

# Notes of the Annual DLH Parish Meeting

Wednesday April 5th 2023

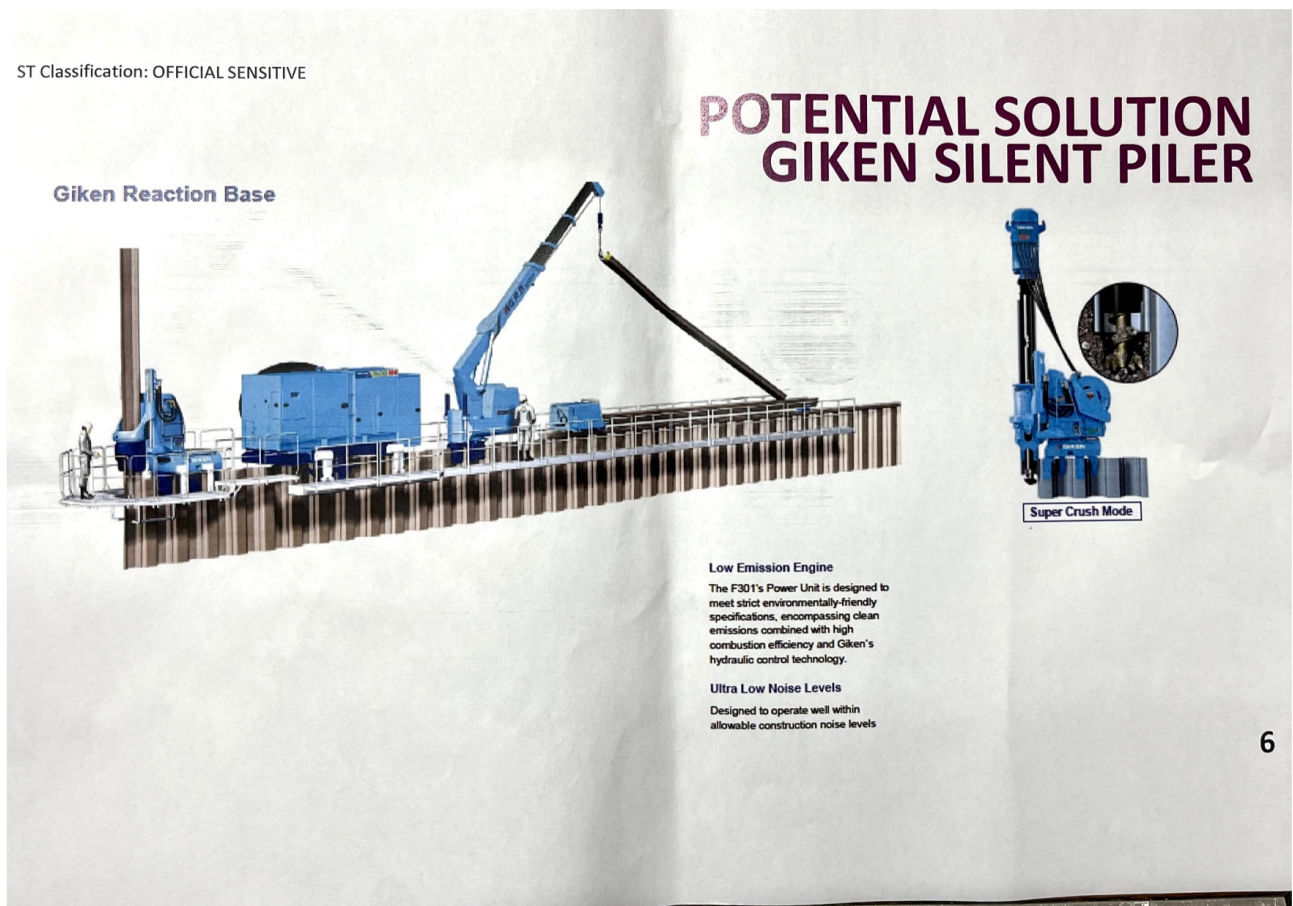
Florence Nightingale Memorial Hall

There were 39 parishioners present plus the nine Parish Councillors and Clerk; in addition, Cllr David Taylor plus guests representing Severn Trent and Derbyshire County Council.

1. **Introduction.** The chair introduced herself and the invited guests.
2. **Chair's Annual Report.** This had been published on the website in order to increase time for discussion in the meeting.
3. **Matters raised by local Parishioners.** Three issues were raised and were taken forward to the Parish Council meeting:
  - problematic parking on Lea Road around Smedley's and the driveways to adjacent houses;
  - dangerous parking on Cromford Road bend beside the DCC car park;
  - a proposal that the role of Parish Warden be reconsidered.
4. **Leashaw Landslip.** The chair introduced the representatives of DCC and Severn Trent. These were: Cllr David Taylor (DCC and AVBC), Chris Henning, (Executive Director), Place, Julian Gould, (Director of Highways), Uma Shankar (Senior Strategic Engineer ST), Mike Haydon, (Design Support Services Manager), Lisa Orme, (Community Communications Manager)
  - Update from DCC: **Chris Henning** described the continuing partnership working between DCC and ST and highlighted the learnings DCC had taken from the 3-year experience of the Cromford Road project. He drew attention to the speed in which services had been re-instated and the need to secure the safety of the site. The main issue was the aqueduct which was why ST were leading this stage of the reinstatement of the road.
  - **Julian Gould** then re-emphasised the importance of partnership working and that weekly meetings were held between DCC and ST. DCC had learned the lessons of providing regular updates to the community. There had been three major milestones so far: the site was made safe, disconnected services had been restored and, were required, reconfigured and the geotechnical survey had been completed and the results were just in.
  - **Uma Shankar** defined ST's goals which were a) to establish the ground conditions, b) protect the aqueduct, and c) to resolve to a solution. Initial expectations were that this might take two years to secure; however significant progress had been made that could foreshorten this tentative timescale. The geotechnical survey had revealed that the ground is solid but that bedrock was not reached until a significant depth: c10m. In order to stabilise the position of the aqueduct the two excavations already made would be filled with concrete to encase the pipe. This work would take place next week (w/b April 10th). A proposed solution was already being evaluated which would involve a sheet piling wall. This would involve drilling down to bedrock in order to provide sockets into which 12m x 1m sheet steel piles would be driven. There were fault lines in the rock beneath the slip site and these were still being evaluated to establish where it was most appropriate to site the sheets. A company that specialises in such piling had been contracted to test the feasibility of the solution - the same company that was currently doing the piling at Matlock Bridge. A visual of the proposed solution was circulated. **US** stated that the ground investigation had only been received two days ago and that it was now possible to envisage a piling solution that could be completed in a further six months ie October/November 2023 which would mean that Leashaw would have been closed for a full year, the slip having first occurred on November 22nd 2022.

