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**Subject:** Response on behalf of the Parish Councils of Queen Camel, West Camel and Sparkford.  
**Date:** 15 September 2020 10:16:28  
**Attachments:** [A303 Fairhurst support .pdf](#)  
[A303 3PCs submission 15\\_09\\_20..pdf](#)

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Dear Sir / Madam,

Please find attached a joint response on behalf of the three Parish Councils of Queen Camel, West Camel and Sparkford and a supporting document from Fairhurst Consulting Engineers.

Kind regards

Les Stevens

Clerk to West Camel Parish Council

Tel 01935 850810

Web site – [www.westcamel.org.uk](http://www.westcamel.org.uk)

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## **Queen Camel, Sparkford and West Camel Parish Councils (3PCs)**

Ms Natasha Kopala  
Dept of Transport

15 September 2020

Dear Madam,

### **A303 Sparkford to Ilchester dualling order application**

In accordance with your letter of 21 July 2020 and Highways England's (HE) reply of 17 August 2020 we are responding with comments which we believe are important to be considered on whether or not to grant approval to the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the dualling of the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester.

We wrote to you on 4 August 2020 with our first comments specifically about the environmental and safety concerns consequent upon the poor design of the Hazlegrove junction and asking that more attention is paid to this issue than has been demonstrated so far in all the reports and correspondence. We believe the lack of emphasis given to this by the ExA reflects that it would be impossible to modify the scheme at this stage without a full redesign. To achieve this the application to approve the DCO would have to be refused.

By way of further introduction the 3PCs recognise that they are trying to look after a wide range of local issues, yet they are most grateful to Mr Bryan Norman, supported by Fairhurst, consulting engineers, for all the technical work they have done in seeing how the Hazlegrove junction could be redesigned and the local parallel road (LPR) incorporated into the scheme. We very much endorse these proposals.

The three Parish Councils are now writing with our additional comments as requested by your letter of 21 July 2020. We have, either collectively or on occasion individually, submitted a substantial number of letters to you or to the Planning Inspectorate in the course of the development of proposals for this dual carriageway. These are summarised in the appendix to this submission; you will see that there is a very clear theme developing in all these submissions.

Firstly, concerns have been raised from the start about the design of the Hazlegrove junction as mentioned in the second paragraph above. We will not comment further in this letter on this very serious matter. Mr Norman has also submitted detailed comments on this. Nevertheless, we attach a technical note prepared by Fairhurst in January 2019 commenting positively on the revised proposals put forward by Mr Norman, both for the Hazlegrove junction and the LPR.

Secondly, the local community has consistently argued for a LPR. The arguments in favour of this, including by the ExA, have been well rehearsed. We would also point out that there is room for both a LPR and a dual carriageway to DMRB standards as designed by Fairhurst to get through by the MoD signalling station on Camel Hill, without more land being acquired and we disagree with HE's analysis on this matter. Such arrangements were proposed and agreed in earlier plans for this section of road in 1998 and 2003. Also, we note that HE sets out an alternative LPR through the villages near the A303. We would point out that this route would go past a school with a 30mph speed limit (not a 20mph one which would be more normal) and in parts it is liable to flooding, both of which situations we regard as unacceptable in such a proposal. We also are disappointed by Somerset

## **Queen Camel, Sparkford and West Camel Parish Councils (3PCs)**

County Council's position on the LPR proposal as we believe it would solve a number of local issues, support local economic activity and provide better routes for NMUs, yet SCC seem to be more concerned with avoiding any increase to the local road network and the costs of maintaining it than in ensuring the best possible scheme is developed. This has been clearly demonstrated by its agreement with HE for the section of the existing A303 to the Mattia dinner and filing station not to be de-trunked. We would also point out that there will not only be a dead end by the filing station but also at the top on Gason and Trait's Lanes, all of which will create anti-social problems which will be left to the Parish Council and District Council to deal with.

