

# Langford Village footways and shared-use links

5K Health Route scheme implementation



**Langford Village**  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

## Introduction

This report was prepared by Richard Kingshott (LVCA Highways and Development) and examines the Health Route Scheme Implementation and the subsequent issues arising from the scheme.

It also makes constructive suggestions on how such schemes should be considered and planned in the future and how a more environmentally sensitive scheme could be introduced in other parts of Bicester.

The purpose of the scheme is to introduce an activity into the community which is designed to residents to be more active. The UK is one of the least active countries in the world and inactivity is responsible for 1 in 6 premature deaths and 40% of long term medical conditions. In Oxfordshire it is estimated inactivity costs local authorities £14m per year.

The Langford Village Community Association provides its unanimous support for such an initiative whilst maintaining the quality and integrity of the local environment. It recognises the importance of taking action in order to facilitate people to be more active.

## Scheme implementation

The scheme was constructed during 8 to 10 May 2017. It was formed by spraying a blue line of various widths along the selected route so that it was easy to see and follow. Markers on the ground were placed every kilometre to inform residents how they were progressing along the route.

## Initial consultation

The concept scheme was first introduced at the LVCA Meeting on 20 February 2017 by Rosie Rowe (CDC Programme Director Bicester Healthy New Town Programme). The route was to be marked out by a simple painted line with kilometre markers so that they were easy to follow.

However Richard Kingshott LVCA mentioned that it was an aim of the Highways and Development Team to reduce or even eliminate all the existing lines along the shared use footways and cycle ways by changing their status. Discussions with OCC had already taken place to this effect and therefore new lines along these routes would not be welcome.

From that meeting until the time of the scheme construction no consultation took place with the LVCA as to how the scheme was to be marked out.

## Scheme summary overview

Unfortunately this scheme implementation has created many problems which are described in detail below.

In brief the route has

- compromised the legality of many of the links
- affected unadopted highway
- been laid along routes about to be widened
- directed users along a potentially unsafe environment
- created environmental visual intrusion and
- involved the Council in additional expense with either future maintenance costs or possible remedial works.

## Health walk implementation standards

The route was indicated in three different ways

- 100mm wide marking,
- 150mm wide marking and
- Signing (yet to be erected).

Total lengths recorded by direct on site measurement:

- marking (100mm): 2714.0 metres
- marking (150mm): 1513.5 metres
- without marking: 314.0 metres

Overall length of route marking was **4541.5 metres**.

*Note: The measurements apply to the markings only, but include the section running alongside the Jubilee Lake. No measurements were taken across road junctions or lamp column gaps. This leaves a further 458.5 metres unmarked.*

## Overall standards

The route markings were laid in different locations along the Health Route. On adjacent cycleway / footway routes it was laid next to the white demarcation line (TSRGD Diagram 1049B) on the footway side, but also on the cycleway side. Sometimes the 1049B line had completely vanished.

On shared use routes the markings were sometimes laid on the right hand side of the facility, sometimes on the left. This was also true of the markings on footways. So overall there is an inconsistency of standard applying to both the line width and location.

## Adjacent cycleway/footway routes



- Length of line laid 100/150mm adjacent to Marking 1049B: 907.5 metres
- Length of line laid 100/150mm opposite to Marking 1049B: 118 metres

In all these cases the presence of the additional line has at best compromised the legality of these sections of link and where no Marking 1049B is visible has rendered them illegal.

*The only marking permitted within an adjacent use facility or link is governed by the Traffic Signs and General Directions Act 2016. Only a white longitudinal marking to Diagram 1049B 150mm wide (or greater) is permitted. The marking can be laid on a coloured surface but there is no reference permitting a line of another colour to be laid adjacent to or parallel with this line.*

## Shared-use routes

- Length of line laid on LHS of facility:  
233 metres
- Length of line laid on RHS of facility:  
776 metres

The presence of the line along these sections has visually narrowed them. No line markings are permitted along such routes. The lines have added to the 'street' clutter and given their colour are visually intrusive.

*\*No markings are required in a shared used facility as indicated within the Department for Transport Note 1/12 (September 2012). Coloured surfacing is permitted but not recommended and there is no reference permitting a line of any colour to be laid along such routes.*



## Unadopted Highway issues

Having checked with the Oxfordshire County Council Highways Records Section, the section of shared use link from Mallards Way up to Tubbs Crossing Footbridge is unadopted.

Before commencing work, the landowner should have been contacted in order to gain their permission. There are potential legal issues emanating from the use of this link. The length of unadopted highway concerned is 288 metres.

