

Quiet Lanes

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The Quiet Lanes Concept

'Quiet Lanes' is about widening transport choice by looking at ways of managing Norfolk's minor road network and the competing uses required of them. This is against a background of rising traffic levels and local peoples' concern about their 'quality of life'.



Craft Lane: Southrepps

In Norfolk, the Quiet Lanes initiative is based on a network of minor roads linking towns and villages with connections to off-road footpaths and bridleways. The network has been chosen and endorsed by local people.

The Quiet Lanes schemes aim to make minor rural links better for road users, including walkers and cyclists and horse riders. They encourage motorists to use the most suitable routes and ask all users to be considerate towards each other when travelling on a Quiet Lane. They also provide links to the public footpath and bridleway networks.

Quiet Lanes recognises the importance of the car, and its vital role in rural areas. With public transport services often sparse, communities are typically very dependent on the car. However, not every one has access to a car – in Norfolk this applies to 1 in 5 households. The idea of Quiet Lanes, is to get people to use more appropriate routes and adopt a 'share with care' philosophy when using routes signed as Quiet Lanes.



Rectory Road: Edingthorpe

The Quiet Lanes Projects

There are two Quiet Lanes projects in Norfolk. The first project, implemented in Spring 2000, is located in north Norfolk. The area is between Cromer, North Walsham and Bacton. This was a national pilot project developed in partnership with the Countryside Agency. The majority of information on this website relates to the knowledge gained from this project.

In Summer 2004 a second Quiet Lanes project was introduced in southern Norfolk. The area is between Attleborough, Diss and Thetford, bounded by the A11, A140, B1134, B1077 and the county boundary.

The County Council identified the area in the south of the county as a strong contender for its second Quiet Lanes project after positive comments from parish councils during initial enquiries last year. It also varied from the first area in terms of geography and character of the road network.

Local parish councils were invited to discuss proposals at informal meetings; this was followed by a larger meeting in May 2003 when other local organisations and representatives were invited to hear more about Quiet Lanes. Among the guests were local people from the North Norfolk pilot area, ready to explain what the pilot meant to them. Following this meeting, a number of community consultations were held. These meetings allowed the public to discuss Quiet Lanes with officers and highlight which roads they would like to see designated as a Quiet Lanes.

These meetings gave officers a basic network to investigate for suitability as Quiet Lanes. Following this investigation a network was drawn up and

presented to parish councils and local stakeholders for their comments at a second meeting. Support was received to take this network forward for implementation.



Pond Road: Antingham

The Pilot Network

The pilot area covers 54km². There are 59km of Quiet Lanes, on 'C' or 'U' class roads. This represents about a third of the highway network in the area.

Why was this area chosen as one of the national 'Quiet Roads' pilot projects?

- It is within the North Norfolk Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has a good network of existing minor roads.



Sandy Lane/Clipped Hedge Lane: Southrepps



C426 Knaption Road/U19208
Mundesley Road Junction, Trunch

- It has different types of communities – from towns to small villages.

- There are many different types of economic activity - light and heavy industrial, farming and tourism.



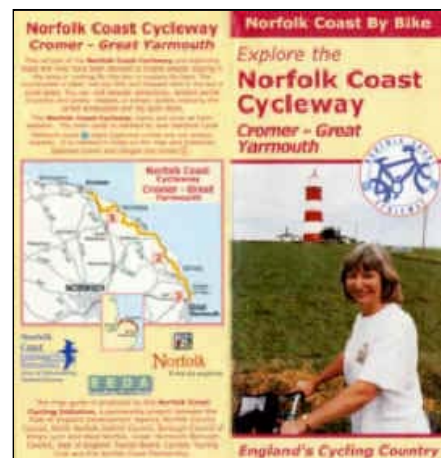
From School Road Junction towards Paston Green



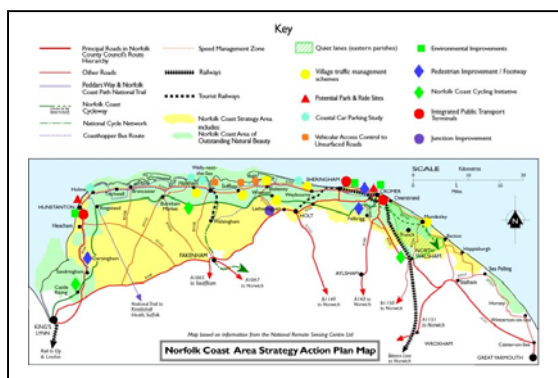
Launch of the Bittern Line

- The area was connected to the rail network with several stations available (Bittern Line).

