

SURREY HEATH LOCAL COMMITTEE**DATE: 11 December 2014****LEAD OFFICER: CLAIRE SAUNDERS, SENIOR COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS OFFICER****SUBJECT: UPDATE ON PETITION – THE HATCHES, PUBLIC BRIDLEWAY 19 CAMBERLEY & FRIMLEY. TO UPGRADE THE SURFACE TO ALLOW FOR SHARED USE****DIVISION: FRIMLEY GREEN & MYTCHETT****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The above petition closed on 16 November 2014 containing 300 signatures. This issue was introduced during questions at the July 2014 meeting and questions raised at the subsequent meeting in October 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Surrey Heath) is asked to note the report and the Enterprise bid.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**Wording of the Petition**

The hatches bridleway between Frimley Green and Farnborough North station is a narrow tarmac path with grass/mud verges. In the winter, the grass/mud takes over making it very difficult, especially for pedestrians who have to negotiate their way across the puddles and mud. The path is narrow so difficult for cyclists to get past pedestrians which sometimes causes conflict.

We would kindly request that the council consider upgrading the path in the next budget year, or at least reserve funding for improvement in the near future.

An ideal outcome for many people would be a Shared Use route for Pedestrians & Cyclists, perhaps with a simple white line along the centre to segregate the flow of traffic.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

Public Bridleway 19 provides a valuable route that connects Frimley Green, Farnborough North Station and the Blackwater Valley path.

A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) has recently been confirmed on the grounds of public safety, which has restricted equestrian use on this bridleway. However, the public continue to be able to use the route on foot and bicycle.

Although we do not have any records to suggest who may have carried out the work, at some point the surface has been laid with tarmac to an approximate width of 1.2m, There is then a verge and fence on either side of the path. At several points, the path is low lying which can allow puddles to form and washed out mud/silt to then be deposited on the surface. On the whole, the route is acceptable as a rural public bridleway.

The Countryside Access Team recognises the importance of this route for both utility and recreational journeys, however there is no budget currently available for improvement works such as this. In the past, similar routes have been successfully repaired and improved with a product called Fibredec where funds have been made available. This is a reinforced flexible bituminous surface dressing that is durable and is in keeping with the rural nature of the route and can withstand incidents of flooding.

We estimate that it would cost approximately £50,000 to undertake this improvement scheme.

Update

Work has now been completed by the Countryside Access Team to clean off the surface and remove vegetation from the full width of the surfaced footpath. This has significantly improved the available width for users.

Any proposed improvement works would need to raise the level of the path surface, and carry out drainage improvement works to reduce the number of occasions when the path floods. The path surface will also need to be renewed.

Any improvement scheme should consider widening the width of the surfaced section between the fences to capitalise on the available fence to fence width. It would also be beneficial to look at thinning the tree canopy to allow more light onto this public bridleway.

The County Council have submitted a bid to the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on 16 September 2014 in partnership with Hampshire County Council. The proposals in the bid are for improving routes for cyclists and walkers linking residential areas to railway stations and businesses. The bid is strongly linked to the economy and jobs.

At the time of writing, the EM3 LEP are considering the bid, but it is hoped that an announcement will be made at the beginning of December 2014.

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