

Waterbeach Bridleways Group Comment on:

Mere Way Byway 21/04625/FUL (including A10 bridge 21/04353/REM and A10 Slap Up Junction safety upgrade) (S106 requirements of developers of Waterbeach Newtown, Urban and Civic)

8th November 2021

Who We Are

The Waterbeach and District Bridleways Group covers Horningsea, Waterbeach, Landbeach, Chittering, Milton and Lode to support equine use in and around the communities to the north of Cambridge.

Equestrian access to bridleways and multi-user paths is an ongoing concern to the communities north of Cambridge. Increasing development and traffic in these areas has resulted in some horse-vehicle conflicts and often the loss of previously available off-road riding. Existing routes between Waterbeach and Milton, and Chittering and Landbeach are non-existent and those in Waterbeach are unsafe because they are both poorly maintained and unpassable (reported to BHS), or they require horses to at some points, to navigate busy roads. Local routes are often too narrow, involve little to no soft surfaces, frequent gates and/or very narrow entrances and exits, impossible river lock crossings and no routes are circular. Positively horse rider and cyclist conflict in the area is rare.

The Waterbeach & District Bridleways group was formed to promote the communities' needs with the proposed Greenways initiative, and to use that opportunity to expand access. The group represents 150 riders from Waterbeach itself (including riders attending the village riding school Hall Farm Stables) and an additional c50 riders from surrounding villages plus the College of West Anglia. It also represents some 200 horses owned by these riders and riding establishments, plus Riding For The Disabled riders who attend Hall Farm Stables. Roughly 50% of group members are British Horse Society members.

Goals for our advocacy • Safe and accessible non-motorised user (NMU) access to local rural and emerging NMU/Greenway networks • Use the emerging NMU/Greenway project routes to expand and link to existing rural paths and nonmotorised routes between villages • Advocate for equine usage of paths to ensure our inclusion in the decision-making and design processes • Maintain and expand long-standing legal rights of way At the very bottom, for completeness and transparency, we have provided a summary of who we are and how we liaise with the British Horse Society on access matters, should anyone find it helpful

Goals for our advocacy

- Safe and accessible non-motorised user (NMU) access to local rural and emerging NMU/Greenway networks
- Use the emerging NMU/Greenway project routes to expand and link to existing rural paths and non-motorised routes between villages
- Advocate for equine usage of paths to ensure our inclusion in the decision-making and design processes
- Maintain and expand long-standing legal rights of way

Note to planning committee

Prior to July 2021, disappointingly there had been no consultation contact with our group on proposed developments for Mere Way byway, A10 bridge or A10 Slap Up junction safety upgrade. Our representative body The British Horse Society notified us of the Mere Way development project, and we found out about the A10 Slap Up junction crossing safety improvements via social media this summer.

We understand that there is no formal consultation process for the Mere Way or A10 bridge projects, unlike all other active travel route proposals in the area, even though this route directly connects at least 4 villages (Milton, Histon and Impington, Landbeach) and is defined in the S106 for Waterbeach Newtown as a required NMU route. We were very disappointed that GCP and Urban and Civic left our group out of consultations when our group are already and will be regular users of the Mere Way.

We were especially disappointed because since our formation in 2017, we have proactively and positively engaged with all related active travel route consultations launched by GCP/CCC/SCDC, plus projects occurring in and around Waterbeach (namely, the Waterbeach Greenway, Waterbeach busway greenway, Area SPD, Urban and Civic and RLWE planning applications including perimeter route plans, NE Area plans). Both GCP and Newtown developers (U&C and RLWE) have had sight of all our submissions, but we found our group had initially been overlooked when it came to Mere Way, A10 bridge and Slap-Up Junction upgrade. We have repeatedly over the last 4 years, highlighted the need for consideration and inclusion of equestrians and horses rights of way and, the constant omission initially in all active travel route proposals to date. We are as mentioned above, an equally vulnerable road user group along with pedestrians and cyclists and our parity of access on existing and emerging rural paths and active travel routes and safety matters, greatly.

Since July 2021, U&C have somewhat rectified this situation on the matter of the Mere Way and the A10 bridge, as a result of our representative body The British Horse Society, requesting we be consulted. We are pleased to now be part of the development of this exciting travel route and to be told we have an equal voice with pedestrians and cycling representative groups. We had the opportunity to engage in a remote meeting in July with Urban and Civic in July about these two developments and have been advised by them that when the A10 Slap-Up junction designs are drafted we will be contacted for our input. We had asked Urban and Civic several important clarification questions on 15th October 2021, regarding equestrian access and amenity enjoyment of Mere Way and the A10 bridge but despite following this up several times and promises of a response, we have to date sadly not received these answers. The absence of a response has meant that our following commentary on Mere Way planning application and the A10 bridge RMA are firm and forthright regarding our access and ability to enjoy these amenities. In addition, Our group has had no contact from Highways engineers about the Mere Way plans but we are aware that they have consulted 'expert' users, such as the Disability Quality Panel, CamCycle and the BHS. For some reason our group was overlooked, despite our attempts to engage.

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Our Mere Way Comments (21/04625/FUL)

Design and Access

1. The entire active travel route should be adopted as a dedicated byway to ensure all equestrians have parity of access to pedestrians and cyclists on this active travel route.
2. Design plans for section from Cockfen Lane, Landbeach to Kings Hedges (where the route joins with the guided busway)- byway 135/3 and 143/3:
 - 2.1. We understand that GCP and Highways planners intend Mereway to be a high-speed cycle/commuter way because it is largely a straight route.
 - 2.2. We have serious concerns about this apparent overarching design principles in the RMA that favour speed and one user group above other non-motorised user groups.
 - 2.3. We have gathered feedback from our members and undertook a hack along the entire route which we filmed on a go-pro (attached for evidence). It is such a beautiful green rural route.
 - 2.4. Our specific concerns with the route layout, width and surface design plans are:
 - 2.4.1.Speed kills! The most vulnerable user groups of this route (and of roads in general) will be pedestrians (namely the elderly and children and people with disabilities) and horse riders.
 - 2.4.2.We do not accept the principle of a 3-4.1m wide tarmac path on the Mere Way with just a 2m strip for all other users who don't want/are unable to use tarmac. We strongly object to this ratio. For avoidance of doubt, we do not object to the creation of a path suitable for commuter cyclists (and available to other users) but do object to the existing path amenity being destroyed in order to provide that path.
 - 2.4.3.Mere Way has a recorded width of 30 feet or 10 metres.
 - 2.4.4.Path from the bridge is to be 3m wide therefore we assume a 3m path on the Mere Way would be acceptable as well?
 - 2.4.5.We have seen highways documentation that 4m width tarmac is required to enable cyclists to enjoy the ability to ride sociably alongside each other. Horse riders must also be afforded the same amenity – in some cases, for example when an adult rides leading a child, it is a safety requirement.
 - 2.4.6.Creating a tarmac path down the centre of this beautiful byway would be clear roadification of the countryside which does not meet with any of the climate change or biodiversity ambitions of the Council or other bodies. It also unfairly forces other user groups into narrow grass strips when cyclists come through.
 - 2.4.7.The projected numbers of cycle users is not justification for the current rural green route to be given over to a high speed straight tarmac cycle way to the detriment of existing pedestrian and equestrian users. An path additional to what already exists is required for cyclists. The hard surface path should be no greater in width than the rural soft surface element to provide equity in accessibility for all vulnerable road user groups.
 - 2.4.8.Pushing these vulnerable user groups repeatedly into a 2m grass strip if/when they are fortunate enough to hear a fast cyclist coming and if/when said cyclist notifies them appropriately of their approaching, is a recipe for safety disaster. Most cyclists have little understanding of how to safely pass horses, let alone a deaf child or a parent pushing a pram with a toddler on foot, for example. Add to that the surge in e-bikes and scooters which travel at speed and have been associated with fatalities.
 - 2.4.9.Being at one with nature on horseback has significant emotional benefits for older riders, the findings of fresh research shows. The findings of a study in point to the psychological benefits derived from the simple act of getting out and riding a horse or walking a dog around neighbourhoods and parks [Older riders derive emotional benefits from being in the saddle, study shows - Horsetalk.co.nz](https://horsetalk.co.nz/older-riders-derive-emotional-benefits-from-being-in-the-saddle-study-shows/). Connectedness to nature and contact with nature can provide many benefits to humans, such as stress

reduction, recovery from illness, and increased positive emotions, Gabriele Schwarzmüller-Erber and her colleagues wrote in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Likewise, recreational horseback riding is a common activity with the potential to enhance physical and psychological health.

