

# **RESPONSE FROM THE CLAPHAM COMMON MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE QUIETWAY PROPOSAL ACROSS CLAPHAM COMMON**

Please find below comments and observations on the Quietway across Clapham Common.

CCMAC remains broadly supportive of the Quietway proposal however that support is not universal with all members. Those against the Quietway scheme across the Common have suggested alternative routes (Appendix 1 and Appendix 3) and outlined approval and legal issues that need to be addressed (Appendix 2).

CCMAC's Clapham Common Masterplan (The Next 50 Years) is clear in its support for "suitable designed cycle paths" and "pedestrian and cycle priority crossing facilities" which the Quietway scheme sets out to deliver. The closure of Windmill Drive is also supported in the Masterplan.

CCMAC is also pleased with the net gain of grassed land to the Common. However, if in the revised plans, the net gain did not materialise then CCMAC would not be able to endorse the Quietway scheme.

## **Comments, observations and questions**

The plans show a proposed path width of 3m. On Wandsworth Common (and elsewhere) the shared cycle and pedestrian routes are approximately 2m wide. Why do the paths need to be 3m in width? 2m is preferred. We need to protect as much green space on the Common as possible.

You still haven't indicated what will replace the existing surface. The material used for the path needs to be agreed. We need comparator assessments of surface treatments. Moreover, once installed it will need maintaining. We need to know what this will entail.

Also when the existing surface is removed it offers further opportunities, for instance, to repair the water pipes to the Temperance fountain. Further, it offers the opportunity to shrink existing paths to 2m where it far exceeds this width today, thereby restoring more green space to the Common. This is particularly notable on the three paths intersecting at the Temperance fountain and the path leading from Rookery Road along Long Pond.

Drainage is also important. Some parts of the Common get water-logged very quickly. Replacing pavements provides a further opportunity to improve drainage by introducing measures to allow water to run-off more evenly and soak into the water table without puddling. We still haven't seen any plans.

You should also know the area around the fountain is a social meeting point. Enough space should be left to allow for 'traffic' both on wheels and feet to circulate around this area.

Once we know your firm plans, we should partner to integrate proposals to resurface other footpaths (outside the Quietway scheme) that are uneven or disintegrating.

Narrowing Rookery Road and losing part of Windmill Drive will lead to a loss of parking, and coupled with the forfeiture of yellow-line parking at the weekends, is concerning to some members. You have previously said you thought it was about 10 spaces. We must also protect disabled parking spaces in the new proposal.

It is also crucial Transport for London models the proposed changes to Rookery Road and Windmill Drive especially with the phasing of traffic lights at the junction of Rookery Road with Long Road and Clapham Common Northside. We must avoid undue traffic jams.

Indications of works time-scale will be needed, including implications for events site disruption.

## **Appendix 1 - two alternative routes proposed by Fred Uhde**

Path One starts at the Brummel Road crossing. It will run left along a new hoggin pathway on common land directly next to the fence along the Pavement up to the Long Road, where it will turn west on the very wide sidewalk outside the common on the north side of the Long Road past two bus stops. It will cross the Long Road at the event site gate crossing junction. From there it will connect to the aforementioned existing diagonal shared path that connects with the already existing cycle-only north-south cycle path. Continuing south it will turn west on to Windmill Drive, which will contain a narrow blue painted cycle-only lane ending at the Avenue.

On this plan the only new common land taken is almost useless common land parallel to the existing fence along the pavement. The blue paint on Windmill Drive will increase pathway safety by clearly identifying it. An alternative can be a continuation along the North-South route beyond Windmill Drive to Clapham Common South Side, where Path One or Path Two will turn west to the Avenue along a shared path sidewalk just outside common land.

Path Two requires no new common land. It starts at the Brummel Road crossing. It takes a right turn towards Omnibus along the Pavement on already dedicated sidewalk shared path along the edge of the common but outside the common. It then then turns west along an already existing shared path at the edge of Clapham Common North Side but outside the common toward the hoggin path leading from the Chase to the Long Road crossing. It continues on the already dedicated diagonal shared path linking to the aforementioned north-south route to Windmill Drive and west to the Avenue as did Path One. This path would be substantially more ambulating and recreational than Path One, but it will fulfil the casual nature of the cycling experience suggested by the Quietways label and take no new common land. Nor will it require closing Windmill Drive, unless Wandsworth residents clearly favour doing so.

## **Appendix 2 - approval and legal issues proposed by Fred Uhde**

1. LAWS. The laws from 1866 to 2006 to set apart and manage common land were not designed to make it a transportation network but only to be open and unenclosed forever as land to be used exclusively for traditional sport and recreation, unless the Office of the Sec. of State decides otherwise after a public hearing for which the public has 28 days to submit representations to be considered.

2. PAST HISTORY. The north-south cycling-only route over Clapham Common was established in the 1980's, I believe, with the promise to replace that land, which is now not part of the common but is part of the transportation network, with the closure of Windmill Drive to the extent at least equal to the land taken. It's clear that the proposed 1980's land exchange was not completed then. The current Quietways exchange proposal does nothing to correct for this 1980's land seizure to accommodate the cycling lobby then.

