

Item 5. Up-date on Quiet Lanes Suffolk for Parish Council Meeting January 18th 2021

By way of introduction this is a quote from the Quiet Lanes lead volunteer about the aspiration of the Quiet Lanes Programme

“The aim of the Quiet Lanes scheme is to ask all road users to be aware, and **expect** to find walkers, cyclists and horse riders using Quiet Lanes. To **respect** the use of the road, to travel with that extra care, and to make Quiet Lanes a safe and pleasant place for residents and visitors alike.”

Following the expression of interest for Quiet Lanes status (QLS) for Westerfield Lane at the end of November 2020 and as reported at our December meeting, the following information and feedback has been received. There is a full detail of explanation on the Quiet Lanes site but I have copied some of the detail (in blue print) for the purpose of this report which I hope will be helpful to the Parish Council and others interested in this project.

The validation exercise conducted with Highways and the Quiet Lanes Lead has been completed for **Westerfield Lane**. This was predominantly a ‘desktop’ exercise with reference to data from the satnav site. Questions were raised by Highways about the suitability of this lane to be put forward for QLS. It was identified as needing a full traffic survey but owing to the latest lockdown such surveys have been subject to delay, I have passed further information gathered by Jim Bird using the SID near Poplar farm in September – the criteria for QLS are that

The nominated lane(s) must single track (with passing places and no line markings) and already be quiet in nature, i.e.

- typically carrying less than 1,000 vehicle trips per day (either direction)

- with average speeds of less than 35 mph, and ideally below 30 mph

The average speeds were recorded as between 26.1 mph and 28.3 between the hours of 7am and 7pm and a volume of 438 on Sunday incoming and outgoing to 988 on Wednesday 30th September, the average daily figure Monday-Friday was 460 incoming traffic and 420 outgoing. I have been advised that we can proceed to fully consider the Lane for QLS which will involve a costing and consultation process if the Parish Council is in agreement with this. We may receive further feedback from Highways in due course but we can proceed with our consultation process.

When first exploring the Quiet Lanes programme, it had not been clear that ‘no through roads’ could be included. I have since been advised that **Fynn Lane** could be considered as are lanes such as Holly Lane in Rushmere. This has been added for consideration by us. A number of views have already been expressed by local residents, these include - it is well known by vehicle drivers as being shared by walkers, cyclists and horse riders already and does not need QLS designation, to more direct opposition by residents who already think it is over-used by vehicle visitors who are parking on verges and at the far end of the lane because of limited parking for an area popular with walkers and those exercising themselves and their dogs. The full QLS programme will be followed up by further publicity and ‘public education’ about the essence of the Quiet Lane programme. The consultation involved would be a whole Parish one so it may be important to consider the pros of including this lane to consider the benefits as well as addressing concerns being raised. I hope to have made contact with a couple of Parish’s who were part of the Suffolk Pilot Quiet lanes programme in 2013/14 also in areas popular with walkers etc to find out about their experiences.

Timescales and QLS process

The response to the QLS Programme has vastly exceed expectations and subsequently there are now proposal for 3 ‘waves’ of the Programme. Those in Wave 1 need to have completed their Parish Consultation by 31st January 2021. The dates for Wave 2 and 3 are 30th April and 30th July 2021. It is recommended that even though virtual meetings will need to be conducted in each participating Parish that every household is delivered with the QLS proposal (similar to the one we have been sent by Swilland and Witnesham)The timescales have been identified to tie in with dates for the SCC Development and Regulation committee and the Road Traffic Act required formal advertising of the QLS proposals. Where lanes cross boundaries into another Parish it is anticipated that the Parish’s concerned would work together to agree the consultation process and the location and costing of signs.

Costing of the signage required.

This is the next piece of work needed and we are being encouraged to complete this as soon as possible in order for the full costs of the Programme to be calculated.

The main cost of the programme is in the installation of posts and signs. Whilst we work on the detailed spreadsheet to assist and collate these details you can use these indicative figures to calculate the costs for your nominated lane(s)

- £190 per individual new post to be installed - use of existing posts where feasible will mean £0 cost
- different lengths of posts in the detailed design stage following successful designation will determine the final actual cost
- £50 allow for each individual sign - typically each post will require an Entry sign one side and Exit sign the other at each end, with possible repeater signs in-between for longer lanes
- there are three different sizes available depending on the location, repeater sign / small or medium, so costs will vary slightly depending which is required
- So for example, a simple lane example with one new post at each end with an exit and entry sign on each will cost in the region of £580
- The SCC 2020 Community grant funding signage allowance is for up to £600 per parish in total for this current programme of work. Neighbouring parishes can claim a share of any un-used allowance to cover signage costs if one of their Routes terminates or requires a sign within the other Parish - subject to confirmation by the programme.
- In addition, only for those Parishes within East Suffolk, the Community Partnership grant provides an additional allowance of up to £300 per ROUTE which starts or ends within an ESC Parish boundary.

The consequences of the above is that there may well be a zero cost for many Parishes particularly if current signage and posts are used for the Quiet lane signs to be attached to - for example on the signpost at the Street end of the route and the end of Westerfield Lane at the junction with Church lane where there is a 'Give Way' sign.

Public Consultation

The Parishes ready for the 1st wave have already been identified and as we have not had further discussion as a Parish and a question about traffic volume for Westerfield Lane had been raised we will not be part of the 1st wave which gives more time to plan the next stage of the process.

We are all aware of the dominance of vehicle traffic through our village but also that we and visitors to the village value the rural nature and attractiveness of the Fynn Valley area and it's walks. We have seen many more walkers and cyclists through the village over the past months as well as probably those coming in their cars and the Quiet Lanes programme creates an opportunity to be part of a significant project aimed at protecting the rural nature of our lanes and the principal of equal respect for all users of designated quiet lanes. We are required to undertake a 'leaflet drop' to ensure every household is aware of the proposed Quiet lane consultation and any subsequent meeting. The detail of this can be similar to that sent to us by Swilland and Witnesham.

For further information you may find the FAQ's section within the website answer many more questions which you might have.

Issues for the meeting to address

Hear from any residents who sign in to the meeting.

Consider the plan for QLS in Westerfield Lane and whether to proceed with the same for Fynn Lane

To consider timing for any public consultation.

Pauline Procter

Parish Councillor and Quiet Lanes volunteer