- Tourism is growing in North Norfolk with cycling being actively encouraged. Considerable numbers of tourists use cars to explore the area.



Norfolk Coast Cycleway leaflet



The Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy Map

- The Norfolk Coast Transport Strategy identified that there was local support for 'Quiet Lanes' and concerns about the effects of traffic.

- Strong, local partnerships already existed, particularly with the Norfolk Coast Partnership, the County and District Councils.

Developing the Quiet Lanes Network

A 'Route Hierarchy' covers the Norfolk road network. This identifies those roads expected to carry the majority of motorised traffic and is based on the function of the road and its level of use. These routes are expected to accommodate through-traffic or traffic accessing local towns, larger villages or other high-activity locations. Traffic signs throughout Norfolk have been reviewed in order to encourage vehicles to use the Route Hierarchy routes.

It was clear that the Quiet Lanes network should be determined locally based on extensive community involvement. The only condition was that the proposals should avoid those roads already part of the Route Hierarchy and should generally be the more narrower country lanes with existing low vehicle flows and speeds. The aim was to provide a network of Quiet Lanes that interlinked with each other and local communities.

Using large-scale maps at exhibitions, in addition to questionnaires and route to school information, a draft Quiet Lanes network was developed. Further on-site audits looking at practicality, traffic management and convenience/attractiveness aspects were then carried out by staff. Once completed, the network went through the public involvement process again.

Examples of Route Hierarchy signing below:



A140 junction with A149 to south of Knapton



Junction on B1145 at Knapton

These examples show the standard type of traffic signs used on Route Hierarchy routes to encourage motorised traffic to use them.

Public Engagement for the Pilot Project

During 1999 many community workshops and exhibitions were held locally, seeking views on the '**Quiet Lanes**' concept and practical ideas for implementation. Building from this work a local 'Implementation Group'

was used to oversee the introduction, progress and monitoring of the project. The Implementation Group included:

- Local parish councils
- Farmers
- Business
- Politicians
- County and District Councils
- Emergency services
- Disabled representatives
- Tourism associations
- Interest groups - pedestrians, cyclists, horse-riders, motorcyclists, drivers.
- The Implementation Group



Photograph from the community workshops: Northrepps Village Hall

Many ways of working with the community were undertaken - eg community workshops, competitions with schools, exhibitions at local fetes, development of leaflets, posters and other publicity information, target promotion of the project within particular user groups.

The Quiet Lanes public involvement process gave Norfolk County Council a much more positive profile in the communities touched by the project.

'Highly Commended' in the Local Government Chronicle, 'Community initiative of the year' 2001. 'Highly Commended' in the Norfolk Society's award 2001.

Quiet Lanes Signing

The signs for the Quiet Lanes network are one of the most important elements of the initiative.

Before the start of the project, there were no approved road signs that could be used to show where a Quiet Lane started or finished. The project staff worked with the Department of Transport on an appropriate Quiet Lanes sign that could be put up on the public highway.

Careful consideration was given to the design itself including, the size, location and type of post. This was all set against a requirement not to let the signs spoil the rural environment that we were trying to protect.



Again, local views on a range of sign options also played a part in the final selection. New 'finger-post' signs were also developed as part of the signing review to direct traffic onto the most appropriate roads.

The Quiet Lanes sign design finally upon for the pilot project is shown. The sign is 360mm high x 185mm wide and is mounted on 200mm x 200mm timber posts at a height of 1100mm. Special approval must be sought from the Department of Transport to use these signs.



Typical Entrance to a Quiet Lane

Specially approved Quiet Lanes entry signs, mounted on timber bollards, were used to identify the start of a Quiet Lane.



Quiet Lanes exit sign

Similarly, Quiet Lanes exit signs were used to identify the end of a Quiet Lane.



Quiet lane destination sign

Destination information was provided on the timber post for Quiet Lanes users. The small text size can be read by walkers, cyclists and horse riders but is more difficult to read from a car.



