

Thursday, 20 August 2015

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LAND WRANGLE MAY CAUSE TWO-YEAR DELAY FOR NEW WORKINGTON BRIDGE

Last updated at 22:05, Thursday, 19 May 2011

Workington's new Northside Bridge could be delayed by up to two years because Cumbria County Council claims it is being held to ransom over a strip of land nearby.

The council last night revealed it was considering legal action to buy the land from an unnamed person or organisation.

It is vital to enable work to start on a replacement for the original Northside Bridge, which collapsed during the 2009 floods.

A delay would be a massive blow to thousands of transport users who were expecting work to start on the new bridge later this year.

County highways spokesman Coun Tony Markley said: "The unreasonable demands of one party are threatening to cause major delays to the whole project.

"We have bent over backwards to meet this party halfway, even to the point of offering a settlement roughly 10 times the value of the land.

"The council will not and cannot be held to ransom.

"The county council has been working flat out to get all the necessary pieces of the jigsaw together, but one local landowner is proving to be the sticking point."

The council wants to see the bridge opened by May, 2012 and, if talks continue to falter, it will consider a compulsory purchase order.

Coun Markley added: "If we have to start a compulsory purchase order, then it's difficult to quantify how long construction could be delayed by, as it would depend on legal challenges.

"Our estimates are that it could delay Workington getting a new bridge by up to two years."

The county council will meet next Thursday, and Coun Markley will recommend that councillors give its officers the authority to make an order if necessary.

There are nine parties – landowners and leaseholders – involved in the transfer of land around the bridge site.

Eight, including Allerdale council and Tesco, have agreed terms.

"We believe that these eight landowners have entered into negotiations in the spirit of recognising how important this new bridge will be for the town of Workington," added Coun Markley.

Humphrey Dobie, chairman of Workington Reds football club, which leases some land, said: "It's not us. We're still talking to them because they want some of our land. We have not caused any problems that I know of. We're still trying to negotiate a price."

The council would not name the party involved.

Planning permission for a new bridge was granted in March, but a contractor cannot be appointed until the land issue is resolved.

Tony Cunningham, Workington MP, said it was disgraceful that the project could be held up.

He added: "It's vital that we get this road bridge up. The people of Workington and West Cumbria would expect everybody involved in this to be doing what they can to get it completed quickly."

The contract for the town's temporary road bridge, which opened in April last year, is due to expire in April 2014.

A county council spokesman said a small extension of its use could be agreed, but it could not be used long-term without restoration.

*First published at 19:22, Thursday, 19 May 2011
Published by <http://www.timesandstar.co.uk>*

Have your say

If the land in question is to the north west of the old NEW BRIDGE, it was open waste ground in the 1990s. With the only fenced ground was around the slaughterhouse. To find out land owners you can check with the LAND REGISTRY OFFICE at PITY ME, Co. DURHAM. I am not sure but I believe the NATIONAL GRID (ELECTRICITY) pay rent for Pylon sites and should have a record of every site. The land to the North East belongs to ALLERDALE, the land to the South East and West was bought by WORKINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL around 1904 and should be in the hands of ALLERDAL COUNCIL now. (the peoples land as the councils are only trustees)

Posted by a freeman on 25 May 2011 at 10:18

I agree with the others this person is obviously being greedy and should be named and shamed for what they are doing to the town

Posted by anon on 23 May 2011 at 15:21

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LAND WRANGLE MAY DELAY NEW CUMBRIAN BRIDGE BY TWO YEARS

Last updated at 19:50, Thursday, 19 May 2011

A new Cumbrian road bridge could be delayed by up to two years because Cumbria County Council claims it is being "held to ransom" over a strip of land.

Have your say

If it is the Reds that are holding up the proceedings then it can only be to gain the maximum amount possible from Allerdale council to release that part of their lease of the land. The land is owned by Allerdale council but they cannot sell it without compensating the Reds for losing that part of the land they lease.

Posted by Geordie on 24 May 2011 at 15:20

The landowner has the right to obtain as much money as possible to secure a deal, who can blame them ?
However the council should stop wasting time and money in other areas and pay off the landowner...

Posted by Mark Taylor on 24 May 2011 at 13:10

The people of Workington need to speak up we need the bridge lets hope the Council can sort this issue out.

I will keep my fingers crossed.

Posted by Charles Graham on 23 May 2011 at 19:55

Put us in the Stocks! Comrade James? Come the Revolution and lets pray that no landowner loses their head and that the masses do just stick with stocks and rotten tomatoes.

On a more serious note, I hope that the landowner recognizes the strength of community feeling here.

Posted by A on 23 May 2011 at 15:52

Be silent people, don't you know you have no say in this matter, you are only needed to pay bills,taxes,bring the crops in off the land,be quiet or they'll put you in the stocks.

