HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Meeting of Safe Routes Working Group held on

Wednesday 17th March 2021 at 12.30pm via Zoom conferencing.

MINUTES

Present: Malcolm Eastwood (ME), David Jemmett (DJ), Gillian Perry (GP), Roger Noel (RN), Julie Coultas (JC), Paul Crowe (PC), Samantha Leader (SL) Steve Sample (SS) Lyn Shepherd (LS) for first part of meeting and Julia Simpson (JS).

Meeting Secretary: Belinda Samrah.

Apologies: Richard Kendall.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING ON FRIDAY 26TH JANUARY 2021

These were agreed.

1. MATTERS ARISING

ME confirmed that he had spoken with Nigel Bird, Countryside Ranger at WSCC and he had recommended asking landowners to grant permissive routes for a limited time or for a trial period, he suggested maybe Summer Opening. This seems good advice and should be used when talking to landowners. ME also said that the Rangers were always very helpful especially with manpower.

1. SIX ROUTES – TO RECEIVE UPDATES
2. Safe cycling link between Small Dole and the Downs Link - Led by ME and SS – The Recreation and Open Spaces Committee (ROS) Meeting on 9th February 2021 had been supportive and therefore letters had been sent to three landowners and that Tim Gue from Stretham Farm had responded positively and a meeting would take place face to face after 21st June 2021; after lockdown had been lifted.

ME thanked Steve for his work on this route. ME said that to encourage landowners to allow access they should be made aware that there would be no costs to them and no additional work, if a path could be marked at the side of the field that would hopefully prevent someone walking down the middle. ME re-iterated that there was no right of way for Cycles on the footpath there or the bridge and road. JS said that one of the lost right of way was nearby but the land was very boggy and not suitable for access.

ACTION POINT: BS to chase the other two landowners a month after original letter sent. RN agreed to try to speak with Mr and Mrs Alliss but that they were isolating at the moment but perhaps we could agree a date for distanced meeting outside in June. ME and BS to finalise the meeting with Tim Gue nearer the time. SS believes that Mr Galvin isn’t around at the moment so that meeting may also take a little time to arrange.

ME and SS would look at what would be needed to upgrade the paths; crushed shingle, additional plank on bridge.

1. Safe walking/cycling link between Business Parks and Henfield Village perhaps then extended to Woods Mill and SDNP - Led by PC, SL and GP - The Recreation and Open Spaces Committee (ROS) Meeting on 9th February 2021 had been supportive but it still was not clear who owned the land. ME agreed to speak to Nigel Bird and found out who owns the land that was marked with a blue arrow on the second map.

ACTION POINT: ME would speak with Nigel Bird to ascertain the landowner and then approach the landowner in the same way as had happened at Small Dole. Once known we can decide who is best placed to talk to the landowner.

1. Safe cycling link between Henfield and Sussex Prairie Gardens avoiding the need to use the busy Wheatsheaf Road - Led by LS and RK.

LS said that it was a route she knew well but that it was a footpath and therefore not for horses or cycles and a sign at the beginning made it very clear that neither were welcome. She wondered whether it would ever be upgraded to a bridleway and if not would it be wise to select another route. ME said there was a parallel route which goes to the Wheatsheaf which is much straighter but not as interesting for walkers. The Prairie Gardens footpath has 6 styles which would also be a challenge to remove. ME suggested looking at new route 3A and asked LS to do the walk with him and consider which of the two might be best. GP wondered whether if there was an offer to put in gates to prevent speeding by either horses or cycles would that make the landowners of route 3 more amenable. ME again said he felt that time limited access or a trial run may be more acceptable. JS confirmed that barbed wire fencing is permissible on footpaths but should on the inside of any posts and if it crosses a path it should be wrapped to prevent injury.

ACTION POINT: ME said that he would speak Pauline at Sussex Prairies and if she is agreeable they could both approach the landowners. He would ask for the support of the ROS and asked that RN asks for support from Woodmancote PC. LS and ME will also walk 3A and consider it as an alternative.

1. Safe bridleway/walking link between Furners Lane/Furners Mead and Blackstone - Led by JC and RN –

ME confirmed that after contacting WSCC he was advised that it is likely to take at least another year before a consultation might be expected (sometime in 2022) and both HPC and Woodmancote PC would be asked for views. JC did not want to give up on this route and ME said she needed to direct any members of public with views toward the legal department address for WSCC. JC said she felt that if the speed of both cyclists and horse riders could be reduced with the addition of gates this might make a big difference. One problem is who pays for gates, someone would need to be responsible.

RN said that he would walk along there again and check about a broken fence. ME confirmed that he felt that most residents in Blackstone seemed against it, but RN and JC needed to find some who would support the route and that after lockdown the landowners could be approached.

ACTION POINT: BS send the legal department address to JC. RN and JC to explore a local meeting of some of those in favour and some who are against this route to explore whether there are any win win designs which might be acceptable. Perhaps landowner(s) could be approached for a face to face meeting after lockdown. ME and BS to ask for the support of ROS for such an approach and RN to do the same with Woodmancote PC.

1. Safe walking link between the Downs (at Fulking) and Henfield avoiding A281 wherever possible - Led by PC and SL - BS confirmed that she has not heard back from WSCC about preferred safe crossing points ME said that as this route was dependent on Route 2, it would be more important to solve that problem first but that in principle a crossing from the Lydds to Henfield Common and one near Terrys Cross to link the two bridleways on either side of the A281 would be a good solution.
2. Safe bridleway link between Henfield and Woodmancote Place avoiding A281 – Led by JC, DJ and RN

Julie, David and Roger had prepared Route with photos. ME asked RN about Woodmancote PC’s progress on speed restrictions on A281. RN said that it was likely that a 40mph limit would be adopted from Swains to Woodmancote with traffic calming measures. RN said that they were also exploring using white posts to mark the safe crossing places.

1. AGREE NEXT STEPS TO INCLUDE

ME said that he felt this had been covered by the earlier discussion on each Safe Route.

1. POTENTIAL LOST RIGHTS OF WAY

ME thanked JS and Liz Smith for preparing the details of footpaths in the Parish and that those reports had been sent Sussex Don’t Lose your Way and WSCC. Two small footpaths within the village will be added once the Parish Online map had been prepared. ME explained that little used footpaths may be lost all together after 2026 unless they can be annotated on Definitive Map Order. The Ramblers Association are helping to co-ordinate the responses and that means it will be restored. JS and ME have agreed to meet in her garden after 29th March to look at her historic maps and explore routes that might be considered for reinstatement or adoption if they would help support the Safe Routes initiative.

ACTION POINT: ME and JS to meet in her garden to explore historic routes after 29th March.

1. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

JC asked JS if the old map showed a green route where Route 6, but JS said it did not. ME felt it would be helpful to look at the old maps that JS had when meetings were allowed again.

SL said she hoped that Woodmancote PC and HPC could work together on other positive issues, maybe to include other Downland Parishes perhaps using the Inter Parish Group which had been formed to fight the Mayfield development proposals. ME agreed wholeheartedly but he wanted to get Safe Routes further along a little further before approaching Nikki Ernest the Chair of the IPG.

1. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

In 6 – 8 weeks’ time and BS would circulate possible dates shortly.

Footnote: ME noted after the meeting that we hadn’t fully explored route 6 because of a shortage of time. If JC, DJ and RN want to discuss their findings in more detail please let him know and he and Gill will arrange a further Zoom conversation on Route 6 so that it can move forward.