

# TELFORD & WREKIN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

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Mrs J Clarke, Administrator to the Forum, 01952-383205 – 11 April 2017

## TELFORD & WREKIN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

A Meeting of the Telford & Wrekin Local Access Forum  
will be held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 1.30 pm  
in The Studio, Graham Building, Wrekin College, Sutherland Road, Wellington,  
Telford TF1 3BH

*Disabled parking is available through the Black Gates in the  
Headmaster's Car Park*

*Please note that the venue may change to the Business School, but directions  
to the meeting room will be on site on the day.*

A Working Buffet Lunch will be available at the meeting from 1.00 pm.

## A G E N D A

1. MINUTES  
To consider the minutes of the last meeting and any matters arising.  
Appendix A
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. CHAIRMAN'S MATTERS  
Appendix B
4. MEMBERSHIP MATTERS
5. CURRENT PROJECTS – REVIEW
6. REVIEW OF DEFINITIVE MAP MODIFICATION ORDER APPLICATIONS
7. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN
8. LIST OF STREETS
9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

### Future Meeting Dates:

Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017 – AGM

Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018



## **TELFORD AND WREKIN LOCAL ACCESS FORUM**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 1.30pm  
at The Studio, Graham Building, Wrekin College, Sutherland Road, Wellington,  
Telford**

**Present:** Anthony Francis-Jones (Horse Riding / BHS), Fiona Smith (Disability), Bob Alton (Ramblers Association), Bob Coalbran (Wellington Walkers Are Welcome), Jan Mees-Robinson (British Driving Association), Cadi Price (Severn Gorge Countryside Trust), Jane Bonner (Severn Spokes, UK Cycling Shropshire), Cllr Liz Clare (Telford and Wrekin Council) and Malcolm Morris (STROWP).

**In Attendance:** Andrew Careless (Senior Rights of Way Officer, TWC) and Jayne Clarke (Democratic and Scrutiny Officer, TWC)

### **LAF-19            Minutes**

**Resolved** – the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **LAF-20            Apologies for Absence**

Paula Doherty (Rights of Way Projects), Ann Sharkey (Legal Assistant, TWC) and Peter Holt (CLA/ Landowner).

### **LAF-21            Chairman's Matters**

The Chair reported on the following issues:

#### **LA21 and CPRE meetings**

The Chair, together with Bob Coalbran, had attended the LA21 and CPRE meetings. Mark Petty had also been in attendance to give a good rights of way representation. With regard to the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England meeting attended by the Chair, Michael Vout, now retired from the Planning Department, had been a guest speaker, although the meeting seemed to be mainly focussed on planning applications.

#### **Definitive Map Update**

The Senior Rights of Way Officer reported that a short term contract was now in place for the work to be undertaken on the Definitive Map. There were approximately 10-12 panels of the map on 1-25,000 scale of which some sections had been enlarged to 1-10,000 scale of which 5 panels had now been completed on the urban area as this had the advantage of housing. The 1927 OS Series Map provided the closest and most accurate information with regard to parishes and this could be overlaid on the mapping system. There was to be a topographical change where the base map and current map could be superimposed. Work was

progressing rapidly and it was envisaged that it would take a further 3 months to complete and then work would take place on the modifications. He was confident that the vast majority of the work would be completed prior to making a new Definitive Map in 2019.

Bob Coalbran enquired if there was anything the LAF could do to help but the Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that it was a one person job transferring the information onto the computer. Councillor L Clare thanked the LAF for the offer of help. The IT work being undertaken would be focussed on meeting the definitive map deadline at which time all of the information would be available to members of the public/search companies which would free up officer time and be a significant step forward.

In the meantime, progress was being made with regard to the definitive map orders registered, key word searches and the register of deposited plans / statutory declarations and the register of applied for but undetermined public path extinguishment Orders / creation orders / diversion orders. There would be improvements to the DMMO register which will be automated for search companies and a 24/7 service which would make the service more open and available.

The Senior Rights of Way Officer reported that with regards to the Hinks at Lilleshall, it was disappointing that the Agricultural College were still obstructing the right of way and had not yet removed the obstruction despite promises to do so. A more formal, legal route may be required in order to bring this matter to resolution. He confirmed that P Doherty was leading on this issue from a Parish point of view and that styles could have been installed at the time the fencing was erected. A reasonable amount of time had passed and weather conditions had been such that this work could have been completed. A letter would be written giving a two week timescale for completion of the work and this would be followed up with a Notice if necessary.

#### Website and Hincks Signage (Lilleshall)

As apologies had been received from P Doherty it was suggested that a full update on the website take place at the next meeting.

