

County Council - 17 December 2019

Item 12(g) - Notice of Motion from Mrs Dennis

Quiet Lanes - Briefing Note

How are Quiet Lanes Introduced?

The Transport Act 2000 gave Local authorities the ability to designate country lanes as 'Quiet Lanes'. During 2006, the Department for Transport (DfT) described the process for introducing Quiet Lanes (and Home Zones) in circular 02/2006. Quiet Lanes are defined as minor rural roads or networks of minor rural roads appropriate for shared use by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and other vehicles. The aim of Quiet Lanes is to maintain the character of minor rural roads by seeking to contain rising traffic growth that is widespread in rural areas.

There are three key elements to a Quiet Lanes scheme:

- community involvement to encourage a change in user behaviour;
- area-wide direction signing to discourage through traffic; and
- Quiet Lane entry and exit signs to remind drivers that they are entering or leaving a Quiet Lane, a place where they may expect people to be using the whole of the road space for a range of activities.

What are the Requirements for Quiet Lane Designation?

Quiet Lanes must be rural in character (though not necessarily in a rural area), carry less than 1,000 vehicles per day and the 85th percentile traffic speed should be less than 35mph. Narrow, single-track roads are the most suitable to be designated as Quiet Lanes. Community involvement is essential to help to define what lanes should be considered and to encourage a change in behaviour of road users.

Once potential Quiet Lanes schemes have been identified and developed with the community, formal consultation akin to that required to introduce a Traffic Regulation Order is necessary. Designation as a Quiet Lane does not bring about any enforceable restrictions nor does designation prohibit use by any types of vehicle or regulate their speed.

A nationally prescribed Quiet Lanes sign is placed at the entry into a Quiet Lane as shown below. At the exit, a similar sign is required with the Quiet Lanes emblem is crossed out.



Specific DfT authorisation is required to allow these signs to be combined with other restrictions such as speed limits and HGV restrictions. Fingerpost destinations can be revised to discourage through traffic. Hedges, verges, walls and wayside trees can be sensitively managed to improve the landscape, retain local character and make travel easier for cyclists, walkers and horse riders.

What can be achieved through designation?

Quiet Lanes were introduced as demonstration projects during 2000 to 2010, notably in Kent, Essex and Norfolk. The results at the time are typical of what might be achieved through introducing Quiet Lanes now:

- A potential reduction in traffic flows of up to 10% albeit achieving higher levels is dependent on successful public engagement.
- Vehicle speeds may fall by around 1mph.
- Limited evidence to suggest a clear pattern in numbers of pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders using quiet lanes – much of which is weather dependent.
- Typically there is local support for Quiet Lanes with around 30% thinking that they have a positive impact.

Potential use in West Sussex

In the right location and with the backing of the local community, Quiet Lanes may be of benefit although their outcomes suggest that they would be unlikely to hold a priority for County Council capital funding in comparison to other competing demands. It is possible however for partners to promote schemes using s106 or other funding. Costs of each scheme would be dependent on scale and might be expected to be approximately £10,000 to £20,000 for a basic scheme including entry/exit signs, fingerposts and formal advertisements. Highways, Transport and Planning would need to develop a procedure that could be shared with our partners such that they could successfully develop quiet lanes schemes to the point where the County Council would complete formal advertisement and process for designation. Such support would be dependent on agreed priorities locally.

Matt Davey

Director of Highways, Transport and Planning