## Footways

- Length of line laid on LHS of footway: 706.5 metres
- Length of line laid on RHS of footway: 461.5 metres

Again having checked with the Oxfordshire County Council Highways Records Section, two sections of unadopted footway exist along the route. The first is the section of footway from Tubbs Crossing Footbridge to Gavray Drive (204 metres) and the second is the footway running alongside the Jubilee Lake (314 metres)

Before commencing work, the landowner should have been contacted in order to gain their permission.

## Potential footway crime concerns

There is concern that the route along the footway adjacent to the Jubilee Lake is a potential crime area. Along this section of the route the footway is narrow, with vegetation on either side, but more importantly it is unlit. A Health and Safety Assessment should have been carried out along this section to confirm its suitability.

## Footways due to be widened

The Health Route line runs along two sections of footway which are programmed to be widened and resurfaced by either the County Council or Redrow Wates.

The first is along London Road from Langford Brook to Mallards Way and forms part of the Rodney House Roundabout to Mallards Way Roundabout link. The length of Health Route affected is 241 metres.

The second is along Peregrine Way from the School Link to the Jubilee Lake. This forms part of the new internal shared use link around the whole of Peregrine Way. The length of Health Route affected is 155.5 metres.

Obviously the cost of the markings along these sections is abortive expenditure.

## Unintended consequences

There have been reports on social media that some cyclists are using the Health Route as a racing circuit. As some of the Health Route exists on footways this leaves the Council open to potential legal action.

Cycling on footways (a pavement by side of a carriageway) is prohibited by Section 72 of the Highway Act 1835, amended by Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1888.

## Future changes to adjacent cycleway/footway routes

LVCA discussions both with Oxfordshire County Council Transport Planners and Redrow Wates have agreed in principle that the present mix of adjacent use and shared use facilities should be harmonised and replaced with a consistent standard throughout the area.

Shared Use links provide the best clutter free environment, are easy to understand and are cheaper to maintain.

However this will require the removal of all Diagram 1049B lining on existing routes where required. Due to the lack of maintenance by the County Council, many of the white markings had already virtually disappeared and the cost to remove many of them would be minimal.

However in order to achieve this now all adjacent Health Route markings would have to be removed and either relocated to the side or a better solution found. The total length of blue line that would require removal is **1693.5 metres**.

The adjacent blue line cannot remain in its present location as it would cause confusion due to the routes new legal status and user understanding.

During 'construction' works it would prove impossible anyway to leave the blue line intact whilst removing the Diagram 1049B line, either by hydro or jet blasting.

## Conclusions

There are many additional points arising from this scheme implementation which need to be considered for the future.

- There needs to be an agreed Policy Document ratified by Oxfordshire County Council regarding how such schemes should proceed.

*A line marking the route of a walk is not necessarily the best and cheapest way of “signposting” its location. There are other logos or symbols that could have been chosen.*

- There must be proper community consultation regarding not only the route itself, but how it is to be signed.

*Giving residents a real say in how they would wish the scheme to be implemented would provide the opportunity for them to take real ownership of the scheme rather than it being imposed from above.*

- Greater consideration must be taken into account of the sensitivity of the environment through which a proposed scheme passes.

*The current scheme has created visual intrusion along its length and is almost a form of official graffiti. Where green sustainable transport is involved, green would have been a much better choice.*

- The colour choice should not lie with the promoting body. This is a form of privatisation of the signing culture. Private signs are not permitted on the highway, therefore nor should “private” markings.

*There must be some form of control of sponsoring bodies. How would residents react if Cancer Research UK wanted to promote a route with a shocking pink line?*

- The opinion of a really important body that should have a say in how the scheme should be constructed is the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind.

*Just because we can see a blue line when it is laid upon a grey or black surface, it may cause difficulty to other individuals with poorer eyesight especially when the line begins to fade. The Health Walk should be for everyone.*

- The Traffic Regulation Order Team should be involved regarding any potential conflict with line markings on cycleway and footway routes.

*There appears to be inadequate research upon how the markings could impact upon the legality of link infrastructure. The white Diagram markings were put there for a specific purpose and should be clear and unambiguous. If any doubts were raised then another form of wayfinding should be used.*

- The OCC Highways Records Team should have been consulted and unadopted links and footways identified. More importantly before any lines were laid, the landowner should have been consulted.

*There are some adjacent and shared use links still unadopted throughout Bicester sometimes because the Developer has still some outstanding work to be completed or that it has been simply forgotten about.*

- The private utility companies should be consulted regarding any works in the immediate future they may have which could affect a proposed Health Walk scheme.

- The OCC Transport Planners should be consulted regarding any future proposals they have in the vicinity which could affect the Health Walk route.

- Likewise the OCC Road Maintenance Team should be consulted not just for patching works affecting the route but also larger reconstruction resurfacing schemes.

*Again this may influence the route of the Health Walk scheme or prevent abortive or wasted expenditure.*

- Regular safety checks need to be carried along the route.

*As this is a Council approved route then there is an additional liability on to provide a safe and secure route. Bushes and overhanging branches need to be cleared away.*

- Explanation boards need to be erected and maintained along the route.

*There are still some residents who have no idea what the blue line means.*

- A Bicester App could be introduced for residents who have mobile phones. Not only could the route be described, but as each person's pace length is different, the number of steps walked could be more accurately individually assessed.

**Richard Kingshott (Highways and Development)**

**Langford Village Community Association**

**5 June 2017**



## Health Walk Survey: location of blue marking (appendix A)

From	To	Street	Link Type	Line Location	Length (m)	Width	Comments
Start	Hawksmead	Peregrine Way	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	77	150mm	Marking 1049B vanished, this section illegal.
Hawksmead	Falcon Mead Rbt.	Peregrine Way	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	236	150mm	Marking 1049B barely visible, legality compromised.
Peregrine Way	Partridge Close	Falcon Mead	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	74	150mm	Marking 1049B barely visible, legality compromised.
Partridge Close	Sandpiper Close	Falcon Mead	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	89	150mm	Marking 1049B barely visible, legality compromised.
Sandpiper Close	Langford Brook	Part Falcon Mead	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	31	150mm	Marking 1049B barely visible, legality compromised.
Falcon Mead exit	3.5m SW LC 51	Langford Brook	Segregated	Opp. to 1049B	118	150mm	Inconsistent with previous marking location.
3.5m SW LC 51	School Link	Langford Brook	Shared	RHS link edge	167	150mm	As no 1049B required, best place for marking.
School Link	London Road	Langford Brook	Shared	RHS link edge	321	150mm	As no 1049B required, best place for marking.
Langford Brook	Mallards Way	London Road	Footway	RHS edge	241+3.5	100mm	Footway due to be widened, abortive expenditure.
London Road	Wren Way	Mallards Way	Footway	LHS edge	50	100mm	Inconsistent with previous marking location.
Wren Way	Bicester SU Link	Mallards Way	Footway	LHS edge	282.5	100mm	Inconsistent with previous marking location.
Mallards Way	Dunlin Court	Bicester SU Link	Shared	LHS edge	233	100mm	Best location of line, keeping link visually clear.
Bicester SU Link	Nuthatch Way	Dunlin Court	Footway	RHS edge	13	100mm	Best location of line, however visually intrusive.
Dunlin Court	Mallards Way	Nuthatch Way / Glebe	Footway	LHS edge	146.5	100mm	Best location of line, however visually intrusive.
Mallards Way	Tubbs Xing Link	Mallards Way	Footway	LHS edge	72	100mm	Best location of line, however visually intrusive.
Mallards Way	Tubbs Xing Bridge	Tubbs Xing Link	Shared	RHS edge	288	100mm	This section un-adopted highway.
Tubbs Xing	Gavray Drive	Footway	Footway	RHS edge	204	100mm	This section un-adopted highway.
Footway	Mallards Way	Gavray Drive	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	107+2	100mm	Marking 1049B visible, legality compromised
Mallards Way	Langford Brook	Gavray Drive	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	319	100mm	Marking 1049B visible, legality compromised
Langford Brook	Peregrine Way Lk	Gavray Drive	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	360	100mm	Marking 1049B visible, legality compromised
Gavray Drive	Pereg. Way Xing	Langford Link	Segregated	LHS edge	237	100mm	Marking 1049B barely visible, marking in cycleway
School Link	Avocet Way	Peregrine Way	Footway	LHS edge	52	100mm	Footway due to be widened, abortive expenditure.
Avocet Way	Langford Lake	Peregrine Way	Footway	LHS edge	103.5	100mm	Footway due to be widened, abortive expenditure.
Peregrine Way	Wretchwick Link	Jubilee Footway (S)	Footway	None	314	—	Unadopted footway, unlit, potential crime area.
Jubilee FW (S)	Jubilee FW (N)	Wretchwick Link	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	63	150mm	Marking 1049B vanished, this section illegal.
Jubilee FW (N)	Ravenscroft	Wretchwick Link	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	50.5	150mm	Marking 1049B visible, legally compromised
Ravenscroft	Peregrine Link	Wretchwick Link	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	102	150mm	Marking 1049B visible, legally compromised.
Wretchwick Link	School Link	Peregrine Link	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	28	150mm	Marking 1049B visible, legally compromised
Peregrine Link	Finish	School Link	Segregated	Adj. To 1049B	157	150mm	Marking 1049B visible, legally compromised