#### 'T&W Cycling and Walking Strategy' Workshop

M Morris confirmed that he had attended a consultation workshop which hoped to address the barriers to cycling and walking and introduce "off the shelf" thinking. A draft of the strategy was due to be produced by 30<sup>th</sup> November and be ready for Christmas. This so far had not been forthcoming as there were difficulties with the definition of the walking network.

The Chair commented that he had received information about the meeting at a very late stage. Comments from the LAF were that the event was run by Strategic Planners APCOM and it was held at Addenbrooke House on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016. Only 1 LAF Member was allowed to attend and that it had been commissioned in late September by Highways. M Morris confirmed that the event had been by invitation only and anyone wishing to attend had to apply for a place. Other attendees had felt

that this was a “box ticking” event and the delegates had been swamped with information which was difficult to take in. Some attendees were not from the Borough and did not understand the local area. It was also felt that the consultation was cycling focussed.

#### Path Clearance Update – Ramblers and Wellington Walkers are Welcome

B Alton gave a brief update on the work of the Ramblers since the last meeting. The last outing had been in November where work had been undertaken on Offa's Dyke path. Unfortunately no other work had taken place. The next planned work was to be a section of the Silkin Way around Severn Drive and Harley Close and the Dothill Nature Reserve which was due to take place in February. It was suggested that there was co-ordination between the groups in order that there was no duplication of work and that B Alton and B Coalbran liaise with each other. It was suggested that a facebook page be set up or something on the Telford and Wrekin website or maybe some kind of electronic notice board that could flag up the paths/areas that needed attending to. It was suggested that for long distance routes the contact point would be the Chair of the Telford Green Spaces Partnership, (Alec Connor). J Mees-Robinson commented that the Caynton Manor Bridleway was on the list to be completed soon. M Morris informed the LAF that some of the clearance work was allocated to the Community Payback Scheme. The Senior Rights of Way Officer explained that he was reluctant to give the volunteers routes to look after on a regular basis in order that they weren't treated as “contractors”. The Chair commented that better relationships needed to be built with some Parish Councils. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that every Parish Council had been written to but that each Parish Council worked differently. The Senior Rights of Way Officer would continue to co-ordinate the work that was required.

B Coalbran gave a brief report regarding the Wellington Walkers are Welcome volunteers who had recently been working in Limekiln Woods doing lighter work and all the tasks on the list had now been completed but there were still issues regarding the stone and boards which were required for the project to be completed.

#### UK Coal Restoration Site / Steeraway / RB 51 (Huntington Lane, Little Wenlock

The Senior Rights of Way Officer had been in contact with Anton Fix with regard to the UK Coal Site restoration. All work should soon be completed and signed off by Telford and Wrekin Council. The Chair confirmed that the work had almost been completed and had been looking at the snagging ie gates and surfaces, and he had noted the fencing had been installed. J Mees-Robinson suggested that there be some form of celebration that this route was being re-opened and it was suggested that a joint project be undertaken with the carriage drivers and the British Horse Society maybe in May when this route may get national coverage. The Chair and J Mees-Robinson would work together on this project.

#### Shropshire Way Consultation/Route Issues

A proposed rebrand of the Shropshire Way had been proposed by the Shropshire Way Association following a consultation exercise. Replies from the consultation had been received regarding the replacement of dangerous styles and furniture and

way marking. The Section through Telford and Wrekin would be strategically developed along the Silkin Way and the Dothill Nature Reserve and would incorporate an existing route change around Allscott/Isombridge and then to the Wellington entrance to the Ercall. The Shropshire Way Association would be meeting in January 2017 and a walk through of the route would take place. The Chair was concerned that part of the route on the Silkin Way had no status. B Coalbran confirmed that the Shropshire Way Association had taken all these issues into consideration. It was expected that the completion date would be September 2017.

#### Cycling and horse riding – multiuser routes

The Chair informed the LAF that the letter from Cycling UK, which had been circulated with the papers, had referred to a statement saying that "horses and cyclists do not mix". He considered this a very negative statement regarding multi-user routes and was not based on fact. It was clear from the attached document that the authors (the BHS and Cycling UK) both agreed that shared routes were fine too and they were both making the point that statements such as this were unhelpful and not based on fact.

