



Colton Parish Council

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Clerk: Ms Mandy Lane
Lilac Cottage
Oxen Park
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18th March 2010

Mr David Cathcart
Capita Symonds
The Capita Building
Kingmoor Business Park
Carlisle.
CA6 4SJ

Your ref: INF/DC/CS/041305

Dear Mr Cathcart,

BOUTHREY BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION

Thank you for your letter of 8th February 2010 seeking this parish council's views on the future of Bouthrey Bridge. Your invitation for us to send a representative to the site meeting held on 8th March is also appreciated.

You are aware that the two affected parish councils (Blawith & Subberthwaite, and Colton) called a public meeting which was held on March 11th. The meeting was very well attended, reflecting the strong local interest in the future of the bridge. Your plans for the reconstruction options were studied, background information was given and then an open forum was held. The detailed points raised during the forum have shaped our parish council's response (given below) but you will wish to know that the outcome of the public meeting was overwhelming support (75%) for Option B (as defined in your letter). There was limited support for Option A and some abstentions but there was no support for Option C.

Both parish councils held extraordinary meetings immediately after the public meeting and each council is responding to your letter separately.

After discussion, **Colton Parish Council's view is that Capita Symonds should pursue Option B.** The council believes that the status of the bridge as a Grade II listed building is over-riding and, for heritage and aesthetic reasons, as much of the original structure should be retained as possible. We also believe that local stone and, indeed, local craftsmen, should be used in the repair wherever possible. If, after appropriate tests, there is demonstrable evidence that Option B has to be ruled out for engineering or other technical reasons, then our council's preferred **second preference is Option A.** The council is strongly opposed to Option C.

We would also like to make the following points:

- it was unfortunate that neither Capita Symonds nor Cumbria County Council were able to provide a representative at our public meeting where not only could they have informed the meeting on certain aspects but they could have benefited from some of the discussion that took place.

- we expect Capita Symonds to carry out appropriate risk assessments regarding flooding (and hydrological processes in general), particularly with regard to the possible role of Bouthrey Bridge in holding back flood waters on the Crake. We see the seasonal and occasional flooding of valley land upstream of the bridge as part of an adapted natural system and are concerned that this buffering effect should not be compromised at the expense of properties and communities downstream from the bridge. We recommend that Capita Symonds maintains communications with local people to obtain historical information on flooding.
- we note that Capita Symonds plan for a replacement or repaired structure which is robust and likely to withstand future events of the sort experienced last November. We believe that that this is essential.
- as was discussed at the site meeting, we would oppose any raising of the height of the bridge parapets.
- lastly, we ask Capita Symonds to note that many of the existing users of the bridge reside on the Colton side of the bridge (especially in Arklid and Nibthwaite) and that many need to cross the bridge on a daily basis for agricultural, communication and transport reasons. Therefore, it is vitally important to these communities that the bridge work is completed during the June-September 2010 window (available through the powers administered by the Environment Agency). We believe that although the choice of Option B may be technically more challenging from an engineering perspective, it should allow paperwork to be completed sooner because planning approval should be more straightforward. Therefore, we believe that the choice of Option B does not provide a barrier to work being completed by autumn 2010, and urge that every effort is made to ensure that this target is met.

We hope that Capita Symonds will continue to engage with the local communities during the coming months and that we may be able to help in whatever way is appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Mandy Lane
Clerk to Colton Parish Council

CC (by email): Cllr Rod Wilson (CCC)
Cllr Claire Salisbury (CCC)
Cllr Colin Davies (SLDC)
Paul Haggin (LDNPA)
Paul Bond (Environment Agency)
Ben Bayliss (Environment Agency)
Nick Grimshaw (English Heritage)
Malcolm Sutherland (CCC)
Kenny Brooks (Capita)
Duncan Mackay (Capita)
Mike Briggs (Capita)
Tim Farron MP
Deborah Middleton (Clerk, Blawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council)