

Dorney Traffic Working Group (DTWG)

What is the process Bucks Council require a parish council to go through to get a road junction in the parish changed from a T junction to a roundabout? What was done? What were the results?

Dorney Traffic Working Group

I have attempted, below, to assess the process that the DPC have gone through with regard to the safest solution for this junction.

DTWG would have preferred that a professional study be conducted by Transport for Bucks in order to determine the optimum set of solutions for traffic calming throughout Dorney and Dorney Reach – of which the consideration of a roundabout at Dents Corner would have been included, as it was one of the options listed. This proposal has arrived outside of such a study, but multiple research studies around the world over many years (of which I have details) clearly indicate that the safest format for a non-signalled junction, such as this, is a roundabout.

It is my opinion that DPC has followed due process, as requested by Bucks Council, and has reached the right decision – subject to the comments regarding consultation on the detail below.

- **Determine whether there is sufficient support for such a change.**
 - Set up a petition – using a [Bucks Council epetition](#) or another one. This is the required process in Bucks CC.
 - County Councillor Dev Dhillon, at DPC on 14JUL20, “suggested getting a petition together in support of a roundabout. Cllr Purdie offered to set this up.”
 - On or around the 27JUL20, the petition went public on Change.org – posted by Andrew Purdie, Vice Chairman, DPC
 - On 05AUG20 Alice Foxley posted a link to it on Nextdoor
 - On 15AUG20 it was posted a link to it on the DPC website
 - On 19AUG20 Andrew Purdie posted an update on the Change.org website thanking people for their support and advising that there were more than 500 votes for and two recorded against.
 - To date 555 votes have been cast for the roundabout.

“Against” petitions or polls

- Despite the offer on the Change.org website to “Start a Petition of your own” there has been no “Against” petition started on this site nor the Bucks Council website. Anybody can action a petition.
- On 24SEP20, Darryl Sheldon posted on Nextdoor a poll asking people to vote for either “Reverting to a T junction” or “Install a roundabout”. There were 108 replies and he advised (on 17OCT20) that 67% (72 respondents) were in favour of a T junction. Presumably, the balance of 36 voted in favour of a Roundabout as there

was no “Other” choice. Darryl Sheldon noted on 28SEP20 that he didn’t have any further information regarding the numbers.

Results of petitions/polls

- Making the assumption that the 36 in favour also signed the Change.org petition, that results in 555 people in favour and 72 against. A significant majority of 483.

Communication by DPC

- The DPC have discussed and minuted “the roundabout” issue every month since May 2020 (and on many occasions prior to this). The minutes are published in Dorney Parish News.
- The DPC posted the petition on Nextdoor and on their website.
- There have been a number of posts on Nextdoor on the subject from AUG20 to date – of which, in total, 20 people have indicated that they were against the roundabout and 11 people were supportive of the roundabout.

Consultation

- Comments have been made that the Parish Council should have “consulted more”. What does that mean? Are they legally obliged to consult every parish elector about every decision they take – especially in the event of knowing that they have a significant majority in favour? No. The following is the legal requirement:
 - *The Parish Council may, at its sole discretion, chose in which circumstances a neighbourhood consultation will take place.*
 - *Parish Council decisions can only be made by Parish Councillors in a duly convened meeting. The results of a neighbourhood consultation are not a substitute for proper discussion and resolutions of the parish council and must be used solely for the purpose of informing parish councillors of the general wishes of those consulted. Specifically, Parish Councillors are required to take the needs of the Parish as a whole into account when making decisions and not just reflect the wishes of a minority which may conflict with the needs of the parish as a whole. Thus, the results of a neighbourhood consultation may not necessarily be reflected in the final decision of the Parish Council.*
- Consulting is difficult and not a legal requirement. There was a raging pandemic worldwide. How could the DPC consult more? If you read Dorney Parish News (approx. 400 readers) or are a Nextdoor member (348 members in Dorney) you had ample opportunity to make your case heard. Some did – but not very many and certainly not a majority.
- It could be argued that DPC could have had more detailed discussions with the property owners who are close to the proposed roundabout and the small number of others who appear to be against the roundabout, in principle. As the Design and Safety Audit (which the DPC contributed £5,000 towards the cost) has not yet appeared – except for a few odd pages – it would be difficult to have a sensible

conversation with any of the property owners on matters of substance (recognising that there was already a majority of 483 people in favour).

Next Steps

- As the Safety and Design Audit has not yet been seen, the DPC have requested it a large number of times, the final details regarding street furniture and lighting have not been discussed to date. The DPC are attempting to ensure that this is done very soon and, certainly, before any final decisions are taken on these points.
- I believe that it is possible that DPC will be publishing a Neighbourhood Consultation Policy shortly which provides more detail on the process for current and future consultations in the parish.

Bill Dax

Dorney Traffic Working Group

07MAR21