

Request for proposals to prepare a feasibility study

[Monks Gate to Horsham cycling and pedestrian route.](#)

1. Introduction

This is a request for consultant companies experienced in highway provisions, including for bicycle and walkway paths, to propose to undertake a feasibility study on behalf of Nuthurst Parish Council.

The proposal for undertaking the feasibility study should be delivered to Nuthurst Parish Council by close of business on date

Please refer to contact details in section 7 .

2. Background

The rural parish of Nuthurst is located in the county of West Sussex and its main settlements are approximately 5 miles east of the town of Horsham. The parish contains a number of villages/hamlets with a total population of approximately 1,800 residents and covers a land area of 1,700 hectares.

Monks Gate and Mannings Heath contain the largest percentage of the population with about 60% of inhabitants residing in these two settlements. The A281 road connects Monks Gate to Mannings Heath and then continues to the main local town of Horsham.

Mannings Heath is substantially larger and has recently lost its village shop and public house although there remains a petrol service station that contains a shop and Post Office which is accessed across the busy A281. No such facilities are present in Monks Gate. For residents of both settlements shopping, entertainment, secondary schools and railway station are generally accessed within the nearby town of Horsham.

The A281 is a bidirectional single carriageway road which carries substantial amounts of road traffic including HGVs and local buses. For most of its length it is narrow, with multiple bends and hills. A narrow badly maintained footpath runs alongside the road.

It is considered a dangerous route for cyclists as confirmed in a report from Horsham Cycling Forum (Appendix A).

3. Objective

The Parish Council of Nuthurst has long had an aspiration to facilitate the provision of an inclusive shared use cycle and foot path from Monks Gate through Mannings Heath to Horsham. It is stated in the Nuthurst Neighbourhood Plan (formally adopted by Horsham District Council), that this could be a possible infrastructure project. It would be funded by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and by other providers of funding for community led projects.

With the recent pandemic causing disruption to local public transport, only small numbers of residents can now use the limited bus service to Horsham. A shared path scheme it is thought would be beneficial to Monks Gate and Mannings Heath residents. The provision of a shared path would also go some way to maintaining the environmental gain that was realized during lockdown by encouraging residents to use less motorized transport and at the same time provide benefits in regard to their health and wellbeing.

The Parish Council would now like to progress such a scheme by having a suitably qualified and experienced consultant prepare a feasibility study.

4. Routes

A preliminary study was undertaken by Horsham Cycling Forum and is contained in Appendix A. This reviewed the Parish Council's preferred option and also proposed an alternative route which it concluded would be unlikely to be used by commuters, shoppers, school children etc.

The Parish Council's preferred route is to enlarge the existing footpath alongside the A281, which it seems has land beside it that could be suitable if it

was to be widened. There is however one bridge over water which may require widening or an additional structure put in place for the cycle / walkway path.

5. Scope of Work

The proposed scope of work for this project includes an initial round of activities aimed at developing a feasibility study for bicycle and pedestrian path connection from Monks Gate in the east to Horsham town in the west. The position of the termination points is to be proposed as an outcome from the feasibility study.

Study Components/tasks

- Investigation of any other routes that could be considered as a possible alternative to the preferred route;
- Evaluation of the preferred route alongside the A281 in regard to existing conditions for walkers;
- Identification of applicable Regulations and legal constraints;
- Land take that may be required to widen the footpath sufficiently for it to be useable for a shared cycle and walkway route. Including identification of landowners and/or local authorities;
- Bridge widening or other structure requirements;
- Provision of outline environmental and economic impacts of the proposed shared use path;
- Facilities necessary to meet the needs of persons with disabilities;
- Recommendations in regard to surveys of residents to establish likely usage;
- Implementation strategy with approximate costs; and
- Funding sources that the Parish Council may wish to investigate.

The consultant is to allow for a one-off presentation to the parish council and a feasibility report is to be provided in electronic format. The report will contain suitable maps, diagrams, figures and costs that will clearly demonstrate the feasibility (or not) of a shared path scheme.

6. Consultant to provide with their proposal

Work Plan –

Proposed work plan for the study components. The work plan should indicate how each task outlined in the scope of works is to be accomplished.

Fee Estimate -

A fee estimate should be broken down for each task.

References –

Provide a list of past clients for whom the consultant has performed work of a similar nature.

7. Contact Details

For further information please contact the Clerk or visit our web site at www.nuthurstparishcouncil.co.uk