Thirdly the level of consultation with HE and with SCC has been disappointing to the 3PCs. While we very much want the scheme to proceed, we have reluctantly had to argue that the present application should be refused and HE asked to come back with acceptable proposals reflecting the designs (or the substance of them) which Mr Norman and Fairhurst have put forward. In making this recommendation the 3PCs do not believe there will be any real impact on the timetable to the overall scheme to dual the road between the M3 and the M5. Therefore, the substantial socio- economic benefits to the South West will not be realised until the whole scheme is completed and the delay on this section will not have a material impact. Further we believe that such a redesigned scheme should be significantly cheaper to build and cause much less local disruption during construction. It will also provide a much more robust road locally, for example avoiding some of the traffic congestion and environmental risks that Mr Norman highlights.

### **Recommendation**

For all the reasons given above and in previous submissions the 3PCs reiterate their position that the application should be refused and that HE should be asked to take full note of the suggestions made by the 3PCs, with the support of Mr Bryan Norman and Fairhurst, redesign the scheme, where appropriate, and resubmit the application for a DCO.

*On behalf of Queen Camel, Sparkford and West Camel Parish Councils*

Yours faithfully



Les Stevens, Clerk to West Camel Parish Council

cc. David Warburton MP, Mike Lewis SCC / SSDC Councillor

## **Queen Camel, Sparkford and West Camel Parish Councils (3PCs)**

### **Appendix: submissions by the 3PCs, jointly unless noted**

- 4 August 2020 regarding the absence of any questions or comments on the Hazlegrove junction in your letter of 21 July which HE should address. We posed some questions in this letter.
- 9 June 2019 letter explaining to the ExA why the three PCs were not signing statements of common ground.
- 30 May 2019 by Queen Camel Parish Council endorsing the 3PCs letter of 28 May and emphasising the benefits of the LPR and of traffic survey issues implying congestion at Hazlegrove junction by 2023.
- 28 May 2019 summarising concerns on the key issues, on the consultation process followed by HE and recommending that the DCO is withdrawn and resubmitted.
- 3 May 2019 answering specific PINS questions and raising points over the possible acquisition of MoD land on Camel Hill.
- 1 May 2019 regarding extreme disappointment at the approach taken by HE and its lack of cooperation
- 5 April 2019 detailed response to a number of ExA questions not least on the advantages of the LPR
- 18 March 2019 regarding HE's non-cooperation on certain points and not producing drawing by which BGN's revision could be overlaid.
- 8 March 2019 QCPC on key issues of Hazlegrove junction and LPR
- 8 March 2019 WCPC on many village issues and on the Hazlegrove junction and LPR issues, with a warning about the unsatisfactory process and the possibility of the DCO being withdrawn.
- 6 March 2019 Sparkford PC on key issues as QC
- 22 February 2019 WCPC correspondence with the MP and the Minister at the DoT
- 22 January 2019 response to ExA questions and general comment on the need for a LPR and redesigned Hazlegrove junction
- 22 January 2019 QCPC submission with emphasis on the LPR and Hazlegrove junction and the absence of a detailed TMP
- 22 January 2019 WCPC submission with same emphasis as QC
- 3 January 2109 commenting on first hearing and emphasising the LPR and Hazlegrove junction design
- 13 December 2018 confirmation that the 3PCs not working with Yeovilton PC

**127642 A303 Sparkford - Ilchester**

**23<sup>rd</sup> Jan 2019**

**Technical Note – Alternative Proposal Proof of Concept**

- 1.1 Fairhurst were appointed by the collective Parish Councils to provide general technical advice and prepare proof of concept drawings for their alternative proposals for Hazlegrove Junction and the retention of a parallel road. The advice was focused on providing high level reviews of the alternative proposal to ensure compliance with the standards set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.
- 1.2 Fairhurst are satisfied that the alternative proposal is a significant improvement over HE's. The retention of the existing A303 as a parallel link road during construction will benefit both the users and the contractors by increasing resilience and reduce the use of the 12 mile detour, avoiding unnecessary increases in journey times. The alternative proposal for Hazlegrove Junction provides a safer and more direct route to Hazlegrove School and to the east on-slip.

**FAIRHURST 23.01.2019**