



One HENFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

**Notes from a meeting of Safe Routes
Working Group held on
Thursday 13th May 2021 at 11.30am via
Zoom conferencing.**

AGENDA

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

Meeting Secretary: Belinda Samrah (BS)

Apologies: Malcom Eastwood (ME) and Richard Kendall (RK)

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 17TH MARCH 2021

These were agreed.

2. MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

3. SIX ROUTES – TO RECEIVE UPDATES

1. Safe cycling link between Small Dole and the Downs Link - Led by ME and SS –

It was confirmed that one of the landowners is happy to meet after 21 June 2021. In the meeting of 26th January it had been agreed that two Parish Councillors plus two member of this group meet with the landowners

ACTION POINT: BS to check with ME but those likely to be involved ME, GP, RN and SS. If agreeable then a date needs to be organised for late June.

An email from another landowner had been received and he would be happy to meet on his return. He's abroad at the moment.

ACTION POINT: The same four to meet with this landowner on his return.

SS felt it would be vital to identify the landowner of the river bank. It was thought that this had already established this but there was some uncertainty after meeting with one of the landowners so it was hoped that ME might be able to confirm.

ACTION POINT: BS to check with ME and if necessary make contact with WSCC about ownership along the River bank. After the meeting ME confirmed that the landowner owned the land up to the river bank and the Environment agency own the actual river bank.

ACTION POINT: BS to check with HDC and/or WSCC whether they have any relevant grants for the upgrade of footpaths or whether Henfield Parish Council would purchase required materials.

RN confirmed that he had made contact with the third landowner who wanted to know more details about the route. They felt that New Hall Lane could not be used but possibly Mill Lane or Stretham Lane.

SL stated that the road is aggressively signed at the moment saying It is a Private Road, seeming to put walkers off using it. She also felt that it does link up well with

walking route through Oreham Common. GP said that she had also seen these types of signs in several locations which seem designed to discourage using the Public Right of Way. PC agreed and said that he had been shouted at whilst walking or running by houseowners.

ACTION POINT – When talking to landowners they should be encouraged not to put up these signs, that walkers needed to be encouraged.

2. 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 Landowner is still not known.

PC confirmed that he and SL had re-covered the route to establish that the footpath is perfectly good. They have also covered south of Horn Lane and SL has photographic evidence of the path, but that there are a number of stiles. SL also said that the existing footpath is really churned up by horses.

PC – showed photos of the route with gates not in obvious places along the route, as it crosses Horn Lane, RN thought that the fence had been erected by Rampion. The new gates were not well signposted and route required walkers to go through several horse paddocks in a zigzag. There is a new farm track which is unofficially being used as an alternative by some.

RN said that he thought that the Farm is about to be sold and the current owners do not want people on their land, he felt it might be wise to wait until new owners get in and make contact at that time.

ACTION POINT – BS to make sure that WSCC Rangers are aware of these issues, the signs should be easily visible with gates clearly marked and the historic sign from previous path changed to the rerouted path.

PC also said that the crossing around the Farm by Terry's Cross is very awkward. RN confirmed that Woodmancote PC are awaiting a response from WSCC about A 281.

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

ME confirmed that he had seen the owner of Sussex Prairies they had agreed that the Bilsborough footpath would be used for a "Walk for Louise" (Clark) event on Sunday 22nd August. Both Woodmancote PC and Shermanbury PC would be invited to participate shortly.

LS confirmed that she and ME had walked alternative Route 3a. This is a wider route, more suited to horses but at the start in Blackstone there is a sign in a stables which states that "this is not a bridleway" but there are hoof marks on the footpath. There is also a stream crossing via a bridge with steps which would be a challenge for horses and would need some reengineering. There are 5 stiles to cross; the same number as the alternative route through Bilsborough. There is an ability to "cross" from this route to the Bilsborough footpath for those who wish to arrive at Sussex Prairies rather than the Wheatsheaf.

LS said it really is not suitable for a cycle. She confirmed that they left the Cricket pitch and headed east to Blackstone Lane but there are stiles. The path is wide and flat and a good solid base to walk but the bridges and stiles make it unsuitable for a bridleway. She took a left and entered the village of Blackstone. She said that it was a lovely walk.

