

Arborfield & Barkham Neighbourhood Plan

Greenways Report

29 September 2016

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1. Background to the Greenways project.

The parishes of Arborfield & Newland and Barkham both have extensive networks of rights of ways. Due to a combination of gaps, unsafe crossings of main roads and increasing traffic on minor roads, this network has considerable weaknesses as a leisure amenity and fails to provide realistic options for commuting and as routes to schools. Consequently it is an important objective of the Neighbourhood Plan to develop a much more coherent route structure. This is an aim supported by the residents survey carried out in September 2012.

WBC have been preparing their own strategy for greenways as it is recognised as a necessary requirement to encourage a more sustainable transport system and as it contributes towards a healthier community. In this context, a greenway is intended to be a right of way that can be used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders and would have an all weather surface that can be shared by all these three categories of users. An outline plan of key routes has been prepared. Government money has been available to support these aims.

The planning applications for several parcels of the SDL have been submitted. These will include greenways within the SDL and some outline proposals have been indicated for routes connecting the SDL to other communities. A main focus is to provide safe routes to the new Bohunt secondary school. This affords the possibility of developing some routes with the assistance of development funds.

Meanwhile a Neighbourhood Plan Greenways Group has been set up, comprising a number of residents. This group has discussed the issues and has carried out some surveys of potential greenways (see section 8 and Appendix 4). Consultation with other groups has also been initiated (see section 4).

Some of the Greenways Group have met with WBC to share thoughts on how the greenways project could be taken forward. It was agreed to keep in touch so as to review how our thinking corresponded or diverged, with the hope that we could move towards a common plan of action with wide support.

2. Priority Projects Identified

The following topics have been identified as priorities. They are in no particular order or ranking:

1. Greenway suitable for cycling from Arborfield Cross to the SDL (safe route to school) (Section 8 route 1)
2. Greenway suitable for cycling from Barkham to the SDL (safe route to school) and extension to Wokingham centre (commuting) (Section 8 route 2c and Section 9)
3. Improved crossings at various locations including Barkham Road adjacent to Barkham Bull, Edney's Hill and Pegasus crossing in Mole Road. (Section 14)
4. Ensure proposed greenways in SDL are fit for purpose, in particular adequate crossings provided for main roads, specifically Biggs Lane, Shearlands Road and the Nine Mile Ride Extension. (Section 17)
5. Signs for existing footpaths, e.g. The Coombes Circular Walk, Barkham to Rooks Nest. (Section 19)
6. Plans for longer routes, e.g. Bearwood Circle linking The Coombes, Woosehill. Sindlesham and Carters Hill. (Section 19)
7. Loddon Path. (Section 18)
8. Develop circular routes for horse riding especially in The Coombes and Carters Hill area.. (Section 11)
9. Bridge over Arborfield bypass (Section 14)
10. Reclaiming quiet lanes, specifically. Church Lane (Arborfield) and Edney's Hill.(Barkham) (Section 161)
11. Promotion of greenways (maps, websites, QR codes etc.) (Section 19)
12. Maintenance arrangements for stiles, kissing gates and ensuring adequate drainage to facilitate all weather usage. (Section 20)

As all of the above are considered to be priorities, there needs to be active planning within the next two years with a view to implementation before 2020.

3. Strategy

The Greenways Working Group agreed that the main requirements would include cycleways, walking routes (footpaths, bridleways and byways) and equestrian routes (bridleways and byways).: Providing cycling and walking routes in and around the new Arborfield Green development is crucial to encouraging greater use of sustainable transport modes in preference to car journeys, in particular it is essential that “safe routes to school” are created to permit cycling and walking to the new Bohunt secondary school..

Each of the three categories will have different priorities in terms of both location and physical conditions:

- a) Cycleways will be point to point routes, require all weather hard surface, some lighting and ideally should not be in remote areas. Cycleways may be best provided alongside existing main roads but width of existing footways and verges is a major a constraint.
- b) Walking routes should provide the opportunity for circular walks. Drainage is very much an issue as all weather routes are required: Hard surfaces, however, are not essential
- c) Equestrian routes also should provide circular opportunities and exclude on-road sections. Crossing points on main roads require good sightlines and appropriate traffic calming.

The following key corridors for cycleways were identified, with an emphasis particularly on routes to secondary schools but also to other significant destinations such as the railway station, employment areas and leisure centres:

- i. SDL to Arborfield Cross
- ii. SDL to Barkham
- iii. SDL to Finchampstead
- iv. Barkham to Finchampstead
- v. Barkham to Wokingham station
- vi. Arborfield Cross to Barkham (also providing route to Wokingham station)
- vii. Arborfield Cross to Shinfield and Reading
- viii. Barkham to Winnersh

WBC have developed their own strategy for developing greenways. This is based on an integrated network comprising four routes traversing the south western portion of the Borough. This approach is welcomed though there is concern that the draft network seems to be aimed at linking SDLs to SDLs rather than residential areas (existing and future) to key destinations. Also it does not clearly distinguish between commuting and leisure requirements. That said there are many useful suggestions and significant commonality with the programme proposed by the Greenways Group.

Particular issues arise with mixed use routes, e.g. cycle/ pedestrian ways require a degree of segregation and adequate width; walking/ equestrian routes need adequate width and drainage becomes an issue for walkers if the route becomes too muddy. If byways have too high a quality, then use by motorcycles and off road vehicles can become a problem.

Land ownership will be an obstacle where it is proposed to create new stretches of route or to widen existing ones.

The Greenways Group has noted existing standards applied by WBC and central government.

4. Greenways Group work programme

The Greenways Group first met in May 2013 and was then relaunched in September 2014.. Participants included parish councillors and a number of local residents from both parishes.

The group aimed to reach some preliminary conclusions in the first three months. It was felt that this would help discussions with WBC. Also it would help the parishes to comment more meaningfully on SDL planning applications.

The following action points were therefore agreed:

- Review the eight corridors and consider what options might exist to provide specific routes, adjacent to main routes.
- Check standards for greenways – widths etc
- Discussion with equestrian groups
- Discussion with Shinfield PC re greenways
- List significant gaps in existing network of footpaths

Following the successful conclusion of this phase, an outline plan of specific routes, including alternatives where necessary, has been prepared. This provided the base for some preliminary survey work to be completed.

These tasks were successfully completed and were reflected in, the first Draft Greenways Report, which was circulated in January 2015 to WBC and other interested parties..

During the next twelve months, the following topics were addressed:

- More detailed surveys of existing routes and preparing a definitive plan
- Prioritising the various routes proposed.
- Public survey carried out at the Arborfield Fete.
- Consideration of types of surface required for each route.
- Crossings strategy, to improve safety where routes cross main roads
- Reclaiming quiet lanes where fast moving traffic discourages use by cyclists, walkers and horse riders, who are all vulnerable users.
- Reviewing historic rights of way that could be usefully reinstated.
- Improving signposting on selected walking routes

5. Consultation with other groups

Discussions have taken place with the following of groups and bodies on either a formal or informal basis.

Wokingham Borough Council

Meetings have taken place with WBC on a number of occasions with the main meetings being held 31 July 2013, 4 September 2014, 1 June 2015 and 26 May 2016.. These included discussions about how the Arborfield and Barkham Greenway Project would interface with WBC's own proposals, implications and opportunities arising from the My Journey scheme, SDL linkages and footpath signs, maps and maintenance. A significant number of other informal meetings have also taken place.

Shinfield Parish Council

A productive meeting was held with a representative of the council 24 October 2014. This was an opportunity to be updated on Shinfield PC's plans, including a proposed cycleway from Shinfield to Arborfield towards the new secondary school in the SDL. The latter will become a particular priority once a sixth form is opened at the school, as this would be attended by pupils from Shinfield. In addition the meeting provided some useful contacts with other groups. Alternative routes include a cross country route or a cycleway alongside the A327 and the proposed bypass.

Winnersh Parish Council

A meeting took place with the Winnersh PC Planning Committee 31 March 2015. This outlined the objectives of the Greenways Group and explored the possibility of promoting a footpath using existing rights of way between the two parishes. Contact has been maintained to bring forward this concept when the initial Barkham signage scheme has been implemented.

Wokingham Town Council

There have been informal discussion with some Wokingham Town councillors. The objective of developing a route from Barkham to the town centre, incorporating an improved railway crossing received encouragement.

Finchampstead Parish Council

There has been informal discussion.

Local Access Forum

A meeting of the Mid and West Berkshire LAF was attended 27 May 2015 at which the Greenway Project was outlined. More recently a member of the Greenways Group was appointed as the deputy chairman of the LAF, thus ensuring further communication and sharing of ideas.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan working group

Meetings with the ROWIP group 11 November 2014 and 10 May 2016 have taken place, in particular with a view to re-establishing disused rights of way.

Ramblers Association

There has been informal discussion.

Dinton Pastures Walking Group

There has been informal discussion.

Limmerhill Walking Group

Meeting took place 10 June 2015 to discuss the possible route from Barkham to the town centre and in particular how the gap from Sandy Lane to Limmerhill Road might be closed.

Wokingham Bridleways Group

Discussions have taken place with Wokingham Bridleways Group who have also provided representation at the Greenways Group meetings.

Parents Reference Group (Bohunt School)

A meeting was held with the Parents Reference Group on 4 May 2016 and there have been other exchanges by email. This group has a keen interest in developing safe routes to the new secondary school to be located at Arborfield Green. In the short term, the Leopard Bus will be crucial in providing access, but it remains a high priority to provide cycle routes from Barkham, along Barkham Road and Langley Common Road and from Arborfield along Eversley Road. These proposals are considered in more detail in Section 9

6. Public Survey

A public survey was carried out at The Arborfield Fete on 6 June 2015. Some additional responses were also obtained from residents who did not attend the fete. The results clearly were weighted towards Arborfield residents (59%) rather than Barkham (17%), but nevertheless it was considered that they gave a useful insight into local behaviour.

