



PHASE ONE

The villages on the west side of the Ouse Valley, namely Kingston, Swanborough, Iford, Northease, Rodmell, Southease and Piddinghoe between them embrace at least three schools, two pubs, four village halls, five historic churches, the South Downs Way National Trial, several farms, many small businesses and a railway station at Southease. The C7 road runs between Lewes and Newhaven and links the villages. Despite its 'C' designation and a 7.5 ton weight restriction it is a busy and dangerous route especially for cyclists and walkers. For most residents, although the distance from Newhaven to Lewes is only 7 miles, there is little practical alternative to using the car for journeys between the villages.

In 2003 POLO (Parishes of the Lower Ouse) initiated the 'The Ouse Valley Green Way' project to create a cycle track along the C7. A feasibility study was commissioned and a report issued. There were some useful achievements but the lack of an obvious route, the number of road crossings, the need for wider community engagement, the difficulty of reconciling the wishes of cyclists, horse riders and walkers, and the lack of funding halted further progress.

PHASE TWO

The need and wish for a safe cycle route remains and recently a new initiative came from the environmental group 'Village Connections' and 'Cycle Seahaven' taking encouragement from the Coalition Government's 'Big Society' and the announcement by Norman Baker of a new Local Sustainable Transport Fund

A number of informal meetings of interested people were held earlier in the year (Kingston in February and a Cycle Breakfast at Spring Barn Farm in March) leading to an open launch meeting facilitated by the South Downs National Park (SDNP) at the Linklater Pavilion in Lewes on April 12th attended by some 40 people. Many ideas and views were put forward at the meeting and with the help of 'post-it' stickers the results were analysed by Chris Paterson (SDNPs Community Engagement Officer).

The key areas identified

1. User Survey/consultation

- Surveys carried out to identify users and their needs
- A range of consultation methods are required to meet the needs of different users/interests
- Must review what consultation has already been carried out, Parish Plans, Friends of work etc
- Look at other stakeholders consultation work
- Use existing consultation to form our own consultation
- A range of mediums (face book etc) to engage with all agencies

2. Routes

- Potential network of routes
- Use of existing RoWs

- New paths created to link existing routes
- Need to look at Landownership across the network
- Links to other routes outside this area
- Legislation to transfer ROW to cycle routes
- Conflict of use between utility and recreation

3. Path surfaces and maintenance

- Need to identify the best possible surface (Tarmac/Woodchip)
- Creating new surfaces
- Repairing existing ROW to meet the needs of this new route
- Maintenance of current paths is an issue that needs to be considered
- Look at who is responsible for maintenance of a new route

4. Partners list

- Review of who the key partners/stakeholders are in the project
- Get representation from the relevant organisations on a steering group
- Look at best practice from other partners nationally/internationally
- Identify and coordinate existing voluntary groups trying to achieve similar in the local area, do opt them onto this group?
- Landowners must be a key stakeholder as well as identified users, new users, existing communities, schools, businesses etc.

5. Commercial opportunities

- Cycle Storage Possibilities
- Cycle Racks and capability to take cycles on public transport
- Cycle Hire opportunities on the route
- Farm Diversification opportunities should be looked at as a way to encourage landowners
- Sponsorship/charging opportunities for new route

6. Funding

- Joint National Park bid ,consider including this project or aspects of it
- Opportunities for future planning negotiations (section 106 agreements) to provide for this project
- Look at existing planning contribution funding and if this can be used

- Need one group to focus just on applying for funding (coordinate with others applying for similar funding)

7. Organisation

- A Steering group and subgroup structure needed to manage the workload and allow people to focus on their interest
- Need to establish a time table so we can see how the project will develop
- Important that the key agencies have representation on a steering group so they can resolve problems allocate resources etc.
- Important that a steering group coordinate the work of subgroups
- Establish a formal group/organisation that can apply for funding etc

8. Road safety issues

- C7 and A26 access and use issues still need to be considered even with a new cycle route
- Improved signage on the existing road networks
- Relevant agencies should be promoting safe cycling on the road network alongside this project
- Promote cycle route on the main roads to encourage cyclists off the road

Meetings to form a Steering Group

Those interested in actively participating in a Steering group were invited to a meeting at the Linklater Pavilion on 7th July. As the invitations did not reach the entire intended circulation list another meeting on July 25th gave a further opportunity for people to join the group.

The Steering Group met on Friday 6th August at Rodmell and agreed the projects aims, vision and strategy to put to an open meeting.

PHASE THREE

OUSE VALLEY CYCLE NETWORK (OVCN) CONSTITUTED

At open meeting held on 25th August at the Linklater Pavilion and facilitated by the SDNP Area Manager Jeremy Burgess a Constitution was unanimously approved.

The meeting also confirmed the membership of the Steering Group and the roles of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

OUSE VALLEY CYCLE NETWORK STEERING GROUP MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Sam Barlow | Rodmell Parish Councillor |
| Gid Cox | Ringmer |
| Neville Harrison (Chair) | Chair, Southease Parish Meeting |
| Andy Lock (Vice Chair) | Seaford, Chair Cycle Seahaven |
| Tom Lockyer | Chair, Piddinghoe Parish Council |
| Jan Marshall (Treasurer) | Newhaven |
| Dinah Morgan | Kingston Parish Councillor |
| John Parry | Lewes, Linklater Pavilion & Lewes Railway Land Wildlife Trust |
| Helen Price | Kingston |
| Susan Thompson (Secretary) | Chair, Village connections |

WEB-SITE

www.ovcnet.ning.com