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Cllr. Dan Poole
c/o Democratic and Member Services
Hampshire County Council
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Dear Dan

Road safety

The Parish Council has been closely monitoring the impact of the B3054 through the village. This road carries substantial traffic, including a significant number of heavy goods vehicles and articulated lorries.

The purpose of this letter is to clarify how Hampshire County Council Highways categorises, prioritises and manages the B3054, given the unusually high traffic volumes through Beaulieu and the associated implications for road condition, drainage and pedestrian safety.

The B3054 is the main route linking the southern New Forest to the A326 and the wider strategic road network. This is largely due to the railway bridge at Ampress Park on the A337 Southampton Road in Lymington, which has a height restriction of 14'6" (4.3m), being materially lower than modern design standards. Vehicles exceeding this height—including standard double-deck buses, many HGVs (where a standard height can be up to 4.4m), some modern trailers and car transporters—cannot pass beneath the bridge as they risk a bridge strike. For many such vehicles, the B3054 through Beaulieu is therefore the most practical route between the southern New Forest and the strategic road network, including access to the M27.

With the assistance of your colleagues at NFDC, we monitored traffic flow in 2024. This confirmed that 88,978 vehicles were recorded over 2 one-week survey periods,

averaging 12,884 vehicles per 24 hours. The detailed report is attached to the covering email to this letter.

Department for Transport traffic statistics indicate that a typical rural A road carries approximately 12,600 vehicles per day, whilst rural minor roads (including B roads) carry approximately 1,100 vehicles per day. The B3054 through Beaulieu therefore experiences traffic volumes slightly exceeding those of a typical rural A road, whilst carrying many times the average traffic volume on rural minor (including B) roads.

The volume and weight of traffic on the B3054 place significant pressure on the road surface and associated infrastructure and contribute to pedestrian and roaming-animal safety concerns. This includes within the village's constrained historic centre, where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles must share limited road space, including on 'blind' corners.

We appreciate the work that Hampshire Highways undertakes to maintain our roads at a time of competing priorities and budgets. However, the high volume and weight of traffic have a material adverse impact on:

- the adequacy, condition and maintenance of drainage infrastructure, including culverts, gullies and underground pipework
- damage to road surfaces, verges and highway infrastructure
- pedestrian safety in the constrained village centre
- narrow footways and kerbs in the historic bridge area
- vibration and noise affecting nearby residents and businesses.

The Parish Council recognises that road classification is only one factor in setting Hampshire Highways' maintenance and investment priorities. Our immediate concern is to assess whether the current management of the route adequately reflects the traffic volumes and infrastructure pressures experienced in Beaulieu.

Accordingly, we would appreciate a detailed understanding of how Hampshire County Council Highways categorises and manages this route compared with rural A roads, particularly in relation to:

- a) maintenance prioritisation;
- b) structural maintenance programmes;
- c) drainage inspection and maintenance;
- d) freight routing and freight management;
- e) resilience and network planning; and
- f) pedestrian safety and active travel considerations.

In particular, we would be grateful if officers could please advise whether the B3054 is classified as a strategic freight route, a key distributor route, or under any other

internal highway classification used by Hampshire County Council Highways for maintenance, investment and network management purposes.

We would also welcome any information that can be shared regarding recent maintenance and drainage works, structural assessments, traffic studies or other reviews undertaken on the B3054. Could you also please provide us with all recent Road Safety Assessments.

The Parish Council wishes to better understand whether the current strategic approach to the route adequately reflects the traffic, freight and infrastructure pressures currently experienced within the village.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and the relevant highways officers to discuss these concerns as soon as possible and identify any practical measures to address them.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Hubbard

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Chair

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