‘ Green Lanes’ for the Manhood Peninsula

1. Introduction

   The Manhood has benefits of being a peninsula-there is no through traffic. However there is a lot traffic trying to bypass the congestion hotspots. So the idea of designating some of lanes as ‘green’ [Quiet Roads] is an attempt to redress the balance between cars and people to promote the area as a destination for green tourism all the year round as well as an environmental friendly place to work and live in.

   The attractive environment is not confined to the coast or to the Chichester Harbour AONB, it is in many parts a pleasant vibrant countryside. Many visitors stay in temporary accommodation, tents, caravans, motorhomes, and want to enjoy themselves without using a car. The flat terrain is ideal for all forms of non-motorised travel all the year round, tarmaced surfaces are important to encourage such use and for those with mobility issues.

   Lanes are part of the history of this rural area. While some, Appledram Lane, are now just used as a cut -through, the majority still retain their character as rural routes in the middle of the countryside, often providing interesting and varied vistas as they wander from hamlet to village.

   So this should be the time to promote a new concept for West Sussex fully in accord with sustainability, health needs, improving pollution levels and developing the Green Economy--- a new Green Initiative--- Green Lanes for the Manhood Peninsula !!

2. What are ‘Quiet Lanes’

   Gren Lanes [Quiet Lanes officially] are minor rural roads, typically ‘ C’ or Unclassified routes, which have been designated by local highway authorities to pay special attention to the needs of walkers , cyclists, horse riders and other vulnerable road users, and to offer protection from speeding traffic. Cars are not banned as the ‘Lanes’ use is to be shared. Measures such as lower speed limits and discrete road signs aim to encourage drivers to slow down and be more considerate to other users who can enjoy them in safety and with more enjoyment of the locality. [Adapted from CPRE’s Guide to Quiet Lanes, published in 2006].

   Following CPRE’s campaign new regulations were published in 2006 , the Quiet Lanes and Home Zones [England] Regulations 2006 under the Transport Act 2000.

3. Examples elsewhere

   Norfolk and Kent were the pioneers, but closer to home the Isle of Wight has a County- wide network. West Sussex County Council resolved in 2019 to adopt a policy supporting Quiet Lanes if supported by the local communities [parish councils] and as long as they didn’t have to pay for them ! It is not known if any yet exist in West Sussex, which probably makes it unique in Shire England.

4. Key Criteria

   The Regulations do not specify any actual criteria but the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum gives some helpful advice.

   It states there are 3 key elements;

   A] Community involvement to change road users behaviours;

   B] Area-wide direction signs to discourage through traffic; and

   C] Good Entrance and Exit signage to remind drivers that they are entering a special area.

   However WSCC have adopted further 'requirements' which appear in the Explanatory Memorandum to the Statutory Regulations only as 'suggestions '; namely carry less than 1000 vehicles per day and 85th percentile traffic speed should be less than 35mph. They also believe they are most suitable for single track roads.

   As this idea is coming forward under the auspices of GlaM it would make sense to try to connect up Green Lanes with existing or proposed cycle/walking routes, especially where on- road routes are the only alternative. For instance Rookery Lane . Singleton already forms part of the Bill Way [NCN 88].

5. The Case for doing this on the Manhood

   The argument is that currently that the Manhood is dominated by vehicles , virtually uncontrolled and that if this goes on then the rural character will totally disappear. At peak times the attractiveness of the area means that all the rural lanes and cut throughs are clogged up by cars etc and that only in isolated areas, Medmerry, is it possible to escape from traffic. The smaller communities are most affected and it is difficult to have a quiet, pollution free living environment. Green Lanes may be part of a solution to keep vehicles to the two main routes other than that needing access to houses and businesses. Green tourism is an important economic driver for the future well being of the area, but it needs the environmental quality of the area to attract caring visitors in the first place. The strong protection rightly afforded to the Chichester Harbour AONB and the South Downs National Park is directing unnecessary and inappropriate growth in the direction of the Manhood. The Peninsula is special surrounded by two world renown heritage harbours and an important evolving coast so it should be recognised for its inherent character. Green Lanes designations could help in this aim.

6. A first suggestion as to an initial network.

   Trying to create an area is not easy but as a first suggestion the following lanes do make a definable area;

   Bookers Lane, Earnley to Almodington Lane, Easton Lane, Ham Road through to Sidlesham School and Keynor Lane. Then across to Mill Lane and Rookery Lane in Sidlesham . This would create a significant zone embracing Medmerry and Pagham Harbour.

   Another possible area is around the Shipton Green part of Salterns Way and link it through to West Wittering using Shipton Green Lane, Itchenor Road, Piggery Hall Lane, Acre Street, and Elms Lane. This provides a safer cycle route into West

wittering than currently available and benefit the many horse riding establishments in the area.

There are many other Lanes, Appledram Lane, Wophams Lane , Green Lane where it would be ideal to reduce traffic volumes but are already acting as cut throughs for traffic wanting to avoid the main road system.

7. Next Steps.

If this is an idea worth pursuing it will only have a chance of succeeding if the parish councils can be persuaded as to its benefits as well as the residents and businesses who live along such routes. The Parishes will have to pay for the work as well !

But if works in Norfolk and the Isle of Wight why not here ????

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