- Purpose of outing: dog walking and rambling groups featured strongly. Specifically the Health Walks from Henry Street were mentioned several times..
- Circular routes generally preferred
- Great interest in Loddon Riverside Walk
- Survey sample weighted towards older age groups.
- Vast majority of responses by walkers – relatively few cyclists and riders

Summary of results:

- Q1. Total responses were 111, including 95 walkers, 35 cyclists and 16 riders. Note that there is double counting as many people responded under more than one category.
- Q2. Average distance about 4 miles for walkers, 10 miles for cyclists and 5 miles for riders.
- Q3. Mornings score highest but generally a spread through the day. Weekends were specifically mentioned by 25% of respondents.
- Q4. Just over a third of walking respondents are dog walkers. Leisure or exercise are other main groups. Only 11% of cyclists were commuting.
- Q5. Most respondents walk/cycle/ride as individuals (65%) at least some of the time but family groups feature strongly (60%).
- Q6. Strong preference to walk/cycle/ride from home (86%).
- Q7. Strong preference for circular routes (83%).
- Q8. Routes mentioned most included The Coombes (26% of walkers, 54% of riders) and footpath AN17 from Melrose Gardens to Farley Hill (17% of walkers). Farley Hill (46%) and Carters Hill (31%) most mentioned by riders. Henry Street mentioned several times in the context of walking groups. One cyclist regularly commutes from Sindlesham to Farnborough.
- Q9. Strong preference for off road routes (79%). Off road was preferred by 100% of riders
- Q10. Loddon Valley Path is a well supported concept with 86% showing interest.
- Q11. Half of respondents walk/cycle/ride daily. Some, especially dog walkers, are out twice daily while 69% of riders are out daily.
- Q12. Arborfield residents were 59% of respondents, with Barkham only 17% and other areas 23%. This is not surprising as the survey was mainly carried out at the Arborfield Fete.
- Q13. Age groups 30 to 70 most strongly represented, but this is basically a reflection of our sample. It would have been useful to have reached more of the under 30 age group.
- Q14. Male/female split is almost even for walkers, but cycling is predominantly a male activity (83%) and riding a female activity (75%).

In general the results were not surprising and reinforced previous thinking on these topics. The biggest gap was an understanding of how many people use the different walking routes. There is also a feeling that the needs of different types of cyclists (commuting, school, off road sporting etc.) were not fully identified. Younger people should be targeted in any future survey.

A further analysis is included in Appendix 3.

7. Standards

WBC Cycle Design Guide were examined, and also some of the DfT and Sustrans publications. The working dimensions recommended are as follows:

- Shared footway/cycleway (unsegregated) - desirable minimum 3.0m; absolute minimum 2.0m
- Segregated footway/cycleway - pedestrian element desirable minimum 2.0m, absolute minimum 1.5m; cycling element desirable minimum 3.0m, absolute minimum 2.0m
- Cycle lane (on carriageway) - desirable minimum 2.0m, absolute minimum 1.5m, absolute minimum (exceptional circumstances) 1.2m
- There are a variety of options for separate facilities and for hybrids (eg where separation from traffic is effected by a difference in levels)
- For the footway/cycleway options, between 0.25m and 0.5m is to be added if one of the boundaries is flanked by vertical features, such as a wall, depending on the height.

Consequently, in most cases, the absolute working minimum will be 2.25m. This should be increased where usage levels are expected to be significant. Given the desired usage levels for the routes, 3.5m should be the target.

Rather worryingly, it seems, the standards appear to apply to both 1-way and 2-way facilities. Whereas pedestrians might be expected to be walking in either direction, 2-way cycling in any quantity is not desirable on a shared facility. Where footway/cycleways are being provided on both sides of a road, this should not be too much of a problem, provided that there is not a change of side so that cyclists find themselves switched onto a cycle lane on the wrong side of the road.

As outlined above, minima for combined cycleway/footways should be 2.25m if shared and 4.0m if segregated. This includes a tolerance for adjacent walls and hedges. These widths are also tight if significant amounts of two way travel is anticipated.

For reference, WBC appear to have used the following standards on some recently installed greenways:

- Station link road (cycle and footways segregated, 2-way, no hedges or walls is 3.6m including the kerb.
- Lower Earley Way (shared cycle/footway, 2-way) is 3.2m including kerb and fence where there is no hedge..

8. Cycleways and shared use greenways

As noted in the strategy, cycleways will be point to point routes. A primary goal should be to provide safe routes to and from the new secondary school. There is also a need to encourage commuting, especially to the railway station at Wokingham where parking is limited and expensive. These cycleways will require all weather hard surfaces, they should have some lighting and if possible they should not be in remote areas.

Ideally all the main routes within the two parishes should have an associated cycleway. This would include the A327, Langley Common Road, Barkham Road, Barkham Street, Barkham Ride and Bearwood Road. , In view of the width limits outlined above this is virtually impossible within existing highway boundaries. Constraints include houses very close to the road on the A327 near Bridge Farm, the brick wall along Barkham Road opposite the Bull, very narrow boundaries along Barkham Street, lack of verges in Barkham Ride, obstructing trees in Barkham Road and ditches along Bearwood Road. This means that off road solutions would have to be considered in most cases.

Based on the eight corridors identified, the following options were considered:

Corridor	Route	Comments	Feasibility
1. SDL to Arborfield Cross	Cycleway adjacent to Eversley Road.	Width constraints north of Link Way less of an issue once bypass constructed, especially if this becomes traffic calmed area.	Feasible at low cost
2. SDL to Barkham	a) Cycleway adjacent to Langley Common Rd/Barkham Road	Though obvious route, existing footway (north side only) is too narrow for most of its length.	School Reference Group favour this solution but there are feasibility issues.
	b) Commonfield Lane - BA11 & BA10 then BA33 or via Doles Lane	Assumes new way adjacent to Commonfield Lane (see notes below) Existing RoW across country. Some drainage issues at crossing of brook. Safety issues at Edney's Hill. Three alternative routes to Barkham Rd to consider.	Existing RoW No land ownership issues (NB land by Commonfield Lane owned by AGLC and WBC) Calming in Edney's Hill required. Doles lane probably better option than BA33 Feasible at moderate cost
	c) Commonfield Lane - BA11 & BA10 then diverging north along the former Nashgrove Ride to emerge on to Edney's Hill near to Mortimers Farm	Brings the route closer to centre of Barkham Hill and could be extended along Aggisters Lane to provide access to Elizabeth Park.	Nashgrove Rode not an existing RoW but land is owned by WBC.
3. SDL to Finchampstead	a) Commonfield Lane - bridleway BA14 –California Country Park	Assumes safe crossing point on Commonfield Lane	Existing RoW Feasible at low cost
	b) Cycleway adjacent to Nine Mile Ride	Understood this is proposed as part of planning application Not within Barkham boundary	Feasible subject to adequate widths

4. Barkham to Finchampstead	a) Combine option 2b or 2c with 3a		Mainly existing RoW Feasible at low cost
	b) Doles Lane - Sand Martins-Finchampstead Road	Upgrading of existing routes. Could be width limits adjacent to golf course	Existing RoW Feasible at low cost
5. Barkham to Wokingham	a) Cycleway adjacent to Barkham Road	Though obvious route, existing footway (north side only part way) is too narrow for most of its length.	Not considered feasible
	b) Sandy Lane –Fox Hill – Smiths Walk – Murray Road – St Paul's Gate – Reading Road	Uses existing routes from Limmerhill Road to Reading Road	Land ownership is issue between Sandy Lane and Limmerhill Road though there are alternative options to close the gap.
	c) Sandy Lane – north of Shires – Limmerhill Road -- Oakland Drive Ashville Way – railway crossing adjacent allotments – Elms Field	Assumes new rail crossing is built to replace existing crossing near Ormonde Road. Alternative access from Ashville Way could improve access to Molly Millars Lane area	Land ownership is issue between Sandy Lane and Limmerhill Road. Footbridge access may be on Network Rail land – not clear where boundary lies.
6. Arborfield Cross to Barkham (also provides route to Wokingham station)	a) Cole Lane and Coombes Lane	Existing route but given remoteness is not considered suitable as all weather cycleway	Existing RoW Feasible at low cost
	b) School Road – BA7 (Kidgham Lane) to Barkham Street thence Church Lane and BA10 to Edney's Hill	Crossings of Langley Common Road and Barkham Street to be considered	Existing RoW Feasible at low cost
7. Arborfield Cross to Shinfield and Reading	A327 cycleway adjacent to Shinfield and Arborfield relief roads with additional roadside routes from Parrot and Magpie to Farley Farms to create continuous route .	Cycleways are planned for the relief roads so link between the two will provide lengthy continuous route.	Some improvements to existing A327 link will be required to ensure the route does not flood.
	Cross country to Greensward Lane, via Rounds Copse, new Loddon crossing to School Green	Shinfield PC have discussed this route with WBC .	Some land ownership issues Loddon crossing a cost issue Possible financial support from Shinfield SDL
	Cross country route via Hall Farm to Cutbush Lane	Route mainly uses existing RoWs	Some land ownership issues

Additional Notes

Commonfield Lane greenway

It is suggested that a new greenway could be provided along the whole of its length. Crest Nicholson have agreed to create a greenway on the southern part of Commonfield Lane, within the development boundary. The greenway would then cross to the east side of the lane, which also creates a direct link towards Finchampstead using bridleway 14. The further link to the Barkham Street/Barkham Ride junction needs to be resolved, along with provision of a safe crossing on the main road.

Commonfield Lane junction with Barkham Street/Barkham Ride

Improvements to this dangerous junction have been considered in the past and the landowner directly involved was willing to cooperate. If the junction is realigned to smooth the bend, the suggested greenway along Commonfield Lane could be realigned to make a safe crossing to bridleway BA11 in the direction of Barkham Church. At the moment this footpath is not usable as it exits directly on to the main road where there is no verge and poor sightlines.