#### BHS List of Streets consultation

J Mees-Robinson asked the LAF where the list of streets was kept and if white roads were on the list. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that some parts of the list were maintainable and others weren't and that white roads were not on the list but would have been picked up before they became out of date. If the right of way was not being used or historically it was not a right of way and was a white road it was not necessary for this to be on the list of streets. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that the list of streets was kept at Wellington Civic Offices in the Planning Section. J Mees-Robinson asked if white roads could be claimed as byways or restricted byways. It was confirmed that if there was evidence, this needed to be submitted but if there was no evidence there would be no value in putting in a claim. If routes had not been used since 1949 then these were considered not needed. The Chair confirmed that the 2026 cut off date did not affect currently lodged DMMO applications and that the cut off date was to pick up historical claims not those that are based solely on user evidence. The last snapshot had been taken via the new Definitive Map in 1965 and a review should be completed every 5 years. B Coalbran expressed concern regarding an area that had been sliced off on a route near to the Motorway. The Senior Rights of Way Officer explained that if the right of way had been adjusted then this needed to go through the legal process if this had not already been done.

#### SCC Outdoors Membership Scheme

SCC were offering an outdoors membership scheme for the use of open spaces and rights of way possibly in order to generate capital.

#### Shropshire Council's Countryside Access Strategy Document

The Shropshire LAF was due to become the Shropshire Great Outdoors Strategy Board which would include sub-groups.

### Locked gate – Horsehay – DMMO still to be determined

The Senior Rights of Way Officer addressed the LAF regarding the route from Horsehay to the Travellers Rest which had a locked gate placed across it and a retrospective planning application had been lodged for this gate. It was proposed that a DMMO be drawn up from the Travellers Rest to Horsehay Pools. There had been 24 statements of evidence of use from walkers as well as use by push bikes, horses, carriages and vehicles. The Chair confirmed that there were currently locked gates and that this had possibly been done to promote the value of the land. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that the route itself had not been lost and that the Developer was aware of the DMMO application although the furniture on the existing route had not been removed. The Senior Rights of Way Officer had the backing of the Parish Council.

### Bridleway Issues at Greenways Recycling – Ketley/Overdale

The Senior Rights of Way Officer informed the LAF that a Traffic Regulation Order had been made on a section of road, near the Pink Skips site, which included double yellow lines. This prohibited parking on the road and highway off the road behind double yellow lines and there was no reason for the Police not to be prosecuting as this was a criminal offence acted on by the Police. A public meeting had taken place with local people who were unhappy with the access to the right of way and bridleway being blocked, the fouling of the area and the planning application which was to come forward for the re-cycling with increased hours and truck movements.

### Effect of Brexit on PRoW

Defra Schemes for routes with access for walkers and riders had now ceased following the ending of the European funded scheme. The implementation of the De-Regulation Act had been held up and although this should have been in place by Oct/Nov 2016 with immediate effect it would take place in stages up to 2020.

### Big Path Watch – Survey Results

The results of the Big Path Watch Survey were available on the website at

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/pathwatch/the-state-of-our-paths-report.aspx>

### **LAF-22      Membership Matters**

It was proposed and seconded that Gill Stead become a Member of the LAF as the area Secretary of the Shropshire Ramblers.

The LAF confirmed that it would be superb to have Gill as a LAF member.

**RESOLVED** – that Gill Stead become a member of the LAF representing the Ramblers.

#### **LAF- 23      Current Projects - Review**

Lloyds Dingle Steps – there was currently unsatisfactory access and a project was being undertaken in order to take out the steps and replace them with a path.

Rough Park – work had been undertaken on the Old House Coppice steps.

#### **LAF- 24      Review of Definitive Map Modification Order Applications**

The Senior Rights of Way Officer informed the LAF that Ann Sharkey was currently on secondment and would not be looking after rights of way for a while. There had been a backlog of DMMOs for some time and it was important to have applications based on statements of evidence of use for 20 years. He confirmed that the easiest way forward was to take out a Land Registry Search and locate any affected parties and write to the Landowner. Unless there was any response from this communication, an order would be made by the Senior Rights of Way Officer. This would be undertaken on any DMMO that was over five years old. Any that were unable to be confirmed would be sent to public inquiry. A question was raised if every order would go to public inquiry. The Senior Rights of Way Officer confirmed that if the DMMOs could not be confirmed then they would have to go to public inquiry. There were currently approximately 80 DMMOs waiting to be processed and it was hoped that about 60 of these would be confirmed, go to public inquiry or be resolved by the Secretary of State.

#### **LAF-25      Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

M Morris Reported on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The previous plan had been due for review and had been disorganised with no action plan or aims and objectives. He had extracted all the relevant information from the previous plan and presented this in a new format which looked at overviews, objectives, actions and achievable aims which would enable the monitoring and progress of the work. The draft proposal was to outline the resources required, identify the work that needed to be done and the relevant costs. The working document was intended to identify that issues were still relevant, still policy, still achievable and to see what had changed. The Plan had been due for review in 2015. The next stage was for the plan to be looked at by a smaller group. The Chair suggested that all members of the LAF look at the Plan and this be brought back to the next meeting of the LAF.

