**Minutes for Amanda – Darley Bridge @ The Shed, Darley Mills – 7pm Start**

Amanda Solloway opened the meeting and addressed residents with housekeeping rules. Amanda thanked the Shed for hosting then updated residents on how Council Officers, Councillors and herself have been meeting regularly to come up with an action plan around the bridge.

Nigel Brien introduced himself and proceeded to state that the bridge is technically in a poor condition. An Inspection was conducted on May 5th, which identified the issues, this was brought forward due to the historical flooding we have had recently. (The original inspection was set for July)

The council does not own the bridge. The council will inspect non council assets every 10 years which can be fed back to its legal owners. Since the last inspection, the bridge has then created legal problems due to ownership. The repairs are significant and at best guest at the current moment is £1 million to make safe and some sort of passage for footway. Nigel stressed that the concrete elements were failing significantly. To put vehicles on the bridge (best guest) it will cost around 3.5 to 5 million. Nigel stressed that the council and councillors could not possibly accept the liability in claiming ownership of the bridge as it would become too much of a risk.

Nigel then went on to explain what the council has done. The council took decisive action to close the road as they have legal powers to do so. The moment the council touches the bridge it then becomes liable. Since then, the council with Council Leader and Amanda have lobbying govt for support to resolve.

A technical report is being done on the bridge for mid-July, to see if we can get something that can resemble access to pedestrians and cyclists. The council is seeking temporary bridges for pedestrian access and estimates have been quoted at half a million, which could take to November to be implemented. The council’s priority is to try and get some form of access for residents.

We move onto the Q&A for residents:

1. Resident – Asked who is qualified and did the inspections? And what was the condition of the metal work in the concrete

Nigel – A Fully Qualified inspection of bridges were completed by a company called ACON and they are specialists in bridge surveys. Once it was completed the work was then verified by councils’ structural engineers. The ironwork has rotted and missing, this isn’t a case of health and safety gone mad, the bridge is in real danger.

1. Resident – Originally 10 years ago the OCOR design was in to be more elevated. Why did this not happen?

Nigel – The Council did not remove the scope of it but the funding from the partners of EA did and discussion has now taken place to see if this can be restored to a future phase. It would need a full design though.

1. Resident – Any heritage issues on this bridge?

Nigel – It is in a world heritage site, and has complications, any works will need to be made in application as it is a listed building and the same would be said if the worse case scenario of demolition would need to take place.

1. Resident – is the bridge is a toll bridge?

Nigel – It is for access on private road of the mills, it is not a toll bridge, which has been a common misconception.

1. Resident – How do residents from Haslam Road and Folly Road, escape if there is flooding?

Nigel – We are fully aware of this but there is no real thing we as a council can do, we would like the EA to notify us earlier to help with evacuation should it be needed. Emergency Planners are aware.

1. Resident – We are concerned about access for Emergency Services, especially if a service was to try and come over from the village, has communications been established with them?

Nigel – The council is speaking to Emergency Planners about this and that the bridge has been notified to all of our emergency services that when accessing calls to service they know which way to go. Nigel then reflected on flooding and was honest by saying that at most on the worst-case scenario people could be cut off by flooding for 36 hours.

Amanda then stepped in to give the meeting her personal assurance around govt intervention, crown, and the constant lines of communications with departments to resolve this.

1. Resident – The utilities underneath can they not take some ownership/funding from them?

Nigel – The gas pipe is live, it cross feeds both ways and it is an essential pipe. The council is not privy to the licence agreement between the original bridge owner and utilities 50/60 years ago. But there is pressure from the council to get financial support from utilities for the long-term going forward.

1. Amanda – What would be the quickest scenario to get something done to resolve this?

Nigel – When we get data back from the technical report in mid-June, and it falls in our way, then we could allow pedestrians and cyclists by end of July. The council is still exploring, temporary bridges and this work is running in parallel, and we may still have to do both.

1. Resident – Could the council consider the footpath using temporary road access on Folly Road towards Alfreton Road.

Nigel – We have looked at this, the bridge is new and is only built for pedestrian usage, he is aware of a council vehicle using this bridge to empty bins and they shouldn’t be, he is going to report this back to the relevant department. Nigel stressed that constant use of that bridge would then result in damage.

1. Resident – Any chance of lottery funding to restore it?

Nigel – Yes absolutely and it could be used based on community heritage and asset value. The council is again looking at these options.

1. Resident – How did the bridge end up with no ownership?

Nigel – This has come from various changes to companies and when the mill was sold in 2011 the bridge was not included and then the crown. It essence it has got lost in paperwork from various transactions from various business deals historically.

1. Resident – The minister for Levelling Up should be looking at this, is it not on his desk?

Amanda – It is on his desk, and all departments have taken serious note to the situation.

Nigel – The DFT Civil service has been hot on this and have had great access to the teams about the situation around this and have been impressed with how things have quickly escalated through their department. He also stated we are not the only need, there will be various other issues/schemes across the UK needed the same attention/funding.

