

HIGHCLIFFE'S BY-PASS

"Hopeless to Oppose the County?"

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE FOR THE ROAD REJECTED

C.T. March 25, 1939

MEMBERS of the Highcliffe and District Ratepayers' Association gloomily reviewed their unsuccessful efforts to divert the proposed County by-pass of Highcliffe, at a general meeting, held at the Parish Hall, on Monday last. The by-pass, a double carriage-way, is to run from Chewton Glen, through the whole of Elphinstone Road, and reverting to the present high road, encroach on the total length of the Highcliffe Castle Grounds.

There is one aspect which alone is tinged with hope. This may never happen.

The meeting was presided over by the chairman, the Rev. H. Mayall, who was supported by the Mayor of Christchurch (Councillor H. E. W. Lapthorne) and the hon. secretary, Mr. H. Lee.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES SUGGESTED.

Mr. Mayall said that the committee of the Ratepayers' Association had been giving serious consideration to the new road ever since the matter had been raised at the general meeting. He had communicated with the County Surveyor, who had forwarded a map of the proposed road. A meeting was then held with the Borough Surveyor, and together they drafted out three alternative routes.

COUNTY'S DECISION.

The road proposed by the County was an extension of the road which came from New Milton. This extension, a double carriage way, was to run through Field Place School, cutting off the "S" bend there, down to the milestone by "The Triangle," and from thence to Elphinstone Road. It then followed Elphinstone Road and joined the existing main road at a point below the schools. Thence it would run by the doorways of Beacon Lodge, Grove Close, and would call for the demolition of Highcliffe Castle lodge and gates. Then it passed by the front door of the "Hoy," and would run close to the Golf Club house. This, unfortunately, meant the destruction of many of the beautiful trees bordering the existing main road on the seaward side.

RATEPAYERS ALTERNATIVES.

Alternative route "A," as suggested by the Ratepayers' Association, would run down the Ringwood road joining the Lyndhurst-Christchurch road at the Cat and Fiddle junction.

Alternative route "B," was to cut across from Chewton Glen to the common, emerging at Roeshott Hill.

Alternative scheme "C," was suggested to follow the main line of the sewer.

Mr. Mayall continued that he interviewed the County Surveyor, and the chairman of the Roads and Bridges Committee, and placed before them the alternative routes.

The County Surveyor at a later date wrote: —

Dear Mr. Mayall,

I have given a good deal of thought to the question of this by-pass, the map of which I now return.

To begin with, Route A is impracticable, because:—

- (1) There is too great a diversion from the direct route;
- (2) The length at Walkford is fully built up; and
- (3) It involves the widening of two railway bridges, one near Amberwood House and the other at Roeshott Hill.

Route C is not very suitable either, because:—

(1) It seriously affects the amenities of two large properties, viz., Woolhayes and Saulfland, and a number of smaller, but nevertheless good class properties, such as Castle Mead and Carradale; and

(2) It crosses a stretch of bad ground immediately north of Shelley Hill House.

Route B, between Chewton Common and Nea Close Farm presents no difficulty. From Nea Close Farm to Roeshott Hill, it would interfere seriously with the amenities of Hoburne and Verno House both large country residences standing in their own grounds. Furthermore, there is a sharp dip immediately west of Hoburne House which would mean considerable cut and fill to obtain a reasonable gradient.

As an alternative, Route C would be very much better although some opposition would be likely to be met with from the owners of both Hoburne and Smugglers Way, while the road will cut Hoburne Farm into two portions. The disadvantages of this route are that the ground is more uneven, and the cost of obtaining good gradients would be higher. The length of existing carriageway between Somerford and Humphreys Bridge, which has been constructed on its final alignment so as to form part of the twin carriageway could not be used. In addition, there would be two roads to maintain in the future practically parallel and fairly close together, and the road would not serve directly the area close to the sea, which is developing rapidly.

Those were the facts which faced me when I had to weigh up the relative advantages, and really the deciding factor is whether or not we regard the Christchurch-Highcliffe-Lymington road as a through road, in which case we should want to avoid all built-up areas, or whether we regard it as a road feeding an area which is bound to develop all along the South Coast. After due consideration of all the facts, I have come to the conclusion that the function of the road is really the latter one, and that being the case it would seem that the original proposals of the County Council will do all that is required in the least expensive way. The only drawback is the question of the trees, but as I explained to you when you came to see me, we have put down a standard width sufficiently wide to enable the trees to be preserved on the centre strip of the road between the two carriageways.

There remains the not insuperable difficulty—one which would involve a good deal of trouble and possibly another Inquiry—that the Ministry of Transport officially confirmed, after a Public Inquiry, the route following the existing road, and it has now been registered for purposes under the Land Charges Act, and so on, and many technical difficulties would arise in trying to vary it.