#### **LAF-26      Future Meeting Dates**

A discussion took place regarding the future meeting dates of the LAF. It was

**RESOLVED: that the following dates be schedule for the LAF for the 2017/18 municipal year:**

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017 AGM**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.**



**LAF-27      Any other urgent business**

Change of Venue for LAF Meetings

The Chair informed the LAF Members that Wrekin College now had a new building which was a new Business School. Discussions were being held with the Head to see if the LAF meetings could be held in the Building School Board Room.

B Coalbran informed the LAF that there had recently been a co-operative effort on the Wrekin Link in order to clear the brambles and the autumn growth before the end of the season.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and noted that the next meeting of the LAF would be held on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at The Studio / New Business School, Wrekin College at 1.00pm for 1.30pm start.

The meeting ended at 4.04 pm.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....



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**B**

*Think –‘If we had no network of PRow how much would it cost to put it in?’*

## Chairman’s Matters

April 2017

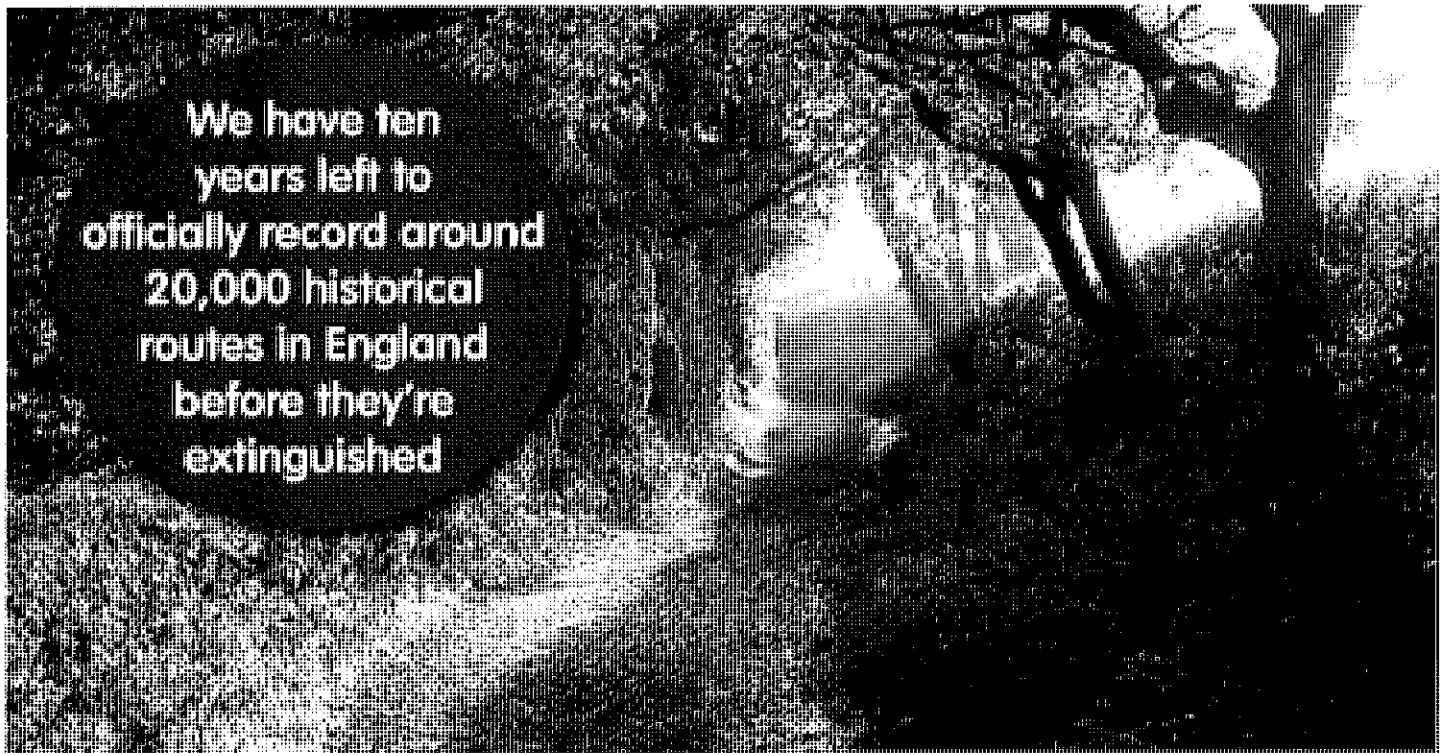
A brief summary of the projects that the Chairman and LAF members have been involved in since the last meeting