Bridleway BA14

It is proposed to upgrade bridleway BA14 as part of the SDL linkages. When upgraded to cycle way standard, this should be designated as part of the round Berkshire Cycleway, thus avoiding a very narrow and dangerous stretch of Barkham Ride that is included in the existing route. BA14 follows the boundaries of Barkham and Finchampstead parishes.

The Greenways Group carried out further research of key sections of the above proposals, as follows:

- Footpaths BA7 and BA10 south of Edney's Hill
- Commonfield Lane, junction and bridleway
- Edney's Hill to Barkham Road alternatives
- SDL to Arborfield Cross
- Sandy Lane to Limmerhill Road alternatives
- Coombes Lane - Cole Lane to Arborfield Cross

The aim was to review existing RoWs to assess widths (including any verges), gradients. Survey reports are shown in Appendix 2.

Conclusions

Priorities for further consideration include 1, 2c, 3a, 3b, 4a, 5b, 6b and 7.

The portion of 5c from Sandy Lane to Limmerhill Road is an alternative to 5b while the suggested new rail crossing from Ashville Way should be considered as a long term project.

6a should be considered as a footway and equestrian way but not as a prime cycleway.

It is assumed Finchampstead Parish Council will lead on 3b and Shinfield Parish Council on 7.

9. Cycling – Safe Routes to School

Many parents of Year 6 children in the Barkham Hill area have chosen to send their children to the new Bohunt secondary school at Arborfield Green. These numbers can be expected to increase as the school expands in the coming years.

If these children have to rely on car transport, then this obviously will exacerbate the already congested conditions on local roads at peak times. The Leopard Bus will provide an option, especially if the timetable and route are adjusted to facilitate access to the school. However many of these children would prefer to cycle to school if at all possible. This is a healthy, active, independent approach should be encouraged, but there are some safety improvements to the route to school that need to happen to make this possible

A low cost solution which could be quickly implemented would be to designate the existing footpath alongside Barkham Road and Langley Common Road. A number of improvements would be required:

- Lower 30mph speed limits in Bearwood Road and along Langley Common Road from Barkham Bridge to Biggs Lane.
- A safe crossing of Bearwood Road, as a minimum a central refuge must be provided, better still would be a raised “platform crossing” that would slow down the traffic.
- A safe crossing also in School Road
- Clearing of vegetation where the existing footpath is somewhat overgrown. This is particularly the case on Coppid Hill and near the bridge.
- At the Biggs Lane end of the route, it is assumed that the existing pedestrian underpass would be retained.
- Safe routes, it is assumed, will be provided onwards to the school, making use of the proposed greenway and roadside footpaths.

Safety of the wall at Barkham Manor needs to be assessed. The existing footpath here is very narrow and Barkham Road is at its busiest point. At the moment the wall is showing signs of leaning over towards the road – in an ideal world it would be rebuilt perhaps less than a metre further from the road. This would make the route safer and would avoid future – and one suspects, perpetual – maintenance. However this is a listed structure requiring preservation.

A safe route will also be required from Arborfield Cross. This would run alongside Eversley Road, from Link Way to the underpass at Rickman Close. There is an existing footpath along this route: there is scope for further improvements when the A327 is diverted via the new relief road when there should be an opportunity to address this problem. This route is surveyed in more detail in Appendix 4.7.

10. Walking Routes

Footpaths in Barkham

Difficult and dangerous points on the existing footpath network were recorded. Note that some of these routes are the same as cycleways discussed in the previous section. Greenway Routes within Barkham (Arborfield)

Footpath BA10 Crossing point to Footpath BA33 on Edney's Hill is on a very dangerous bend in the road which is not wide enough and difficult for two cars to pass safely. This crossing point needs to be made safe.

Footpath BA10 to Footpath #7 on Edney's Hill/Evencons Lane involves walking along a very narrow road with no footpath for about 250m. There are dangerous bends in the road and it is difficult for two cars to pass safely. This section of the road needs to be made safer with a parallel footpath.

Footpath BA10 crosses a small seasonal stream next to the track from Brook Farm. This needs some form of elevated path as it becomes very muddy in winter and difficult to cross.

Connecting Hayes Lane to Coombes Lane in Bearwood Road involves crossing the road twice on the brow of a hill for just a 200 metre walk. It would be safer if there was a pavement on the West side of Bearwood Road at this point.

Crossing Barkham Road at the junction with School Road to access footpath BA7 is sometimes difficult because vehicles exiting School Road, and turning left heading towards Wokingham, are not visible until the last minute.

Barkham Street is a narrow road and in places has a very narrow footpath (2' or 600mm). Great care needs to be taken, when at the Barn and White Cottages, in case a bus or lorry is passing as you could be hit by its wing mirrors.

At the moment the end of footpath BA14 from Biggs Lane toward Arborfield Cross is blocked off at the far end making it useless as a through route. This is a useful Greenway link for circular walks involving Coombes lane and this blockage needs to be removed by possibly taking a route out to the Eversley Road near Arborfield Cross.

As noted in cycleways (see Section 7), improvements in the area of Commonfield Lane are required. At the moment the link between BA11 and Commonfield Lane is on an extremely dangerous bend, with fast moving traffic and poor sightlines.

Barkham PC is keen to see two small projects involving the creation of roadside footpaths. These are:

- Closing the gap along the east side of Barkham Street, northwards from Church Lane
- Completing the footpath on the east side of Bearwood Road, from Hayes Lane to Coombes Lane.

Both these routes provide improved access for local residents and also help to fill gaps in the wider footpath network.

Footpaths in Arborfield

Arborfield Cross enjoys several footpaths in the centre of the village but most are only 1m wide. However, there are some specific concerns as follows:

- AN16 – no path exists from the roundabout at Arborfield Cross to the start of 16 and walkers have to use the busy Sindlesham Road to access the footpath.
- AN14 – on OS maps and other documents, a public path is marked from (LCR) across fields to exit on to Link Way. The path can be used to traverse the first field then along to the edge of the second field where all evidence is lost. New houses on Link Way have obviously absorbed the footpath some years ago.
- Crossing points of the Arborfield bypass need to be taken into account in plans. It appears that footpaths AN17 and AN22 will be affected.

Greenway Connections with the Arborfield Garrison SDL

From the Barkham direction one of the main Greenway connections that is likely to be proposed is a new greenway route along or alongside Commonfield Lane. By connecting with the existing footpath network around Barkham Church this will provide off road routes to the new and old centres of Barkham as well as connections towards Wokingham.

There should be a direct connection from the SDL internal Greenways to Finchampstead via Bridleway BA14 that exits onto Commonfield Lane. This will also provide a direct greenway route from the SDL to the California Country Park and Rooks Nest Country Park.

There should be a direct connection from the SDL internal Greenways to footpath AN14 that goes towards Arborfield Cross. If the blockage is removed this will be a useful Greenway link for circular walks involving Coombes lane and off road connections back into Barkham, Woosehill and Wokingham.

Additional Greenways

There is a desperate need for a new greenway route along or adjacent to Commonfield Lane. At the moment this road is mainly a single track road with no pavement. If there is not room to place a foot/horse route adjacent to this road a new route should be made across the adjacent farmland which is WBC owned.

If the existing blockage in footpath AN14 from the end of Biggs Lane toward Arborfield Cross cannot be removed and made into a through route then a new footpath is required to link up with School Road. A possible route is to create a new footpath/bridleway that follows the Barkham Parish boundary from the end of Biggs Lane to Wood Lane thus linking into the Coombes footpath system.

11. Equestrian routes

Equestrian activities have an important economic impact across the parishes of Arborfield and Barkham. There are probably 600-800 horses in the two parishes, stabled privately or livery. This is estimated to be worth £3 to £4 million to the local economy. Without adequate equestrian routes, the attractiveness of horse riding in the area will diminish and drift away to alternative areas such as Bramshill that are better served.

A primary goal must be to develop continuous routes, ideally segregated from traffic. Safe crossings of main roads are essential. Ideally routes should be circular, as indicated by the survey (92% preference for circular routes). Horses are stabled in a range of locations in Arborfield, Barkham, Farley Hill, Finchampstead, Sindlesham and Spencers Wood so improvements to routes in these localities are keenly anticipated..

Managing the equestrian/motoring relationship is in the interests of both sides. For horse riders, there is great danger if horses are startled by (not necessarily fast moving) vehicles. It is a long way down, to fall of a horse and injuries can be serious and on occasion fatal. Horse riders, therefore, do not want to be on roads if there is any viable alternative. For motorists, horses are an unwelcome hazard. They impede the flow of traffic and the more careful drivers have to make allowance not just for unexpected reactions by the horse, but by more reckless behaviour by some other drivers.

Gaps of concern include the following:

- Mole Road between Ellis Hill and Church Lane
- Bridleway BA14 is a dead end – connections to Rooks Nest and California country parks would be desirable.
- Upgrade of BA14 in the Coombes to bridleway is sought to create a circular route, linking the Coombes Lane/Gravel Pitt Lane junction with Rectory Lane (BA6).

There are also safety concerns at crossing points on main roads:

- Mole Road at Copse Barnhill Lane and at Gravel Pit Lane
- Bearwood Road at Sandy Lane
- Barkham Road at Sandy Lane/Doles Lane crossroads
- Commonfield Lane SDL to bridleway BA14
- School Road near Langley Pond Farm

Where possible, a Pegasus crossing should be provided. It is recognised that this is not possible in some locations due to lack of available land and of course cost will be a factor. At the very least there should be appropriate speed limits and warning signs. Alternatively rider activated warning signs could be used, on the lines of one recently installed in Lambourne, West Berkshire.