I do hope that you will feel from this letter that I have given the matter serious and unbiased consideration and that, in the end, in striking a balance, I have perhaps adopted the best method.—Yours sincerely,

A. C. HUGHES.

County Surveyor.

OPPOSITION MEANS TROUBLE.

"This letter," continued Mr. Mayall, "was brought before the committee, and it was decided that the original route suggested by the County should be approved. We felt," he added, "that any further opposition would cause a great deal of trouble and would serve no purpose at all.

"I do not think, and I believe the Mayor will agree with me, that there is no chance of the County altering their proposals.

"This road may come to-morrow, or it may not be made for ten years, we do not know.

"If we can save at least some of the trees by persuading the County to leave them standing on the central division of the double carriage way, that will be something. The trees will have to come down in the Castle grounds, but that will have to come at some time.

"The whole of the Castle grounds are scheduled for building."

The Mayor agreed with Mr. Mayall that it was hopeless to try and baulk the County.

"We have backed you up on the Council by opposing the scheme, but it is as useless as 'banging your head against a brick wall' to oppose a County scheme, was his comment.

LOCAL MATTERS.

Arising out of the last committee meeting, Mr Mayall said that the society had written to the Corporation with regard to certain parts of the sewage system, which had apparently not been connected up. They referred especially to the Shelley Hill district.

In reply, the Town Clerk stated that application for a loan to effect this work had already been made to the Ministry of Health.

Representations had also been made to the Council concerning the terrible condition of Chewton Way, Walkford Way, and Glenville Road, and the Council had been asked if it were not possible for them to fill up some of the "pot-holes."

In reply, the Town Clerk wrote that the Council had no power to do this, and pointed out that it was the duty of the private frontagers to keep the road in a good state of repair.

If the majority of the frontagers were in favour of the road being made up, the Corporation would be prepared to take it over.

Addressing the meeting, the Mayor of Christchurch said: "We have been working hard since the last crisis and for months before to produce a national defence scheme in Christchurch. I am proud to say that if a crisis came at midnight to-night, we have an A.R.P. scheme, which can go into operation within two hours.

STRETCHER BEARERS AT A PREMIUM.

"The scheme is still incomplete, but through no fault of our own, I am sorry to say that although I have appealed through the press and elsewhere for men between 35 and 50, to act as stretcher bearers, I have only had two applicants."

The Mayor appealed to his listeners to find fifteen men in Highcliffe during the next 24 hours.

Twenty men were also needed for the Auxiliary Fire Brigade to give assistance in the Highcliffe Division of the scheme.

THE BEACH QUESTION.

Explaining the present position with regard to the Mudeford and Highcliffe Beaches, Mr. Mayall pointed out that after considerable negotiation, the Council had considered an agreement with the company for the development of both beaches, and the company were now considering that agreement, and if they approved the scheme would go through.

"I do not think for a minute that it will affect Highcliffe this year. As far as I can see, Mudeford is regarded as an asset, and Highcliffe as a debit. They expect to make money out of Mudeford immediately, but not from Highcliffe for several years.

RATES.

Mr. Mayall also referred to the recent rise in the rates and expressed the opinion that the Council had done well to keep them as low as they had.

The need of extra police in Highcliffe and Friars Cliff during the summer months was also discussed, and it was decided to make representations to the standing joint committee of the County Council.

SCOUTS AND BOYS COMMUNITY CENTRE.

The Committee of the Highcliffe Boy Scouts apparently frown upon the possibility of a Boys' Community Centre.

Mr. E. M. Sharp, the Highcliffe Scoutmaster, said that he wished to make public the fact that the Highcliffe Scouts Group Committee were not responsible in any way for the appeal for a Boys' Community Centre; nor had it been consulted in any way when the appeal was drawn up. The committee wanted to make it quite clear to local residents that the Scouts had no connection with the Highcliffe Boys' Club.

Mr. Mayall: "With regard to this appeal, it was drawn up at a meeting which was convened by Brig. -General J. G. Browne, and representatives of all the sports movements in the village. General Browne, who is, I believe, Scouts Commissioner for the district, and Mr. A. S. Carlos, were supposed to represent the Scouts at that meeting."

Mr. Sharp: "General Browne and Mr. Carlos had no right to represent the local Scouts at all."

Mr. Mayall: "Surely the Scouts are not going to stay outside such a boy's movement?"

Captain Hobson: "But General Browne has repeatedly said that if this field is purchased, he hopes to have a Scout's hut erected upon it."

Mr. Sharp: "The Scouts have certain standards which they wish to live up to, and they definitely do not wish to be associated with the Boys' Club."

Here the matter was dropped.