

Ringwood Signage Project Group

Notes of Meeting held on Wednesday 20th January 2010

Present: Roger Bettle
Joan Cundill
Anne Osborne
Jo Stannard

Apologies: Cllr Barbara Woodifield
Cllr Brian Terry
Phil Harmsworth

1. Membership of the Project Group

It was noted that Phil Harmsworth (ESP Personnel and a member of the Chamber of Trade) had expressed an interest in joining the Project Group. However, he was unfortunately not able to attend this meeting.

2. Pedestrian Signs

Members of the Group considered the Pedestrian Signs Feasibility Report prepared by Mott Gifford in May 2008. It was expected that the total cost of the scheme would be in the region of £30,000. JS confirmed that the Town Council had allocated £10,000 towards this cost, subject to the County Council funding the balance and being able to deliver the scheme. The scheme had been included on the reserve list in the New Forest 2009/10 Traffic Management Programme. However, it was considered unlikely that any schemes on the reserve list would be progressed and they would therefore need to be considered for progression as part of the 2010/11 Traffic Management Programme.

It was noted that two of the proposed signs could be delivered as part of the Southampton Road Environmental Improvements scheme, which was scheduled for implementation in Autumn 2010; those being sign number 10 (Fridays Cross) and 11 (outside 33A Southampton Road). A maximum of £8,000 had been allocated within the scheme to cover the cost of these two signs and a third new sign at the entrance to The Close.

A number of amendments had been suggested by members of the Southampton Road Environmental Improvements (SREI) Steering Group and a subsequent officers meeting. These suggestions took account of the length of time that had passed since the proposals were first put forward, the need to rationalise some of the proposed posts which currently held too many fingers and the need to include signage for the strategic cycle route.

The Project Group considered these amendments as follows:

Design

The Project Group had recommended green signs with white text. However, Members on the SREI Steering Group were keen that all street furniture should be coordinated and had therefore proposed that the signs should be black with white

text, to fit in with the new litter bins and proposed new seats, lighting columns and railings. A bespoke finial was also proposed.

The Project Group disagreed with this and felt strongly that the signs should be green – a more cheery colour and softer on the eye and easier for the visually impaired to read. It was noted that the taxi shelter and Millennium clock posts were both green. If it was a question of cost, they did not see the need for a bespoke finial, which had actually not been allowed for in the indicative budget in the Feasibility Report.

Content

- 'Castleman Trail' should be amended to 'Castleman Trailway' – agree.
- Change 'River' to 'Bickerley Millstream' – do not agree – leave as 'River'.
- Change 'Pocket Park' to 'Danny Cracknell Pocket Park' – do not agree – the title is too long – leave as 'Pocket Park' – interpretation boards with full name will be provided on site.
- Delete 'Human Sundial' (only proposed for inclusion on 2 posts) – do not agree – this is a unique attraction in the town.
- Possible use of symbols for toilets, visitor information centre and car park to reduce number of fingers required – agree.
- Sign 10 – add 'Visitor Information Centre' (symbol), delete 'Old Town', add strategic cycle route to C and H (to include long distance destination and logo) – agree.
- Sign 11 – delete 'Old Town' and replace with 'High Street' – agree.
- Sign 12 – add 'Visitor Information Centre' (symbol) and 'Christchurch Road Shops' – agree.
- Sign 13 – add 'Christchurch Road Shops' and 'Council Offices' – agree.
- Addition of a new sign in Southampton Road at the entrance to The Close to sign the strategic cycle route (north and south). This sign would negate the need for a bollard in this location to stop vehicles entering The Close. The sign could also be used to sign other locations, e.g. Medical Centre. – agree with sign – not necessary to sign anything in or through The Close – want to direct people through the town centre.

In addition to considering the above amendments recommended by the SREI Steering Group and officers, the Project Group also recommended the following amendments:

- 'Old town' should be deleted from all signs.
- Sign 5 – add 'Picnic Area' (new finger to the East towards Rotary Picnic Area).
- Sign 8 – as this sign is located outside the Visitor Information Centre and therefore the starting point for most visitors, it was felt that this should be the 'master' sign and should include more destinations than currently proposed.

Distances should also be included on this sign to give people, particularly those less able, an indication of how far they would have to walk to reach each destination.

- Sign 10 – ‘River’ should be signed to the South, through Friday’s Court and not down the High Street.
- Sign 11 – add ‘Picnic Area’ to the North East, include distances to ‘Skate Park’ and ‘Playground’

It was noted that all of the amendments would now need to be considered by the Council’s Planning, Town & Environment Committee. If Members agreed with the principle of the amendments, it may then be necessary to walk the routes to ensure continuity.

3. Funding

As noted above, the Town Council’s budget for signage (£10,000) had now been committed to the pedestrian signing scheme. However, it was noted that £500 included in this year’s Planning, Town & Environment Committee’s budget for built environment/furniture had not yet been spent. Members of the Project Group considered whether this could be spent on new map boards in Blynkbonnie Car Park or a new Welcome To Ringwood sign on the main town roundabout. It was felt that the majority of people using Blynkbonnie Car Park were local people and therefore map boards in this location would not be a high priority. Therefore, it was agreed to recommend to the Committee that this budget be used to fund a new colour Welcome To Ringwood sign on the main town roundabout to replace the existing black and white sign.

4. Other Signs

It was still hoped to provide new signs on the A31 as the Highways Agency had agreed that the existing signs were inadequate. However, to date the Highways Agency had failed to provide any costs for new signs. JS hoped to meet a representative of the Highways Agency at a meeting in February to discuss this in more detail.

5. Any Other Business

There was none.