- 1) AF-J + JM-R attended a day’s training on the implication of 2020 cut of date
- 2) Definitive Map – update- AC
- 3) TWC website update + Hincks signage, HAUC (Lilleshall) Paula Doherty
- 4) Path clearance update – Ramblers and Wellington Walkers are Welcome
- 5) UK Coal restoration site/Steeraway/RB51 (Huntington Lane, Little Wenlock)
- 6) Shropshire Way (Isombridge Farm area) and Hutchinson Way update
- 7) Granville site – Issues with flooding and misuse
- 10) Transport Focus document – non-motorised use of the main roads
- 11) LAF National Conference – who would like to attend?
- 12) Horton Lane – possible closure to vehicles at the eastern end – AF-J
- 13) Street Champions – Bob Coalbran
- 14) TBUG – represented on the LAF – Jane Hayes



# The BHS and the Ramblers 2026 TRAINING

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Horse  
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**17 June** – Harston Village Hall, Cambridge

**18 June** – Barnston Village Hall, Essex

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# Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians: a summary of priorities for Highways England's Network

January 2017



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## **Introduction**

Transport Focus is the independent consumer watchdog representing the interests of all users of England's motorways and major 'A' roads, the Strategic Road Network (SRN) managed by Highways England.

While cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians' use of the SRN is confined to single and dual carriageway major 'A' roads because they are prohibited from using motorways, they need to be able to cross all Highways England's roads safely – whether in an urban or rural environment.

Between now and 2020 the Government will invest substantial sums in improving the SRN, and planning for the five years after that is already underway. We believe it is important to understand the priorities of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians in relation to these roads, and in particular to take their views properly into account.

The objectives of this study were to:

- understand the key issues and barriers that cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians face when using or interacting with the Highways England network
- understand themes that are common to cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians
- make a series of recommendations about how Highways England and the Department for Transport could more effectively address their needs.

We met the key organisations representing cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. Those involved were British Cycling, British Horse Society, Cycling UK, Living Streets and Ramblers. Their interests are distinct, and this report describes the issues identified for each mode of travel, along with examples of the types of problems experienced. First of all, we highlight a number of themes that are common to all three types of user.

We then make a number of recommendations and will now work with Highways England and the Department for Transport to ensure that these issues are fully considered in future investment decisions.

## **Interests common to all**

From our discussions with these organisations it became clear that many issues were common to cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.

- Safety, whether users are crossing the SRN or travelling along it, is of crucial importance. Provision that has been made for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians should be maintained to an agreed standard and inspected on a regular basis.

- The quality of the journey experience is also important to these road users. Key factors that influence journey satisfaction include the type of path surface, noise levels, lighting, signage and physical segregation from road traffic without an excessive increase in distance travelled.
- Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians want provision incorporated for them at the outset of the scheme design, rather than 'fighting' for adaptations later. They believe that cost inflation when design adjustments are made later leads to proposals not meeting cost-benefit requirements – the view being that acceptable cost-benefit ratios would be achieved if proposals were designed in from the start.
- Better dialogue with Highways England project teams on individual schemes is needed, especially if measures for cycling, walking and horse riding cannot be delivered as originally proposed. This is especially important when users were asked to provide input during the initial design phases. It was a simple message. If people think Highways England has agreed to incorporate something, the company should go back to them and explain if that 'something' later turns out to be impossible.
- We found that, on the whole, users preferred physical separation from motorised vehicles. This could be by separating a byway, bridleway, footpath or cycle path from the carriageway itself, but following the same broad alignment.
- There needs to be better provision for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians who need to cross motorways and major 'A' roads. Users preferred these to be level with the carriageway (in other words not involving a bridge or subway, but they recognise that there will be practical limitations).
- Users explained that the Highways England's network can be a barrier to making journeys, severing links between communities, places of work and routes such as the National Cycling Network, footpaths, towpaths, byways and bridleways, junctions and roundabouts. This is especially important as many users need to cross the SRN to continue along the local road network. Many junctions lack even basic crossing provision and pavements at present.

## **Interests of pedestrians**

In our discussions with groups representing pedestrians we heard a strong message that in the design of new road schemes, and when upgrading the existing network, their needs must be considered from scheme conception. Also, without careful consideration the network can sever communities and make it difficult to get to a bus stop, local amenities or others parts of the community.