- A number of questions were taken from the audience which explored the issues of timescales, full visibility of the project and its milestones, whether there were likely to be delays for tendering the work (no - ST had already appointed a contractor for the piling),

ST Classification: OFFICIAL SENSITIVE



finance for the work, (ST were covering this as the risk was to their asset), and accountability for any further delays. It was pointed out that the site was highly constrained in terms of access for heavy equipment and this presented a further risk to feasibility and the overall timescale, that single track access would not be available for health and safety reasons, that the full scheme had not yet been fully designed nor approved by DCC who had a duty to protect all of the apparatus in the road.

- The chair moved the agenda on to the plight of local businesses. Robin Maycock spoke about the risks and challenges their business faced and the need to re-open as soon as practically possible, and in the meantime to reconsider the signage that indicated to the public that businesses were open. He described a widely held view that there seemed to be insufficient activity at the site given the gravity of the situation.
- **Julian Gould** responded by stating that people will not have seen a lot of activity so far but there was a lot of behind-the-scenes research, planning and calculating going on. The site was constantly monitored for movement remotely. Once Severn Trent have completed their work Highways will follow on directly to re-instate the highway. **JG** felt that ST had acted with dispatch in this emergency. **US** re-iterated that there will be a lot of heavy equipment needed including a major crane. All requires a lot of logistical planning. He felt that ST had acted with due urgency and diligence: their bore holes had gone down 30 metres and they had given the project high priority.
- Further questions arose regarding the state of the remainder of Leashaw much of which was exhibiting signs of cracking and potential future collapse. Parishioners requested assurance that either repairs would be carried out preventively or monitoring would be such that DCC could guarantee that no future road closure would be required. No such reassurance was

available however; **CH** pointed out that DCC's annual budget for carriageway maintenance was £2.7m whereas the assessed need to bring all roads to standard was £1.5billion.

- **Cllr Taylor** expressed the view that the prime issue currently was securing local businesses and improving signage around the village. **JG** undertook to conduct a review of present arrangements for signage. The Parish Clerk would liaise with his office to set this in train.
- A resident thanked the staff for **ST** and National Grid for their help in restoring services and went on to highlight the incapacity of the current road drainage systems. Assurance was sought that these would be resolved as part of the re-instatement of the road. **Robin Maycock** endorsed the resident's view and urged DCC to institute better management and housekeeping of drains and culverts which were often blocked. **Mike Haydon (ST)** referred to the impact of climate change. **JG** felt that landslips were almost always associated with movement of ground water - not surface water. He was aware, he stated, of the particular requirements here. DCC does have gully cleaning records and these has been carried out on Leashaw in the past. He stated that DCC will do everything it can to improve surface drainage as part of the road restoration.
- There were questions on the initial condition of the road and whether it was not now time to state weight limits and have them enforced. **JG** stated that Derbyshire had a largely 'evolved' road network ie it had many rural roads in particular that were never designed to carry the loads they were now carrying. DCC were in conversation with the Police about enforcement matters. There was a question about the visibility to residents of project management and progress. Could the workplace or critical path analysis be shared publicly? **US** stated that he was happy to share once a firm plan was in place via the present mechanisms. There was a question concerning financial recompense for businesses damaged by the road closure. **US** stated that this event was classed as an emergency or 'act of god' and therefore attracted no liability for **ST**. Businesses could claim more generally for road closures though there was no guarantee of eligibility: **Lisa Orme** undertook to provide the appropriate contacts for such applications to the Parish Clerk. As far as DCC was concerned, there was no legal mechanism to disburse public funds to local businesses.

In summing up, **CH** stated that two days ago there was no solution proposed for the landslip; he estimated that in a further week, thanks to the geotechnical survey and **ST**'s design proposals, they would have a draft plan. He recognised that confidence was low following the village's previous experience.

**JG** stated that he was happy to be invited to the meeting even though he knew that the Annual Parish Meeting would fall at a point when final and approved plans were not yet available. He was confident that in another month a much clearer timetable would be in view.

**US** reaffirmed that the Leashaw landslip is a complicated matter: it is a highly constrained site, options for repair were limited and the re-instatement work itself highly specialist. This project was work that **ST** does not often do and logistically it was demanding.

The Chair warmly thanked the participants and the parishioners and declared the meeting closed at 8.00pm.