Quiet Lanes exit sign, destination sign & way-marker

Where a Quiet Lane ends, way-marker arrows were used to indicate the direction to the next Quiet Lane.



New finger post signs have been provided within the Quiet Lanes pilot area. At the edge of the Quiet Lanes network these signs direct drivers onto routes avoiding the Quiet Lanes.

U14430 Lyngate Road/U19663 Bradfield Road Junction, Lyngate



Within the Quiet Lanes network the new finger posts signed destinations for all users. The designation of the route as a Quiet Lane was identified on the finger post arms.

U19206 Chapel Road/C424 Wright's Loke/C424 Bradfield Road Junction, Trunch

Village Treatment

It was essential that the Quiet Lanes network provided a useful, attractive and direct link between villages and towns. Many Quiet Lane routes converged on a local community which were defined as 'village nodes'. The Quiet Lanes could not avoid crossing some of the many roads that have been designated as better routes for motorised traffic (defined as Route Hierarchy roads – more info in the Pilot Network page).

The village treatments were used to seek to address the needs of all road users at these points where conflict could be greater. Techniques such as surface changes, speed limit extensions, village gateways and signing were used to highlight to drivers that they are entering a special area and that they needed to be aware that more vulnerable road users were present.

Examples of village treatment are given below:

Village treatment works in Trunch included the extension of the 30mph speed limit so that it covered all the Quiet Lanes close to the village.



Junction treatment work at Knapton, where coloured surfacing was used to encourage vehicles to stay on the main road, and to indicate a change of environment on the minor road (which is the Quiet Lane).



Surface treatment in the centre of Southrepps, to highlight the village environment.





Off-Road Links

Quiet Lanes uses existing minor roads and lanes. However, in the pilot area a more complete network could not be achieved without using other off-road links as an alternative to busier roads. These off-road links were generally bridleways and footpaths or other public rights of way.

When using and promoting off-road links there was a problem with the surface quality. Unlike minor roads and lanes, the off-road links were generally unsurfaced – suitable for most walkers and horse-riders but not so good for cyclists. For this reason, they were identified as link routes in the network rather than Quiet Lanes. Available project funds prevented the surfacing of these links. In addition it was often not appropriate to change such attractive rights of way by surfacing them.

Examples of Quiet Lanes off-road links :



Robinson's Loke: Knapton



Robinson's Loke: Knapton



Typical Quiet Lanes Footpath



Bacton Woods

Verge Management Strategy

The role of the verges alongside the lanes in the Quiet Lanes network was also considered. Would leaving them uncut have any benefits? What about changing how and when they were cut? Safety issues were important too – visibility around bends and being able to step out of the way of a vehicle, for example.

After listening to local people, the view was that the safety role of the verge was paramount and that we should not change the normal practice of cutting verges at least twice a year (or more often if there is a specific visibility requirement). Generally, throughout the road network, the timing of the cut is confined to spring and late summer which accommodates most plant species' requirements.

However, it was felt that a trial should be undertaken to look at whether changes to the timing of the cut and the removal of the waste ('cut and clear') could be beneficial. It is anticipated that the removal of cut material will create more diverse plant habitats allowing plant species to establish that require less fertile growing conditions. The timing of the cut on these trial sections is determined by the County Council's Countryside Officer who takes account of particular species needs and the prevailing climatic and seasonal changes. The verge trial is ongoing and will take several years of monitoring to assess any changes.

Examples of wildlife to be found in highway verges:



Quiet Lane Verge



Hare Bell Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward



Hare Bell Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward



Toad Flax Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward



Sun Spurge Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward



Cranes Bill Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward



Hedge Brown Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward



Birds Foot Trefoil Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward



Common Blue Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward



Knapweed Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward



Red Admiral Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward



Small Tortoiseshell Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward



Tufted Vetch Photograph –
Copyright Ken Ward

The County Council will be monitoring the effects of the verge management strategy. Local people are also invited to report lengths of the verge with interesting plants, insect or animal species.

Contact:

Raz Woollacott, Countryside Officer; Telephone Number: 01603 222775

Monitoring

The Quiet Lanes project in north Norfolk was one of the national Quiet Roads Demonstration Projects in which approaches to making rural roads more attractive to non-car users were being examined. The experimental nature of the project meant that effective monitoring was needed to determine whether any changes occurred and why. The monitoring was undertaken jointly with the Transport Research Laboratory.