The proposals for undertaking a feasibility study are to be posted or emailed

Nuthurst Parish Council

Sarah Hall

The Clerk

107 Morris Drive

Billingshurst

RH14 9ST

Email@ clerk@nuthurst-pc.co.uk

Tel: 01403 784985 or 07584 308408

Appendix A

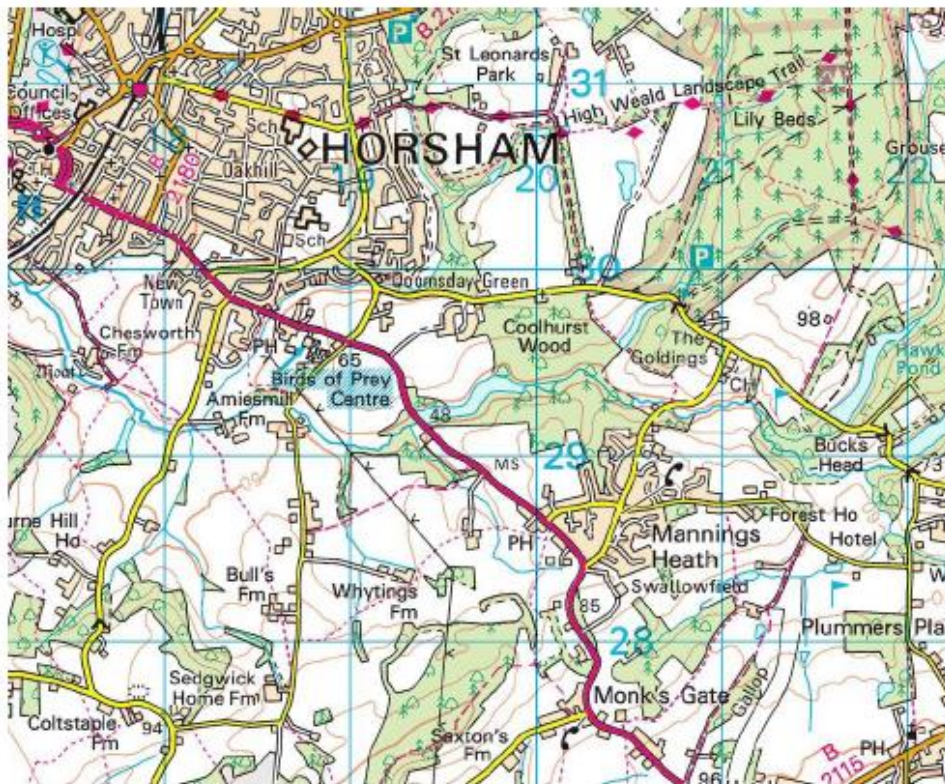
Horsham Cycling Forum draft report

Mannings Heath/Monks Gate cycle route

(Draft report)

The Nuthurst Neighbourhood Plan includes an aspiration for a safe cycle route from Mannings Heath/Monks Gate to Horsham.

The cycle forum was asked to investigate what options are available for making the route safe.



The current route along the A281 is dangerous and unpleasant both for cyclists and pedestrians and effectively bars all but the most determined from cycling into Horsham. In addition to the actual dangers along the route there is a high level of subjective danger. The route feels very dangerous because of the closeness to fast moving heavy traffic, and the lack of protection provided for vulnerable road users.

The current design of the road fails to provide a viable cycling and pedestrian route to Horsham.

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Notes from riding the route into Horsham 30/7/15

Any cycle route would most likely follow the footpath on the southern side of the A281.

The path is very narrow (typically 1.5m but often narrower). You are very close to the road and it feels very scary, especially going the “wrong way” out to Mannings Heath facing the oncoming traffic. There is a high risk of falling into the road.

The surface is poor in many places. There are tree roots, manhole covers etc. These can be difficult to see because of the dark caused by overhanging trees and the path is unswept and covered in leaves in places. You need to pay attention at all times.

Overhanging vegetation needs to be cut back. Much of it is on private property?

There is a fair amount of street furniture (posts, signs etc.) blocking the path.

Where should the route start? Nuthurst Road?

Options

If what is being envisaged is simply making the current path shared-use then it will enable people to cycle legally into town but once it has been signed as a cycle route people would obviously start to use it, which could potentially be quite dangerous. Such a narrow part is not suitable for 2-way use or any sort of “heavy use”. The simple case of two ordinary cyclists coming in opposite directions could be very dangerous. Any mistake puts you straight into the road.

There are several sections where the path is separated from the road by a grass verge and there is scope for widening the path.

The Sustrans Design Manual¹ states the minimum width for a one-way cycle track is 2m (or 1.5m + 0.5m margin) on a busy road over 40mph. (p16)

The minimum space needed for 2 cyclists passing each other (two-way track) is 2.5m. (p7)

Would it be marked by a white line near the kerb? It would help to delineate the path and would be especially helpful since it is quite dark under the trees.

There is a difficult section by the garage where you have to cross a wide entrance.

¹ http://www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/file_content_type/sustrans_handbook_for_cycle-friendly_design_11_04_14.pdf

The section by the bridge is extremely narrow. This feels terrifying even when walking (you need to wait for a gap in the traffic before crossing to feel safe).

The route is not suitable for use after dark. There is a risk of not seeing the poor surface and of falling off or deviating into the road. An additional hazard would be lights from vehicles blinding you when going east).

Who are the likely users? Elderly people? Disabled? Such a route would be not be suitable for children or families. To be inclusive the routes should cater for buggies, bike with trailers etc.

Where are people mostly wanting to get to? Town centre? Station? Beyond?

Where should the route end?

The westbound route could end:

- At Sedgwick Lane (where the worst of the road ends)
- By the 30mph signs just before Kerves Lane
- All the way to East Street

The route needs to offer continuous protection from the worst of the traffic otherwise it won't be used.

Alternative route via Hampers Lane

An alternative route via Depot Road/Hampers Lane offers a quiet alternative or additional route from the north of Horsham/station to the north of Mannings Heath via Goldings Lane/Church Road. This would not be very direct (and as consequence would be unlikely to be used by commuters, shoppers, school children etc.) but potentially offers a quiet leisure route.

The footpath between Hammerpond Road and Golding Lane has scope for widening and upgrading (landowner permitting).

Combined with a route along the A281 this could provide an alternative route into Horsham as well as forming a potential circular cycle route.

Horsham District Cycling Forum

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