2.4.10. The Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan states that the bridleway network is fragmented, inadequate and in need of improvement. It goes on to state:

2.4.10.1.1. At SOA4 there is a comment about improving countryside access which includes equestrian access:

-Liaise with planners and developers to provide new countryside access provision to link new development into an enhanced network catering for increased population. To include new routes, status upgrades, improved facilities and improved information, signage and interpretation. Facilitate alternative means of providing improvements and ongoing maintenance in discussion with developers and communities in accordance with policies contained in the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan 2015-2025.

2.4.10.1.2. At SOA5 there is this comment:

-Prioritise bridleway improvements on grounds that bridleway users currently suffer highest risk on roads and bridleway network is currently most disjointed. Ensure that bridleway improvements have least possible effect on pedestrians so as to maximise benefit to widest user community, subject to available funding. Support alternative mechanisms of delivery where necessary.

The proposals for the restrictive shared pedestrian / cycle path fails to meet these requirements.

2.4.11. The proposals for the restrictive shared pedestrian / cycle path fails to meet these requirements.

2.4.12. The majority of cyclists are male whereas the vast majority of horse riders are female. Being female is a protected characteristic within the Equality Act. Failure to provide equally for horse riders and cyclists therefore falls foul of equal opportunities.

2.4.13. Tarmac is a surprisingly surface design choice given its dirty environmental credentials and high maintenance costs. We are living in a world where, protecting against climate damage and advancing biodiversity is no longer just the goal but the new accepted norm. We write this as COP26 is taking place in Glasgow! Either the GCP are committed to investing in environmentally sustainable development or they are not.

2.4.14. All public authorities have a statutory duty do take into account biodiversity.

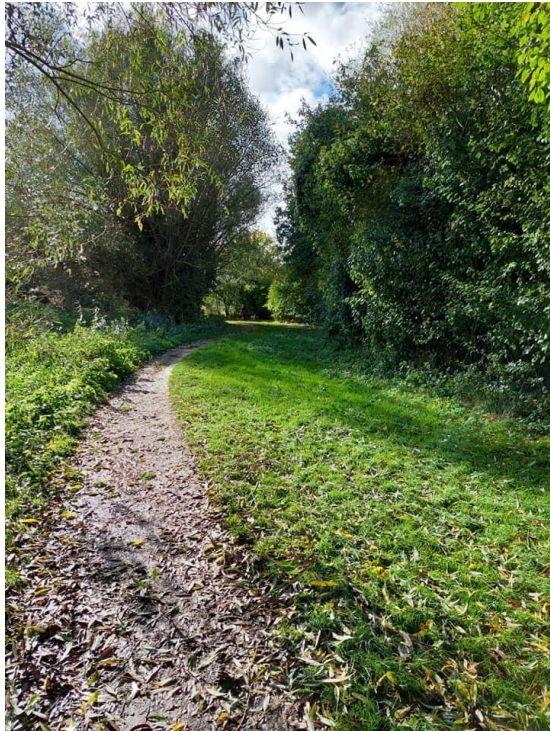
2.4.15. Tarmac in winter is a magnet for ice/snow creating a slip hazard. What will the programme of salt spreading look like? Who will clear the route of snow to ensure it stays open as a commuter/leisure route? Currently, as a rural green path, nature offers a complete solution on the route for all seasons.

2.4.16. Tarmac destroys wildlife, biodiversity and contributes a negative carbon impact. It also requires expensive archaeological digs on this route prior to instating due to the route being an old Roman Road). The chosen hard surface must be suitable to maintain all users access to Mere Way in winter months- equestrians will need to use it when the soft track becomes deep but we cannot safely use a slippery/icy strip of tarmac. A more sustainable and sensible surface than tarmac could be self-binding limestone path gravel. It carries a lower carbon footprint to Tarmac (there are even ground-breaking limestone gravel asphalts that are carbon neutral). It is porous which provides drainage maintenance advantages and keeps it non-slip. It is even, stable and hard wearing, perfect for footpaths, cycleways and equestrian use. It is cheaper

and requires less labour to repair/replace than Tarmac. The National Trust uses it plenty and many shared user paths in the Lake District are made from it. Part of the Luton-Dunstable busway cycle path is made from it. It is used on local river tow-paths which cyclists frequent.

2.4.17. The Court of Appeal in the case of *Cowen v Secretary of State for the Department of Environment Transport and the Regions* (1999) 3 PLR 108 concluded that if the construction of a hard surface changes the character of a way it goes beyond 'improvement'.

2.4.17.1. An exemplary example of a local bridleway with equal hard (non-tarmac, minimal maintenance, robust) surface and soft grass track is Cow Hollow Wood bridleway 247/23- see image below. The hard surface is wide enough for cyclists, pedestrians and, buggies to pass each other and all users have access to both surfaces. It is a much enjoyed and used path, by all.



Cow Hollow Wood Bridleway 247/10

A similar bridleway image



2.4.17.2. This area of permanent grassland is a massive carbon store. A recent Natural England report showed that neutral grassland stores 60 tonne/hectare, equivalent to 6kg/m². So, for every 1m length of Mere Way that is converted to tarmac 24kg of carbon will be released, plus all the emissions associated with digging the path, creating the surface and laying in and annual maintenance. That surface cannot recapture carbon. So poor environmental choice that goes in the opposite direction of the 2019 net zero legislations, Paris Agreement and COP26.

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/.../67262461984...>

2.4.17.3. We understand that Mere Way width claims of 3-4.1m wide tarmac path are in relation to current and future agricultural equipment. However to provide for this, the path will have to be engineered to a load bearing specification far in advance of that required for a cycle path. The farmer does not have a tarmac path currently and as far as we are aware, has always managed to access his fields / farm. If the cycle path were to be constructed to one side of the 10 metres plus byway and the farmer left with his existing provision, the path specification could reduce the negative impact on climate change and the environment and the amenity to existing users would be protected also. Providing agricultural access on a cycle path is not without its problems. A case has been reported on social media where such a path was created and all went well until harvest, when the farmer hauled his crop along the path, not only covering it with mud but also causing damage from the weight of the load. The Council approached him for the cost of repairs which he challenged successfully on the grounds that it was their decision to create the path on the route he was entitled to use.

A surface solution which minimises maintenance, has to be balanced against the negative impact of the surface they are proposing and the potential for damage through use by agricultural vehicles and the Council being responsible for expensive repairs.

3. Design plans for Butt Lane crossing:

- 3.1. A safety crossing is required here and we would recommend firmly a Pegasus crossing.
- 3.2. When approaching this from the north on a horse, you cannot get a sufficient view of traffic coming from Impington or Milton without pulling almost right out to the edge of the road.
- 3.3. Butt Lane is a 50/60mph road in places. The fact we must ride so close to it to be able to judge when is safe to cross is scary and dangerous. We are very experienced riders on very safe traffic experienced horses, but when we rode it, we found it nerve wracking.

- 3.4. Current visibility crossing from the south is fine because the tree line finishes earlier and the road bends away, both of which provide good visibility in advance of reaching the edge of the road.
- 3.5. We would also require that the crossing section speed limit be reduced to 30mph- drivers notoriously travel this section of Butt Lane at 60pmh. Should a user of Mere Way take a chance or make a misjudgment, they would have no chance.
4. Design plan of A14 Bridge underpass:
 - 4.1. This area presents a personal safety concern. We wish this point to be taken seriously and in raising it we shall state up front that we are not being discriminatory.
 - 4.2. Link from Mere Way to guided busway is very tight with limited visibility- presents safety issue for all user groups, especially if this area and route are to see greater 'traffic',
 - 4.3. There is a great amount of litter, broken objects etc. around this area.
 - 4.4. There is evidence of threatening signage around the traveller site and when we approached it on horses, the path under the bridge was interrupted by people of the travelling community sitting in the way. Their demeanor and apparent reluctance to move, plus the fact we were on horses like the breeds they have, plus being females, made us feel uncomfortable to go further. We encountered 2 young women running that route and they felt they needed to run this section very fast. Sadly, this is the reality of our experience and theirs- none of us felt safe. The concealed design of the area was a key component also to this area feeling unsafe.
5. Carriage driver accessibility:
 - 5.1. Our group includes members who are carriage drivers (including Riding for the Disabled). Carriage drivers should be provided with parity of access on equestrian suitable paths and active travel routes. Carriage drivers are a group with access to only 5% of the RoW network.
 - 5.2. Mere Way is presently a byway with TRO (1997) which prevents any vehicle other than a pedal cycle from using the route unless they are permit holders, so at present there is no general right for carriage drivers to use Mere Way without a permit though they are eligible to apply for one. The route therefore needs to accommodate carriage drivers who wish to access a permit.
 - 5.3. This raises the issue of ensuring the Mere Way is kept free from abuse by quad-bikes/motor bikes etc.
 - 5.4. Bollards would be a sensible addition at entrances to the Mere Way and approved carriage drivers given access to keys to adjust bollards. The siting of such bollards at the Butt Lane junction needs to consider the safety of carriage drivers as well as horse riders so that their carriage vehicles and horses are safely clear of Butt Lane when they are required to adjust bollards to gain access.
 - 5.5. The BHS have provided guidance documents on vehicle barriers, gates that can be easily operated on horseback and bollards [Free Leaflets | British Horse Society \(bhs.org.uk\)](https://www.bhs.org.uk/free-leaflets).
A summary of key points is offered here:
 - 5.5.1. The requirements of the Equality Act 2010 must be taken into account. A barrier affects people with impaired mobility and impaired vision as well as riders who may have difficulty negotiating the structure safely and carriage-drivers are commonly excluded completely. Equestrians are quite often people with limited mobility whose horse and/or vehicle provides them with highly beneficial means for open air exercise. Horse-drawn vehicles adapted for use by wheelchair users are increasingly common. (BHS Advice on
 - 5.5.2. Vehicle barriers on routes used by riders and carriage-drivers in England and Wales (Dec 2019)
 - 5.5.2.1. Any barrier should always be set well back from the roadside so that riders or carriage-drivers have space to align themselves for the structure and to negotiate it away from the additional hazard from motor vehicles. Structures should not cause