It would make sense that there is a bridleway connection from the Pegasus crossing on the A327 near the Poppyfields roundabout, through the SDL and emerging at the proposed crossing on Commonfield Lane opposite BA14. This would provide the potential for a continuous like from Finchampstead to the Farley Hill area, where there are many riding opportunities on bridleways and quiet roads.

12. Bridleway surfaces

A sample of a new surface was examined by the group. It has enough springiness to be suitable for equine use. It is porous and hard wearing – apparently it has been used in the USA for 15 years and in this country has had various applications including a portion of the Pennine Way. The product is called Flexi-Pave and is produced by KBI Surfacing. Although the surface is approximately 50% more expensive than a conventional tarmac surface, it is longer wearing and thus is an economic proposition. For more information please see link: www.kbiuk.co.uk

WBC are proposing to install Flexi Pave on several routes: it is good to see that a section is now installed adjacent to Biggs Lane. It is also proposed to upgrade BA14 with the surface to provide a continuous route from Arborfield Green to the Finchampstead Baptist Centre.

13. Crossing strategy

Safe crossings of roads are a necessary element of developing an integrated greenway network. They are most critical for horse riders but is also important for all vulnerable road users including walkers and cyclists – especially young ones. This is not just a local problem for Arborfield and Barkham, it is a problem that need to addressed across the Borough and indeed nationally – transport planners seem to justify modifications on the basis of accident records and usage. This means that prudent horse riders and walkers are deterred from using the routes involved. This is no way to encourage sustainable travel and healthy lifestyles.

As general principles

- Speed limits should be low at significant crossing points, ideally not more than 30mph.
- Crossings should be well marked by lines and/or coloured surfaces: markings do not just make crossings more visible to drivers, they also encourage pedestrians to cross “at the right place”. A case in point is crossing Barkham Road from Barkham Manor towards the Bull: pedestrians are inclined to cross adjacent to the roundabout, without realising there is better visibility a few yards down the hill.

Types of controlled crossing

- Pelican
- Pegasus
- Puffin
- Toucan

Uncontrolled crossings: possible safety improvements

- Road markings to create illusion of road narrowing
- Road markings and coloured surfaces to make crossing point more visible
- Humps and ramps
- Surface treatments with grooves and corrugations to alert drivers
- Central refuges
- Illuminating warning sides
- Speed limits
- Revised road layouts

It is noted that some solutions are not considered acceptable in unlit areas, e.g. speed limits. Imaginative solutions are needed.

In Lambourne a bespoke crossing has been installed, following concerns about the poor visibility for horse riders. The flashing signs can be used in daylight only and can be activated by riders at either side of the road by flicking a toggle-type switch. Once activated the lights flash for 60 seconds and can be activated multiple times if necessary. The initial feedback from trainers and riders is reported to be very positive. This concept could be modified to assist other vulnerable user groups to cross.

Crossing locations requiring attention include the following:

Location	Greenway Group Proposal
Mole Road (Gravel Pitt Lane)	Pegasus crossing proposed
Mole Road (Ellis Hill/Church Lane)	Depends on new greenway (ROWIP)
Relief Road (AN22)	Central refuge/signs
Relief Road (AN17)	Bridge
A327 (Near Poperinghe Way)	Pegasus crossing exists
Biggs Lane (near Lake)	Pegasus crossing proposed
Commonfield Lane (BA14)	Signs and lines
Barkham Ride (BA14)	Signs and lines
Barkham Ride (Commonfield Lane/BA11)	New road layout, ideally a roundabout
Edney's Hill (BA10 near Edney's Hill Farm)	Traffic calming hump, speed limit
Barkham Road (Sandy Lane/Doles Lane)	Signs and lines
Barkham Road (near Aggisters Lane)	Central refuge
Barkham Road (near Bull)	Signs and lines
Barkham Street (near Church Lane)	Signs and lines, speed limit
Bearwood Road (Barkham Road)	Signs and lines (if road wide enough)
Bearwood Road (Sandy Lane)	Signs and lines, speed limit

There is a need for a crossing of Sindlesham Road adjacent to Lockey Farm as pedestrian access is very difficult because of the tight bends. This ought to be in the interests of the farm shop owners as it would encourage custom from the village. The possibility of a footpath linking the farm to Church Lane should also be revisited.

14. Bridge over Arborfield Bypass.

The Arborfield Relief Road is a key piece of infrastructure for the Arborfield SDL. It is proposed that there will be a cycleway provided for its full length, which is obviously beneficial for the development of sustainable transport.

The proposed road crosses two rights of way: AN17 near to Arborfield Court and AN22 near Greensward Lane. Initial proposals showed both rights of way with surface level crossings .

In the case of footpath AN17, it is an obvious(if more expensive) solution to provide a bridge across the relief road. This would retain the integrity of the footpath

It is suggested that the bridge across the relief road on footpath AN17 should be constructed to permit use by horse riders. This would mean upgrading the western part of AN17 to bridleway and should be accompanied by a new bridleway adjacent to the relief road south from Swallowfield Road. This would create a continuous equestrian route from the Arborfield Cross area, where there are several stables, to Farley Hill which offers excellent riding country.

It will be very difficult to justify a bridge or underpass for AN22. However it is essential that, as a minimum, there is a central refuge as walkers will have to cross opposing streams of traffic travelling at 50mph.

15. Recovering “lost” rights of way

Government has set a deadline of 2026 to recover lost footpaths. The 1911 Ordnance Survey is considered as a baseline for establishing old routes: Routes on this map have been checked at the Records Office at Kew. Two routes are of interest, one near Carter’s Hill that would help create a circular riding route in that area, another in the vicinity of Edney’s Hill known as Nashgrove Ride would create an improved route from Barkham Church towards Bearwood Road.

Some possibilities in the Carters Hill area have been identified and will be researched further. Specifically Holloways Lane and Bear Lane were noted. Which would help to create a much needed circular route for equestrian use. In addition Nashgrove Ride in Barkham is a historical route that would provide an improved route from the SDL to Barkham Hill (Section 8 route 2b) .

16. Reclaiming Quiet Lanes.

This is another issue that is not unique to Arborfield and Barkham and which needs to be addressed across the Borough and beyond. The problem arises where narrow country roads are used as rat runs. The level of congestion around Wokingham encourages drivers to be creative in their route planning. The result is that fast moving traffic uses unsuitable narrow lanes and in turn cyclists, walkers and riders are discouraged from using them. The two main examples are Church Lane in Arborfield and Edney’s Hill in Barkham.

WBC have not previously been enthusiastic about tackling this problem with a “quiet lanes” initiative. A report was commissioned to examine options for Whitehorse Lane in Finchampstead but only limited options seem to be available, primarily to discourage traffic with visual narrowing and additional signage.

There are limitations that have to be accepted. Total exclusion of traffic is not possible and large farm vehicles have to operate. A further constraint is that these lanes are not lit.

A more aggressive use of speed limits is also long overdue. It is absurd to allow speed limits of 40mph in Church Lane or the 60mph national speed limit in Edney's Hill: no road that is not wide enough for two cars to pass and has blind bends should not have a speed limit higher than 30mph and arguably 20mph. It appears that speed limits are justified on the basis of what the police force can enforce and reported accident rates. This fails to anticipate problems that might occur, discourages use by the vulnerable road users and leads to an inconsistent approach with similar roads having different speed limits. (An example is Forest Road, where the section from Binfield towards Wokingham has a 40mph limit, while the next section westwards is at the national limit, in spite of having a roundabout and a dangerous T junction at the end. May be it is not a coincidence that the former section is in Bracknell Forest and the latter in Wokingham.)

It is encouraging that a circular was published in 2013 by the Department of Transport (Circular 01/2013) which seems to be more accommodating in recognising the practical difficulties of vulnerable users and other environmental issues. The circular actively encourages 20 mph zones, though primarily in urban areas. The following extract is illuminating with regard to walking cycling, walking and riding:

32, Different road users perceive risks and appropriate speeds differently, and drivers and riders of motor vehicles often do not have the same perception of the hazards of speed as do people on foot, on bicycles or on horseback. Fear of traffic can effect peoples' quality of life and the needs of vulnerable road users must be fully taken into account in order to further encourage these modes of travel and improve their safety. Speed management strategies should seek to protect local community life.

The circular also calls into question the percentile methodology which appears to have been the overriding principle of setting speed limits:

35, Mean speed and 85th percentile speed (the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles are travelling) are the most commonly used measures of actual traffic speed. Traffic authorities should continue to routinely collect and assess both, but mean speeds should be used as the basis for determining local speed limits.

A review of local speed limits would be timely.

17. Priorities for Arborfield Green

Creating a comprehensive greenway network would provide a superb opportunity to create a community where cycling and walking can genuinely substitute for car transport. The distances from the extremities of Arborfield Green to the District Centre is modest (a little over 1km) but proper segregated routes with safe crossings are essential. If a coherent network is built, then this would be well used by much of the community, not least the young and the old.

A number of greenways are already proposed within Arborfield Green. In particular the developer has proposed the creation of an east-west route, making use of the linear park. This is welcomed. The following features also need to be ensured.

- Adequate width, to permit shared use for walkers, cyclists and horses. It is understood that a width of up to 3 metres will be provided where possible.
- An all weather surface. WBC is proposing to use a flexi pave surface, funded by the S106 agreement – this is good news.
- A Pegasus crossing where the greenway intersects Biggs Lane. This will be essential for horse users but will also benefit walkers and cyclists, including students at the new secondary school. The planning application for Parcel 01 shows a Pegasus layout but without lights. WBC have indicated that lights will ultimately be provided once traffic increases.
- A Pegasus crossing on Shearlands Road is also required for the same reasons. The planning status of this is unclear.
- A link is required from Parcel A to Baird Road. Again the planning status of this is not clear. It is noted that this involves a small parcel of land outside the developer's ownership.
- Baird Road needs to be opened up for non vehicular use: this simply means replacing the existing gates with bollards.

