

## **BOUTHREY BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION**

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2010, 7.00 pm, Blawith and Nibthwaite Village Hall at Water Yeat

Present:

Colton Parish Council: Colin Barr (Chair), Ian Cunliffe, Ken Dean, Penny Lovegrove, Anne Robinson and Mandy Lane (Clerk)

Blawith-with-Subberthwaite Council: Ross Baxter, Sheena Thompson, Linda Nicholson and Deborah Middleton (Clerk)

Cumbria County Councillors: Rod Wilson and Claire Salisbury

and 24 members of the public

### **1. Apologies**

Cllr Anne Hall (SLDC), Cllr Vera Grant (Blawith and Subberthwaite PC), Cllr John Taylor (Colton PC), Cllr Chris Potts (Colton PC) and Cllr John Watson (Colton PC), Owen Jones and Peter Evans.

### **2. Overview of status of bridge and reconstruction options**

Cllr Barr explained that the format of the evening was: public viewing of plans, followed by the public meeting, followed by respective Parish Council meetings. Capita-Symonds had been asked whether an engineer could attend the meeting, but unfortunately no-one was available on this date.

Cllr Barr summarised the background to the meeting as follows:

#### History:

Bouthrey Bridge had been badly damaged by the November 2009 floods. Cumbria County Council had surveyed all bridges in the County and had closed some, including Bouthrey Bridge. Capita-Symonds, on behalf of Cumbria County Council was considering options for reconstruction and was consulting both Parish Councils and other agencies including the National Park and the Environment Agency. Three options had been presented in a detailed letter explaining the considerations associated with each. A site meeting had been held on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March, with representatives from both Parish Councils present. Following consultation, one option would be chosen and planning consent sought from the Lake District National Park Authority.

#### Known material facts:

The bridge was a Grade II listed building and subject to planning control. Any in-river work was subject to strict control and was to be carried out between 1<sup>st</sup> June and 30<sup>th</sup> September; the bridge itself could be completed after this date. Repair was likely to require less paperwork and bureaucracy, but was technically more difficult than rebuilding. Tests were still to be carried out which could show that repair was not an option. Time-scale and costings were not available until the tests had been completed.

#### Options presented in the consultation letter:

**Option A: Re-build to replicate original bridge:** demolish and rebuild both arches

**Option B: Repair:** demolish and rebuild just damaged upstream arches and repair the remainder.

**Option C: Build new rectangular bridge:** demolish and replace with single-span pre-cast rectangular beam deck.

An Option D - single span concrete arch - was referred in the consultation letter as a rejected option, because it would result in an unacceptable (by the Environment Agency) decrease in waterway area.

All three options would use modern materials but be clad in stone facing. Whatever structure was put in place would result in some increase in waterway area and would be more robust than the original bridge.

### **3. Public Session**

A summary of the question and answer session follows; there being no engineer present, answers were given only in terms of known information:

**Q:** To what extent do the 3 options cater for worse flood events than November 2009?

A: It was thought that all options would be more robust and allow some increase in waterway area. Option C was the most robust and provided the most increase in waterway area (28%)

**Q:** What is the difference in water level above and below the bridge - in other words, does the bridge form a barrier in any way that increases the lake level and reduces flow downstream?

A: Unknown. Question for Capita-Symonds **Clerk**

**Q:** Has a flood risk-assessment been carried out?

A: Unknown. Question for Capita-Symonds **Clerk**

**Q:** For information (Mr Les Higgins): A Coniston Flood Forum had been formed by Coniston Parish Council with the Environment Agency involved. They are to have their next meeting in mid-April. It might be important to find out if they are considering downstream effects of any plans they have for flood-reduction.

A: Coniston Parish Council/Flood Forum will be contacted **Clerk**

**Q:** Many Cumbrian bridges were originally pack-horse bridges that have been extended, for example one bridge in Kendal over the River Kent, and they have stood the test of time. A repaired bridge should not necessarily be less robust.

A: This point would be made in the submission.

**Q:** It is important that any Environment Agency flood assessment has Parish Council input; previous experience has shown that EA flood mapping can be very generalised and may not show local flash-flooding effects.

A: The Parish Councils will try to maintain an input

**Q:** It is not usually permitted to demolish a listed building; a listed bridge should be no different. What is the legal status of Listed structures?

A: If re-building is presented as the option, then the plans are likely to go to the Secretary of State for approval. Advice on the legal situation would need to be sought, but the English Heritage wording states 'every effort to observe listed status' and the LDNPA Conservation Officer did not refer to a duty to observe in conversation, although he implied that its listed status was clearly a strong factor in its preservation.

**Q:** For information (Cllr Claire Salisbury): We should note that Cumbria County Council is to fund the first £3M for flood repairs, with the remaining funds to come from central government - a rare situation. This means that selection of the desired option, if more expensive, is not likely to impact on the precept.

A: Noted.

**Q:** Cllr Wilson: A major concern is the need to get a bridge built soon to alleviate the difficulties faced by residents. We should ensure that the 'window' for rebuilding this summer is not allowed to slip.

A: This point will be made strongly in the submission

**Q:** Could the bridge be built to lower specifications - e.g. with weight and width restrictions?

A: It is unlikely that approval would be gained for a structure not meeting modern standards.

**Q:** Why not option D? Surely a single-span bridge would be possible.

A: Unknown. It seems to have been discounted - the implication of the letter is that we can express an opinion only on options A, B and C.

**Q:** Can we find a preamble statement for our decision, for example 'having regard to listed status, lack of engineer present to answer questions, and the important window for reconstruction'?

A: Will include in the submission.

#### **4. Voting and summing up**

The result of the vote on the 3 options was as follows:

Number voting: 33.

Option A (re-build 2-arch structure): 2

Option B (repair) 25

Option C (replace with rectangular beam deck): 0

Abstentions: 6

Result: Option B - repair.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting.