

# Parishes to Town: Active Travel Project

## Final report

Mar-23

### Project introduction

The Eastern Area Committee of Swale Borough Council commissioned a “Parishes to Town” project in Dec-21. The project has four stages:

- 1) Develop an outline network
- 2) Consult on the network with Parish Councils and others
- 3) Audit the network to identify barriers and suggest possible improvements
- 4) Write a summary report for inclusion in the Faversham Town, Swale Borough councils’ LCWIPs and Kent County Council’s KCWIP.

***Approval of the final (Stage 4) report is now requested.***

### Summary and conclusions

Increasing active travel between Faversham and the surrounding communities needs interventions that are either location-specific – such as safe crossings or segregated cycling infrastructure – or generic throughout the area – lower speeds and reduced traffic flow on rural roads.

### Issues and potential solutions

Active travel options between Faversham and local communities are currently seen as dangerous and/or unpleasant. A tour of the local lanes and meetings with Parish and District Councillors and local residents identified multiple, specific concerns, summarised as:

***“Too many, too large vehicles travelling too fast, make local residents fear using the lanes for cycling, walking or horse-riding”***

Solutions for achieving a significant modal shift to walking or cycling into Faversham come under three broad categories:

- 1) Building dedicated infrastructure for cycling: possible in some places but requires political commitment and likely to be costly.
- 2) Upgrading existing footpaths and bridleways for year-round use for walking and, in some cases, cycling. While lower cost, it requires community support and is unlikely to generate significant numbers of people walking or cycling.
- 3) Reducing volumes and speeds of vehicles on existing roads. As well as making lanes more pleasant and less eroded, this brings them closer to their original purpose: routes for local people to use safely on foot, on horseback, by bike or in a motor vehicle. Relatively low cost, but the design needs to be carefully considered in order to achieve community support.

## Prioritisation

At Stage 1 a set of criteria for assessing route priorities was agreed (details in Appendix):

- a. Proximity to Faversham – up to 40 minutes (walking or cycling);
- b. Places with larger populations given greater priority;
- c. Demonstration of Parish Council support for active travel;
- d. Route deliverability, assuming funding available (mainly cycling); and
- e. Strategic nature of route (mainly cycling) – whether the link forms part of wider route network.

Based on these criteria the following places were prioritised at stage 2:

Walking: **Oare, Goodnestone and Painters Forstal** – all within 40 minutes, paths mostly exist and/or upgradable at modest cost

Cycling: As above plus **Graveney, Boughton & Teynham**. All within 30 minutes cycling distance of Faversham station, have Parish Council support, are largely deliverable, cover the larger centres of population and are on a network of strategic routes.

## Stage 2 recommendations

The stage 2 report recommended the following actions:

- 1) Produce more detailed plans for walking and cycling routes for the six priority communities;
- 2) Suggest a list of possible actions for individual Parish Councils;
- 3) Leverage other project opportunities as they occur;
- 4) Lower speed limits across all rural roads, as Surrey CC has recently done and West Sussex is considering; and
- 5) Designate some lanes as ‘access only’, potentially as part of a ‘Quiet Lanes’ project – recent examples in Suffolk<sup>1</sup> and Cornwall<sup>2</sup>. Where using physical barriers prove to be impossible, using signed-only “Access only” TRO could be investigated as a first step. This would reduce, but not eliminate through traffic by removing certain lanes from SatNavs.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.quietlanessuffolk.co.uk/about-us>

<sup>2</sup> <https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/truro-quiet-lanes>

## Summary conclusions

- 1) Output from the project is included the overall SWALE LCWIP and in the countywide KCWIP
- 2) General (all or some parishes):
  - a. Develop Quiet Lanes or Quiet Ways project by Kent County Council and Swale Borough Council with individual Parish Councils to reduce traffic speed and volumes on rural lanes.
  - b. Lower speed limits of 30mph / 40mph on rural roads with 20mph in villages and on the narrowest lanes.
  - c. Write Highways Improvement Plans with specific interventions.
- 3) Specific:
  - a. Oare: given the close proximity of the community to Faversham, **include interventions to promote walking and cycling within the Faversham LCWIP.**
  - b. Teynham: Improving the cycle route along Lower Road is possible and could generate significant amounts of people cycling over time. Of particular importance is that Teynham lies on the strategic cycling route to Sittingbourne. **Sustrans is producing a feasibility report and further recommendations will depend on that output.**
  - c. Painter's Forstal: a **detailed report is appended**, which focuses on improving both walking and cycling
  - d. Boughton has existing demand for cycling and considerable longer-term potential, not least because it lies on the strategic route to Canterbury. The **attached report** describes the multiple alternative routes and the next step for Swale, Faversham and Boughton councils should be to agree which of those routes to develop further. Some recommendations do not depend on the chosen route, particularly interventions east of Brenley Corner.
  - e. Graveney and Goodnestone are considered together. For cycling, Sustrans is conducting a feasibility study on a proposed upgrade to NCN1 from Seasalter Beach to Sandbanks Lane. While the **attached report** includes recommendations for walking between the two villages and into Faversham, the **output from the Sustrans study is needed** to confirm much of the detail, particularly around the creek area.
  - f. Specific interventions in other locations have been given a lower priority at this stage, due to lack of proximity to Faversham, lower populations, or less community support.