Should all these features be provided, then a first class greenway would be provided linking all the way from Finchampstead and California Country Park (using BR14) to Farley Hill (using AN15).

In addition a north south greenway is required. This should link all the way from Langley Common Road, through Arborfield Green to the District Centre and onwards to the proposed Hogwood development and the southern SANG. Besides providing for leisure use, this route is vital to access the Bohunt School and would permit residents to access the District Centre facilities. (See Map 5)

It is also proposed as part of the S106 agreement to provide greenway linkages to neighbouring communities: These include

- SDL-Arborfield Cross (Section 8 route 1)
- SDL-Shinfield via relief road (Section 8 route 7)
- SDL-Barkham via Commonfield Lane, BA11, BA10 (Section 8 route 2b or 2c)
- SDL- Barkham Ride via BA14 (Section 8 route 3a)
- SDL-Finchampstead via Nine Mile Ride (Section 8 route 3b)

(See also Map 4)

18. River Loddon Route.

The survey indicates considerable enthusiasm for the River Loddon Walk (89% support). It will be critical that the crossing under the M4 is improved: this issue was raised at the recent Examination in Public relating to the M4 “Smart Motorway” scheme.. A link into Lower Earley, which is shown on some maps, would also be advantageous in opening up the route to residents in that area.

The Wokingham Bridleways Group have suggested that the River Loddon Route should be available for equestrian use. It is an obvious example of a longer distance route away from traffic hazards and it would open up the possibility of several circular routes.

19. Signs, maps and other publicity

A plan is being developed by Barkham Parish Council to improve signposting on two footpaths, making use of existing RoWs. (See Map 6)

- The route from Barkham Road near Doles Hill to Barkham Church (BR10) and then onwards to Rooks Nest Wood
- A circular walk around The Coombes.

It is anticipated that this will encourage greater use of these routes and, especially in The Coombes, it should discourage users from creating their own informal paths that potentially damage the vegetation.

The project, which it is hoped will be implemented by the parish council during 2016 will include:

- Maps on public notice boards and the parish website
- Finger posts to include destinations
- Way mark discs will be provided. For the circular route these will be branded as “The Coombes Circular Walk”.
- The way mark discs will also be annotated with QR codes which will link to the appropriate map.

If these new routes are well received by the community, it is hoped that additional routes involving neighbouring parishes might be developed, for example:

- A route from Arborfield Cross via AN17 to Farley Hill
- A circular walk linking Barkham, Woosehill, Sindlesham, Carters Hill and through The Coombes back to Barkham
- A circular walk linking Barkham at Doles Hill via BR10 and BR14 to California Park and then onwards via the Arborfield Green to Langley Common and through The Coombes and along Sandy Lane back to Doles Hill.

20. Maintenance

It was felt that the priority is to improve reporting procedures to enable WBC to make ad hoc repairs when needed. The line of contact should be more widely known – including a WBC phone number and/or web address on maps would be a possibility.

APPENDIX 1 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Appendix 1.1 Gaps in existing greenways network

Route	Comments	Parish	Cycle	Foot	Horse	ROWIP	WBC
Arborfield Cross-ANR16 (to Church Lane)		AN	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Arborfield Cross-AN14		AN	YES	YES		YES	
School Road-AN14	Alternative to previous	AN	YES	YES		YES	
Commonfield Lane-BA11		BA	YES	YES			
BA14-Nine Mile Ride	Provides link from SDL to White Horse Lane	FI			YES		
Sandy Lane-Limmerhill Road (alternative routes)	Barkham-Wokingham cycleway	BA/WK	YES	YES			YES
Doles Lane-Blagrove Lane	Part of SDL-Wokingham cycleway	WK	YES	YES			
Ashville Way-railway bridge	Part of SDL-Wokingham cycleway	WK	YES	YES			
Sandy Lane-Simons Lane	Existing track within golf club – not PROW	BA	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Arborfield-Shinfield	Routes being suggested by Shinfield PC	AN/SH	YES	YES			
Arborfield Bypass	Cycleway adjacent to road (proposed by WBC)	AN	YES	YES			YES
Poppyfields Roundabout- BA14	Through SDL	AN	YES	YES	YES	YES	
Barkham Street (north of Church Lane)	Roadside footway	BA					
Bearwood Road: Hayes Lane-Coombes Lane	Roadside footway	BA					

Appendix 1.2 Improvements to existing routes

Route	Comments	Parish	Cycle	Foot	Horse	ROWIP	WBC
Commonfield Lane: SDL-BA11	Off road reqd. Part of SDL-Wokingham cycleway	AN	YES	YES			
Edney's Hill BA10 – approx 200m eastwards	Off road reqd. Part of SDL-Wokingham cycleway	BA	YES	YES			
School Road-Barkham Street BA7	Part of Arborfield -Wokingham cycleway	BA	YES	YES			
St James's Church-Edney's Hill BA10	Part of SDL-Wokingham cycleway	BA	YES	YES			
Eversley Road SDL-Arborfield Cross	Improvement to provide roadside cycleway	AN	YES	YES			
Barkham Road: Doles Hill to Limmerhill Road	Roadside: Alternative Barkham-Wokingham route	BA/WK	YES	YES			
Mole Road: Church Lane to Ellis Hill	Improvement to provide roadside bridleway	AN		YES	YES	YES	

Appendix 1.3 Safer crossings required

Location	Greenway Group Proposal	Parish	Cycle	Foot	Horse	ROWIP	WBC
Mole Road (Gravel Pitt Lane)	Pegasus crossing proposed	AN	YES	YES	YES		
Mole Road (Ellis Hill/Church Lane)	Depends on new greenway (ROWIP)	AN	YES	YES	YES		
Relief Road (AN22)	Central refuge/signs	AN	YES	YES	YES		
Relief Road (AN17)	Bridge	AN	YES	YES	YES		
A327 (Near Poperinghe Way)	Pegasus crossing exists	AN	YES	YES	YES		
Biggs Lane (near Lake)	Pegasus crossing proposed	BA	YES	YES	YES		
Commonfield Lane (BA14)	Signs and lines	BA	YES	YES	YES		
Barkham Ride (BA14)	Signs and lines	BA	YES	YES	YES		
Barkham Ride (Commonfield Lane/BA11)	New road layout, ideally a roundabout	BA	YES	YES	YES		
Edney's Hill (BA10 near Edney's Hill Farm)	Traffic calming hump, speed limit	BA	YES				
Barkham Road (Sandy Lane/Doles Lane)	Signs and lines	BA	YES	YES	YES		
Barkham Road (near Aggisters Lane)	Central refuge	BA	YES	YES	YES		
Barkham Road (near Bull)	Signs and lines	BA	YES	YES	YES		
Barkham Street (near Church Lane)	Signs and lines, speed limit	BA	YES	YES	YES		
Bearwood Road (Barkham Road)	Signs and lines (if road wide enough)	BA	YES	YES	YES		
Bearwood Road (Sandy Lane)	Signs and lines, speed limit	BA	YES	YES	YES		

APPENDIX 2 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN STATUS

Proposals as shown in Appendix 13 (See note) *

Parish	Proposed Route	Justification	Requested By	Status
AN	Create new Mole Road field-edge BR and Church Lane verge track.	To form safe Barkham - Coombes / Arborfield - Carters Hill circular routes.	BHS	Part of WBC Greenway project.
AN	NE-SW route on S bank of R.Loddon from Hall Farm to A327 at Arborfield Bridge Waterside path.	Would form part of a Loddon Valley Path from Wargrave to Basingstoke.	RA	Spur to Lower Earley Way required
AN	Route from existing path SE of Arborfield Church parallel to road to a point close to Arborfield Cross.	Provides Arborfield Cross residents with off road route to church and the path network in the Loddon Valley.	RA	Farm shop has resisted this proposal even though it would increase footfall for the shop. Would a field edge path be more acceptable?
AN	NE-SW route on SE side of Arborfield Cross from B3349-A327.	Links existing truncated path to village and to path network to N. Creates off road link between village and Arborfield Garrison Links network to N with network to SW avoiding busy roads.	Cllr Gary Cowan, RA & Arborfield PC	No action to date but remains a vital requirement, especially in view of SDL construction.
AN/ SH/ SW	NE-SW route on N bank of River Loddon from A327 at Arborfield Bridge to path at Sheepbridge Court Farm	Waterside path. Provides increased opportunities for circular walks for residents of Shinfield and Spencers Wood. Provides off road route between Shinfield and Swallowfield villages. Would form part of a Loddon Valley Path from the confluence with the Thames at Wargrave to the source at Basingstoke.	RA	WBC giving this a high priority. Crossing of M4 needs to be improved – this depends on outcome of Smart Motorway project.

BA	Upgrade BARK FP 8, 9 & 10 to BRs.	To provide off road access for horse riders between Barkham Street and Evendons Lane	BHS	Part of this route is included in SDL linkages scheme. Crossing of Barkham Street and Commonfield Lane links are crucial.
BA/ FI	BR route from east end of ARBO BW 15 across Arborfield Garrison to link up with Finc BR 14	To provide off road access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders to the PROW network in Farley Hill and Finchampstead.	WBC Countryside Service	
BA/ FI	FP linking Finc FP 28 with BARK BW 18	To provide an off road link from Arborfield to Finchampstead.	WBC Countryside Service	Greenway needs to be confirmed linking north of SDL to West Court. Note that area around West Court will be a SANG.
BA	Path linking BR 14 (Barkham Street) to BR 11 (nr California Country Park).		WBC Countrysid e Service	Revised requirement is a link from Barkham Church to SDL. Crossing of Barkham Street and Commonfield Lane links are crucial (see above).
BA	Routes using Nashgrove Ride and connecting tracks in countryside around Barkham Church.	Provides connections between existing paths. Allows Nine Mile Ride residents off road access to path networks to the NW without using roads.	RA	Inclusion of Nashgrove Ride as part of improved route from SDL to Barkham is proposed as part of NP Greenways report. This has advantage of bringing route closer to centre of Barkham residential areas and would facilitate a link via Aggisters Lane towards The Coombes.
BA/ AN	N-S route on W side of Bearwood Road from opposite Simon's Lane to Coombes Lane.	Off road path linking existing path from Emmbrook to path network around Barkham. Avoids busy road. Would provide only direct link to countryside for many residents on W side of Wokingham town.	RA	There is an existing path within the golf course grounds but there is no public access. Sand Martins type solution with fenced off path should be feasible. This route should be a bridleway.

