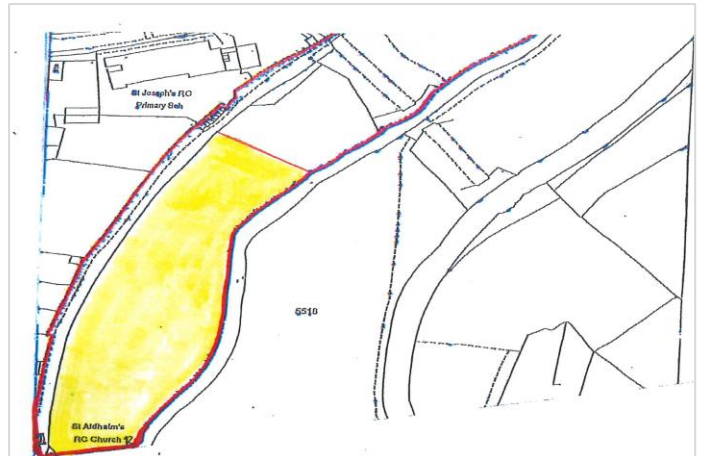
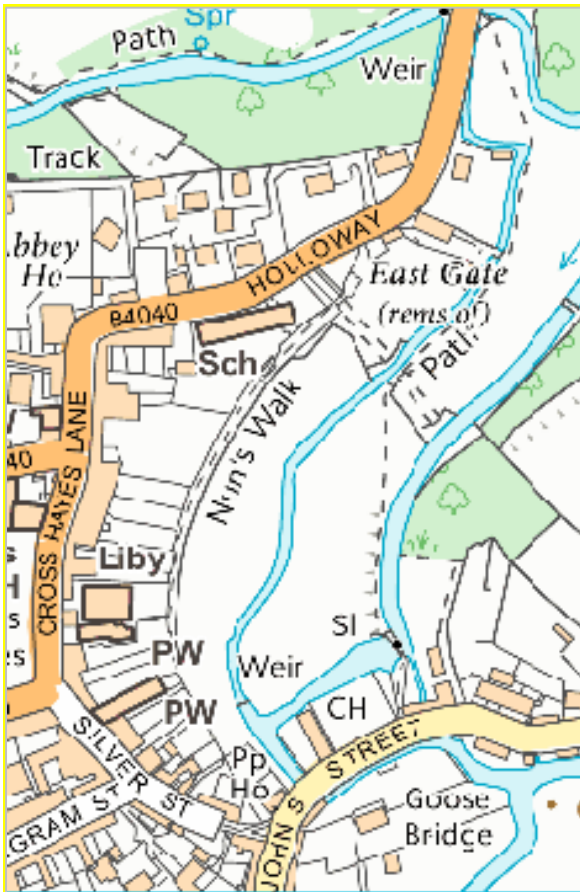


Notes of Meeting -Town Defences/ Area East of The Nun's Walk

12th December 2021 (Zoom Meeting 10.00am)

Present At Meeting: Malmesbury Town Council (MTC) - Cllr.P.Exton; Cllr. Power;
Historic England – Nick Croxson - Heritage at Risk Projects Officer
RC Clifton Diocese – Jo Long - Head of Property

Location Map:



This outline provided by RC Clifton Diocese

Background:

- Different sources, including the Malmesbury Civic Trust, the Malmesbury Conservation Trust the Malmesbury History Society and residents have liaised together with Historic England and the RC Clifton Diocese and have subsequently contacted MTV to look at 'taking on' responsibility for the strip of land to the east of the Nun's Walk, which is currently owned by the RC Clifton Diocese.
- This is an important area heritage area for Malmesbury, as an 'Ancient Scheduled Monuments' because it includes Iron Age earth works and the historic town wall defences.
- Restorative work carried out to the walls and surrounding area through a Heritage Lottery grant of approx. £1 million (added to by other bodies) in 1997 and works were carried out over the next

couple of years. Archaeological excavations were carried out in 2000 and later in 2005-2006 due to relandscaping and work to St. Joseph's RC Primary School by Cotswold Archaeology.¹



Photo provided by Historic England

Notes:

This first meeting was for parties to make contact and for the Diocese and Historic England to discuss their aims in broad outline, including preservation and maintenance of this ancient monument and to allow residents and the public to visit.

The Diocese explained that their initial idea is to lease the land to MTC on a long term, but that there would be restrictions on this, particularly access. That access would need to be via the school, but would need permission. The Nuns Walk would need to be retained for pupils and staff. They advised that they had sold off a portion of the land at the south to private individuals.

Historic England advised that they would want to see the land cleared and prefer to see the land grazed rather than managed with machinery. Maintenance of the walls themselves was discussed and that there is a possibility of grant support.

Considerations:

- Ownership by the town - Long lease or ownership by MTC?
- Southern Access- unfortunately there might have been access from the south, but not sure if any access rights now over portion purchased by private owners.
- Access via St. Joseph's RC Primary School and use of Nun's Walk – this would need to be clarified, for maintenance and for opening for public use.
- What rights of way would St. Joseph's RC Primary School and St. Aldhelm's Church have on the land in particular the Nun's Walk and access to the church?
- Maintenance of walls, residents apparently responsible for their part of the wall showing on their property. Clarify who has ownership/ responsibility especially in case of subsidence or wall falling down, also accidents and moreover clarify who has financial responsibility, for all parts of walls and land.

¹ Ref "The Wall and Defences of Malmesbury" book published by Malmesbury Civic Trust 2012.

- Does the southern end of the land in private ownership form part of the 'Ancient Scheduled Monument' and presumably if so, what are the restrictions on that usage, maintenance of any wall etc, is there anything which would affect the remainder of the land, such as rights of way?
- Removal and maintenance of scrub land to the river – is this a special habitat for any species? Would removal of scrub mean that local wildlife groups would not wish to be involved?
- Any possibility of a bridge over the river?
- What would the initial and ongoing costs of repair and maintenance be?
- Costs of insurance, including public liability? Would we expect to see wall owners insuring their part and evidencing this?
- How could it be open to the public and used for educational/ tourist purposes? How could this be arranged?

It was agreed that we would explore the options further and arrange a meeting in January 2022, with a site visit (Covid and weather allowing). Plus, it would be beneficial to ask local interested parties to attend too.

Cllr Mrs. Kim Power Dec 2021