

Road link should bridge that gap

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THE problem of bridging the 8ft. gap between Burton's Fairlawn and Dairy House Farm estates — at present divided by the Clockhouse Stream — now lies in the hands of Dorset county's transport and planning committee.

At a special meeting on Monday, members of Burton parish council and Christchurch's works committee decided a road bridge was necessary to link the two halves of Priory View Road, Burton, and provide a third access to the Fairlawn estate.

And they are recommending that the county committee look into ways of funding the construction itself.

BARRIER

The special meeting accepted four main arguments for the bridge. It would cut out a 1½ mile round trip for delivery and emergency vehicles travelling down Priory View Road and "sever the psychological barrier dividing the two housing estates." Burton parish and Christchurch borough councillor Kevin Bishop told the meeting.

Trade in shops planned for the neighbouring Dairy House Farm estate would also be encouraged if a bridge were laid, allowing Fairlawn shoppers to come directly by car.

They now have to travel right round to reach one end of Priory View Road using the only access at present, the exit from Fairlawn on to the Salisbury Road.

It was also pointed out that a third access to Fairlawn, allowing cars travelling north from the estate to meet Stoney Lane from Campbell Road, Burton, would provide a new and safer approach to the main road for residents.

The problem posed by the bridge arose first when Greaves estates, the developers of the uncompleted Fairlawn, went into liquidation. Their bond was not enough to pay for another bridge in addition to one now being built on the estate's west side, Burnham bridge.

The county council had then said there was only enough money for a footbridge in Priory View Road.

BRIDGE PETITIONERS FEAR TRAFFIC RISK TO CHILDREN

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UP TO 40 local residents have signed a petition against the proposed Clockhouse Stream bridge at Burton, and sent this protest to Christchurch Council. They are said organiser Mrs. Frances Ward "vehemently against it."

They object to a bridge because it would link the two halves of Priory View Road, making it a through route. This would bring more traffic at faster speeds they say, endangering children who had got used to playing in the quiet streets and going along the road on their way to school.

And the residents opposed the suggestion that they might have to pay part of the cost of bridging the 8ft. gap between Fairlawn and Dairy House Farm Estates, she said.

But interviews with residents on both sides of the stream revealed that the road plan does have support.

Most of those who opposed the plan live on the Fairlawn estate next to the stream.

Mrs. Ward, of Priory View Road, said that she and her neighbours were "very upset" by Burton Parish Council vice-chairman Mrs. Margaret Crawshaw's comments at the last council meeting that she would resign because of the county council's delay in getting the road bridge built.

NO-ONE ASKED

"I don't know where she got the impression we supported the scheme — nobody asked us for our views before suggesting it," she said.

Mr. Christopher White whose Priory View Road home is one of the nearest to the stream, had signed Mrs. Ward's petition because he was worried about the threat to children from traffic, especially heavy lorries on their way to building sites at other, unfinished parts of the estate.

Mrs. Judy Lord, who lives opposite Mr. White, also spoke of danger to children, but admitted that the bridge would make life easier. The stream area badly needed to be tidied, but she was not convinced that the bridge was the right answer.

But Mr. Ralph Serle, who lives on the Fairlawn Estate near the bridge site, supported the scheme because it would then be much easier for him to visit friends and relatives on the Dairy House Farm Estate.

"It would not be the road that would endanger children, it would be the motorists," he added, hoping the road would be built soon because the stream area was an "eyesore."

One of the road bridge's most adamant critics lives on the Dairy House Farm estate. Mrs. Julie Williams of Winkton Close, overlooking the site, said: "As soon as those roads are joined up I will be the first to sit in the middle of it — I am totally against it."

She had lived there seven years, and until recently there was no talk of joining up the roads. Had she known there would be such a plan, she would have thought twice about moving in. she said.

Through traffic would endanger children because it would increase speeds in Priory View Road, some accesses to which were lined with 6ft. high brick walls which obscured drivers' visibility. "I am not keen to see lorries tearing by — children's lives will be at stake.

One of the reasons given for the bridge was that it would give Fairlawn residents easier access to shops on the Dairy House Farm side, but Mrs. Williams said that after a seven year wait there was still no sign of shops being built.

Rather than build a road the county council should tidy up the stream area and make a new footbridge

A resident of Farwell Close, Dairy Farm Estate, who declined to give her name, said that at the moment there was very little traffic, and backed the view that more would endanger children.

Two other residents on the Dairy House Farm side supported the road scheme because it would be convenient for traffic between the two estates and because the eyesore at the stream would be cleared up. Another woman was in favour of the road, but could understand people with children being apprehensive.

COUNTY PROBLEM

The problem of bridging the gap first posed when Greaves Estates, the developers of the uncompleted Fairlawn, went into liquidation, now lies in the hands of Dorset County Council's transport and planning committee.

It was put there after last month's special meeting between members of the parish council and Christchurch works committee, who decided that a road bridge was necessary. The developer's bond, it was heard, was not enough to pay for another bridge in addition to Burnham Bridge now being built on the estate's west side.

The county council had then said there was only enough money for a footbridge in Priory View Road.

Arguments for the road bridge are that it would cut the 1½ mile round trip for delivery and emergency vehicles using Priory View Road, break the psychological barrier between the estates, boost the trade of planned shops on the Dairy House Farm estate, and provide a safer approach to Stony Lane via Campbell Road.

Assistant borough engineer Mr. Dick Minns told the Times in January that it was possible people living on the second phase of the Fairlawn development could have to find between £12,000 and £15,000 to help finance the road bridge, with the bondsman giving £10,000.

Burton parish and Christchurch borough councillor Kevin Bishop, who is eager to see the bridge built, told the Times that he could appreciate residents' reluctance to finance the scheme. But he thought those opposing it were in the minority.