Posted by James O on 23 May 2011 at 13:16

just build the bridge stop faffing about with the land to make it look pretty. If the bridge is in the sme place what is the problem

Posted by anon on 23 May 2011 at 11:22

Why if the bridge is going back were it was is there this problem all of a sudden ??!!! And more to the point why wouls someone want to stop us getting a bridge its outradgous and petty....Get a grip whoever you are !!

Posted by Laura on 23 May 2011 at 09:01

Puzzled, if the bridge is going back in the same position of the old one, why is there a land issue?

Posted by TR on 22 May 2011 at 14:49

I assume there isn't a court order preventing this person from being named.

Posted by a on 22 May 2011 at 10:17

Anon, I simply do not accept your analogy between this piece of land and a cigar box on the Titanic.

Yes the price of the cigar box may indeed be what someone is prepared to pay for it and with antiques or collectable, we are not talking about issues of public access and we do not have a law that permits to community to exercise entirely appropriate powers of compulsory purchase.

This bridge is needed and if the landowner seeks to take advantage of community need here by demanding an exorbitant price for his/her land, then the community needs to stand firm and use the powers that Parliament has given it.

Workington has suffered enough with the floods. Cumbria County Council needs to get tough and use its powers.

There has been a ridiculous situation in Carlisle when a planned bridge in Currock had to be cancelled. Apparently the city lost c£1m of Big Lottery funding partly because of land ownership issues around the base of the existing bridge.

By all means, go for a mediated solution but do it now and do it quick before the public's patience is exhausted. I in fact would advocate litigation being commenced now to run in tandem with any mediation rather than insterad of it. This kind of situation cannot be allowed to continue and we should be prepared to lobby our county councillors accordingly.

Community access schemes should not be blocked by individual(s) seeking to make an unreasonable personal profit.

Posted by A on 22 May 2011 at 08:59

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Have your say

Is this project going to be any different to anything else undertaken in Workington? Time is definately not money here.

Posted by Suedol on 21 May 2011 at 11:17

Hi,

Please note that posts making 'wild' allegations about an individual or organisation or posts that we deem to be personal attacks, will not be released.

Ian
Online editor

Posted by Ian on 21 May 2011 at 09:39

unless the landowner is a non tax payer, he's going to be 1 of thousands that end up paying the price of it with raised tax.

further more, he is holding up a vital bridge thats needed. if the contract for the temp bridge doesnt get renewed, we'll be back to travelling around by cockermouth, dovenby, broughton moor. you maybe don't mind that, or maybe you dont even live in workington so it doesnt even effect you, in which case, your comment is futile, but we need that bridge back soon as.

tescos doesnt own land in the area where the plans are for, and reds use a track off tescos goods in road, so i doubt its them. i'd imagine its a local farmer that has the field next to the old bridge.

Posted by ray on 21 May 2011 at 07:11

All will become clear once the landowner is revealed

Posted by andy on 21 May 2011 at 06:27

We need this someone see sense.

Posted by Bob on 20 May 2011 at 22:41

Anon, the land is only valuable for the reason that a very large number of people require a bridge to get back to living their normal lives. Why should anyone want to make a large profit on a piece of land that is required for that purpose? If you read the article it states that the offending party has been offered up to TEN times the actual value of the land and they still refuse to accept. I hope all the other 8 parties speak out and say that they have agreed and signed up leaving the offending party isolated.

Posted by Geordie on 20 May 2011 at 21:57

Let them hold the council to ransom, they will end up with next to nothing once it is compulsory purchased.

Posted by Anon on 20 May 2011 at 21:13

Derek - Cumbria County Council is the authority that is responsible for building the bridge and securing the land NOT Allerdale

Posted by Town Lad on 20 May 2011 at 20:13

Has no-one considered that because that particular piece of land is wanted by the council it is worth more? It's not intrinsically different to any other piece of land. But as the council want that piece, and not a different one the seller quite rightly should demand a higher price and the council should be willing to pay more. This is basic economics. I saw a story earlier this week about a cigar box that belonged to the captain of the Titanic, it was estimated that it would auction for between Â£10,000 and Â£20,000. Not because it was different to any other old cigar box, but because people want to but that particular one.

It doesnât sound to me like the council are being held to ransom. Sounds more like they have inflated the value of the land with their plans and are now unwilling to pay. Instead of delaying and threatening expensive court action the council should be seeking a mediated resolution. This will save time and money in the long run.

Posted by Anon on 20 May 2011 at 15:47

RE SC saying "I'm pleased someone has already clarified that the Reds do not own the land they occupy, they lease it from Allerdale I understand, so it can't be them."

