject to arable cropping. The reduction in size, to approximately 5.7 acres may render it unsuitable for arable production in the future, particularly as the works will render it more severed from the remaining holding land it already is. To help mitigate the loss in value of the land, my client would request that Highways England securely stock proof fence the perimeter of the land so that it may be utilised by livestock in the future. Fencing along all stretches of land should bordering my clients land where works are to be undertaken</p>	<p>Boundary fencing for this plot is currently specified as a wire mesh fence with two strands of barbed wire on steel posts. Highways England would be happy to continue liaising with the Church Commissioners for England on this matter as details of fencing and gates will not be finalised until the detail design stage.</p>	<b>AGREED</b>



Topic	Ref	The Church Commissioners for England comment	Highways England response	Status
		should be of stock proof fencing, with a specification of pig netting, two strands of barbed wire with tantalised round posts with a lifespan of at least 30 years."		