JC said that those who had been riding horses for many years all agree that this is the route used by them for a long time. RN suggested that WSCC may need to be contacted to re-instate access. GP wondered whether hedging along the current path might shield horses from the walkers or cyclists if landowners either side felt their horses would be

disturbed by cyclists. LS thought that all the difficulties this would mean that everyone would have to use the main road instead of the paths/bridleways. RN stated that the owners of Woodhouse Farm use that road and only allow access to a few people to use.

4. **Safe bridleway/walking link between Furners Lane/Furners Mead and Blackstone - Led by JC and RN** – ME had already contacted WSCC – likely to take at least another year before a decision might be expected. He felt that the preferred routes in and out of Blackstone could be discussed before this moves to consultation.

JC confirmed that the land owner has erected vertical bars to stop cycles getting through but was aware that some people are getting round it.

ACTION POINT: RN said that Woodmancote PC would write to the landowners about the aggressive signage.

SL wondered whether BN5 could carry reports of landowners that are doing a good job for members of the public rather than complaining about those that do not, may be raising awareness amongst the public. GP asked if anyone was aware of landowners who have been helpful by promptly replacing stiles and bridges and that details are sent to BS at Parish Office. SL also wondered if we could enlist the Monday Club (or an alternative group) to improve stiles and surfaces. RN suggested that SL (as a resident of Poynings/Fulking) contacted Mid Sussex DC who support the Monday Club.

ACTION POINT – GP asked if SL could give a brief synopsis of what Monday Club does at the next meeting.

JS joined the meeting at 12.15pm.

5. **Safe walking link between the Downs (at Fulking) and Henfield avoiding A281 wherever possible - Led by PC and SL** – BS has contacted WSCC, they have no proposals for a speed reduction on road or markings for crossing points. There is still consideration being given though and Woodmancote PC are still involved too.

6. **Safe bridleway link between Henfield and Woodmancote Place avoiding A281 – Led by JC, DJ and RN**

JC said that finding out who the landowner is was a priority. DJ confirmed that it was a very pleasant walk, but first step is finding the owner.

JC asked the group whether they would consider an additional route to be made a bridleway? The very short route from Common to Furners Mead/Daisycroft which at the moment does not allow cyclists or horses. This would prevent riders from having to go around the roundabout at Golden Square. PC said he thought it was very narrow and wondered whether a walker and a horse could pass each other freely. JC said that riders would wait. JC had spoken with residents on both sides of the footpath and both were tentatively agreeable but have concerns about horse droppings being left behind.

GP asked whether the group were agreeable to adding this as a seventh route. All agreed.

ACTION POINT: that this route be included in future discussions as Safe Route 7.

4. AGREE NEXT STEPS TO INCLUDE

This was included in the Action Points.

5. POTENTIAL LOST RIGHTS OF WAY

A few queries were raised by Chris Smith at Don't Lose your Way group and these have been answered by both Julia and Liz Smith. GP said that part of that discussion had meant looking at the old fashioned route. JS said that she and ME had discussed the old maps that Elaine Goodyear had given her and he had taken a number of old maps away.

RN said he would like access these old maps, JS confirmed that they did not exactly match the 'Don't lose your way' maps. But that she believed these to be from the 1960s.

ACTION POINT: BS would see if it were possible to scan or copy the map(s) so that all could see them.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

SS hoped that it might be possible to re-issue the map that ME originally circulated with the updated routes to add clarity to our discussion, as some options had been adapted since January.

ACTION POINT: ME to re-draw the routes on the map and re-issue to group members with the agenda for next meeting.

GP confirmed that she had been following the Slow Ways project and had received training on reviewing footpaths. Only one comes through Henfield which is not a 'hub' at present. The route is Stehur1 (Steyning to Hurstpierpoint). RN noted that this probably went through Blackstone along one of our potential safe routes. GP will send details to BS for circulation.

SL wondered whether a link with schools could be established in the hope that more children could walk or cycle to school, maybe from Henfield to Steyning using the Downs link.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was hoped that the next meeting would be in about six weeks' time around 24th June and that BS would circulate dates for the group to notify her of their availability.

The meeting finished at 12.40pm.