New Proposals by Arborfield & Barkham Greenways Group

BA	Sandy Lane to Limmerhill link	Provides new options for linking Woosehill and western parts of Wokingham to The Coombes, avoiding a busy stretch of Bearwood Road	WBC	Part of WBC Greenway project.
BA/ AN/ EA	N-S Greenway SDL to Lower Earley	Provides a new cross country route also linking to The Coombes.	WBC	Part of WBC Greenway project. New ROW required from AN14 to Scholl Road (adjacent to Wood Lane) and also a link from Jukes Lane to the Loddon Path.

Note

ROWIP 15 Jan 2010 Appendix 13

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/parks-and-countryside/paths-and-pavements/improvement-plan/?assetdet8733745=123688>

APPENDIX 3 GREENWAYS SURVEY, ARBORFIELD FETE 6 JUNE 2015

Summary of Results

		Total	Walk	Cycle	Ride	Total	Walk	Cycle	Ride	
Q1	Are you:-walker/cyclist/horse rider?	111	95	35	13					
Q2	Distance you usually walk/cycle/ride per outing?	Average (miles)	4.25	10.29	4.85					
Q3	Time of day you prefer to walk/cycle/ride?	morning	56	15	9	59%	43%	69%		
		midday	19	11	2	20%	31%	15%		
		afternoon	29	15	5	31%	43%	38%		
		evening	26	9	1	27%	26%	8%		
		weekend	23	9	2	24%	26%	15%		
Q4	Purpose of outing, e.g. dog walking, visit specific destination such as shop/pub/school/work?	dog walking	32	4		34%	11%			
		leisure/pleasure	27	15	1	28%	43%	8%		
		exercise/health	24	9	3	25%	26%	23%		
		commute/school	3	4		3%	11%			
		family outing	1	4		1%	11%			
		destinations	17	5		18%	14%			
Q5	Do you walk/cycle/ride as individuals, families or as part of a rambling group?	Individual	72	59	26	12	65%	62%	74%	92%
		Family	67	60	27	6	60%	63%	77%	46%
		Group	19	17	6	2	17%	18%	17%	15%
Q6	Do you start from home or drive to a start point?	Home	95	80	35	12	86%	84%	100%	92%
		Drive	31	29	6	3	28%	31%	17%	23%
Q7	Do you prefer a circular or point-to-point route or have no preference?	Circular	88	76	28	12	79%	80%	80%	92%
		Point to Point	6	6	6	0	5%	6%	17%	0%
		No preference	17	14	4	1	15%	15%	11%	8%
Q8	Most used routes?	The Coombes		25		7		26%		54%
		AR17 to Farley Hill		16				17%		
		Around Farley Hill		7		6		7%		46%
		Carters Hill		4		4		4%		31%
		Henry Street		6				6%		
Q9	Are you willing to use the following types of route:-	Roads	34	26	16	1	31%	27%	46%	8%
		Sidewalks	49	45	20	5	44%	47%	57%	38%
		Off road	92	81	29	13	83%	85%	83%	100%
Q10	Would a riverside route alongside the River Loddon be of interest?	Yes	96	82	31	11	86%	86%	89%	85%
Q11	How often do you walk/cycle/ride?	Daily	55	50	12	9	50%	53%	34%	69%
		Weekly	47	38	19	5	42%	40%	54%	38%
		Monthly	17	12	7		15%	13%	20%	0%
		Less often	1	1			1%	1%	0%	0%
Q12	Your Post Code	Arborfield	66	63	21	6	59%	66%	60%	46%
		Barkham	19	12	7	3	17%	13%	20%	23%
		Other	26	20	7	4	23%	21%	20%	31%
Q13	Age group e.g 30-40	10-20	4	4	2	0	3%	4%	5%	0%
		20-30	8	8	0	1	7%	8%	0%	8%
		30-40	35	32	18	3	30%	32%	49%	25%
		40-50	20	15	7	4	17%	15%	19%	33%
		50-60	17	12	6	3	15%	12%	16%	25%
		60-70	24	22	3	1	21%	22%	8%	8%
		70-80	5	5	1	0	4%	5%	3%	0%
		80-90	1	1	0	0	1%	1%	0%	0%
		90+	1	1	0	0	1%	1%	0%	0%

APPENDIX 4 BARKHAM POTENTIAL GREENWAYS

Appendix 4.1

BA 7 Footpath Barkham Road/Langley Common Road to Barkham Street:

This footpath (once Kidgham Lane) runs in a south-easterly direction from Barkham Road to Barkham Street where it emerges beside White Cottage garden. It is c. 850m long.

Access: at the north (Barkham Road) end this could be dangerous.

Cyclists from Langley Common Road need to make a right turn into BA7 just after the end of School Road coming from the left. Drivers turning left from School Road concentrate on potential traffic from the right before turning and might not see a cyclist in time.

Cyclists turning left from School Road and crossing Barkham Road into BA7 would have to take great care as Barkham Road must be crossed after only 7 metres.

For a cyclist exiting BA7 onto Barkham Road, the main problem times are in the two rush hour periods; there is no pavement on that side. If attempting to turn right into School Road, would have to dismount and cross on foot.

Fewer problems at the south, Barkham Street end.

Physical characteristics along course and owners of adjacent land: Footpath BA7 at the north end is 3.40m wide and a hard stone-packed surface used by cars, tractors and heavy machinery (photo 1). The NE hedge is very mature mainly of blackthorn, the SW hedge is much younger with chain-link fence and belongs Barkham Square. The track drops 10 metres down a gentle slope (from 57m OD to 54m OD) to a closed c. 4m wide gate and a wooden English-style stile (photo 2); a right fork leads to Field House.

The field beyond the hedge belongs to Mr Phil Beattie of Nash Grove Lane.

After the stile the footpath continues downhill across PB's field as a firm track of the same width, used by tractors etc. (photo 3) to another open gate and stile at 45m OD.

The rest of the path to Barkham Street is on level land (photo 4). It continues as a narrower path across the next field but is not constricted in width in any way, to the next locked gate and stile (photo 5). Beyond these it crosses a concrete drain 6.10m wide. The footpath continues through a neglected wide strip of land (photo 6) which is the flood plain of the Barkham Brook (last badly flooded in July

2007, but cleared out and comparatively dry since). This is bordered on the NW by a field owned by Mr Roy Hoy (Barkham Grange) and on the SW, land belonging to Barkham Square.

When the footpath reaches the bottom of White Cottage's garden it swings right and instantly reduces to a width of 6m before a fence and wooden Continental single plank stile (photo 7), with a ditch to the right. Following this the 2m high garden fence on the left has restricted the width from 2.5m before a mature hazel bush on the right and to 2m width at two veteran English oaks on the boundary with Barkham Square Farm (too dark to photograph).

The footpath emerges beside White Cottage onto an unrestricted area of mown grass at Barkham Street (photo 8).

Current use of land crossed: A hay crop had been taken off at the Barkham Road end, but there were no signs that the other fields had been used by grazing stock recently.

Recommendation: Save for the great care needed at the north end and the width restriction at the south end, Footpath BA7 would be ideal for a cycleway, as there is usually room for both cyclists and pedestrians (and dogs); cyclists would have to use their bells to warn pedestrians (and dogs!).

JMF 28/10/2014

Appendix 4.2

Barkham Potential Greenways: BA10

Footpath BA 10 runs approximately NE for c. 700m from the east of the churchyard of St James' church, Barkham, to Edney's Hill, opposite Follyfoot Cottage and south of and adjacent to the gate to Edney's Hill Farm.

Add part of BA8:

From a practical point of view, one should add the NE end of footpath/track which is actually BA8 (photo 1) which runs from Church Lane adjacent to the moat at 1, Church Cottages, south alongside the churchyard and joins footpath BA10 where the stile is, outside the SE corner of the churchyard (photo 2). This extends the route by c. 100m. The west end of it would be accessed from Barkham Street via Church Lane and the rough area used for parking beside the churchyard.

At right-angles to this footpath BA8 next to the churchyard is a muddy track about 4m wide and used by tractors and farm vehicles. On the right (SE) is the hedge bordering the Scheduled moat and following this a ditch which feeds the moat with water. On the left (NW) on the fringe of the churchyard is a straggly area of hawthorn, brambles and nettles and a few trees: apple, hawthorn, oak and holly and a veteran oak just after the footpath turns to the left. The track close to Church Cottages is 54m above sea-level.

Physical characteristics along course and owners/tenants of adjacent land and land use:

Footpath BA 10 begins at a single plank continental-style stile and there is an old metal gate adjacent (photo 3). At this point the level has dropped to 51m OD, but the footpath eventually rises 13m to 67m OD at the stile adjacent to Edney's Hill Farm and settles back to 59m OD at Edney's Hill.

