

Cross City Cycling: Fen Ditton Parish Council (FDPC) Response to Consultation

Ref: Ditton Lane and Links to East Cambridge

Introduction

Fen Ditton Parish Council (FDPC) welcomes the Cross City Cycling objectives and investment to improve access to safe cycle/pedestrian routes to and from Fen Ditton Primary School and Cambridge City. However, there is a united concern to be sensitive to the Conservation status of the Village, to maintain character and key features of amenity value and thus the 'how it is done' is of major concern. This, along with local knowledge of usage and problem areas, the opportunity for landscape enhancement in the light of the development and FDPC public consultation form the basis of the recommendations below.

FDPC refer you to the Fen Ditton Conservation Policy document 2005 (SCDC) where choice of materials for walling, protection of grass verges from removal or damage, trees and choice of street furniture have policy guidance. The two Copper Beach trees on the crossroads of the village have Tree Protection Orders (TPO's). FDPC draw your attention to the recent reported loss of 100 Beach Trees on the A1307 at Wandlebury Country Park (Parish of Stapleford) made unsafe because of a Highways cycle path installation some years ago that involved root severance and the removal of large, low branches. The Tree Officer of SCDC has described the Copper Beach trees in Fen Ditton as being two landmark trees that without distress from construction might otherwise be healthy and valuable for another 200 years. FDPC put on trust that lessons have been learned and expect all lengths to be taken to protect the roots from damage in accordance with BS. 5837:2012; Permanent Hard Surfacing within the Root Protection Area (RPA).

In forming this report FDPC have sought guidance from the following South Cambs District Council Officers and thank them for their support and contributions:

Ian Lorman - Tree Officer, South Cambs District Council

Carol Newell – Landscape Officer, South Cambs District Council

Juliette Wilson – Historic Buildings Consultancy Officer, South Cambs District Council

Following this first step of Public Consultation FDPC now strongly expect regular communication from the project team and to be invited to be involved wholeheartedly with the future developments of the proposal and schemes.

An invitation to present and discuss the recommendations below to representatives of the project team in person would be welcomed.

Recommendations/Comments

Please refer to Relevant Cross Sectional Maps attached.

1. Fen Ditton School Horningsea Rd (Ditton_4).pdf

In addition to Cross City Cycling published proposals:

1. Make good grass verges/reinstate verges damaged by cars along length of Horningsea Rd. to Field Lane both sides of Rd.
2. Install additional knee rails to protect grass verges from 'parent parking' from new crossing on west side travelling North for some agreed distance towards Field Lane and identified risk area post installation of new crossing East side Horningsea Rd
3. Widen path from proposed new school crossing up to 2 m. travelling north to Field Lane to meet existing cycle /footpath minimising loss of roadside verge paying particular attention to pinch points (all to encourage usage to and from school catchment Horningsea + public usage)
4. To mark width of path with white lines as per existing Horningsea cycle path (some sharp edges to path and ditch running alongside) plus solar 'cat eyes' as per Wadloes footpath
5. Crown lift trees along length of Horningsea Rd to Field Lane to balance tress, improve specimens, encourage vertical growth minimising maintenance requirements longer term to keep path clear of overgrowth. Cut shrubs/brambles back along length of Horningsea Rd to allow min of 2 years growth before further cutting back required (ecological and economical).

Photos Below

Reinstate damaged grass verges and installation of knee rails in-keeping with existing to protect verges



Proposed site
new crossing

Parent parking all
but removed
substantial grass
verge

Looking South



Proposed site
new crossing

Parent parking all
but removed
substantial grass
verge

Looking North



Proposed site
new crossing

Damaged reflector
cone creates
opportunity for
parent parking on
grass verge.

Looking North



Address Pinch points cutting back brambles/shrubs for at least 2 yrs 'maintenance free' (ecological plus economical)

Widen path up to 2 m. from new school crossing to Field Lane minimising loss of verge addressing pinch points to encourage use to and from Hornigsea.

White lining to mark edges and central solar cats eyes

Existing Horningsea cycle path.

New extension 2m only widened to maintain grass verge as much as possible

Looking South along Horningsea Rd
From Field Lane



Cut back brambles/shrubs to allow min 2 years growth before further maintenance required to keep pathway clear

Crown Lift and rebalance Trees along length of Horningsea Rd.

Sharp edges to existing path, adjacent to steep bank and ditch. Hazard in dark plus as narrow, passing cycles

Looking North along Horningsea Rd beyond proposed new school crossing



Impact of cycle path installed with removal of grass verges. This would be undesirable and not acceptable for Fen Ditton

Looking North from Field Lane from current junction of pathways towards Horningsea and A14.