3. EQUAL VALUE EXCHANGE. Furthermore, the land proposed to be exchanged for Quietways is less valuable land than that proposed to be taken. Who, for example, is going to have a picnic close to the Windmill Drive or Rookery Road roadways? The proposed exchange will also remove the sidewalks along Rookery Road? Will that be a gain to get from the Long Road to Clapham Common South Side? Peter Schmitt is correct. The narrowing of Rookery Road will cause undue traffic impairment for the so-called gain offered.

4. ROUTES THAT TAKE NO COMMON LAND OR VERY LITTLE. The two routes I proposed are presently or can be almost exclusively shared paths except for the section of the north-south route, taking minimal or no new common land. It doesn't require closing Windmill Drive, if that aspiration should be opposed by Wandsworth Council on grounds that such a change will add to traffic impairment at Clapham Common South Side and the Avenue. The route proposals I offered protect the integrity of the common and provide for a more than reasonable accommodation for cycling.

5. REALISTIC CYCLER PROFILE FACTS. The Quietways label is, in my opinion, misnomer. The proposed Quietways pathway is not for casual cycling inasmuch as it is a continuation of a transportation as opposed to a recreation cycling pathway leading to the Bromell Road crossing at the Pavement. The proposed Quietway pathway will be taken over by fast cyclers despite the cycling lobby protest to the contrary. For evidence one only has to walk on any pedestrian path on the common and be over taken by multiple speeding cyclists whizzing within inches of one's body. Talk about cyclist courtesy is sweet but ignores human nature. Many cyclers will always be territorial and aggressive, unless they fear severe punishment, which is not in the present vocabulary.

6. BYE-LAW RESTRICTION OF CYCLING. Surprisingly to some, it is a crime to violate an open spaces bye-law. Lambeth Council Bye-Law 15 states that cyclists may only use designated cycling pathways, sole or shared of which, I believe, Clapham Common has only two. Yet cyclists often ride very fast on any and every pathway on the common in violation of this bye-law revised in its present form as recently 2006. It is clear that presently many cyclists are territorial on any pathway and human nature being what it is provides no hope for a change of this behaviour. Clearly, all pedestrian paths must be marked as such, in order to provide means for pedestrians to shout, "Pedestrian Path Only", to reclaim their rights from bye-law breakers, who can be educated therewith.

6. CCMAC AS PROTECTOR. Unless the Sec. of State rules otherwise in a public hearing, our CCMAC duty as protectors of the common is to find ways to accommodate changing needs without giving up any land or proposing that those needs be carried out on non-common land elsewhere as does Wandsworth Council as evidenced by the letter I distributed last Thursday from Valerie Selby, Wandsworth officer for open land and parks.

7. BENEFITS OF THE NATIONAL CONSENT PROCESS. The Quietways plan will require Sustrands and TfL to apply for consent to the Sec. of State via the national Planning Inspectorate. Officer Iain Boulton confirmed to me that national consent will be applied for. It doesn't matter that Lambeth Council and TfL have got this all decided already. The advantage of the national Planning Inspectorate process is a second bite of the apple for the community, this time with possibly a more objective arbiter.

8. DUTY. Our duty is to submit a consultation representation that reflects all the voices so far heard including the aspiration of many as printed in the 50 Year 2007 MasterPlan to close most of Windmill Drive in Lambeth Council AND Wandsworth Council, but this time in order to bring to realisation the land exchange promised but not delivered in the 1980's.

### **Appendix 3 - issues relating to the closure of Windmill Drive proposed by Friends of Clapham Common**

The Friends of Common are picking up opposition to the closure of Windmill Drive, especially due to perceived traffic congestion around the south west corner, as well as opposition to the shared cycle/pedestrian route on safety grounds.

If the Quietway goes through without closing Windmill Drive, and with path widening, then we shall have lost 474 m<sup>2</sup> and gained only 350 m<sup>2</sup> from the Rookery Road grass reclamation, ie a net loss of 124 m<sup>2</sup>. Clapham Common would have lost out for a second time, which we would deplore.

The options appear to be:

a) allowing cycling on the existing width of path along the suggested route, which would have the effect of slowing down cyclists. Shared paths less than 3 m wide appear to work on Tooting and Wandsworth Commons, though there is far less usage. No loss of common, but relocating the entrance to the playground essential.

b) since any route across Clapham Common has to join up with the Balham and Clapham North continuation, we propose an alternative route which would not require path widening. From Bromell Road the path would cross The Pavement and then turn NORTH WEST along the newish cycle path beside the footpath, behind and around the Church, continuing along that cycle path along Northside as far as the hoggin path; at the bottom of that path, it would cross Long Road, use the diagonal path (which has been recently widened) as far as the dedicated cycle path. The old pedestrian path could then become shared as far as Windmill Drive for those unhappy about using the dedicated NS cycle path. If Windmill Drive is not to be closed, then commercial traffic should be banned. The route could then continue safely along Windmill Drive to the pedestrian/cycle traffic lights at the western end.