



SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE

CHERTSEY TO THORPE CYCLEWAY

22 SEPTEMBER 2006

KEY ISSUES

The upgrading of Monks' Walk (Footpath 6 Chertsey and Footpath 51 Egham) to a bridleway would open up a direct, traffic free route from Chertsey to Thorpe for cyclists, equestrians, and disabled people.

SUMMARY

On 10th December 2004 it was recommended to Committee to prepare an outline design for a new cycle link between Chertsey and Thorpe along Monks' Walk, and that this new cycle link should be subject to public consultation in consultation with the Divisional Members.

The conclusion of the public consultation is to create a bridleway to permit cycle access along Monks' Walk. This has the added benefit of providing a new horse route, and would facilitate improvements to allow disabled access.

The next step is to make and advertise a creation order for a bridleway and prepare a detailed design. Once the legal process for conversion to a bridleway is complete, physical works can then commence on site to upgrade the route.

ELECTORAL DIVISION AND MEMBER

Chertsey – Cllr Ray Lowther

Egham Hythe and Thorpe – Cllr Yvonna Lay

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to approve:

- a) **that the Creation Order for Public Footpaths Nos. 6 and 7 Chertsey and 51 Egham (Monks' Walk) to become a bridleway be made under section 26 of the Highways Act 1980 and advertised for the statutory period; in the event that one or more objections are received and maintained the Order will be forwarded to the Secretary of State for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs for determination;**
- b) **that if the Creation Order is successful a bridleway be constructed along the route, as detailed in Annex 1.**

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 10th December 2004 the Committee approved to start the process of creating a new cycle link between Chertsey and Thorpe, along Monks' Walk. This route is rural in character and is of some historical importance. It is traffic free and therefore attractive to cyclists.
- 1.2 Monks' Walk includes Footpath 6 Chertsey and Footpath 51 Egham – these two form a continuous route between Church Approach in Thorpe and the A320 Staines Road in Chertsey, on the North side of the M3 over-bridge. As the final link in the route, Footpath 7 Chertsey connects the A320 Staines Road, on the South side of the M3 over-bridge, to Staines Lane and Bridleway 7 Chertsey.
- 1.3 Most of Monks' Walk is on land owned by Thorpe Park. A section of the route in Chertsey is on Highway land, and a short section in Thorpe is unregistered.

2.0 Public Consultation

- 2.1 In May 2005 Transportation Engineers met with Chris Edge, Head of Development of Thorpe Park, Anne Sheppard of Runnymede [horse] Riders, and Anne Woods of Surrey County Council's Countryside Access Team. It was agreed that the best option would be to convert Monks' Walk to a bridleway. This would grant access to equestrians and cyclists while retaining the route on the definitive rights of way map and being managed by the Countryside Access Team.
- 2.2 The main concern of Chris Edge, as representative of the principal landowner, was security. He opposes any change that may result in increased incursion into Thorpe Park through the boundary fence, or that may result in increased illegal use of Monks' Walk by motorcyclists. He supported converting the route to a bridleway, as long as appropriate access control devices are installed, as this will make no operational difference to Thorpe Park.
- 2.3 In anticipation of converting Monks' Walk to a bridleway, Surrey County Council's Countryside Legal Team has completed a formal consultation. Representations were received from residents at both ends of the route, local Ward Members, the Ramblers Association, the Cyclists Touring Club, the Egham by Runnymede Historical Society, the Association for Improvement of Runnymede (AIR). A number of issues were raised regarding the suitability of the route for equestrian use, the need to preserve the rural nature of the route, and the possibility that increasing accessibility to the route may encourage existing antisocial behaviour at the Thorpe end of the route.
- 2.4 To resolve these issues, a site meeting was convened in August 2006, attended by Chris Edge, local Divisional Members, local Ward Members, representatives of AIR, a local historian, Surrey County Council's Countryside Access Officer and Transportation Engineers. A number of points were resolved:
 - the main benefit of converting Monks' Walk to a bridleway is that it will open the route to the greatest cross section of the local community, providing a traffic free equestrian and cycle route where there is none at present, and facilitating improvements that would make the route accessible for disabled use;
 - promoting legitimate use of the route may discourage existing antisocial behaviour along the route;
 - the route was very similar in nature to successful bridleways elsewhere in Runnymede and Surrey, and that although there is a narrow section of approximately 40m in length at the Thorpe end, this is not insurmountable;
 - the vast majority of the route could be opened for equestrian use simply by cutting back overgrown vegetation;