2. High Ditch Rd & Ditton Lane High Street Junction (Ditton_3 Pdf)

Amendments to published Proposals:

1. Replacement rather than removal of existing Bus Shelter. To replace with an alternative narrower 'open' style design in-keeping with character of Village and sensitive to conservation area ie timber structure not urban design. Requires sufficient roof line for 8 to 10 to benefit from some shelter. Ideally to sit behind or offset to new footpath but, if necessary on it, hence recommendation of a narrow construction.

The current Bus Shelter is used every morning by school children waiting for school bus for Bottisham Village College. School children consulted advised existing is well used, they wish to retain a shelter but would prefer an 'open design'. Existing is cleaned on a regular basis on behalf of FDPC however brick enclosure described as "smelly" and not very pleasant. A replacement needs to be in-keeping with street furniture in village and offer sufficient shelter that children are protected from the worst of the weather and not discouraged from using the school bus, all of which helps reduces cars on the road at peak times.



Examples of timber framed 'open' style bus shelters as replacement to existing.

Narrow base takes limited space on path but limited no's can shelter

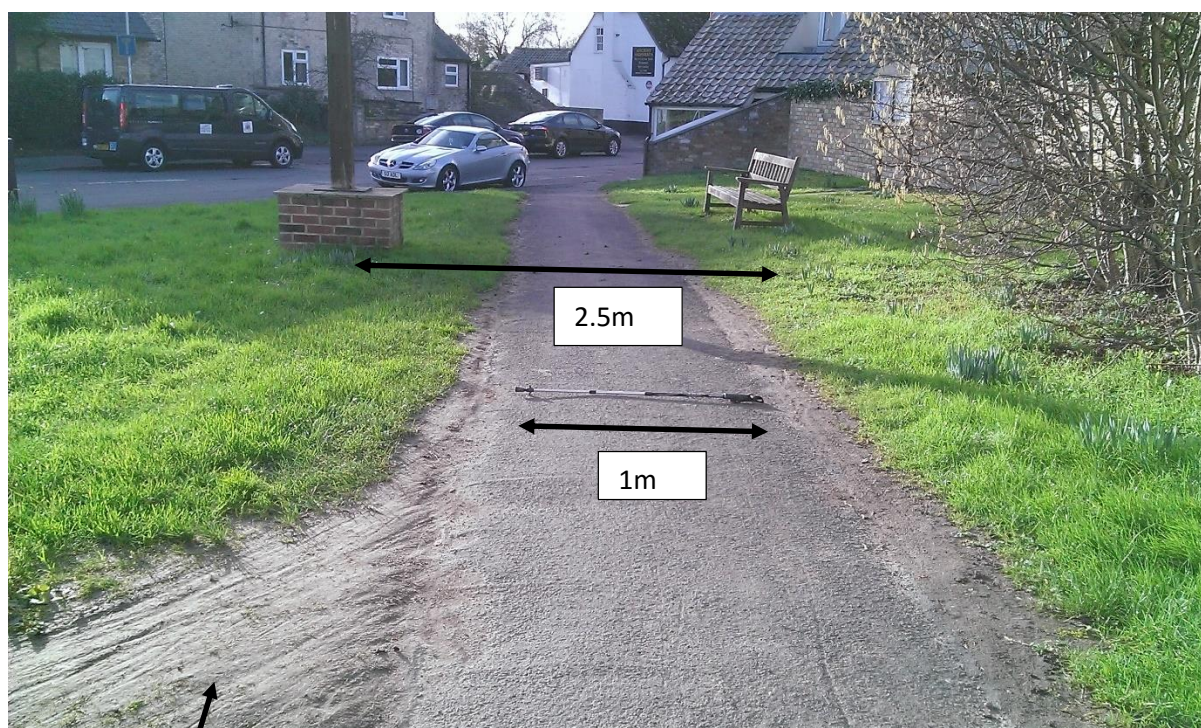


Wider base would offer more shelter but take up more space on path.

2. High Ditch Rd & Ditton Lane High Street Junction (Ditton_3 Pdf) contd.

Amendments to published Proposals:

2. It is not clear from the cross sectional drawings if the grass banks holding the Copper Beech Trees would be reduced in the proposals to accommodate widening of footpath. If this is the case, FDPC recommend as a means to offer the most protection to the Trees (TPO's and construction addressed above) use of proposed 'overrun areas' to accommodate widened shared use path. This would also serve the purpose of narrowing the junction decreasing the speed of cars into High Ditch Rd and High Street.
3. To maintain the character and amenity of the Village Green, including use and position of existing wooden bench and position of village sign, to limit widening of the path across the green to 1.5m or leave as existing for pedestrian use. To direct cycle traffic around the outer corner of the Green (roadside) using proposed overrun area to accommodate widening of path to 2m. Any realignment of the pedestrian crossing and or widening of the path across the Village Green to ensure good fit with path to protect grassed area.