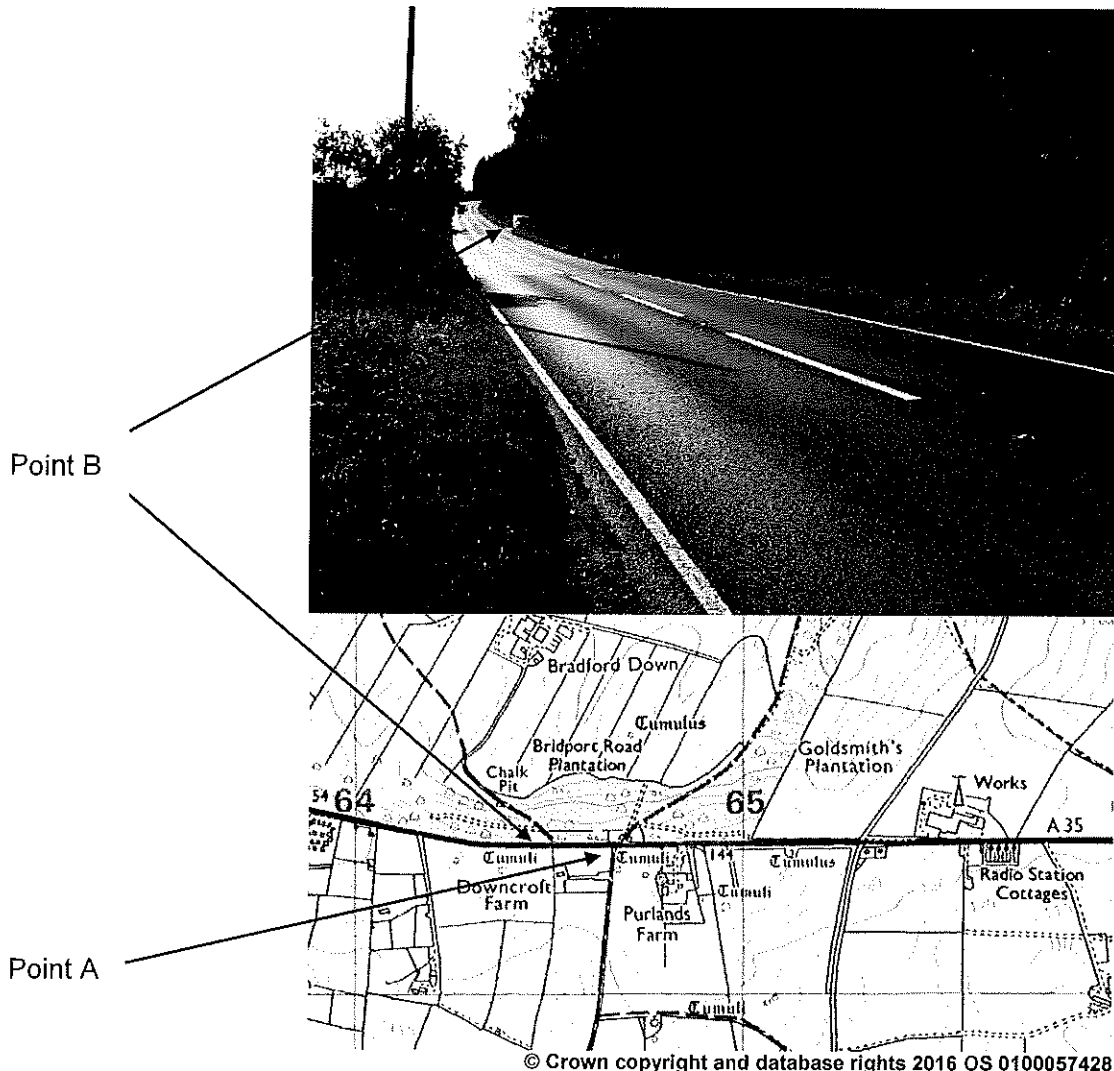
Specific thought should be given to the design of major roundabouts and interchanges. Slip roads with high volumes of fast traffic are a real concern. This is especially important where the network connects urban areas to out-of-town leisure areas such as the rural rights of way network, or to retail and business parks. Lack of provision for pedestrians and cyclists is believed to force people to use motorised vehicles because of safety fears.

There also needs to be greater emphasis in highway design on facilitating 'utilitarian walking'; that is, travelling on foot as distinct from walking for leisure. This is particularly important for short local journeys to friends, amenities or links to public transport. Where Highways England's network passes through built-up areas, there needs to be recognition that these roads have a significant role in facilitating these types of journeys. It is important that pedestrian facilities such as pavements and crossings are designed accordingly.

Crossing busy carriageways can be extremely hazardous for pedestrians, especially for those who are elderly or less mobile. They prefer to cross on the same level as motorised traffic although this has obvious practical limitations. Bridges are the next preferred option, with subways a third preference (although difficulties in protecting the latter from anti-social behaviour, especially in urban areas, is understood). The location and type of crossing also requires careful consideration to ensure they are in a safe, accessible and convenient location. User-operated crossings are preferable when traffic lights are involved.