It is about 2.05m wide along the length to the next stile (photo 4) (NB the minimum for a footpath and cycleway combined should be a minimum of 2.25m). On the left, or NE, there is a single wire, sometimes electrified, which runs along the field known as Whitfield. This is owned by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and is farmed by Andrew Lake of High Barn Farm, Commonfield Lane. It is used mostly as meadow, sometimes for corn and often a herd of cattle grazes the aftermath. There would be little physical problem to move the wire fence to widen the path. On the right or SE side of the footpath there is a mixed hedge of blackthorn, hazel and bramble before a ditch and along its course four English oak trees spaced along it. Two of them are veterans (over 3m girth at 1.5m); the oak at the NE end is declining; it is ringed by at least two visible bracket fungi (ganoderma) at a low level (photo 5).

The stile at the NE end is again a one plank continental style (photo 6); there is an old metal farm gate adjacent but not in use. Here the footpath drops into a muddy patch which has a full ditch on either side. Footpath BA10 continues rising and falling slightly across a newly-sown meadow: 'Long Meadow' (photo 7), dividing a quarter of its area to the NE from the rest. This is again owned by WBC and farmed by Neil Chard of Brook Farm, Barkham Street. After the hay crop is taken off cattle

normally graze the aftermath. At the east side of this field is a modern metal kissing gate and a 3m wide open metal gate (photo 8); after this the footpath crosses a concrete bridge over the infant Barkham Brook. Here it is c. 3.5m wide and becomes a track for about 10 metres with some hard core poured into it (photo 9). On either side is the remains of Nash Grove Ride, just here now a linear copse [but to the SW it is an avenue of four lines of lime trees planted by John Walter III in the winter of 1884/5].

Footpath BA10 then crosses a track running N and S; next the facing barbed wire fence is bridged by another once English stile now a single plank continental-style (photo 10). It crosses the next 'Top' meadow acts a grass path of about 1m width. Again the field is owned by WBC; a hay crop is often taken off and it is grazed from the late summer by cattle owned by Mr Chard. The rise is quite steep from 51m OD to 54m at its centre point and 69m OD at the top stile. This was an English stile, but the top plank has gone (photo 11); it is at the corner of the farmyard of Edney's Hill Farm owned by Mr Carruthers.

Footpath BA10 from here has a surface of alternately mud (photo 12) and concrete, sometimes stepped, until it reaches Edney's Hill. It is restricted in width to a minimum of 2.0m as it runs between the farmyard on the NW bounded by a concrete wall (photo 13), which is in total about 50m in length including the back wall of three barns (photo 14). On part of this drainage from the roofs is piped down onto the path which contributes to the slippery nature of the earth section (photo 15). Beyond the last concrete building the fence on the NW is an overgrown hedge (photo 16). On the SE side are a veteran hawthorn, a young oak tree, elder stems and a smaller hawthorn. The fencing on the field side beyond is barbed wire, followed nearer Edney's Hill by sheep netting (photo 17) to a field of pigs owned by Simon Beech (of Jack's Cottage, Sandy Lane).

Problems and recommendations:

At the west end Footpath BA10 would be suitable as a cycleway, since the surface could be improved and the wire electric fence moved to create at least a 2.25m width. The difficulty arises at the NE end where part of it is bordered by a 50m long concrete wall; the trees would have to be felled on the SE side to create a 2.25m width.

The principal difficulty is where for about half its length the path crosses land which is grazed by cattle for several months of the year. To segregate (fence) the cycleway/footpath as it presently runs from the rest of the two fields would cause difficulties for the farmer who takes off a crop of hay from both and cause problems for the management of his cattle. They could be driven across the path, west of where it crosses the 'Nash Grove Ride' but one quarter of Long Meadow would be isolated and this is a very small area for lively young stock. The problems are probably insurmountable, unless the cycleway/footpath is diverted to the perimeter of those two fields.

JMF 5/11/2014

Appendix 4.3

Commonfield Lane

Commonfield Lane is a single lane carriageway that has a number of passing places. It is currently not too busy and just about copes with traffic flow but with an additional 3500 houses I think a sensible option must be to widen it so that it can take 2 way traffic and furthermore to add a footway and cycle route,

Widening the carriageway on many of our local roads will be difficult but here it should not be. Please refer to the attached plan. Section A to B is owned by the MOD and section B to C is owned by WBC so both could be set aside and not built on allowing improvement works to be made.

Public Bridleway No 14

This bridleway runs from Commonfield Lane to California Country Park a distance of about 700m and should then ideally continue straight all the way to Nine Mile Ride. It is ideally located and turns north towards Barkham Ride.

The route varies in width from 2m to 4m but is not surfaced so is muddy when wet. There is plenty of scope to widen it where required without damaging trees or going onto private land and it could of course be surfaced if this was deemed worthwhile to make it a cycle route as well as a bridleway and footpath.

Junction between Commonfield Lane and Barkham Street/Ride

The junction is far from ideal and the proposal to move it as shown on the plan D, E, F was suggested to highways over a year ago. The owners of Barkham Square Park have offered to gift the land to WBC/Barkham Parish. I think this is a golden opportunity to make improvements to both the junction and a section of Barkham Street/Ride which cannot cope with current traffic demands. By way of example a school bus and car cannot pass on this section of road without one being stationary.

As well as improving the highway this would also allow space for a cycle route and footway to be added.

Appendix 4.4

Footpaths, 33 & 7.

As we all know Edney's Hill is the problem. Spoke to girl working at Toads Hall Nursery, she said that one cannot see car lights at night as the bends are so sharp. Dangerous bend in road at crossing from 10 to 33.

No 33 would be fine to leave as a footpath to the Barkham Road, muddy so some boarding covered with wire netting would be helpful, as slippery after rain.

Both 33 & 7 could be turned into good cycle tracks, but would need much money spent on cutting down many trees, scrub, ditches covered, hard surface, lighting.

There is a fence along No 33, from Edney's Hill end, private house, which does make the track narrow.

No 33 would be a less expense to make into a cycle track as shorter route to the Barkham Road, stile would need to be changed into a gate and then hard surface road to Barkham Rd. (Would have to find out who maintains the road now). However then the cyclist would have to go up or down the Barkham Road, as no direct route on the other side of the road. No real reason to change from footpath to cycle track.

As already detailed by Derek O, 250m walk/cycle from Footpath 10 to No 7 along dangerous Edney's Hill. If ditches were covered, arrangements made with house owners to cut into their hedges, a footpath could be made but cycle track questionable. Notices warning drivers of cyclists on road now would be a good start. Speed limit.

No 7 could be turned in a cycle track. Width OK. Pleasant walk, high fence along Stud Farm. There are a few large trees which would have to be left. It would be a lot of work/money spent on cutting down trees, scrub, ditches covered, hard surface, drainage pipes, lighting. There is a thick stabilizer wire to a pole which would have to be moved.

At the far end of 7, Doles Lane, past the stables, up to the Barkham Road would be difficult as residents are very unhappy about the traffic caused by the riding school, Judith Neuhofer can confirm this. Have not walked up the Lane recently but remember it is narrow. Many cars going to and from the riding school especially at weekends when pleasure cyclists would also be on the Lane. Winter snow turns Lane into a quagmire.

Turning right and continuing along Doles Lane to Blagrove Lane corner would be possible though at present 9 inch deep potholes. (Who maintains the Lane at present?) Cyclists could then go along Blagrove Lane, Oaklands Drive, Molly Millars to Barkham Road. (I have not walked behind Lidl but will do so soon and let you have detail).

I started off near the Scout Hut, on Evendons Lane, as thought there was a footpath back across the fields. Local dog walker confirmed no path. Only gate into the Park.

Again, as we all know, Doles Hill up the Barkham Road is the problem when a cyclist slows everyone up and drivers have to be very careful passing them. It would be such a comparatively easy solution if one pavement could be a cycle track. Cyclists would just have to go on the road for the few yards when there is only one pavement. Large warning notices. (It might cost less than making new all-weather cycle tracks). Again will people cycling to the Station really want to go on a round-about route rather than straight up the Barkham Road. Cyclist would have to be warned to be aware of residents turning in and out of their driveways.

Looking forward to seeing you on the 10th, it would be helpful if the meeting could end at 9.30 as we have a busy week.

HB

GREENWAY FROM ARBORFIELD CROSS TO BEARWOOD ROAD USING COOMBES LANE AND COLE LANE.

Width of Coombes Lane entrance from Bearwood Road = approx 23 ft. with adequate sight lines to both left and right of Bearwood Rd. The lane then reduces to approx 14ft width. Surface is old metalled construction with no visible drainage for approx 180metres.

The lane's surface then reduces to rutted soil and grit for approx 320metres with an average width of 10 ft. Without drainage many of the deep ruts are flooded. There is little scope for lane widening without tree felling. Moderately level. This continues up to the junction with Footpath 2.

After junction with Footpath 2 and for the next 740metres Coombes Lane is of 13ft average width and of natural soil/grit surface. No drainage but with old ditches on either side. Very rutted and often flooded. Moderately level (refer photos P1 and P2 looking East).

Junction with Gravel Pit Lane. Surface is old tarmac/metalled with recent addition of scalpings. Average width is 14ft and surface is level without drainage. At this point Coombes Lane is in regular use by vehicles accessing Ellis Hill Farm, which arrive via Gravel Pit Lane.

From the junction with Ellis Hill Lane, Coombes Lane becomes Cole Lane for the remainder of the route. For the next 320metres to the junction with Byway AN10 average width is down to 10ft and surface is old tarmac with a ditch to one side and the Ellis Hill Farm boundary to the South side.

After the junction with Byway AN10 the lane runs steeply downhill and winding. Average width is reduced to 8ft with incline of approx 1in 9. Surface is soil and sand and has a steep cross camber. It is deeply rutted from tractor use for some 50 metres after which the steep downhill section continues for another 300 metres but is less rutted. (refer photo P3 looking East).

Cole Lane levels out and widens just before the ford across Barkham Brook. The footbridge here is the only way across the brook apart from negotiating the ford. The footbridge is only 84cms wide and has 3 steps up with 3 steps descending. A wider bridge of low arch pattern without steps would be more suitable for cyclists. The ford is still used by tractors, 4x4's and brave horse riders.(refer photo P4 looking East).

