

Walberton Neighbourhood Plan Review

Getting Around – Walking, Cycling and Horse Riding – a review.

- 1. Introduction:** As part of the review programme, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group set up a small working group of residents to look at the network of public rights of way (prows): to report back on its condition and to recommend what action may be necessary. It's purpose is twofold:
 - To establish whether new policies are needed in the Neighbourhood Plan to protect/improve access for residents
 - To provide the Parish Council with evidence when considering planning applications that might have a good or bad impact on access.
- 2. Summary:** Overall, the Parish is well served with prows, the network giving off-road access to most parts of the Parish. The paths are generally well maintained and signposted. However, the anticipated increase in population and the considerable additional volume of traffic will need improvements to ensure new housing development is sustainable.
- 3. Maintenance:** West Sussex County Council's access rangers inspect every path and all signposts every 15 months and contractors then carry out all necessary works; in addition there is an annual clearance programme for some paths .

The Parish Council also has powers to maintain the paths, which it does sparingly through volunteer members of Walberton Task Force. The South Downs National Park has no maintenance responsibilities but may assist in the costs of improvements within the Park.

The Working Party has produced a comprehensive survey report on the condition of all the paths, which has been sent to WSCC.

- 4. The network:** A reasonable network of footpaths and bridleways serves the east and south parts of the Parish; fewer paths serve the area west of Walberton Village. For that reason links between communities and access to public transport depends on the road network – the great

majority of which are still unimproved country lanes with little or no footway or verge.

It should be noted that the network is enhanced by a number of permissive paths dedicated by farmers on their land south and east of Walberton village and in the woodland areas.

- 5. The Users:** This report is concerned with all non motorised users for both utility purposes and for leisure:
- **Walkers** - - getting to school or work or to the shops; walking the dog, enjoyment of the countryside, rambling, jogging, etc
 - **Cyclists** - also getting to school or work and off-road cycling up into the Downs
 - **Horse riders**- some 200 equestrians in the parish need to exercise their horses and need to use the busy roads to get access to the bridleway network.
- 6. What are the future needs of residents?** The network was created based on the needs in former centuries in a rural environment. Over the next 20 years some 500 houses are to be built in the Fontwell community (though not all within the Parish boundary) and a further 200 in Walberton village. These developments could bring 1,500 extra resident cars and 2-300 more children needing safe access to schools. The population of the parish may increase by 50%. The Working Party has identified the present and future needs as follows:
- a) Safe off-road paths for walkers and cyclists to schools, to shops and to public transport.
 - b) Footways alongside the carriageways where they are missing and where traffic is a hazard.
 - c) Circular recreational walks - especially for dog owners.
 - d) Traffic calming on lanes used by equestrians.
 - e) Longer distance paths for commuting and recreational use - e.g. access to Arundel, Chichester, Barnham and Yapton.
 - f) Safe crossings of the A27 and A29 for all
 - g) Ensure that the construction of a new A27 Arundel Bypass provides improved access through and to the National Park for all non-motorised users.
 - h) Good information should be available to residents and visitors alike.

- 7. Priority for Action:** The Working Party recommends that the following issues should be taken into account as the Neighbourhood Plan is Reviewed and the Parish Council adopt these proposals as future policy:
- A. **Cycle links:** Barnham Lane Cycleway has been a great success but the extension of the cycleway to Fontwell along West Walberton Lane is not safely usable. Traffic is increasing and there is inadequate width to provide a separate surface for walkers and cyclists; moreover the unstable subsoil means the surface of the carriageway is constantly subsiding, making cycling at night particularly hazardous. An alternative route by way of Copse Lane could be investigated. This is a crucial issue to be addressed before the new housing in Fontwell is fully occupied.
 - B. **The A27 Trunk Road:** this road forms a major barrier to residents wishing to cross to the National Park, with only one safe access point – the tunnel at Fontwell – and even there access to it is poor. Similar provision must be provided as and when improvements on the A27 are being designed. Similar consideration must be taken into account if the A29 is to be rerouted.
 - C. **Havenwood Caravan Park:** residents are very isolated – a link for walkers and cyclists alongside the A27 should be provided as far as Binsted Lane (W).
 - D. **Old Scotland Lane (BW338):** this bridleway provides an excellent direct off road route for all non-motorised means of travelling through the National Park; the section in the parish has been improved by WSCC but major improvements are needed in Tortington Parish to complete the link to Arundel.
 - E. **Information:** Walberton Parish Council is encouraged to continue to provide information to residents – including the updating of the booklet *6 Walks Around Walberton (now to be 7 walks)*.
 - F. **New developments:** Walberton Parish Council is recommended to ensure that public paths affected by future development proposals are protected and enhanced and that planning policies are alert to the need to fill in the gaps between safe footways.

*(Members of the Working Party: Peter Brown, Sarah Caffyn, Teresa Gess,
Bob Rogers and Belinda Wilkins)*