



CPRE Sussex Policy Position Statement

QUIET LANES IN SUSSEX: WHAT CAN WE DO TO SAVE THEM FROM INCREASED TRAFFIC?

The Importance of Rural Roads

In the UK in 2005, the number of car drivers and passengers killed on rural roads was 1,336, compared with 339 on urban roads. The vast majority of these (71%) were men. Some 240 of the fatalities on rural roads in 2005 occurred in South East England, which represented nearly 18% of the total number of fatalities (*Department of Transport, 2006*). Across the UK, 65% of road users feel threatened by traffic "all or some of the time" and 91% think that the speed limit should be reduced (*Natural England*).

Rising levels of traffic are turning once peaceful lanes into urban thoroughfares. Speeding traffic is a particularly dangerous problem on narrow, winding rural roads and in tranquil villages. Cars often share these rural roads with walkers, horse-riders and cyclists and combining these activities can have fatal consequences. This encourages car use for short journeys because people are too fearful to walk or cycle.

Central and Local Government Planning Policy

The 1998 White Paper 'A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone' placed the emphasis on sustainable transport. It included the following statement "traffic management can help to produce better and safer local road conditions for everyone – we will encourage the continued development of new and imaginative ways of designing local traffic schemes to make them more sensitive to their surroundings".

The Rural White Paper 2000 included a section on Quiet Lanes – recognising the need to protect the character and tranquillity of the countryside.

Section 268 of the Transport Act 2000 gives legal status to the term 'Quiet Lane'. This gives

local traffic authorities the power to designate rural roads within their responsibility as Quiet Lanes. The Act required central government to provide guidance to local traffic authorities on the criteria and process for designating Quiet Lanes.

The current situation is that there are no designated Quiet Lanes in Sussex.

What are Quiet Lanes?

Quiet Lanes are minor rural roads or networks of minor rural roads shared 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 the rising traffic levels now widespread in rural areas.

There are three key elements to a Quiet Lanes Scheme:

- i) community involvement to encourage a change in user behaviour
- ii) area-wide direction signing to discourage through traffic
- iii) entry and exit signs to remind drivers that they are entering or leaving a Quiet Lane where they may expect other people to be using the road for a range of activities

The speed of vehicles must be low enough to satisfy the local traffic authority that any permitted activities may be enjoyed safely by people of all ages and abilities. The *Department for Transport Quiet Lanes Regulations 2006* recommend that designated Quiet Lanes should have no more than about 1,000 motor vehicles per day.

Despite its rural nature it is surprising that no designated Quiet Lanes schemes have been implemented in either East or West Sussex although certain communities are actively

planning schemes.

CPRE Sussex Policy

We believe that our country lanes and rural roads should be accessible to all without feeling threatened. Our countryside lanes are an integral part of rural Sussex and form an important role in our leisure activities and travel choices.

Objectives

- People should feel safe and secure when travelling by any mode in the countryside
- Quiet Lanes should help to broaden travel choices by making journeys easier on local lanes by any mode of transport (i.e. giving people the choice to leave their cars at home), whilst ensuring the safety of all users
- Quiet Lanes' should be used to help achieve integrated sustainable transport strategies, and encourage cycling and walking
- Quiet Lanes should be part of a network linking people's homes to places such as schools, work, centres, rail stations and bus stops
- Quiet Lanes should be incorporated into countryside access rights for leisure based resources as well as day-to-day road use
- Quiet Lanes should be a tourist resource used to link public access routes (e.g. footpaths) and other tourist attractions, and to encourage tourists to use rural roads respectfully
- Personal rights of access should not be infringed where Quiet Lanes are designated
- Local communities should be empowered to make decisions on how local road use and Quiet Lanes are managed
- Quiet Lanes should not disrupt the economic life of the countryside or prevent motorised vehicles such as delivery vans, farm machinery or emergency vehicles from going about their business

- Signage on Quiet Lanes must be sensitive to the rural surroundings
- Quiet Lanes should benefit local residents and businesses as well as visitors

Be aware that not all rural roads qualify as Quiet Lanes. Quiet Lanes should be local routes devised through local participation. The roads chosen should already be relatively lightly trafficked.

What you can do?

- Liaise with your Parish Council, local community and road user groups to establish support for a Quiet Lanes and the rural roads to be included in such a scheme
- Use the opportunity that the creation of Local Action Plans offers to push for Quiet Lanes in your community
- Use the *CPRE Quiet Lanes Guidelines* which provides details on how to encourage local authorities to designate country roads as Quiet Lanes – see Further Reading below
- Utilise Natural England's *Quiet Lanes Technical Guidance* – see Further Reading below
- Contact your local transport authority at the addresses given below and lobby them to provide financial resources
- Contact CPRE Sussex and other groups for support and information such as the Ramblers Association, British Horse Society, Sustrans and the Cyclists' Touring Club
- Raise the issue with the local media so more people are aware of what is planned
- Write to your MP to let them know of your concerns and ask them for their views on the proposal.

FURTHER READING / WEBSITES

CPRE Quiet Lanes Guidelines:
<http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/pub/pdfs/transport/traffic-management/quiet-lanes.pdf>

CPRE Sussex Policy Position Statement: Quiet Lanes in Sussex

Department for Transport Quiet Lanes Regulations 2006:
http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_sustravel/documents/page/dft_sustravel_612270.pdf

Natural England - Quiet Lanes
<http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Recreation/Greenways/quietlanes/index.asp>

Natural England - Quiet Lanes Technical Guidance
http://www.countryside.gov.uk/Images/Quiet%20Lanes%20Technical%20Guidance_tcm2-29204.pdf

West Sussex County Council Local Transport Plan 2006-2011:
<http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/your-council/plans--policies--reports-and-initiatives/local-transport-plan/west-sussex-transport-plan-2006-2016/>

East Sussex County Council Local Transport Plan 2006-2011:
<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/localtransportplan/downloadltp2.htm>

Highway Authorities

West Sussex:
highwaysandtransporthq@westsussex.gov.uk

East Sussex:
highways@eastsussex.gov.uk

Other Groups

- Ramblers Association (www.ramblers.org.uk)
- British Horse Society (www.bhs.org.uk)
- Sustrans (www.sustrans.org.uk)
- Cyclists' Touring Club (www.ctc.org.uk)

For further information about CPRE Sussex's campaigns and other policy position statements, please visit our website www.cpresussex.org.uk. Alternatively, please contact CPRE Sussex by email at info@cpresussex.org.uk or telephone/fax 01825 890975 or write to CPRE Sussex, Brownings Farm, Blackboys, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5HG.