After the ford, Cole Lane narrows to 9/12ft for approx 420metres with an upward gradient of approx 1in 20. Surface is a compressed mixture of soil, old tarmac and broken concrete but is generally smooth and has a ditch to the Northern side. (see photo P5 looking East).

The incline steepens to 1 in 8 for the next 230metres up to the first house on the left. Here the track levels and is 9ft in width before becoming a metalled wider access drive to the rear of the houses. Cole Lane then adjoins the busy Arborfield Cross roundabout. (see photo P6 viewed East).

NOTES.

The whole route is indicated as a byway but also as a road/track on Ordnance Survey maps.

The Eastern end from the Bearwood Rd entrance (part A above) is in regular vehicle use as an access to the houses at the beginning and to the pony field on the South side.

From part B to D above, the lane is occasionally used by vehicles but usually of 4x4 or tractor types heading for the Gravel Hill/Ellis Farm area.

From the Western end of the route vehicles do venture as far as the ford as "Events" are occasionally organised in a field on the Northern side of the lane.

There is no lighting for the whole length of the route.

BH 5/11/2014

Appendix 4.6

Barkham to Wokingham

a) Cycleway adjacent to Barkham Road

This has the advantage of being the most direct route and also has the merit of being illuminated.

There is an existing footway that is continuous on the north side of Barkham Road. The footway on the south side is not continuous, there being a gap where the road follows an S bend, just west of the Leathern Bottel. Closing the gap would involve land acquisition.

Unfortunately the footways are not wide enough to create a shared cycleway/footway: it has to be kept in mind that there are many private drive ways which would have limited sight lines. The number of pedestrians is much greater to the east of Molly Millar's Lane.

Approximate widths of the north side footway are as follows:

Location	North Side (metres)	South Side (metres)
Smalley Close	1.75	1.75
West of Leathern Bottel	1.00 to 1.75	No footway
West of Blagrove Lane	1.75	2.00
East of Blagrove Lane	2.00	1.50
West of Old Woosehill Lane	1.70	1.80
Emmbrook bridge	1.20	1.70
Near Latimer Road	1.35	1.70

b) Sandy Lane – Reading Road via Smiths Walk

Sandy Lane to Fox Hill via Glennifer Farm: existing track across private land. Would involve land acquisition.

Fox Hill: woodland with open access. Existing paths are narrow but could be widened.

Field behind Leathern Bottel: private land but with well used pathways used by local residents. Barriers have been placed at entrances to restrict access but some of these have been used.

Limmerhill Road: private road but only crossing required.

Unnamed walkway between Woosehill and Magnolia Way: a path with hard surface exists, which is only 1 metre wide but is mainly in a corridor 10-20 metres wide. Some pinch points as little as 1.5m. Some lighting.

Smiths Walk to Emmbrook crossing: hard surface. Well used by cyclists and pedestrians.

Murray Road

St Paul's Gate to Reading Road: established route with railway crossing

The problem is lack of a public right of way from Sandy Lane to Limmerhill Road. The routing north of the Shires outlined below would be an alternative option to reach Limmerhill Road. The eastern portion of the route already well used as a greenway.

c) Sandy Land to Elms Field via path north of Shires and Oakland Drive

Path north of Shire: is narrow, reducing from 2.0 metres down to 1.0 metres. The final section is less than a metre wide requiring residents to squeeze between a brick wall and a hedge. As an alternative there is an entranceway to some

business units that affords a route to Barkham Road. Land acquisition would be required to bring this route up to greenway standard.

Entry to field behind Leathern Bottel (as above) involves land acquisition.

Crossing of Barkham Road to Blagrove Lane and Oakland Drive: relatively quiet roads suitable for cycling.

Crossing of Molly Millar's Lane: ideally the controlled cost that exist to north of Oaklands Drive could be moved further south towards Lidl. This could be advantageous to existing users.

Ashville Way: a quiet road accessing housing and commercial premises is suitable for cycling.

Railway Crossing: Ashville Way meets the railway on the wrong side of the allotments that are adjacent to the existing bridge from the Ormonde Road playing field. It is not clear where the boundary of Network Rail property lies, but an alternative access from Ashville Way could be feasible. At some point a new bridge will be required to cross the Waterloo line.

Pathway to Elms Field: existing pathway from railway crossing.

As with a) above, the link from Sandy Lane to Limmerhill Lane is a problem.. The suggested railway crossing from Ashville Way would also be very useful for linking the Molly Millar's Lane area with the town centre.

d) Doles Lane to Elms Field via Oakland Drive

Emerging from footpath in Doles Lane, pasture land could be crossed to Blagrove Lane, subject to land acquisition. Thereafter the route would follow c) via Blagrove Lane, Ashville Way and a new railway crossing.

This would provide a more direct route from the SDL to Wokingham, in conjunction with footpath BA10.

ARBORFIELD GREENWAYS

Arborfield Cross to Barkham - The most obvious route from the centre of Arborfield Cross is via Cole Lane and Coombes Lane to connect up with Sandy Lane, but this is designated as a Byway open to all traffic and would require hard surface and lighting. Already agreed as remote and not practical for school cycleway.

Alternatives:

- a) School Road to Barkham Road. The south side of School Road can accommodate a cycleway quite easily with only little widening in a few places. The crossing of Barkham Road would require special attention to join BA7 Kidgham Lane.
- b) A327 and Langley Common Road to Barkham Road. The A327 from south of Link Way to the British Legion Centre has a parallel side road which could be used as a cycleway. From the point that this side road joins the A327 down to Langley Common Road, a pavement exists approximately 1.5m wide. However, there is a fence 3m to 3.5m from the kerb with a hedge in front. If this hedge could be removed, sufficient room would allow a cycleway to be built. The only narrowing part of this pavement is in front of the British Legion premises (car park) which, if agreed, could be moved back. The final 100m along the path bears left slightly into Hickman Close providing a safe approach to Langley Common Road.

The stretch of Langley Common Road to Barkham Road is capable of being widened by retrieving part of the pavement from the hedge. The only difficulty will be alongside the caravan park.

- c) Alternative from b) is to utilise the underpass at Hickman Close to cross (LCR) onto Baird Road and enter the SDL.

BRIDLEWAYS IN ARBORFIELD CROSS

It is a pity that a number of these bridleways cannot be connected in order to create a circular route for equestrian use.

APPENDIX 5 – EMAIL FROM PARENTS REFERENCE GROUP

From: Lisa Eleazu [mailto:lisaeleazu@yahoo.co.uk]

Sent: 18 October 2015 17:11

To: matt.davey@wokingham.gov.uk

Cc: John Kaiser <john.kaiser@wokingham.gov.uk>; BPC Clerk and BVH <clerk@barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk>

Subject: Safe routes to the new secondary school, for Barkham residents

Hello Matt

I am writing as I am concerned for Barkham residents, with regard to safe walking and cycling routes to the new Bohunt secondary school in our parish.

Many current year 6 children from Barkham Road and The Lilacs estate are choosing for their child to attend the new Bohunt school, and are keen to encourage their children to walk or cycle to school rather than needing to travel by car or by bus. I feel this healthy, active, independent approach should be encouraged, but feel there are some safety improvements to the route to school that need to happen to make this possible.

Currently (with the absence of safe cycle paths joining Wokingham and the new development in Arborfield) the route children from Barkham would take to walk or cycle is on the path alongside the road, in the Langley Common Road direction from the Bearwood Roundabout. In order to support this current route we need some adjustments, as follows;

Firstly, there needs to be a crossing point on Bearwood Road, suitable for those crossing from the Barkham Road direction and The Lilacs side of Bearwood Road. It is a very dangerous junction presently, with a wholly inadequate drop kerb crossing point, located around a blind corner. Cars approach the Bearwood roundabout at speed, particularly from the Coppid Hill and Bearwood Road direction, and also accelerate out of the roundabout at speed, along Bearwood Road where the current unmarked crossing point is. I have crossed here many times with my children whilst cycling to primary school at The Coombes, and it usually requires waiting a long time until a kind motorist holds up the traffic long enough for us to cross safely. This is not something children would be able to do independently. Similarly my secondary age child had to cross at this point last year to reach her bus stop (whilst the station roadworks were ongoing) and every day felt like she was risking serious injury whilst crossing Bearwood Road.

I would like to suggest a Puffin Crossing on Bearwood Road. It is an intelligent crossing, that can recognise when pedestrians or cyclists are waiting or crossing, and can keep wait times for traffic on the road to a minimum.

This crossing would need to be installed by September 2016, in line with the opening of the new school.

From this point the most direct / safest route for pupils walking and cycling to school is currently on the pavement, continuing towards Langley Common Road. However there is a real issue with the width of the pavement alongside the walled gardens of Barkham Manor.

The second crossing point I would like to see installed is on School Road. Many cars cut the corner turning into School Road, with limited visibility of pedestrians wishing to cross, and accelerate along

School Road at speeds greater than the 30 mph limit. A safe crossing point (again, as close to the junction as is allowed) is required, to ensure children can continue their safe journey to school, by using the crossing.

I firmly believe that providing these crossing points will result in more walking and cycling to the current Coombes primary school, as well as to the 1200 pupils who will be travelling to the new secondary school. Given we have many new houses being built in the area, and traffic increasing, I feel we should do what we can to alleviate congestion and unnecessary regular vehicular travel, and encourage walking and cycling.

I would appreciate your thoughts Matt, and would like to see specific feedback including a likely timescale for implementation of crossings on Bearwood Road and School Road. If there is any further information you require from me please do not hesitate to get in touch. My details are Lisa Eleazu, 353a Barkham Road, Wokingham RG41 4DJ.

I know many other parents share my concerns.

With regards

Lisa Eleazu