Flows, speeds and accidents. In order to find out what physical changes took place, surveys of Quiet Lanes users (pedestrians, cyclists, horse-riders and motorised traffic) were carried out. The 'before and after' traffic surveys showed that:

- traffic flows were down by an average of 10% at the survey locations on the Quiet Lanes network - flows on the network varied between 40 and 600 vehicles per day.
- vehicle speeds were down by 0.6-1.5mph at the survey locations on the Quiet Lanes network – however, this figure could not be considered significant as other factors such as the survey locations and the weather needed to be considered.
- vehicle speeds were down by 1.5-5.0mph at the locations where the village treatment works had been undertaken.
- surveys of pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders have shown no clear pattern in the changes in their use of the Quiet Lanes. The numbers of pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders fluctuated greatly with the weather appearing to have the greatest affect on these users.

What people think about Quiet Lanes. Monitoring was undertaken to find out about attitude, behaviour and perceptions. This included work with 'focus groups' (eg, farmers, cyclists, drivers, etc), postal questionnaires, telephone interviews, parish council monitoring, face-to-face interviews, exhibitions and public meetings. The results of this monitoring is summarised below:

- there was clear local support for Quiet Lanes – from the various surveys an average of 81% supported the project before implementation. This figure had increased to 84% after implementation.
- there were divided views on whether people felt that Quiet Lanes worked in practise - from the various before surveys an average of 32% thought it would work in practise with 30% being unsure and 39% believing it would not work. The after surveys showed that an average of 34% thought it worked in practise with 27% being unsure and 31% believing it did not work (7% thought it partially worked).

- those who said 'yes it was working' added: drivers show more respect and are more aware, and they felt that safety was improved on the Quiet Lanes.
- those who said 'no, it's not working' added: motorists still drive too fast and there is a need for lower speed limits.
- a survey of the Quiet Lanes sign showed that two thirds of those questioned gave a broadly correct interpretation of the Quiet Lanes sign. This was similar to other standard road signs that the people were questioned about.
- focus groups felt that drivers were showing greater consideration but that some were still driving too fast. It was also felt that lower speed limits should be introduced.
- there was a widespread view that Quiet Lanes awareness could be improved through better signing, publicity and inclusion of the signs and the 'share with care' philosophy in the Highway Code.

How people use Quiet Lanes. Additional monitoring was undertaken to find out about people's perceptions of using Quiet Lanes.

- 24% of those questioned before implementation claimed they would be more likely to avoid a Quiet Lane (72% said it made no difference and 3% said they were less likely to avoid a Quiet Lane). A year after implementation a few more of those questioned (27%) stated that they would be more likely to avoid a Quiet Lane. However, three years after implementation this figure had fallen to 23%.
- surveys a year after implementation indicated that 39% of respondents thought the scheme had made them drive more carefully (49% thought it made no difference, 12% did not think the question was applicable). No one thought that they drove with less care. Three years after implementation 34% thought that Quiet Lanes made them drive more carefully (54% thought it made no difference and 12% did not think the question was applicable)

Technical Report

Norfolk County Council has produced a Quiet Lanes Technical Report 1. The report includes:

- Project management structure
- Monitoring
- Policy background
- Preliminary design
- Scoping study
- Promotion and publicity

- Public engagement
- Implementation

Quiet Lanes Technical Report 2, which describes the monitoring results in more detail, will also be available soon.

Copies of the reports (price £20.00 each including postage) can be obtained by contacting pt@norfolk.gov.uk.

Share With Care

This is an essential guide for everyone and applies to all users of Quiet Lanes. However you are travelling, enjoy your journey at a slow, relaxing pace and

- Share a Quiet Lane with care Be aware of all other users
- Look after yourself
- Notice your environment
- Follow the Country & Highway Codes
- Remember that you are in a rural community where people are working



REMEMBER If you want to know more about Quiet Lanes in your area or you wish to comment about Quiet Lanes, please contact us.

Your views and comments are important and we want to hear from you.

Contact

What do you think? Can you assist with the promoting Quiet Lanes? Do you have any comments?

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