- a horse stile and kissing gate could be installed at either end of the route to prevent motorcycle access, while allowing legitimate use;
 - the stone stile at the Thorpe end of the route could be relocated to a nearby location in Church Approach, and a feature made of it;
 - the rural nature of the route could be preserved by constructing a new bridleway formation from compacted recycled road base material or similar;
 - no lighting should be considered for any part of the route;
 - signing of the route should be limited to bridleway fingerposts and single blue cycle destination signs at each end;
- 2.5 It was agreed by all that conversion of Monks' Walk to a bridleway, together with the subsequent improvements to facilitate access, should go ahead.

3.0 Outline Design

- 3.1 **Annex 1** details the proposed improvements to facilitate access for cyclists, equestrians and disabled people.
- 3.2 The horse stile and kissing gates to be used to control access are standard devices, already in use elsewhere in Runnymede and Surrey.
- 3.3 The construction of a bridleway from compacted road base material is a standard technique, recently used successfully to construct a bridleway along Hurst Lane, adjacent to Thorpe Green.
- 3.4 There are 2 bridges along the route. These will have to be upgraded by provision of raised parapets and non-slip surface. Surrey County Council's Structures Group will be briefed in due course to provide these improvements.

4.0 Legal Implications

- 4.1 The conversion of Monks' Walk to a Bridleway requires a Creation Order to be made and advertised. In anticipation of advertising this order formal consultations have been completed – as mentioned above. A number of issues were raised that may result in formal objections to the Creation Order being submitted.
- 4.2 Any objections to the Creation Order would have to be submitted to the Secretary of State for determination. Officers do not have delegated powers to deal with opposed orders and therefore Committee approval is required to make the Creation Order.
- 4.3 A Creation Order can only be made on the grounds that it is "needed for public use." Monks' Walk is already a well-established Right of Way, and the grounds for wishing to upgrade it to provide a route for other users have already been outlined. It is considered unlikely that the Secretary of State would oppose the Creation Order, unless it could be proved that the route was not needed as a bridleway.
- 4.4 The stone stile at the Thorpe end of Monks' Walk, together with the adjacent brick walls, is a Grade II listed structure. Therefore planning permission must be sought before any modifications are made to this stile.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 A budget of £95,000 has been allocated in the forward programme to complete the legal process for conversion of Monks' Walk to a Bridleway, to prepare the detailed design for the necessary improvements, and to implement these improvements. This allocation is from the LTP capital works budget, with construction scheduled for the financial year 2007-2008.
- 5.2 In addition to the allocation within the LTP budget, AIR (Association for the Improvement of Runnymede) are bidding for funding of up to £20,000 to

contribute to the relocation of the stone stile at the Thorpe end of the route. This would be a very welcome contribution.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 An outline design for a new bridleway along Monks' Walk has been prepared in consultation with a number of stakeholders.
- 6.2 The conclusion of the public consultation is to convert Footpath 51 Egham, and Footpaths 6 and 7 Chertsey to bridleways, and to make various modifications along the route to facilitate equestrian use.
- 6.3 The conversion of Monks' Walk to a bridleway will be of great benefit to the local communities at either end of the route.

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Background Papers:

Chertsey to Thorpe Cycleway Feasibility Study Report, 10th December 2004

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Annexes: 1