Recent loss of turf during lamp post replacement has encouraged cyclist to cut corner; turf to be reinstated to return footfall to paved area.

Any realignment of the pedestrian crossing and or widening of the path across the Village Green to ensure good fit with path to protect grassed area.

Village Green

Existing Path 1m

Proposed Increase to 2.5 m for shared use would impact on Village sign placement, bench and existing planting.

Recommend maintained for pedestrian use; cyclists to be directed around outside of Village Green on existing path to be widened to 2 m.

4. The recommendations above to use the existing constructed road area to accommodate widening of footpaths on both sides of the junction may mitigate any proposed 'over run area.' However, if any is to remain FDPC have been advised by SCDC Historic Buildings Consultancy Officer that 'a careful choice of material is required for the proposed over run area at the main junction.' Understanding the proposed speed tables are typically tarmac, to blend in with the road surface a material similar in colour to the tarmac has been recommended such as a charcoal/black block/brick paving.
5. Over run areas on both sides of crossing and the road to extend to long speed table to protect against parking in these areas.
6. FDPC request consideration of the viability of a mini-roundabout or traffic lights to slow traffic speed and offer safer exit from the junction, specifically in the case of any increased difficulty exiting onto the main road on account of narrowing the junction to accommodate widening paths as above.

NB If either of the above are found to be viable public support would need to be canvassed and FDPC vote on the matter before supported as a recommendation.

7. The proposed removal of the 'traffic islands' containing reflectors, lights and Give Way signs on both sides of the junction and any necessity to replace with posts and signs are asked to be reviewed in the light of junction safety and Fen Ditton conservation policy (pg.23) to limit and rationalise 'street clutter' , signs bollards etc. around the crossroads.
8. In the event of a narrowing of the junction preventing access from local farm traffic it is believed the alternative approach via the A14 and Quay roundabout to High Ditch Rd would not be unreasonable. There is one arable field entrance only village side of the railway bridge on High Ditch Rd.

NB The farmer will need to be consulted to check access requirements there may be logistics preventing large machinery being brought over the railway bridge – if so, could another access be created?

9. FDPC have applied via LHI funding for the installation of double yellow lines at specified points on High Ditch Rd to limit parking and improve traffic flow both at the junction and running east. The installation of these remains important to residents but will need to be reviewed in terms of proposed changes to the layout at the crossroads.

3. Ditton Lane (Ditton_2(1).pdf)

1. FDPC understood from the public consultation event held in the Pavilion on the 14th January that engineering solutions with regard to the widening of the footpath and reduction of the grass bank running along Ditton Lane were yet to be fully considered. That the current proposed retaining brick wall may prove not to be a feasible option.

In the light of this FDPC request the following principles are taken into consideration for this aspect of the project.

In principle to:

- i) Retain as much of the grass bank and slope as possible
- ii) Review the feasibility of a retaining wall and or reduction in depth of the bank in the light of containment of the run off from the Paddock and unintended environmental consequences.
- iii) Ensure any engineering works secure the bank in place to prevent erosion and problematic run off/soil deposits on new path and include sufficient replacement top soil to enable sustainable re-planting.
- iv) In the case of the use of engineering bricks to minimise this e.g. 3-4 courses. Colour to be in-keeping and sympathetic with existing village walls i.e. muted colours, e.g. 'Cambridge Brick' (see Fen Ditton Conservation Policy). NOT red and black engineering bricks!!
- v) To retain existing Rowan Tress if possible, if not, as proposed to replace the same species on top of the bank.
- vi) Replacing existing original council concrete post and wire fencing with wooden post and rail fencing as per North side of field to enhance landscape and amenity value.
- vii) If existing Rowan Trees are to be lost and replacement planted on top, a new planting scheme in the grass bank, for example naturalised spring bulbs or strips of wild flowers of value to insects etc., to be incorporated into the scheme.

