



## Rodmell Parish Council

To: [clerk@rodmellparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@rodmellparishcouncil.gov.uk) for distribution.

Cc: Southease Parish Council: [southeaseparishchair@gmail.com](mailto:southeaseparishchair@gmail.com) [alister.Linton-Crook@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:alister.Linton-Crook@southdowns.gov.uk) [wendybbrewer@gmail.com](mailto:wendybbrewer@gmail.com) -Chair, The Egrets Way

Dear Councillors

**Cycle Lewes** is a membership organisation representing cyclists and cycling interests in the Lewes district and the **Lewes Footpaths Group** has, for more than 60 years, organised walks and hikes in the area. We are coming together to ask what you can do to help complete the Egrets Way, the walking, cycling and wheeling route connecting Lewes and Newhaven along the Ouse.

As you might be aware there are only two sections that require diversion onto the busy C7. **One of these sections is in your Parish and stretches for roughly a mile north of the Southease bridge. For some reason it appears permission has not been granted to surface a track along the river. This means all but keen mountain bikers and hikers have to detour through Rodmell and proceed along the C7.** The other section, into Piddinghoe, has recently been through a community consultation regarding the best route.

As you know better than us, that section of road can be dangerous with frequent, fast traffic on a winding road. It also rules out this riverside route for those with less mobility, i.e. the young/old, pushchairs, wheel chairs and mobility scooters..

We believe that other parish councils such as Hamsey, Kingston and Iford have been instrumental in instigating community discussions to enhance countryside access / Rights of Way improvements and the Iford Estate have dedicated a new Right of Way along with delivering several miles of new surfaced paths to improve access for all users and complete missing links between Iford village, Swanborough and Lewes.

Over the last 15 years generous landowners have played a vital role in allowing a surfaced path along the Ouse. It is now possible for families to ride from Rodmell into Lewes safely. Residents in Southease, Piddinghoe and Newhaven are not so lucky. They have to take a 2 mile detour with over half a mile along the C7, thereby endangering themselves and doubtless causing frustration to car drivers, who get stuck behind them. This is definitely a disincentive to riding into Lewes and therefore probably increasing car traffic on the C7.

Along with increasing the safety of cyclists and walkers and giving access to the less mobile, surfacing of all of the riverside path could also have significant tourist benefits. Currently the Avenue Verte, the bike route from London to Paris, bypasses Rodmell and Lewes, taking a wide detour due to the lack of a safe route. Over the years, as cycling tourism increases, this could be a lucrative tourist stop along the route with Rodmell being roughly a day's ride from London.

We are not aware of the reasons why permission is not being given to surface this one-mile path linking Rodmell to Southease. Currently this land (and the top of the river embankment) is being churned into a muddy quagmire by mountain bikers and keen hikers, surely causing more damage than a relatively narrow surfaced track.

Sooner or later someone will be injured or worse along the C7 stretch. I am sure none of us want to carry that responsibility. The Egrets Way could be a splendid national example of landowners, government and the community working together to provide an asset we can all be proud of.

We would be happy to meet with you and/or the landowner to see what could be done to encourage a change of mind and allow this last section along the river to be surfaced.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue and we look forward to hearing from you.

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