In many rural areas footpaths and bridleways often emerge onto or lead off 'A' roads. We were told of numerous instances where public rights of way were not aligned on the two sides of the road: they are staggered by several hundred metres. This requires pedestrians to walk on verges, often with dense foliage, or step into the road and face oncoming traffic in order to reach the next path. Also, pavements can run out on one side of the road, then switch to the opposite side requiring pedestrians to cross the road. In some rural areas there are no pavements at all on Highways England's 'A' roads, forcing all pedestrians to walk on the carriageway.

The A35 near Winterbourne Abbas, Dorset, pictured below is an example. Two bridleways emerge onto the A35 a few hundred metres apart, with no provision to get between the two apart from walking in the carriageway. Photo taken at Point A.



Where provision has been made for pedestrians to use major roads, the quality can vary greatly. In certain areas pedestrians find themselves very close to the carriageway on poorly-maintained surfaces being buffeted by air turbulence from passing vehicles. In wet weather the situation can be worse, with carriageway surface water and spray making pedestrians wet even if it is not raining. Using an unlit, poorly-maintained path in the winter months when it is dark early was also cited as an issue.

Pedestrians would prefer physical separation from high speed and heavily-used carriageways. Purpose-built, parallel paths for pedestrians greatly enhance journey quality, especially when these routes are clearly marked to avoid conflict with cyclists and horse riders.

User groups also say that some drivers behave inappropriately towards pedestrians trying to cross or travel along 'A' roads. There is a desire to see improved driver behaviour, including increased awareness that pedestrians have a right to use these roads.

## **Interests of cyclists**

Organisations representing cyclists told us that most cyclists try to avoid travelling along major 'A' roads where possible. They feel that many road improvement schemes have not made proper provision for cyclists. The perception that these roads are unsafe for cyclists deters some from using them. With a growth in cycling predicted in the coming years, there is keenness to ensure the infrastructure is ready for this.

The cycling user groups told us that quality cycling provision needs to be considered at the very early stages of new road construction. Any new road scheme should consider cyclists in two distinct areas; those that need to travel along the road and those that need to cross it.

Major junctions on 'A' roads present their own issues for cyclists to safely navigate and are of particular importance as they allow access to and from local roads, retail and business districts. Poor design and minimal cycling provision can lead to these important areas being effectively inaccessible by bike from residential areas.

Cycling groups told us that the siting of crossing points needs to be carefully considered so that they are located on 'desire lines' (where people will intuitively cycle left to their own devices). They perceive that too often schemes involve them crossing where it was convenient for the design team to put them, rather than for the cyclist to use. Cyclists prefer not to have bridges or subways, and therefore to cross level with the carriageway, to avoid having to dismount and extend their journey time.

When it comes to travelling along 'A' roads, we were told that cyclists prefer "corridors" that are safe from heavy traffic and vehicles travelling at high speed. In this regard cyclists usually prefer physical segregation from motorised vehicles, but along parallel, direct routes that don't require long diversions away from the alignment of the carriageway.



Photo: Cycling on a segregated path. Photo courtesy of Highways England.

We were told that the quality of cycling infrastructure is of key importance in maintaining current usage and in encouraging more cycling. As well as surface quality, other aspirations include shielding cyclists from excessive traffic noise; signage improvements; prevention of flooding; and improved links with other cycling routes. The latter should include close cooperation with local authorities to maximise connectivity.

The provision of cycle-friendly infrastructure varies throughout Highways England's network. We were told that there is no agreed standard for what good looks like. There is also a desire to see regular maintenance and safety checks on cycling assets to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

### **Interests of equestrians**

The British Horse Society told us that use of Highways England's 'A' roads with horses is limited. Many roads do not offer provision for horses and are therefore considered unsafe to use. Indeed, horse riders perceive that better provision is made for pedestrians and cyclists.

To ensure that there is quality provision in highways infrastructure for equestrian use, there is a strong call for their needs to be considered where appropriate at the conception of both new road and improvement programmes. As the design develops there is a desire for stronger engagement with equestrian groups at a local level to ensure maximum benefit is realised from the investment.

As with cyclists and pedestrians, usage can be split into those who need to cross Highways England's network and those who need to travel along it. A top priority for horse riders is to improve the ability to cross busy carriageways and their preferred option is to use a Pegasus crossing because the controls are higher and they can stay mounted. These user-operated crossings allow horse riders to cross safely because traffic lights stop vehicles, helping to keep the horse calm.



Photo: A Pegasus crossing. Photo courtesy of British Horse Society.