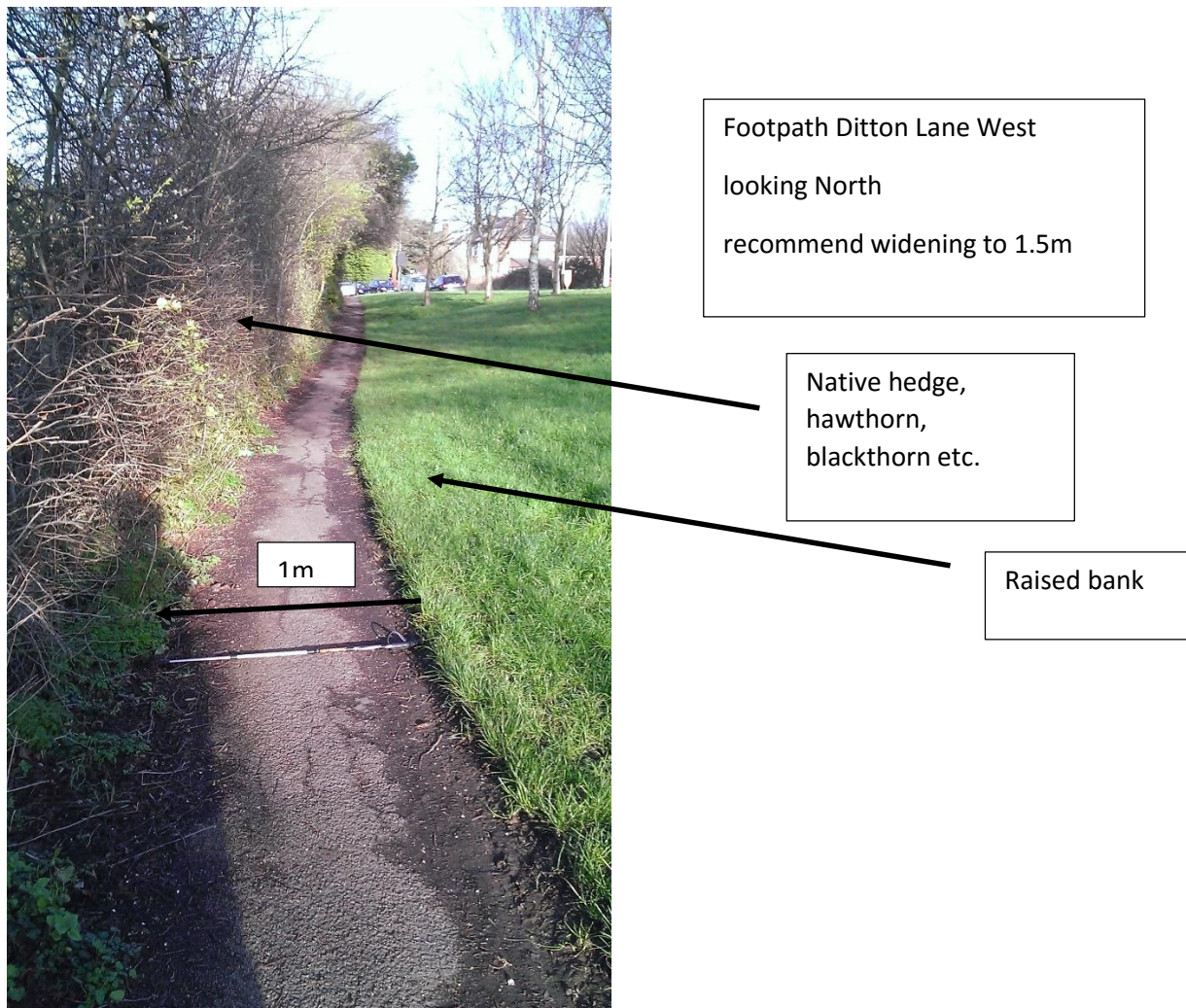
2. FDPC expect and have been requested by property owners whose driveways and or hedging at front of properties are due to be disturbed will be consulted individually by the project team to clarify the extent of this, materials to be used and quality of work undertaken. Of particular note is property no 133 Ditton Lane, the owners have informed us the Leylandii trees are planted within their property boundary, the cross section plans indicate complete removal with no verge remaining at all.

4. Fisson Rd (Ditton_1(2 Pdf)

In addition to proposals

1. Widen existing footpath running from car park on the west side of Ditton Lane behind grassed bank planted with trees, containing Fen Ditton Village sign, to the junction of cycle route 51. This is shown on proposals as unchanged. This footpath is very narrow, there is a bank on one side and thorny hedgerow on the other and is underused as a result. Widening the path to 1.5m would improve access for pedestrians, young children, push chairs, cyclists etc. and enhance the walkway which is otherwise pleasant in being away from traffic amongst a grassed area and trees.

See photo below



5. Wadloes Footpath

Wadloes footpath has not been featured in the Cross City Cycle scheme. This is a permitted shared foot and cycle path running from Sustrans Cycle route 51, where it leaves Ditton meadows, into the heart of Fen Ditton Village to the Church. The traffic on this path, cyclists and pedestrians has increased substantially in the last 10-15 years since its instalment with the original Sustrans development across Ditton Meadows to Newmarket Rd Park and Ride. It is 1.3/5 m in width only and is need of widening and maintenance eg replacement of solar cats eyes and wooden bollards restricting road vehicle access etc.

It is anticipated all cycling traffic coming in and out of the City travelling to and from Fen Ditton and Horningsea will as of present use this path; it is the most direct route.

FDPC recommend including the widening of this path to 2m (2.5m considered too wide for this situation) into the Cross City Cycling scheme and refurbishment of solar lights running the length and centre of path .