

**A358 PREFERRED ROUTE INFORMAL PARISH COUNCILS GROUP:**  
**Comprising: Ashill, Beercrowcombe, Broadway, Donyatt, Hatch Beauchamp,**  
**Horton, Ilton and West Hatch Parish Councils.**

**25 January 2020**

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Dear Miss Norris.

**A358 PREFERRED ROUTE**

I am chairman of an informal group of parish councils which are concerned at the potential impact of Highways England's A358 Preferred Route, announced last summer. Our particular interest is in Section 2 of the Route, from Southfields to Thornfalcon, along which our councils believe there would be a number of harmful consequences if the Preferred Route were implemented as proposed. These include severing village links with the main route to the M5 and Taunton, making access to the A303 more difficult, disrupting connectivity across the A358 for motor and non-motor vehicle road-users, diverting traffic onto unsuitable minor roads and increased congestion at Southfields roundabout, with greater difficulty for traffic going to and from Ilminster. The group is working on developing its case for changes to what is proposed, with a view to influencing the consultation Highways England have promised on the detailed design of the line and the Planning Inspectorate's consideration of the eventual Draft Consent Order.

It would be helpful if the group could have the benefit of Ilminster Town Council's view on the Preferred Route and information on what your Council may already have done, or is planning, to investigate its impact on the town and local routes or to bring any concerns it may have to the attention of Highways England. While the group recognises that the Town Council's perspective may be focussed particularly on the Southfields roundabout aspect of the issue, rather than the consequences for communities further north, it would be welcome to join the group if it wished or to receive information on what the group is doing. But at the least, the group believes that all those communities with concerns about the Preferred Route should be in touch with one another as the plans for the upgrading of the A358 mature.

I should be grateful to hear from you as outlined above. I am happy to meet the Town Council if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Peter Gregory  
Chairman, Broadway Parish Council  
[petergregory999@gmail.com](mailto:petergregory999@gmail.com)  
01460 259 589