

STC Recreation & Leisure Committee 17 November 2021

Proposal for resolving dangerous traffic and parking issues in Church Road, Meole Village and the Tarmacked hard surface currently used as a 'Park & Stride'

Background: There has been long-standing tension between numerous groups who use the Church Road Recreation Area and the 'Park & Stride' hard-standing, which also bears 2 basket-ball baskets, donated by The British Basketball League.

The central grassed area is bounded by metal railings supported by concrete pillars, marked for football use by The Meole Brace Football Club (was Beacon Football Club until recently) in the winter months on Sundays, requiring parking for players and spectators.

The Trinity Church has parking requirements on the Park & Stride hard surface, though Meole Primary School provides some parking within its grounds during Sunday Services.

The Trinity Centre, located within Trinity Church, hosts Wedding receptions and other events for up to 150 guests.

There are visitors to Maesbrook Nursing Home, located along a narrow terminal section of Church Road.

Residents of Church Road, Burnside Gardens and Field House Drive require vehicle access to their properties.

Meole residents and visitors often drive to The Church Road Recreation Area to walk, often with their dogs, on the outskirts of The Recreation Area and also in the Rea Brook Conservation Area.

Parents walk, cycle and drive their children to Meole Primary School (and Nursery) along Church Road and also walk & cycle along the footpath linking Meole Estate and Meole Village, to the School.

Additional parking on a Grasscrete extension of the hard-standing has been proposed, but STC Officers have given examples of this elsewhere, concluding that the area usually becomes a mud-bath. There would be particular risk of this on the site, as it is at the bottom of a slope.

Many students walk and cycle from Meole Estate, Bayston Hill and other Shrewsbury Suburbs across the footpath over The Rea Brook to Church Road and on to Meole Secondary School.

Residents walk and cycle from Meole Village to Meole Estate across the footpath over The Rea Brook and beyond to the Meole Retail Park.

Church Road itself is narrow, particularly at the corner where the Trinity Church is located and at its terminal section leading to Maesbrook Nursing Home, and has a dangerous slope on one section, where a car has previously overturned.

Emergency Services need access to sites in and beyond Church Road.

Thus, there is high usage of Church Road and The Recreation Area, with frequent traffic congestion and overflow parking on the grass verges and Church Road itself, including the front entrance to Meole Primary School.

Other factors

The Trinity Church gained The Glebe Field, which is adjacent to Church Road, in 2019 in a land swap with The Diocese of Lichfield, with a 5 year Covenant preventing development.

The Church originally planned for the Glebe Field to be used by The Church as a recreational area for its parishioners and some of its disadvantaged congregation, plus a small car park.

However, a recent Arboriculture Report advised that the current trees within The Glebe Field posed a problem for the plans, particularly in obtaining Planning Consent for a car park.

Additionally, when STC Officers recently visited Church Road in Meole, they advised that tree repair work would be necessary before The Public would be able to use Glebe Field.

It should be noted that when Planning Consent expires, there may be pressure to seek Planning Consent for Housing.

In a spirit of generosity to The Meole Community, to permit good use of The Glebe Field and to solve the parking issue, Trinity Church proposes to gift The Glebe Field to The Community in return for access to 40 additional car parking spaces on an extension of the Church Road Hard-standing.

There has been a Football Association Grant Scheme to improve existing Community Football Pitches, for which I believe that STC has submitted a bid to take the slope and 'belly' out of the field, plus improved drainage.

Proposal:

That Shrewsbury Town Council officers investigate these issues and construct a Report with Proposals to The Recreation and Leisure Committee to resolve the dangerous traffic and parking issues in Church Road, Meole Village and the Tarmacked hard surface currently used as a 'Park & Stride': the resulting agreed proposals to be considered by Finance and General Purposes Committee for possible inclusion in the Town Council's capital programme.

Bernie Bentick.
Councillor for Meole Ward.