



Pennington and Lymington Lanes Society (PALLS)

Protecting the distinctive character of our lanes



pennandlymlanes@gmail.com

18th November 2020

Mr Stuart Jarvis
Director of Economy, Transport and Environment
Hampshire County Council
Email only: info@hants.gov.uk

Dear Mr Jarvis

I write as the member of PALLS tasked with developing our policy towards Quiet Lanes. We ask that you take forward our proposal that a network of lanes lying to the south of Pennington and Lymington should be designated as Quiet Lanes under the *Quiet Lanes and Home Zones (England) Regulations 2006*.

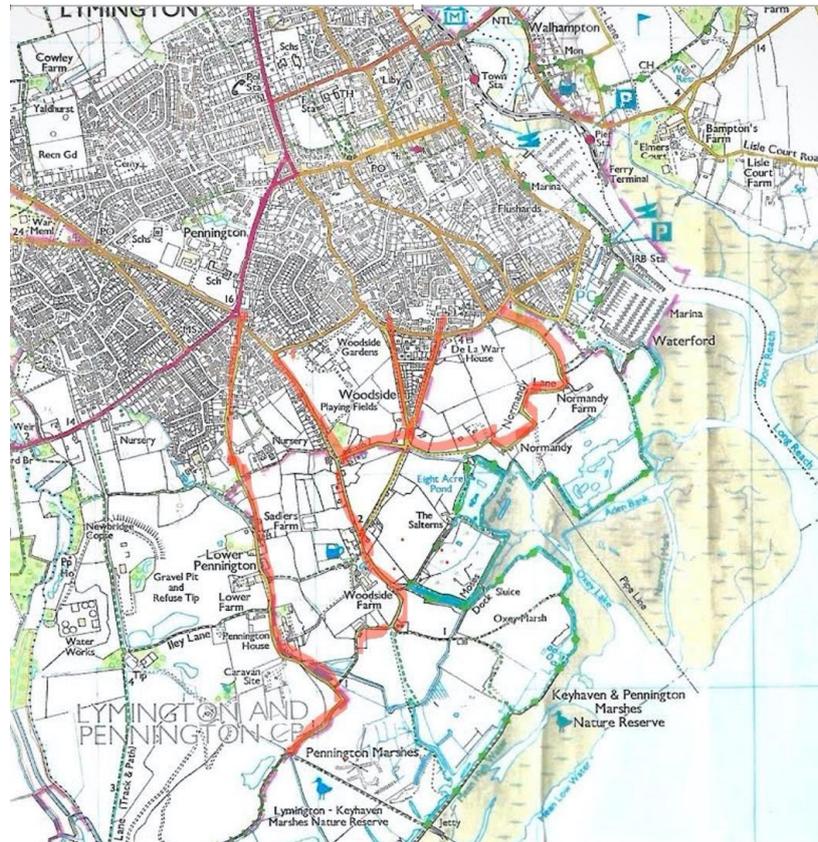
- We are PALLS, The Pennington and Lymington Lanes Society: a local community group, who wish to protect and enhance the character of our local lane network, which falls largely within the New Forest National Park
- We have conducted a large survey of our neighbourhood (not just our members) and find that local residents and businesses are overwhelmingly in favour of designating these roadways as Quiet Lanes.
- The New Forest National Park Authority are lending their support in principle to Quiet Lanes proposals, as they wish to increase active travel and sustainable transport within the National Park, to help reduce carbon emissions and pollution levels.
- We are prepared to seek external funding opportunities to help with project costs and also have a large volunteering base which could be deployed to count traffic or assist in local community engagement.
- We would like to work closely with Hampshire County Council to gain real benefits for the Pennington and Lymington communities in terms of road safety, health and wellbeing and the conservation of the distinctive character of these historic lanes.

The area is an important one in terms of the local environment for Lymington, lying as it does between the town and the sea, covered with a network of narrow lanes which originally served for grazing animals on their way to the marshland pastures (which still exist), for transporting coal and salt for the local salt production industry (now disappeared), and for servicing the garrison of the 16th Century Castle on Hurst Spit (no longer occupied).

The map below shows how the lanes link directly to the network of footpaths which cover the saltmarshes and seawall, the largest of which is the Solent Way, which links Milford on Sea to Emsworth. They house a significant residential population, (around 300 homes) and are heavily used by walkers, joggers and cyclists from Lymington and beyond, taking the air on the marshes and sea wall, and observing the abundant wildlife, especially migratory birds.

Most lanes lie within the New Forest National Park (boundary in pink on the map), and the southernmost lanes look onto the Lymington-Keyhaven Marshes Nature Reserve, managed by HCC. The lanes include approximately 10 km of public roadway, narrow, often single lane, with grass verges and no footways.

There is therefore a shared use of the lanes between motor vehicles and walkers, cyclists, mobility scooters and horse-riders, all of whom use the lane to reach homes on the lanes, or to access leisure facilities at Woodside Park, the caravan site at the foot of Lower Pennington Lane and the footpath network that connects at multiple points to the lanes.



Our Society is clear that the lanes picked out in red in the map are appropriate for designation as Quiet Lanes: they are minor rural roads which form a natural network serving local residents and visitors alike. Normal suburban improvements like footways would be both impracticable (for lack of room) and undesirable in terms of environmental and ecological impact. Therefore, the lanes will continue to be shared between residents, visitors, car and van drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, runners and occasional horse-riders. Pressure on these road-sharing arrangements seems bound to increase in the future, as there are plans for large housing developments in the area and recreational uses are likely to increase as well.

The main advantages of designation are that

- signage, indicating that the lanes are shared space, would be authorised under the legislation by the Transport Authority (HCC), and would therefore have status in the minds of both drivers and other users; and
- there would be a presumption in favour of lower speed limits. Currently Normandy Lane, one of our narrowest lanes is derestricted: the rest have a 30-mph limit. But all would benefit from a 20-mph limit, reflecting the frequent shared use of the lanes with cars, pedestrians, cyclists and others. Lower Pennington Lane and Ridgeway Lane have higher

densities of traffic, and some higher traffic speeds connected to the leisure facilities on them. The new limit would therefore impact more on users of these lanes, but there would be a corresponding improvement in road safety and the local environment.

We surveyed members of the local community and businesses operating in or near to the lanes in January – April 2019 and there is a very high level of support for the idea. The stand-out figures are:

- 313 forms completed,
- The largest group of respondents (149) said they walked most of the time in the area, compared to 122 who drove
- The largest group of lane users (200) walked in them for leisure (including dog walking); and the next largest for accessing their homes (160)
- Nearly 270 respondents felt Quiet Lanes would make the lanes safer for all users ('agree strongly' and 'agree'), 9 disagreeing (disagree or strongly disagree); a similar number felt that the lanes would be more attractive to walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, with 7 dissenting; and 224 felt that Quiet Lanes would make drivers more considerate, with 24 disagreeing. Most respondents also felt that low speed limits would maintain tranquillity and rurality in the lanes, and just over half felt that lower speeds would encourage drivers to find alternative routes.
- 84% of respondents wanted all of the roads listed on our map to be included in the scheme
- The most popular measure under the scheme was reduced speed limits (83%) followed by signage at 81%.

In the light of the strong support for the scheme from the public in our area, we request a meeting with your officers to discuss next steps, and the ways your authority can help our neighbourhood.

I am copying this letter to Councillor Rob Humby, Chair of Economy, Transport and Environment, and Councillor Michael White, who has responsibility for our area with HCC; Gavin Parker, Chair of NFNPA, NFDC councillors, and Lymington and Pennington Town Councillors.

Yours sincerely

George Trevelyan
PALLS Steering Group