

What are 'Quiet Lanes'?

Safer walking, horse riding & cycling in Sussex

In the summer of 2020, the Government published its plans to get Britain cycling and walking, entitled: [Gear change: A bold vision for cycling and walking](#). Earlier in May 2020, the UK Government had announced an emergency active travel fund because of the Covid crisis. In November 2020, the Government announced further funding for cycling and walking infrastructure across England, "to make local journeys safer for all."



However, very little funding is filtering down to rural communities! This is despite the fact that rural roads carry 40% of road traffic but account for 62% of road fatalities, as reported by the Government in 2015. See '[Facts on Road Fatalities](#)'.

The report goes on to say that accidents which occur on rural roads are more likely to be of a fatal nature than those on urban roads, and that rural roads have a much higher average speed than urban roads. This problem continues to be the case in more recent years.

[RoSPA say in their report](#) of 2018, "More deaths occur on rural roads than on urban ones. In 2016, there were 1,015 fatal accidents on rural roads compared to 593 on urban roads."

The problem of deaths on rural roads comes into sharper focus when we consider that only 17% of the population live in rural areas. See: [Defra Official Statistics Rural population 2014/15 \(Updated 27 August 2020\)](#).

Something has to be done to protect pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders in rural areas. So what can we do? Of course we need to campaign for a fair share of the millions of pounds going to help urban areas to get some of the funds allocated to rural areas. However there is one trick up our sleeve... we can use a little-known piece of legislation called the [Quiet Lanes and Home Zone order \(2006\)](#).

A Quiet Lane designation linked with a 20mph speed limit would be an ideal way of helping rural communities benefit from government support for what the Government call 'active travel.' Many minor lanes in the countryside are often too narrow to allow the construction of a path for cycling and walking but, with the support of the local council, some lanes could be designated 'Quiet Lanes' which would help local residents and tourists alike use their bicycle or get out and walk rather than using the car. A Quiet Lane designation is a clear message to motorists to respect the right of passage of walkers, runners, cyclists and horse riders. Connecting up existing paths with Quiet Lanes could provide a network for people to confidently walk and cycle without the fear of being hit by a vehicle.

Suffolk County Council and particularly East Suffolk District have been successful recently starting to build a local network of Quiet Lanes: Click [HERE](#) to see their report.

On Quiet Lanes and in Home Zones, the need to improve the quality of life for local residents takes precedence over speeding vehicles. Roads in a Quiet Lane network or in a Home

Zone are places where prescribed local activities may be carried out as well as being public thoroughfares. The speed of vehicles must be low enough to permit such activities to be enjoyed safely by people of all ages and abilities.

We would encourage local communities to put forward proposals to their county councils and to the South Downs National Park for designation of Quiet Lanes. We will look for minor rural roads or networks of minor rural roads to achieve this objective. The [South Downs Network \(SDN\)](#) is keen to map potential Quiet Lanes in the South Downs National Park area. If you are interested in helping us produce a schedule of lanes or have any suggestions, please send them an email. Click [HERE](#). Thank you.

In choosing what lanes to put forward to the authorities we suggest using the excellent document produced by CPRE HQ entitled, '[CPRE's guide to Quiet Lanes.](#)'