equestrians to be delayed on the road as that increases the risk of a motor vehicle hitting them, particularly where motor traffic is at high speed.

5.5.2.2. Barriers other than bollards commonly cause considerable difficulty to equestrians because horses are likely to have been taught to jump similar obstacles.

5.5.2.3. If the solution appears to be a barrier close to the road edge, consideration must also be given to space for riders or carriage-drivers waiting to cross or join the road. Bollards are therefore likely to be the only acceptable constraint at the roadside.

5.5.2.4. All barriers must have:

5.5.2.4.1. 1. Straight approach and exit of at least 3m length on a bridleway, 6m on byways to allow the horse (and vehicle) to be aligned and opportunity to assess the structure

5.5.2.4.2. 2. Level well-drained ground free from overhanging vegetation to 3.7m height (in case a horse jumps the structure)

5.5.2.4.3. 3. A non-slip and giving surface as a horse may jump the barrier and slip or be injured (i.e., not tarmac)

5.5.2.4.4. 4. On a bridleway joining a road, ample space for at least three horses to wait between the barrier and a road (5m assuming at least 3m width available but need not be straight as in 1.)

5.5.3. The preference of the BHS to prevent access by four-wheeled motorised vehicles would be for bollards as being least restrictive to legitimate users. They may also be used to prevent parking vehicles, which commonly obstruct access to a bridleway or byway for equestrians, particularly carriage- drivers. Lockable bollards which can be lowered may benefit landowners and the emergency services where occasional motor vehicle access is desirable. Bollards obviously will not prevent access by motorcycles or quad bikes but neither will a gate that is usable by equestrians.

5.5.4. Bollards should have smooth tops and edges and have gaps between them of no less than 1.5m on a bridleway, 1.8m on a byway. Round bollards are preferred. On byways, the minimum gap is 3m so a gap of 1.8m is illegal unless authorised by the highway authority's rights of way service as necessary for the safety of users.

5.5.5. Recommended height of bollards is 600mm. Taller bollards may be more vulnerable to being removed; shorter bollards are more difficult for carriage-drivers to keep in view, especially when driving a pair. Very short bollards can be a trip hazard.

5.5.6. Where the route has verges, trees or hedges to the sides, a central bollard is not acceptable unless the surface to each side of the bollard is level and even with height clearance to 3.4m and no hedges that may restrict width. Two bollards may be required to give a clear central passage for riders of 1.5m and for carriage-drivers 1.8m.

5.5.7. On a byway, the gap between the bollards and 3m before and beyond it must have level and even ground. Uneven ground between or in the approach to bollards may cause a carriage to tip and collide with a bollard. Vegetation must be maintained so that the full width between the bollards is available with a level surface.

5.5.8. It is unlikely that a gap of 1.8m will admit the type of four-wheeled motor vehicles most used for illegal or antisocial access. Smaller street cars are not usually a problem and the smaller four-wheel drive vehicles (e.g. Suzuki Jimny 1,645mm wide) would have clearance of less than 80mm each side.

5.5.9. If a gap less than 1.8m is proven to be necessary on a byway, local carriage drivers may be willing to accept lockable bollards which can be lowered and for which they have the code, but this is only a solution where such acceptance has been negotiated by the highway authority with local users. The bollard when lowered must be less than

150mm high. Combination locks are more acceptable than key locking padlocks and the code should be circulated to the British Horse Society, British Driving Society and local harness clubs each time it is changed as well as a local list of users to whom it has been supplied. Failing to communicate with users about locks has withdrawn cooperation in many areas. Contact details for acquiring the code must be provided on site.

- 5.5.10. On a byway leaving a road, bollards should be set back by 6m, so that a horse-drawn carriage does not have to swing into the road to clear the bollards. It may be a difficult maneuver for some carriages, so not being exposed to motor traffic is preferred. Where the purpose of the bollards is to prevent fly-tipping or parking, it may be necessary to reduce this length, but it should only be done where road traffic flow makes it possible for a horse and carriage to be lined up with the gap in safety.
 - 5.5.11. N.B. The Kent Carriage Gap is no longer recommended by the British Horse Society as it obstructs the majority of modern horse-drawn vehicles. The BHS Advice on Vehicle barriers on routes used by riders and carriage-drivers in England and Wales explains further why this barrier is no longer recommended.
 - 5.5.12. Only bollards may be erected on a byway as the structures below will prevent access by horse-drawn carriages and may unseat riders and are therefore only to be considered on bridleways- horse stile, horse safe gate, chicanes.
6. Mounting blocks
- 6.1. The BHS have provided guidance on mounting blocks [Free Leaflets | British Horse Society \(bhs.org.uk\)](https://www.bhs.org.uk).
 - 6.2. Occasional mounting blocks on the route would be a good addition to designs, giving riders the opportunity to get in and out of the saddle if required. Creative mounting blocks made from natural materials also double as pit stop furniture for other user groups and can even be crafted by local artisans to add cultural interest to the route.
7. Cycle speeds:
- 7.1. Horse rider and cyclist conflicts are rare. We as a group are supportive of our cycling club peers. That said, recent times have seen a surge in e-bikes and scooters.
 - 7.2. The TRO status attached to Mere Way byway prevents any vehicle other than a pedal cycle from using the route unless they are permit holders, so at present there is no general right for e-bikes/e-scooters to use Mere Way without a permit, like carriage drivers.
 - 7.3. How will the access of e-bikes/-e-scooters be policed?
 - 7.4. How will the speed of such modes of transport be limited? An e-bike/e-scooter doing 25mph on an active travel route with multiple different vulnerable user groups is a very worrying concept.
8. Ancient route and Climate Impact
- 8.1. Introducing a significant width of permanent hard topping will require archaeological digging given the ancient history of Mere Way.
9. Landbeach village northern section
- 9.1. Our group prefers the northern section of the proposed Mere Way route to follow the original lay of the Roman road of Mere Way. This is in keeping with the history of the route and offers significant safety advantages to all user groups, helping them avoid coming into contact with traffic through Landbeach. We support this route option subject to safe road crossing.
 - 9.2. If the route is to travel through County Farms land, parity of equestrian access must be delivered and the route amenity and width mirror the designs agreed for the southern section of Mereway (equal provision of hard and soft surfacing).
 - 9.3. If the northern section is to travel through Landbeach village equestrians must not be excluded from the roadside path. This would push horse riders into traffic meanwhile protecting other user groups, with whom we share equal vulnerable road user status.

10. In summary,

- 10.1. A cycle path in addition to the existing byway is required, rather than complete redesign of the existing beautiful historic rural route.
- 10.2. The Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan states that the bridleway network is fragmented, inadequate and in need of improvement- current proposals for Mere Way fail to meet the requirements of this locality ROW plan.
- 10.3. We strongly object to the plans for a 3-4.1m wide tarmac path on the Mere Way with just a 2m strip for all other users on safety grounds and equality grounds. We do not object to the creation of a path suitable for commuter cyclists (and available to other users) but do object to the existing path amenity being destroyed in order to provide that path.
- 10.4. The 3m wide path from the proposed A10 bridge (as per RMA 21/04353/REM) should be followed through with on Mere Way.
- 10.5. The hard surface element of Mere Way should be no greater in width than the rural soft surface element, to provide equality in year-round accessibility for all vulnerable road user groups. No one user group should take precedence over another, in respect of design plans and amenity provision from this S106 Mere Way development. With speeding cyclists on a central path and all other users confined to a 2m, the potential for accidents is high. The requirements of the equality act 2010 must also be taken into consideration.
- 10.6. The hard path should be placed to one side, not down the middle which pushes all other vulnerable road user groups into narrow grass strips when cyclists come through and does not meet with biodiversity/climate ambitions of GCP/CCC/SCDC.
- 10.7. A hard path made of compacted limestone/similar robust natural material and additional to what already exists, is required to respect the ancient and rural and biodiverse nature of this once roman road. Tarmac would be environmentally vandalizing (see the recent destruction of Wilson's Road bridleway Cambridge by tarmacking), costly, high maintenance, create slip hazard for horses and induces leg concussion and limits year-round use of Mere Way for equestrians.

