



Emsworth Community Board Cycleways Project

Steve Pearce

Emsworth Community Board

Readers will have seen the variety of works forming part of the HCC project to improve access to Emsworth town centre for cyclists and pedestrians. Disabled residents should benefit from the many new dropped kerb crossing points and tactile pavement areas.

The pedestrian crossings of the A259 near West Street, and the footpaths that lead to it, have been widened to allow shared use by pedestrians and cyclists. Once new signage has been erected to indicate the shared use pathways, the effect of the scheme will become clearer. It will certainly benefit cyclists coming from the Warblington Road area into the town via West Street who can now do so without crossing the A259.

Another improvement for cyclists will be the extension of the cycle lane on the north side of the A259 from Highland Road to the Kings Arms. This has been delayed for technical reasons but when completed it will eliminate the existing dangerous pinch point for cyclists approaching Emsworth from the west.

The scheme will almost certainly benefit cyclists, however, several pedestrians have expressed concern about shared paths especially in the town centre and the overall success of the project will depend on the care and consideration shown by cyclists towards pedestrians on the shared paths.



Shared pedestrian cycle path awaiting signs

The next stage in the ECB cycleways project will be a meeting with staff from the transport policy departments at Hampshire County Council and Havant Borough Council. The aim is to present the views of Emsworth cyclists and review them against the latest HBC/HCC plans for cycle routes and cycle lanes in Emsworth. A full report of the outcome will be given in the next edition of The EMS.

Improving our local public footpaths

James Colbourne

Emsworth is fortunate in having (on paper, at least) some very attractive public footpaths and bridle ways on both sides of the county border. Both County Councils have a statutory duty to keep them signposted, properly maintained and free from obstructions. Unfortunately, although there is much 'spin', the official removal of signposting and the state of some paths gives cause for concern.

For example, last July a collapsed stile and iron hurdle obstruction that made the popular Sussex Border path, between Seagull Lane and Westbourne, unusable for elderly walkers was yet again reported to the Hampshire Rights of Way Office. They replied in September, after being chivvied by Recorded Delivery, to say that it "...has been allocated a Priority 4 (their lowest) rating. The Sussex Border path is not a Hampshire CC promoted path, and does not therefore warrant a higher rating."

Although HCC claimed the landowner was unknown and that it is not allowed to keep records of land ownership, ten minutes on the Land Registry website enabled me to phone the very cooperative owner who was unaware of the problem but is now working with our Community Board to open up the path.

Last September, HCC's Head of Corporate and Legal Services confirmed to me that "...once a public authority is under a duty to act, it cannot resile (withdraw) from fulfilling that duty by citing lack of resources". It is a pity, therefore, that as confirmed at the last Hampshire Countryside Access Forum,



the relevant Regulatory Committee, of which our own David Gillett is a member, receive no training in such matters so are not able to question officers' advice.

I understand that John Tweddell now intends to direct his undoubted talents to the much needed improvement of our local shoreside paths including the ancient Fisherman's Path that runs southward from the public jetty. Other paths, such as those from Beacon Square to the shore and the old Wadeway from King Street to Thorney, will be lost unless formally claimed and recorded by 2026.

Pavements in Emsworth

Ann Lanchbury and Richard Jannaway

Following the submission of a petition of 300 signatures to improve pavements in Emsworth in general and Bosmere Gardens in particular, the County Highways Department wrote to say which roads in Emsworth are likely to have their pavements resurfaced in 2007/8. These are:

- Brook Gardens (cul-de-sac adj. no. 78),
- North St. (Seagull Lane to Sultan Rd.),
- Maismore Gardens (loop 16 to 39)
- Westbourne Avenue (2 to 66).

Budgets have not yet been confirmed, and programmes are only provisional at this stage.

The Highways manager's letter states that the allocation of points is based on a "standardised system of quantifying defects and deterioration". The above roads have achieved prioritisation scores of 130 or above, while Bosmere Gardens has been awarded only 85 points.

The pavements in these areas have similar problems to Bosmere Gardens, however, they are not significantly worse. Talking to a resident of Brook Gardens, it transpires that they have been campaigning for years to get cracked and subsidising pavements repaired. Similarly in Maismore Gardens, the local residents association has been pestering the County Council for a long time. So it would seem that if you want the path mended, you have to be organised, persuasive and be prepared for a long campaign. Unfortunately the old adage 'the squeaky hinge gets the most oil' seems to apply.

To restate the problem: the undulating pavements slope at a variety of angles, exacerbating the pain suffered by pedestrians with major, or even relatively minor, mobility problems. In places it is virtually impossible to push a wheelchair on the pavement and users have to take to the road. This is completely unacceptable.

Certainly the County needs to balance need for maintenance with level of funding available but they also need to appreciate the great depth of feeling in Emsworth about the maintenance of pavements.

Editor's note: The work done surrounding the pedestrian traffic lights on the A259, was financed by a Central Government grant and did not come out of the County budget for regular pavement maintenance.

Bridge Road Car Park

Howard Jacobs

Many residents will be aware of the ongoing pressure by Havant Borough Council for changes to local car parking.

In March 2005, plans were first mooted for residents-only parking in Bridge Road and surrounding roads. This plan was thrown out as a result of strong representations from many of those likely to be affected.

Plans have also been put forward recently for charges to be imposed in the Bridge Road public car park which is currently free. This car park is a community asset which is used by locals, shoppers and visitors and many considered that charges would have a negative result on Emsworth as a viable shopping and commercial centre. These plans prompted a very large number of letters and emails from local residents who are strongly opposed to the charges. Councillors, Council officers and the Council Executive were lobbied to withdraw their charging plans.

As a direct result of residents' pressure, the last Full Council meeting in February passed an amendment to the Council budget resulting in the withdrawal of charging plans. Whilst this may be seen by many as a victory for local opinion it can probably only be considered as a short-term one. But this does illustrate that if enough people are prepared to take action against the authorities, positive results can be achieved.

Parking is not an issue which is likely to go away. Perhaps the actions of a small number of residents in rallying the majority should be used as a model for opposing the many unsuitable housing and industrial developments which are threatening to radically change the face of the area in which we have chosen to live.

Petitions rarely work but individual letters to Ward Councillors often do. Get writing.

Editor's note: The results of a survey of Emsworth residents and businesses organised by the EBA, on the parking issue can be found at www.emsworth.org.uk

Street lighting in Horndean Road

Brendan Gibb-Gray

New and improved street lighting has been installed along Horndean Road. This will significantly improve visibility and lead to the removal of the old and rusty columns. Until now Mums and Dads with pushchairs and people in buggies have had to negotiate an obstacle course around the old street lighting columns which are a serious safety hazard on the pavements.



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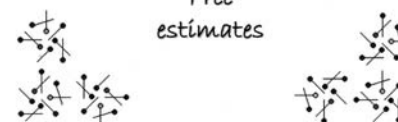
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