So what exactly is Mr Dobie trying to agree a price for, if it isnt land he owns?

Posted by Dave the Rave on 20 May 2011 at 14:58

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In response to 'Ray' who suggests just building a simple bridge without footpaths etc.
I understand that the bridge will be named after PC Barker. Lets do the brave public servant justice and build something to be proud of. A proper decent lagacy. There is enough "cheap and dreary" architecture around from the 60's and 70's. Look at what the Victorians did all those years ago, lets have some imagination. The extra cost to do it "right" will not be that significant. Yes, I know that we need hospitals, schools etc etc (before you start!)

Posted by Rob on 20 May 2011 at 14:17

I'm pleased someone has already clarified that the Reds do not own the land they occupy, they lease it from Allerdale I understand, so it can't be them. In fact Reds are set to loose land at the changing room side of the pitch to accommodate the wider road planned.
My hunch is that it could be where the former greyhound stadium used to be, I understand that is still privately owned. Of course, the current owners could always come out into the open & confirm that my hunch is incorrect.

Posted by SC on 20 May 2011 at 13:13

Knowing the Council they're trying to buy something for nothing.

Posted by Jim on 20 May 2011 at 12:22

I see no problem in the council naming all the parties that they are dealing with .I would hope its not the Reds but it would be prudent to see just what both parties are saying.

Posted by John on 20 May 2011 at 12:14

Quote : "Humphrey Dobie, chairman of Workington Reds football club, which leases some land, said: "It's not us. We're still talking to them because they want some of our land. We have not caused any problems that I know of. We're still trying to negotiate a price."

Doesn't sound as if it's the Reds to me.

Who actually knows all of the 9 parties involved - who on earth could they be apart from Tesco, Reds & Pet Food?

Posted by Derek on 20 May 2011 at 12:09

Remember the council works for the people, not the other way around. This is hardly good practice for a council, to say theyre being held to ransom. It would be quite easy to find out who owns the land, by checking the land registry.

Posted by Jchn on 20 May 2011 at 11:46

Here we go again im not surprised i think we were all waiting for this

Posted by unreal on 20 May 2011 at 11:27

Just give us the new bridge!
Whoever the mystery 9th person is needs to stop dragging this on even longer that it has.

Posted by Daz on 20 May 2011 at 11:18

call me skeptical about the reasons but is it simply that the council just has'nt got the funds to build it yet, and are just dragging it out, or is it because the money they have been given was spent on one of the many black holes they have, still should be relatively cheap to make with the steel works and fabrication plants only a mile away and thomas armstrong concrete factory nearby, that'll help the cost, oh sorry i drifted into fantasy land then, that's not how common sense works in these matters, particularly when it comes to council spending descisions and logistics.

Posted by James O on 20 May 2011 at 09:49

Hangabout... if the council says it's done the deal with 8 out of 9 and Workington Reds says they're still in negotiations... then it must be Reds holding things up. Not good from a community club to be jepordising the new bridge. Wonder if they'll lose fans if they carry on.

Posted by George Dixon on 20 May 2011 at 09:45

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Inflammatory language is hardly going to help with the negotiations now is it?

Held to ransom or just unwilling to pay market value? I'd want to hear the other party's side before jumping to conclusions.

Posted by Maladept on 20 May 2011 at 08:52

Name the guilty party !!! Or better still, name the innocents then we can work out who is the guilty one!

2nd option - Compulsory Purchase. Allerdale, you have the power to push things through if you really want to, so get on with it.

2 years delay? You have the power to knock that on the head. Look what you did with selling the Cloffocks to Tesco.

Posted by Derek on 20 May 2011 at 07:34

looking at that image of it, reduce the plans to just the bridge on the original land it had, and omit the pathway features of it - they're not needed

Posted by ray on 20 May 2011 at 05:29

name and shame them. or failing that, hammer them with 10yrs worth of massive council tax to pay for it

Posted by ray on 20 May 2011 at 05:27

I think its rightt to name the greedy people who are trying to hold up this important transport link. I hope the Council names them

Posted by Anon on 19 May 2011 at 23:32

I agree whoever is holding this vital link up to line their own pockets should be named and shamed. Not a good development when it was looking to be on track!

Cant they just compulsory purchase the land?

Posted by Fred on 19 May 2011 at 23:14

if this was down south it would have been up by now long time a go

Posted by me on 19 May 2011 at 22:41

Name and shame them. Cannot believe a 'local' landowner would be so petty... but then again!!

Posted by Lee on 19 May 2011 at 21:54

Why don't they name and shame? Then they'll find out just how quickly things can get moving! Peer pressure can be a wonderful thing.

Posted by Jess on 19 May 2011 at 20:42

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