Tarmac is a poor environmental choice that goes in the opposite direction of the 2019 net zero legislations, Paris Agreement and COP26. As per the recent Natural England report information on climate protective value of grassland, every 1m length of Mere Way that is converted to tarmac 24kg of carbon will be released, plus all the emissions associated with digging the path, creating the surface and laying in and annual maintenance.

Limestone/similar natural material on active travel routes would help GCP/CCC/SCDC achieve their net zero ambitions.
- 10.8. Pegasus crossing required at the Mere Way junction with Butt Lane.
- 10.9. Butt Lane section of Mere Way- speed limit reduction to 30mph- to ensure safety of all NMU user groups travelling on Mere Way and crossing here.
- 10.10. A14 underpass section of Mere Way linking to Guided Busway requires improved visibility and security adjustments to ensure safe passage for all user groups.
- 10.11. Carriage driver access should be included in design plans as per 'byway' status. This ensures carriage drivers and disabled riders are included in Mere Way accessibility. Access via authorised permit (as per current TRO status) should continue to protect their equality of access.
- 10.12. Only bollards may be erected on a byway as the structures such as horse stile, horse safe gate, chicanes will prevent access by horse- drawn carriages and may unseat riders and are therefore only to be considered on bridleways (BHS guidance).
- 10.13. E-bike and E-scooters high speeds present safety hazard risk to other vulnerable user groups of Mere Way and the present TRO status prohibits their use of the route.
- 10.14. The claims that there will be significant numbers of new residents wanting to use the cycling option when travelling from Waterbeach given the new-town, must not overlook the

fact that there will also be an increase in numbers of pedestrians, dogs, children and horse riders and carriage drivers too as there are good livery and riding school provisions already in existence. Mere Way is a superb route linking Waterbeach and Landbeach to St Ives and settlements in between and, it will see more use from equestrians. these numbers could be very significant.

- 10.15. Our group prefers the northern section of the proposed Mere Way route to follow the original lay of the roman road of Mere Way subject to safe road crossings. This is in keeping with the history of the route and offers significant safety advantages to all user groups, helping them avoid coming into contact with traffic through Landbeach.
- 10.16. If the northern part of the route is to travel through County Farms land, parity of equestrian access must be delivered and the route amenity and width must mirror the design requirements outlined above for the southern section of Mere Way to ensure equestrian safety and equity of access.
- 10.17. If the northern section is to travel through Landbeach village, equestrians must not be excluded from the proposed roadside path/cycle path. Excluding us would push horse riders into traffic, meanwhile protecting other user groups, with whom we share equal vulnerable road user status.

Our A10 bridge Comments (21/04353/REM)

Design and Access:

1. The terms of the S106 agreement is that Mere Way and the A10 bridge are to be built to NMU status as a restricted byway- which includes equestrians. It is essential that S106 obligations are delivered and for CCC to fulfill its obligations in terms of equality.
2. Despite the heading of Cycle Path, the bridge is correctly identified within the application as being an NMU bridge, non-motorised users are pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. However, we cannot find any reference within the documents to access to the bridge from the Waterbeach development for equestrians. This needs to be included as part of the planning permission.
 - 2.1. Furthermore, there is ambiguity surrounding the RMA in respect of equestrian access at the moment and contents of the RMA documents do not convey the same verbal agreements made during the one consultation meeting we had with Urban and Civic back in July, or the exact requirements of the S106.
 - 2.2. The site notice document is titled 'For: Approval of access, appearance, landscape, layout and scale of A10 cycle bridge pursuant to outline planning permission S/0559/17/OL'. To us, this RMA title and the various documents attached (e.g. Bridge GA and elevation, parapet, wing geometry, etc as summarised in the 'Attachment Summary From Portal' document) refer directly to the bridge structure as a cycle bridge. Pedestrian access is mentioned in some documentation. Overarchingly, it is labelled as a cycle bridge, implying cyclists will have priority rights of way. Nowhere in RMA documentation does it specify equestrian access over the bridge.
3. It is essential that the specifications contained in both the British Horse Society Advice Leaflet on Bridges and the DMRB are met to enable horses to be safely ridden across the bridge. Contrary to popular belief, it is safer for horses to be ridden across bridges because a rider controls the horse by three means, hands, legs and seat. When leading a horse, two of these three control methods are removed. <https://www.bhs.org.uk/advice-and-information/free-leaflets-and-advice> 'Bridges, fords, gradients and steps'
 - 3.1. BHS Advice Leaflet 'Mounting Blocks'
 - 3.1.1. 'A rider usually has best control of a horse while mounted by using the rider's seat, legs and hands. When leading a horse and while mounting or dismounting, control is reduced because the first two means are removed and the last is compromised.'
 - 3.1.2. A horse being led, has the opportunity to pull away from the person leading it resulting in a loose horse. Whereas when being ridden, the rider usually stays with the horse. It is a misconception by those who do not understand horses that safety is improved when the horse is being led.
 - 3.1.3. During mounting or dismounting, a rider is at particular risk of any movement of the horse arising from that reduced control. A sudden move, such as from the horse being startled, can result in serious injury to the rider as falling is the most likely outcome.
 - 3.1.4. Equestrians must not be required to dismount to cross the bridge. To enforce this would make this route prohibitive for riders with disabilities. It is well documented that when crossing bridges, riders have greatest control of their horses when mounted. Good to have mounting blocks around for those who want to dismount but it must be optional not mandatory. The bridge needs to meet all equestrian use conditions.
 - 3.1.5. We require confirmation of full mounted and dismounted equestrian access.
 - 3.2. We cannot see on the drawings confirmation that the parapets are of the correct height for horses to be ridden over the bridge. These matters were raised during BHS Access Officer conversations with Urban and Civic so they may be contained somewhere within the documents but until that is confirmed, this planning application must not be approved.

- 3.3. The infill must be provided on the whole of the bridge – including the central section where the two ‘wings’ dip. The bridge designers did state that the infill had been included within the design but we cannot see it on the drawings
- 3.4. It has been mooted that the bridge and route will be adopted as a Restricted Byway. If that is the case, which we would fully support, then it will need to accommodate carriage drivers as well. As a linked extension of Mere Way byway the bridge adoption status should mirror the Mere Way adoption status to ensure continuity of user group access.
4. The GA document in particular, is confusing:
 - 4.1.1. The legend doesn't include a single mention of equestrians
 - 4.1.2. There is a note on the map itself indicating equestrian crossing point but the pointer points to a shared user path
 - 4.1.3. Mounting blocks are situated and marked on the approach to both sides of the bridge (which is great by the way) but the GA doesn't clarify if equestrians will have full (not dismounted only) access to the bridge crossing.
 - 4.1.4. It is unclear on the GA doc and others in the RMA whether the bridge is a fully shared NMU bridge for cyclists, equestrians (including mounted) and pedestrians. We have asked U&C for clarity on this but have not yet received a response. The bridge must be an NMU bridge.
 - 4.1.4.1. This requirement is also of importance to our disabled riders, for whom dismounting and leading makes bridge access prohibitive. There is an active Riding for the Disabled Group in Waterbeach. The barrier of having to dismount for these groups would not meet Equal Opportunities requirements and would discriminate against disabled riders. We did make this point very clear during the July stakeholder meeting with U&C. We have asked U&C for clarity on equestrian mounted and dismounted bridge access but, have not yet received a response.
 - 4.1.4.2. There is much mention in various other documents attached to the RMA of the bridge being a cycle bridge, sometimes mention of a cycle and pedestrian bridge and Mere Way being a cycle way.
 - 4.1.4.3. Imagery used in the RMA implies user segregation on the bridge (pedestrians one side and cyclists the other) although there isn't surface markings. For avoidance of doubt, we require there to be no segregation lanes because this could place horses in vulnerable positions when crossing.
 - 4.1.4.4. The decision on the RMA we imagine will be binding and it would be utterly terrible if we as a vulnerable road user group, were to lose out on being able to have parity of access to the Mere Way or the bridge, because application documents omitted us on key matters that then form the basis for the development.
 - 4.1.4.5. For clarity, where in RMA documentation it refers to U&C consulting with the local bridleways group, this was in fact one zoom meeting in July, where we were informed that the bridge would be cycle and pedestrian only. Our BHS colleagues investigated the S106 requirement and brought it to U&C attention, which then resulted in them going back to look at designs and agreeing to let us know.
5. In summary, we object to the RMA without the following:
 - 5.1. The bridge is designated as a non-motorised user bridge (NMU bridge) and built to standard for all NMUs including equestrians.
 - 5.1.1. Despite the application being for a Cycle Bridge and Cycle Route on Mere Way, the S106 requires the provision of a ‘bridge and route suitable for non-motorised users’ . Non-motorised users being pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. Unfortunately, failure to

use the correct terminology results in incorrect expectations from user groups. This is missing from much of the RMA documentation, which leaves security and parity of equestrian access at risk.