1. Resident – (Took a pole on who wanted a bridge with no access with vehicles, was a popular choice). Why not knock it down and crowdfunding a bridge?

Nigel – Crowdfunding has a place; however, this may need match funding from The Lottery. We need to know how much and what is needed. Price to demolish could be severe based on the heritage and then replacement would need input from UNESCO & world heritage. Nigel believes there should be some return to normal vehicle service for access for Haslam & Folly Lane to supplement the access.

1. Resident – Whilst the bus gate is popular and supportive with residents in the village, there is issues with traffic at night when people return home as routes are being sought to get to their homes as the bridge is closed, could a similar one way system be implanted on the bridge if it was to open to help alleviate this?

Nigel – There will have to be extensive consultation on what usage the bridge would be in the future, which would need input from the residents, but this would be an option to consider if there is appetite for it.

1. Cllr Alison Martin – We need some illicit response from Emergency Services to give comfort to residents. We are working together for a temporary bridge; can Nigel explain costs? Can Amanda explain responses from Govt.

Nigel – Funding for temporary bridge hasn’t been made yet and those conversations are taking place with govt and the council leadership. However, we are exploring all options.

Amanda – First of all it is important that we got together with Cllrs. We first contacted the crown estate which you are aware, they have come back to us to state they do not own it, this has been pushed back to them. Department for Transport & DEFRA have been contacted rigorously. We are having conversations with the local business to bring in more stakeholder engagement. You can have my personal guarantee that everything is being done to bring this to a resolution.

1. Resident – Can we bollard it and central reservations (can we let people cross at their own risk)?

Nigel –The moment the council does that and assume that position, then we take liability of the bridge, and we also take responsibly of the people doing that? We can’t allow the public to take their own choices on this.

1. Resident – Why cant we use the Outram boat?

Nigel – There is a licensing issues and will need the Canal Trust, but it is a possibility to use this option. We would need moorings and platforms so it wouldn’t be a quick fix.

1. Resident – Why can’t OCOR put the designs back in? Are you aware people climbing to get over, particularly cyclists?

Nigel – This was taken out by DEFRA & EA to help progress the scheme for the main works in Phase 2. They were only impression designs they were not full detailed designs. We are aware of people trying to get over and we ultimately we can’t stop that, we have done everything we can to stop road usage.

1. Resident – Why can’t the military get involved with either a temporary bridge or to help design a bridge?

Nigel – We have looked at this, but this but whatever we put in its place it would have to be EA compliant and compliant for flooding and usage by the public, rules would be different for a temporary structure that is for military use. We could put a bailey bridge and itt has been explored but do not envisage a real or efficient temporary bridge. Putting a bailey bridge on top would need a multitude of work to mske sure the embankment would not fail and if the original bridge collapsed it does not take the new bailey bridge on top.

1. Resident – What was the report 10 years ago and what did the council do to progress it?

Nigel – It was compliant at the time to do its job and then stressed it was not our job to force works on the bridge, however, they were notified. Report did not show a service life, the survey was purely a snap shop of time.

1. Resident – Is the deck of the bridge that has caused the failure?

Nigel – Failure is in the deck and edge beams, the Victorian riverbed stone and ironworks are fine, good Victorian engineering always superseding the more modern work.

1. Resident – Are utilities looking at alternative supply should the bridge collapse or fail?

Nigel – They have said they are monitoring it, but the council has told them to look at alternative supplies. They have been out to inspect, and the supply is in within their tolerance.

1. Resident – Are we taking legal advice and are we unlocking the ownership issue. Can we make it a community assets and joint ownership?

Nigel – Yes, we are taking legal advice and we have been speaking to crown estate about their legal advice. There have been historical ownerships with joint ownerships and the council wants to explore as a last resort to the council. We need to seek advice on Levelling up Agenda to seek where the liabilities are. Seeking assurance from DfT around the business case down the road.

1. Resident – Can residents on Folly Road have something in writing about escape routes on flooding?

Nigel – I will take this away and get Emergency planning to outreach on routes on the eventually of flooding.

1. Resident – How will the June report be given out to residents? Has two way traffic cause issues on the bridge?

Nigel – Last question first, we simply do not know. We are working on letter updates and when we have clear ideas when the report is materialised then communications will be sent out via online and normal channels.

1. Resident – Can the council seek to adopt Haslam Lane? Bailey Bridge when there is closure to Haslam Lanes for flooding.

Nigel – I Like the idea of a bailey bridge and will take this option way. Adoption of roads is something councils are always nervous about when it comes to land, they do not own, once again it comes to liabilities and risk.

This concluded the final questions taken and Amanda closed the meeting. Amanda then proceeded to say that another meeting can be reconvened if residents want it. A big thanks to Nigel for attending and taking questions and to The Shed for hosting. Meeting Closed