Pegasus crossings should be used near to bridleways, multi-user paths and venues such as riding schools. This is especially important when paddocks, training grounds and exercise areas are separated from other buildings by a road. Where a Pegasus crossing is not feasible, dedicated underpasses are the preferred solution, particularly at major junctions, and where dual carriageways and motorways need to be crossed.

User groups also told us that many bridges cross Highways England's network, but they can be for the private use of landowners. They suggested that Highways England explore whether private bridges could be opened to increase connectivity between local communities at minimal cost. This would help long-distance journey planning allowing equestrians to safely cross Highways England's roads and connect to other routes, byways and bridleways under local authority control.

For equestrians travelling along major 'A' roads, we were told that segregated paths away from the carriageways are the preferred option, even if these are shared with pedestrians and cyclists. However, careful thought should be given to the type of surfacing used on these paths to prevent degradation through continued use. Where current provision is already made for horse riders along verges, care should be taken

that traffic signs do not impede riding or block visibility. Other hazards include poorly located drain covers in carriageways (on which a horse might slip), forcing riders further into the carriageway, and bridge parapets that are too low to provide adequate protection.

### **Conversion of 'A' roads to motorway or expressway**

Whenever an existing 'A' road is converted into a motorway or upgraded to the proposed expressway standard, Highways England must carefully consider the impacts of excluding cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians on them. Wherever they are prohibited from using a section of the SRN it is important for Highways England to provide a safe route to all the places currently served by the road, as well as safe ways of crossing it. The earlier observation that some users would prefer a segregated path broadly following the alignment of the road should be noted.



## Recommendations

Transport Focus therefore recommends the following:

- **User input to design** – prior to any new scheme entering the design process, Highways England should engage with cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians to ensure that their needs are at the heart of planning. This should include national representative groups for generic input which can then be shared internally within Highways England. Local user groups should also be consulted for project-specific detail. If designs change after initial engagement, Highways England should re-engage to find the next best solution.
- **Crossing the network** – any new road scheme or major upgrade should incorporate crossings for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians from the very beginning, taking into account both current and potential use. These should, where possible, be along ‘lines of desire’ between key points. Careful thought should be given to installing the most appropriate type of crossing whether it be on the surface, an underpass or bridge.
- **Connecting networks** – careful thought should be given to how crossing roads can improve connectivity between communities and amenities. This should include collaboration with local authorities and local interest groups to maximise strategic and county-wide schemes to encourage non-motorised travel.
- **Junctions and roundabouts** – Highways England should seek to improve the experience of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians at junctions and roundabouts. This should include the creation of traffic-free alternative routes.
- **Segregated paths** – Highways England should investigate ways for new and existing road schemes to incorporate segregated paths for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. Where possible these should be physically separated from the carriageway, but with minimal diversion from the intended route.
- **Minimum standards** – develop a set of minimum standards, beyond the current requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) for infrastructure intended for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. These should focus on the following areas:
  1. Surface quality
  2. Noise protection
  3. Physical protection from motorised vehicles
  4. Lighting (where appropriate)
  5. Flood prevention
  6. Signage
  7. Limited divergence from the existing carriageway route

8. Maintenance and inspection regimes
9. Crossings and underpasses

Once these standards have been developed and tested we would recommend Highways England incorporates them in to the DRMB.

- **Connecting Public Rights of Way (PRoW)** – where a PRoW commences or terminates at the edge of a Highways England 'A' road, Highways England should explore options to connect it with a PRoW on the other side of the road, especially if they are staggered by only a few hundred metres. Where this is not practicable, Highways England should engage with landowners and local authorities with a view to re-routing rights of way or constructing a path outside the current Highway boundary.
- **Explore existing assets** – Highways England should fully evaluate whether assets within the Historic Railway Estate could be brought in to use for the benefit of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.
- **Bridge environment** – Where a Highways England road crosses over another part of the SRN, a local authority road or a public right of way, the installation of spikes, netting or other means of preventing birds from perching underneath bridges would be helpful. It would help to reduce bird defecation onto paths below, reducing health risks and improving the pedestrian experience.



Photo: Pigeon defecation on footpaths under bridges, as seen here under the M5 at Oldbury.

- **Conversion of 'A roads' to motorway or Expressway**  
Whenever an existing 'A' road is converted into a motorway, or upgraded to the proposed expressway standard, Highways England must carefully

consider the impacts of excluding cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians; providing suitable alternative provision where necessary.

- **Measuring usage of the network** – Highways England should explore low-cost solutions to gather data about the use of major 'A' roads by cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. This would assist in building a national picture of route utilisation and provide a benchmark for, amongst other things, casualties versus usage on individual roads.

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