- 5.2. The bridge and route will be adopted as a Restricted Byway, not a highway.
- 5.3. Full mounted and dismounted equestrian access to, from and across the proposed A10 bridge is permitted and specified as such.
 - 5.3.1. This requirement is also of importance to our disabled riders, for whom dismounting and leading makes bridge access prohibitive. There is an active Riding for the Disabled Group in Waterbeach. The barrier of having to dismount for these groups would not meet Equal Opportunities requirements and would discriminate against disabled riders.
- 5.4. Paths surrounding and linking to the bridge are designated NMU paths, not pedestrian and cyclist only.

Back ground information:

Since discovering the RMA recently (not via U&C communication), we emailed Caroline Foster a number of clarifying questions about designs and time frames. Those outstanding are explained above. In our email to Caroline Foster of Urban and Civic of 15th October 2021, we asked several clarifying questions. These are listed below. To date, we haven't been provided with answers to these which reflects our overall commentary on the A10 bridge RMA.

- Mounting blocks are situated and marked on the approach to both sides of the bridge (which is great by the way) but the GA doesn't clarify if equestrians will have full (not dismounted only) access to the bridge crossing. We need absolute clarity of this please?
- It is pleasing to see that equestrians are included in the pathways surrounding the bridge area and we note that this was discussed with us at the online meeting. However, I note on the legend that the hard landscape key for those pathways says '*Shared pedestrian and cycle routes*'. We need absolute clarity on whether this includes or excludes equestrians please?
- This map legend for the bridge itself also refers to '*Stantec application documents*' and '*Knights Architects*': Can we please have sight of these?
- There is much mention in various other documents attached to the RMA of the bridge being a cycle bridge, sometimes mention of a cycle and pedestrian bridge and Mere Way being a cycle way. I'm sure you can understand that although we had one online meeting with U&C where we were reassured that this would not be the case and that equestrians would be included, seeing us omitted worries us greatly. The decision on the RMA we imagine will be binding and it would be utterly terrible if we as a vulnerable road user group, were to lose out on being able to have parity of access to the Mere Way or the bridge, because application documents omitted us on key matters that then form the basis for the development.
- It remains unclear on this doc and others in the RMA whether the bridge is a fully shared bridge for cyclists, equestrians (including mounted) and pedestrians- please can you clarify?
- Rebecca mentioned at the online meeting we had with you back in early summer, that she would arrange for a joint meeting between us, GCP and U&C because there was a clear need to share dialogue about equestrian needs, with GCP. Please could this be arranged for October please? Would it be yourself or Rebecca who would arrange this?_

- We are a large worried vulnerable road user community group, simply seeking to better understand, so that we can engage and contribute informed commentary to these related consultations. Our priority is to ensure our equestrian community have parity of access on local route developments.

Our A10 Slap Up Junction Safety Crossing Comments

1. Design and Access:
2. We have to date not been consulted by anyone about these plans, nor have we seen any documentation. We became aware of the planned improvement through village social media.
3. We approached Urban and Civic for information and they explained that the planned safety crossing for the Slap Up junction on the A10 will be a Toucan Crossing.
4. A large number of our members are concerned about the proposed Toucan crossing which serves only pedestrians and leaves us extremely vulnerable when crossing the A10. They have expressed their views with U&C but have so far not received a response.
5. The Slap Up A10 junction must give due consideration to horse riders as well as to pedestrians. Riders from Waterbeach would like to safely access the beautiful Mere Way byway and circular routes to Landbeach. Riders of Landbeach would equally like to be able to safely cross to access local routes. These riders include young and disabled riders from local riding school Hall Farm Stables.
6. Currently this junction is extremely dangerous for any non-motorised user to cross. There is zero safety infrastructure for their safe passage.
7. The planned improvements, we understand, are among other things, are to provide infrastructure that enables safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. Horse riders and horses must be included in this provision, given their equal status with pedestrians and cyclists as a highly vulnerable road user group.
8. To that end the installation of a Pegasus crossing at this junction is required as a minimum.
9. This crossing for Hall Farm Stables Riding School is the closest access route to Mere Way.
10. While the bridge provides safe crossing for users at the very north of the village, it creates a nice but long and linear access route to Mere Way.
11. A Pelican crossing at the Slap Up junction would provide us with much needed safe access to Mere Way and create circular route options for us and all users.
12. By installing a Pegasus crossing at the Slap Up junction, riders would have parity of access in a safe, controlled way. Without such provision, riders may be tempted to use an unsuitable pedestrian crossing which would put both horse and rider in an extremely vulnerable position. None of us wish to hear of any more fatalities or injuries on our local roads, least those which could be prevented by appropriately planned crossings let alone appropriately planned crossings at known accident black spots.
13. We are waiting to hear from U&C when this improvement application will be going in.

Our Comments on Green Way route linking to Denny End

Design and Access:

1. In a email from Caroline Foster (U&C) to us, she referred to the Green Way route linking to Denny End: *'we are currently updating the connection into the development from Denny End Road to align directly with the Greenways route (subject to CCC approval)'*.
2. We are somewhat lost as to which Greenway route is now being adopted and what the latest proposed route is. We asked for clarification from U&C in October and a design map and are still waiting to hear.
3. We actively fed into the Greenways team at GCP back in 2018 but have not heard of a further update or what the planned route will be (our commentary from those consultations is attached in an appendix below).

Our relationship with British Horse Society Area Access Officers

To provide completeness and because while we work alongside our British Horse Society Area Access Officer, as a triad we are both connected in our remit and also different at the same time, which can create confusion. We hope you find this useful summary below provides clarity.

-Waterbeach and District Bridleways Group- Co-Chairs: Tessa and Jude.

-BHS Area Access Officer: Lynda Warth

-Hall Farm Stables: Tessa Frost

Together, Tessa and Jude represent (as co-chairs) Waterbeach and District Bridleways Group, which represents all member riders from the local areas of Waterbeach, Milton, Chittering, Cottenham, Landbeach and all riders of Hall Farm Stables on all access matters. Tessa takes the lead on RDA access provision and needs (and day to day physical provision via her riding school business) but they are represented by us as a collective group.

Lynda from BHS represents ALL local riders in access matters and is not restricted to just representing our group. Because of that, and the affiliation we as individual riders have with the BHS, and Tessa's business being governed by BHS riding school regulations, we liaise very closely with Lynda, so that our group's contribution benefits all local riders (including our members) and are in line with BHS advice and standards.

All this means that at times you may see us separately ask developers for clarifying information, because our official formal responses are submitted separately as Waterbeach and District Bridleways Group or BHS. In consultation communications however, we are involved as a collective on anything related to equestrian access, for reasons mentioned above. We basically come to the same access route matters with slightly different lenses.

ENDS

Waterbeach and District Bridleways Group

Chairs: Jude Sutton and Tessa Frost

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/191181688055355/>

Contact email address: judelinds@hotmail.com or tessa@hallfarmstables.com

ENDS

Waterbeach Bridleways Group: Comment on Mere Way Byway 21/04625/FUL (including A10 bridge 21/04353/REM and A10 Slap Up Junction Safety Upgrade (\$106 requirements of developers of Waterbeach Newtown, Urban and Civic)
8th Nov 2021

Appendix

- A Waterbeach & District Bridleways Greenways Initiative Recommendations
November 2017
- B WATERBEACH GREENWAY- Second draft consultation comment from
Waterbeach and District Bridleways Group
2nd Dec 2018
- C Waterbeach and District Bridleways Group- Comment to SCDC on
Parameter Plan - AMENDED 09/04/2019
- D The Wildlife Trusts: Local Authority Services and Biodiversity Your
Statutory Obligations
- E Study-Older riders derive emotional benefits

Appendix A

Waterbeach & District Bridleways Greenways Initiative Recommendations

November 2017

Covering Horningsea, Waterbeach, Landbeach, and Lode to support equine use in and around the communities to the north of Cambridge.

Goals for our advocacy

- Safe and accessible non-motorised user (NMU) access to the Greenway networks
- Use the Greenways to expand and link to non-motorised routes between villages
- Advocate for equine usage of paths to ensure our inclusion in the decision-making and design processes
- Maintain and expand long-standing legal rights of way

Equestrian access to bridleways and multi-user paths is an ongoing concern to the communities north of Cambridge. Increasing development and traffic in these areas has resulted in some horse-vehicle conflicts and often the loss of previously available off-road riding. Existing routes between Waterbeach and Milton, and Chittering and Landbeach are non-existent and those in Waterbeach are unsafe because they are both poorly maintained and unpassable (reported to BHS), or they require horses to at some points, to navigate busy roads. Local routes are often too narrow, involve frequent gates or very narrow entrances/exits, impossible river lock crossings and no routes are circular. Positively horse rider and cyclist conflict in the area is rare.

The Waterbeach & District Bridleways group was formed in order to promote the communities' needs with the proposed Greenways initiative, and to use that opportunity to expand access. The group represents 150 riders from Waterbeach itself (including riders attending the village riding school Hall Farm Stables) and an additional c50 riders from surrounding villages plus the College of West Anglia. It also represents some 200 horses owned by these riders and riding establishments. Roughly 50% of group members are British Horse Society members.

Our Greenway Access Recommendations

In order to enable safe use of these routes by all users there are a number of design concerns for multi-user, off-road routes. Below are specific areas of concern and recommendations for Greenways access.

- The Waterbeach Cycling Campaign generated three Greenway options for the Waterbeach Greenway. Options 1 (improving the existing greenway on the river) or 2 (new route following the rail line) would be the preferred routes for horse use, over option 3 (along the A10)

These are the routes shown on the Waterbeach Cycling Campaign documents and may not accurately reflect the current plans. However, either of these routes is preferable to a route that follows the A10 although an A10 path as well as either the railway or river route, would create the opportunity for a very welcome circular path.

- Where a tarmac surface is installed for cycles, a parallel unsealed path provides separation for horse or pedestrians during high traffic commuting periods
- If option 3 is granted this would provide another circular route but with some considerations:

-Busy A-road crossings would be best provided for by construction of under/over passes suitable for pedestrian, cyclists, and horses. Refer to BHS Standards 'Road Crossings' leaflet.

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/access-and-bridleways/free-leaflets-and-advice>

-Ideally no A10 elements, due to speed and type of vehicles using A roads which present safety risks for all greenway users.

-If route passes alongside A10, safe barriers are needed to protect all users from the dangers of the A10 (E.g. children or dogs getting onto the A10).

- Routes need to be wide enough to accommodate all users.



We refer to the BHS guide for standards on this:

'Multi-User Routes'

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/access-and-bridleways/free-leaflets-and-advice>

- 3 user information and etiquette points on route- one for cyclists, one for walkers and one for horses.



User etiquette and yield to information signage to educate all users. Frequently and prominently signposted along the route. We refer to the BHS guides for standards on this:

‘Horse and Cycle’ leaflet

‘Multi-User Routes’ leaflet

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/access-and-bridleways/free-leaflets-and-advice>

‘Dogs under control’ guidance required.

- Barriers to prevent motorized vehicle use need to be useable by riders, for instance by enabling step-over or mounted open/shut gates

Ref: BHS leaflet ‘Multi-User Routes’ available on BHS website

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/access-and-bridleways/free-leaflets-and-advice>

“Barriers to prevent motor vehicular use but permit all other users are used successfully at relatively low cost, they must be legally authorised and comply with

The British Standard; they should only be used where there is a genuine danger from motor vehicles and where the loss of accessibility of the path to all legitimate users is justified by that danger”

BHS Multi-user Route Leaflet



- Regular mounting blocks or tree stumps (every 200m). Combined user greenway furniture would be preferable so that it benefits all users e.g. doubles up as a seat for walkers/cyclists to rest on. Could be designed as a piece of artistic route furniture linked to a trail/game that all users could enjoy experiencing. Could also be designed to convey route directions.



- Good sight lines so users can see who and what is coming. Meandering route preferable make for greater visual interest and an overall more enjoyable experience and help users judge better the speed of oncoming users. Space to safely pass other users.
- Grass or soft surfacing to minimize concussive impact on horse's legs and provide aesthetic appeal.
BHS statement from their leaflet 'Surfaces' on the BHS Website:

"The level of concussion to both the hoof and horses' legs increases with the hardness of the surface and with the speed at which the horse is moving. This is exactly comparable to humans – running on a pavement transfers a lot more stress to the bones, joints and soft tissues than running on a grass sward, with typical increased wear and risk of deterioration and injury – therefore, riders avoid hard surfaces where possible."

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/access-and-bridleways/free-leaflets-and-advice>

- Railway crossings.
Where gates are provided for vehicles, all equestrians have historically been expected to use the vehicular gate, not the narrow side gate provided for those on foot. Vehicular gates have catches and are usually difficult to open from horseback, so the lone rider will spend time on the line shutting one gate and opening the far one. They may have to dismount while on the track. This is inherently unsafe as spending time on the track increases the risk from trains, especially where there is no way of talking to the signalman.

The British Horse Society's advice is that *"horses should be ridden across level crossings as the rider has more aids to control their mount. A led horse can easily jerk the reins free and put the person – and others – in danger. However, the Society recognises that in some instances dismounting and leading may be the only way to use the crossing. If the rider chooses to do so, they must exercise extra care and use a trackside telephone if one is available....."*

.... Where riders have to cross gated railways, install bridle gates or narrow side gates made wide to bridleway standard or, if space does not allow this, catches to be supplied that can be operated from horseback."

Refer to BHS guidance on 'Level Crossings' for specifications on railway crossing standards for equestrian use.

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/access-and-bridleways/free-leaflets-and-advice>



- If crossing rail tracks, installation of safe grounding so that horses' hooves and shoes cannot get caught.

- Link greenway route for all users into Milton Country Park.

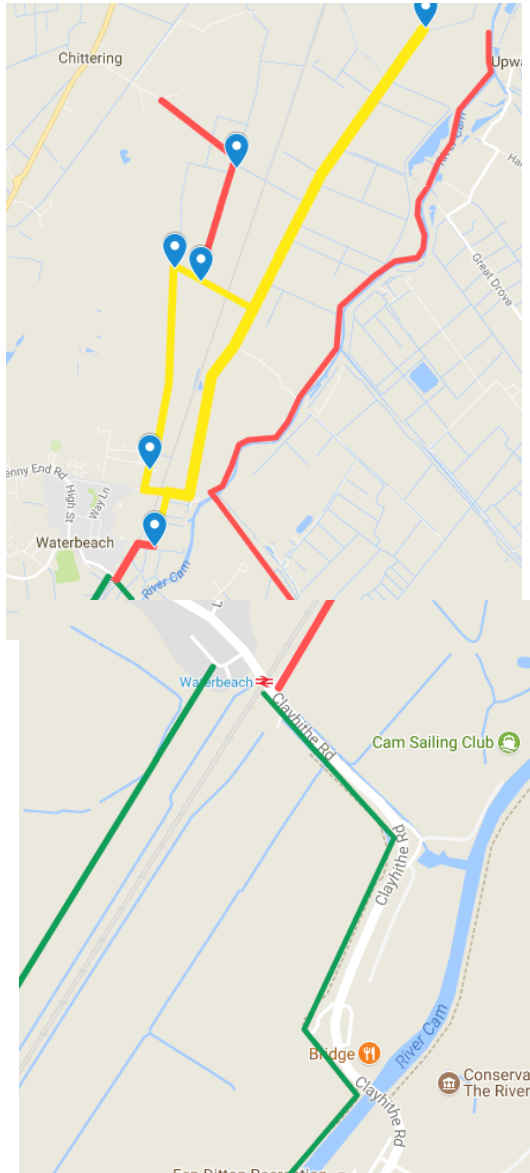
On the Greenways leaflet there is a potential route shown through Milton to link the 3 route options via Fen Road. Is there scope for a pleasant and safe off-road link if 2 or 3 of the routes go ahead?

Connecting Villages

Connecting nearby village routes to the Greenways will be essential for access by all users. A number of equestrian routes have been identified and others need to be investigated. As much as possible these routes need to avoid roads for safe and enjoyable use.

Waterbeach Routes

Currently equestrian routes for Waterbeach require that riders use the roads through town to Bannold or Long Drove. Developers Urban&Civic and RLW Estates have made no provision for horse riders or multi-NMU groups. Speculative development plans will dramatically increase traffic, eventually making existing NMU routes on roads (e.g. Long Drove and Bannold Drove), bridleways and byways less safe especially for horse riders.



As a Greenways proposed route follows the river or the railway tracks, connecting routes could be included to access upgraded existing path to accommodate NMU's along the dyke, and over the river to Lode and Horningsea. These paths are already well used by cyclists.

Google map with details available here:

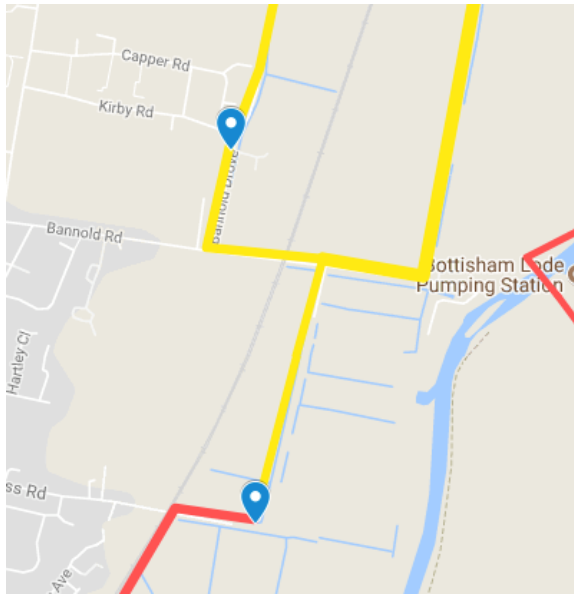
<https://tinyurl.com/yayev7eq>

Greenways Routes

The green paths in the south are possible Greenways routes. One follows the current river path from Cambridge, this one is not accessible to equestrians currently and would require improvement for increased cycle/pedestrian usage. The other follows the rail line but does not currently exist.

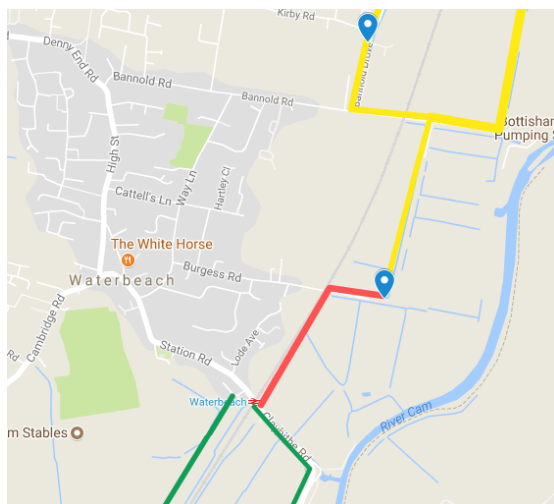
These are the routes shown on the Waterbeach Cycling Campaign documents and may not accurately reflect the current plans. However, either of these routes is preferable due to risk factors of a route adjacent to the A10.

Currently Accessible Multi-Use Paths



The yellow paths are Long Drove, Burgess Drove, Bannold Drove, and Cross Drove. These paths are currently accessible to equestrians, as well as vehicles (car and farm), bicycles, and pedestrians. All are single vehicle in width, and in most places are bordered on both sides by ditches. Although wide enough as a bridleway already, the addition of places to step off the droves and/or a parallel path would support increased cycle, pedestrian, and equestrian usage.

Connecting Routes



The red routes do not currently exist. This include the path that could connect the Greenways with the yellow. That route is especially important as currently the only route available requires riding on the road through Waterbeach via Way Lane and Station Rd. These are high traffic areas and are likely to increase with the new construction north of Bannold Rd.

Other connecting routes shown on the larger map include a connection from Cross Drove to Chittering, a River path that is currently pedestrian only, and a connection to Lode.

Improve equestrian access safety at unmanned rail crossing at Chittering (Long Drove) and on Burgess Road Waterbeach.

NMU river crossing at Bottisham Lock which would open up links to Lode, Bottisham and Wicken. NMU river crossing also needed at Baits Bite Lock, linking Milton and Horningsea and Fen Ditton. These paths are already well used by cyclists.

Access through or round the perimeter of the field at rear of St John's Church Waterbeach so that riders can access the bridleways at Cow Hollow more safely rather than having to ride along very busy village roads (Hall Farm Stables riding school currently has to take children on horses through centre of busy village to access these routes).

Orbital links preferred. Current 12 greenway routes are like spokes of a wheel without a tyre. Linking these by utilising and extending existing bridleways would produce a network of routes right around Cambridge. Upgrading the existing network of routes to be available to all NMU's would be a cost-effective way of achieving access for all.

Improving Safety on Existing Routes

Safer access at bridge at Clayhithe where there are narrow entrances, bollard entrances, dangerous turns onto very busy road with blind bend.

Recommendations for standards and specifications of structures and surfaces

We draw your attention to the various researched and approved multiuser route and bridleway design recommendations that the BHS have published:

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/access-and-bridleways/free-leaflets-and-advice>

Appendix B

WATERBEACH GREENWAY- Second draft consultation comment from Waterbeach and District Bridleways Group

2nd Dec 2018

Waterbeach & District Bridleways Group sent in their recommendations regarding their preferred route for this Greenway at the initial consultation. We are extremely disappointed to see that our considered, comprehensive and positive and proactive views have been largely ignored and that the route chosen runs largely alongside the railway line and lacks links to the bridleway/byway network and is linear not circular. Local equestrians feel like they are effectively being excluded. The route which runs alongside the railway line, is not favourable for horse riders and many riders therefore feel that that will be unable to use this route.

Reasons why this route alongside the railway line, which carries hourly high-speed trains to and from London, and also daily freight trains (circa total 40-45 trains per day), is less suitable than the route alongside the river, are as follows:

1. The chosen path next to a busy high-speed railway line does not evoke the character of a rural Greenway and makes the path less pleasurable to use for equestrians, walkers, leisure cyclists, and other NMUs.
2. The chosen path appears to be one long straight route, which encourages cyclists, commuting cyclists in particular, to travel at speed, making it a safety issue for equestrians, walkers, pushchairs, wheelchairs and other slower cyclists, including children on bikes. Waterbeach Cycling Campaign have expressed in their feedback a preference for a straight commuter route because it enables cyclists to travel at higher speeds and reduce commute times- the proposed route favours speed and one user group and puts other user groups at risk. A greenway is used by people of all ages, from walkers, wheelchair users, horse riders, to cyclists - meandering routes are considered safer for all and are more enjoyable.
3. Combine the element of speed as mentioned above with the sudden and fast passing of passenger and freight trains alongside the route and the chosen path becomes challenging for horse riders to navigate let alone enjoy. This is especially true of young/novice riders and horses and of disabled riders who are often led in hand, of which there are many within our group who ride locally with Hall Farm Stables at Waterbeach and with the College of West Anglia and the RDA, as well as those who ride privately. It is not impossible to ride shared paths alongside railway lines, but it is discouraging for disabled/young/novice riders and horses, for whom more should be done to provide parity of access and suitable routes.
4. There is no obvious equestrian access from this path to cross the railway line to access the current path alongside the river or other local equestrian routes. Currently there are railway line crossings at Fen Road in Milton and Station Road in Waterbeach. However, these are

crossings which already require safety upgrading and would certainly require upgrading if they were to be used by the many and various Greenway user groups. NMU bridges would be optimal at these two crossings.

5. This route does not provide any circular options for leisure traffic on the Greenway. There is no enjoyment whatsoever in riding a dead-end route. There are clear options to create links to circular routes and which link to the wider bridleway network which need to be factored into designs (we cover this further below)

6. This shared user route finishes short of Cambridge North Station- why?

7. The Waterbeach Greenway rail route does not link to any other Greenway. Our members and our group as a whole have fed back many times that there is a great opportunity being missed by the planners in designing a series of Greenways that just represent the spokes of a wheel that have no connection between them. Dead end routes deter people from using them. It is a shame that the Greenway routes are not being connected to each other or existing link routes which could provide a wonderful much larger scale network for commuting and leisure.

As per our original consultation comments the more favourable route for equestrians is alongside the river with links across the river and railway line to enable circular routes and access to the wider bridleway network. This was one of the options at the last consultation, but now does not appear to be proposed. This is disappointing. We said that the river and railway routes were most suitable for horse riders, and we commented extensively on the merits of each of the 3 original routes and their suitability for equestrians. We also provided considered suggestions to inform the design details. Sadly, none of which have made it through to this latest proposed route design. Our comments appear to have been ignored and as a result the proposed route is highly unsuitable for horse riders.

We refer you again to our original commentary and ask that this is read again by planners and designs take into account the needs of the local equestrian community. For ease, we have included it as an appendix to this latest comment.

The route preferred by our group is the River route option which already exists along the tow path and would only require upgrading to a shared NMU route. This path also has an existing A14 underpass and runs all the way to central Cambridge with many options to create cyclist/pedestrian access off it to Cambridge Nth Station and the Guided Bus route for all users. Upgrading and adopting this route would deliver dramatic savings in the £6.6M cost that the current route involves in creating a path from scratch along the railway line and a whole new A14 underpass. Even if upgrading the River route cost £1M that's £5.6M saved! And an enjoyable and functional Greenway created from an existing historical access route that holds a significant place the history of the Fens and Cambridge.

If the current proposed route along the railway line is taken forwards, to better provide for equestrians who are by default of current design most likely to be unable to use the railway route, could an additional Greenway route along the river be created by upgrading it for NMU use (including equestrians) please?

This would:

- a. provide a circular route for walkers, cyclists and equestrians, with the rail side route presumably being more favoured by commuting cyclists.
- b. the riverside path would provide a more suitable path akin to what a Greenway is, which would also give access to the other side of the river. At present there are river crossings at Baits Bite Lock and Bottisham lock, however these are currently not accessible to equestrians, meaning that the only river crossing is at Clayhithe, providing a route to Horningsea, with the possibility of linking to Quy Fen and Lode. NMU bridges at Baits Bite and Bottisham Lock could help improve river crossing opportunities for riders and all users.
- c. the river route could carry on safely past Cambridge North Station, which could then link up to the Guided Busway, which would give equestrians access all the way to St Ives and the villages along the Busway. This would provide a valuable and important link for equestrians and other NMUs, as the path alongside the Busway is designated as a Bridleway.
- d. the river route would provide links to the Horningsea, Swaffhams, Bottisham Greenways and could provide a circular route with Clayhithe and Fen Ditton and onto Ely via the Fen Rivers Way and out to Lode too near Bottisham Lock. Some of these routes are footpaths that have been colonised by cyclists of years who use them regularly but are unavailable to equestrians – this could be easily changed, and the paths would require zero-minimal upgrading.

Comments on the design specifics of the current proposed route:

1. The underpass – this needs to be suitable for equestrians with mounting blocks provided on either side, to enable riders to remount. Many of our riders are not able to mount from the ground, especially children and disabled riders which is why mounting blocks should be provided. There is however already an underpass in that local area, which could be upgraded?

2. Jane Coston Bridge isn't accessible to equestrians.

3. Milton Country Park - will the new section of shared path to MCP be available to equestrians please? The path would provide an equestrian route to MCP, which has a route round it for horses and would provide a nice circular leisure route for riders. If the river route was chosen, then a link at Fen Road railway crossing to the river could be provided.

4. Route next to railway line. The shared path at 3m wide seems narrow. The diagram suggest that a grass strip should also be available. We would support the suggestion from the BHS that a hedge separating the railway line would be preferable to a fence – a hedge would be a more suitable screen than standalone trees, as the hedging would absorb some of the sound. It would also help to provide habitat for biota and hedging in this area of the country is in very short supply. Hedging would also cost less long term to maintain.

5. Car Dyke Roman canal looks good. Just a note regarding surfacing- that area is known to have sudden large stones/rocks so careful designing is required on any grass strips to avoid causing serious injury to horse's legs. If horses are using the grass strip at speed which would be desirable this problem is potentially worse. The area is known to have extensive archaeological treasures and interest from its time as a Roman canal. The grass strip should be prepared with the same care and consideration as the hard path, and this should apply to all the grass strips throughout the Greenways, including regular maintenance of these grass strips.

6. Traffic calming- yes please!

7A Can't tell if this shared use path includes equestrians

7B Traffic calming- again yes please.

7C Route past proposed new Station. This is presumably a shared use path including equestrians, until it changes to a quiet road known locally as Bannold Drove byway which links to Cross Drove byway. As we mentioned in our initial commentary, this route is well used by equestrians and provides the only existing circular equestrian friendly off-road route in Waterbeach as it links to Long Drove. Ideally the Greenway should be extended to include these Byways, which would protect them from being swallowed up by the new development and used as a new access road which is what developer RLWE plan. RLWE plan for this byway to be a main access road for the new station and the station quarter of their proposed town. The route and area here will receive high levels of traffic and introduce a wide variety of vehicles and threatens the ability of equestrians to navigate the area and continue to enjoy this established route.

In Summary

The river path is the much preferred and most suitable route for equestrians, rather than the railway path.

We ask please that if the railway path option goes ahead, that as a minimum, NMU bridges are installed to provide cross links off the path, and also as a minimum that the river path is upgraded as well, to provide a circular route for all users and to assist with reducing the high expected costs of creating a new A14 underpass.

We ask also please that equestrians be included on all shared paths and any underpasses, with the quality of the shared paths being suitable for equestrians.

Appendix C

Waterbeach and District Bridleways Group- Comment to SCDC on Parameter Plan - AMENDED 09/04/2019

The Waterbeach & District Bridleways group represents 150 riders from Waterbeach itself (including riders attending the village riding school Hall Farm Stables) and an additional c50 riders from surrounding villages plus the College of West Anglia who share interest in the local access routes. It also represents some 200 horses owned by these riders and riding establishments. The group are British Horse Society members.

We are interested in protecting and extending equine access routes across the Waterbeach area and beyond. We have engaged with the consultations on the various Waterbeach planning applications that affect equestrian access (the station relocation, Urban and Civic Waterbeach Barracks, and RLWE greenfield development, local plan SPD, GCP Greenways project) and liaise closely with our British Horse Society regional access officer on these matters, and the Waterbeach Cycling Club with whom we share mutual interest but we are separate entities.

We note the access routes in the above-mentioned amended parameter plan and key in the amended parameter plan for the Waterbeach barracks development by Urban and Civic and make the following comments:

1. There is no mention of horses or equestrian access in this amended plan. Omitting rights of way for horse riders (existing routes or parity of access with cyclists and pedestrians) has been a common theme across all the above-mentioned planning applications/projects, and many of these have now been edited to include equestrians. This document is out of line with other related applications and projects, and the Local Plan SPD which also includes rights of way for horses.
 - a. Please amend the keys to include horse riders where there is reference to 'pedestrian or cyclist access', and horse riders where there is reference to 'cyclists, pedestrians and public transport'.
 - b. These routes should be labelled non-motorised user routes (NMUs) to prevent exclusion of any minority group that does not travel in a motorised vehicle, including equestrians and horses.
 - c. Although wide paths are preferable in design phases (as detailed in the documents highlighted in point 4 below), horse riders can safely share narrower paths if absolutely necessary. It is important that the local equestrian community have parity of access with cyclists and pedestrians and other non-motorised users.
2. The amended plan provides for only vehicles at the 2 A10 access points. This excludes all non-motorised users and prevents them from having safe access to access networks to the west of the A10.

- a. Please amend the plan to include non-motorised user safe crossings at these access points.
- 3. The amended plan does not include an access link for non-motorised users at the bend in the A10 near Emmaus, which is currently a useful route to Cottenham and beyond.
 - a. Please amend the plan to introduce a safe non-motorised user crossing at this point, (*as outlined in the vision documents referred to below*).
- 4. We have previously submitted the attached documents to the various planning applications mentioned above, and believe these will assist in editing the Urban and Civic amended parameter plan, to ensure equity of access for horses and horse riders. Please carefully review these documents and the advisory comments within.
 - a. Vision map for Equestrian access across the new-town (below). This map includes combined routes for cyclists and horses.
 - b. Waterbeach Cycling Club New Town Vision (page 7 refers to shared access routes for horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians). If planners do not support the Waterbeach cycling club vision, including our shared access routes, our priority is to ensure rights of way for horses and equestrians are included in alternative plans.
 - c. Waterbeach and District Bridleways Group comment on greenways project (contains specifics about equestrian rights of way, and design spec required to ensure parity of access with other non-motorised users and safety for riders). Since this comment was submitted the greenway route/s may have changed but the design principles we put forwards in this document are still relevant).

Waterbeach New Town People First Vision



Sincerely,
Waterbeach and District Bridleways Group
 Chairs: Tessa Frost and Jude Sutton

Waterbeach Bridleways Group: Comment on Mere Way Byway 21/04625/FUL (including A10 bridge 21/04353/REM and A10 Slap Up Junction Safety Upgrade (S106 requirements of developers of Waterbeach Newtown, Urban and Civic)
 8th Nov 2021

Contact: judelinds@hotmail.com

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