## Detailed recommendations for each location

### Graveney and Goodnestone

Speed and volume of motor vehicles through the villages make walking or cycling unpleasant and potentially dangerous. While the Parish Council's top priority is a safe walking route between Graveney and Goodnestone, a safe walking / cycling route into Faversham is also needed. For cycling (and to an extent walking), the proposed Solar Way provides the best current opportunity for developing / enhancing the strategically important National Cycle Route 1 to provide a safe, direct, comfortable cycle route from Seasalter beach to Graveney.

From Graveney to Faversham improving the surface on the existing cycle route by the Creek and implementing a more direct route through Iron Wharf Boat Yard is highly desirable. A series of recommendations is included in the detailed report attached.

While it is also possible to cycle from Goodnestone into Faversham using Sandbanks Lane, consideration should also be given to developing a route along Graveney Road, which is more direct. This would potentially bring benefits to those cycling in from Boughton (see next section)

A lower short-term priority and outside the scope of this project is a route from Graveney to Whitstable along Monkshill Road and Seasalter Lane and CW2 (or Dargate Road). This would provide a safe route into Faversham for those that currently cycle along the Thanet Way! It brings the additional benefit creating of a circular leisure route Faversham / Solar Way / Monkshill Road with a possible link into the new 'Cantii Way' – see below. Issues include the need for traffic calming on Monkshill Road and upgrading CW2 to a bridleway, or similar.

Better cycling links from Graveney and Goodnestone could benefit Hernhill, Staplestreet, Yorkletts and Dargate.

There is also demand for improving the walking route from Graveney and Goodnestone into Faversham. Alternatives include using ZR492 and then ZR495, a route 'promoted' by KCC, route or along ZR494 and the Graveney Road. Consideration to be given about whether either PROW could be upgraded to a cycle route and how to ensure safety at the railway crossing(s). Other issues to be investigated with the Parish Council.

*Action required:*

*Assess outcome of Solar Way discussions and implications*

*Parish Council to consider which recommendations to include in its Highways Improvement Plan, particularly:*

- *Developing detail proposals for walking route (on or off road) between Graveney and Goodnestone*
  - *A 20mph speed limit*
- *Decide on need for Graveney Road cycle route and how to provide a cycleway link to Goodnestone*
  - *Replace existing stiles with kissing gates on ZR492 at the railway crossing*

- *Improve ZR492 footpath near railway (waterlogged in wet weather)*
- *Improve surfaces on ZR494, ZR495 and ZF29 to make them accessible all year round*

## **Boughton & Dunkirk**

With a population of 2,000 in Boughton and 1,400 in Dunkirk, the two communities lie about halfway along the strategically important cycle route between Faversham and Canterbury. There is demand for a safe cycle route for the 4 mile, mainly flat journey to central Faversham. Extending the cycle route to Dunkirk would be a later development and would need buy-in from the Parish Council.

Building a cycling connection between Faversham and Boughton is an important first step of a plan for a network of commuter routes between Faversham, Canterbury and Whitstable and a wider inter-urban network. It would also open up a pleasant circular leisure route of around 25 miles, using the existing successful Crab and Winkle route and would be a useful adjunct to the newly opened Cantii Way, a 145 mile circular route in East Kent.

*Note: Although important from a network development perspective, the route from Boughton to Canterbury is outside the scope of this project.*

There are numerous possible routes from Boughton to Faversham.

- Most routes use Brenley Corner. Until Chalkley Road, the section from Boughton needs little intervention beyond better signing. Improved infrastructure on Canterbury Road between Brenley Corner and Stockers Hill is desirable but not a necessity. Although The Street is not ideal for cycling, it is acceptable, although it would benefit from a 20mph speed limit in the village.
- Making the crossing of the A2/A299 fully LTN 1/20 compliance needs a complete redevelopment of Brenley Corner. An interim solution is to re-phase the lights to shorten the wait time for pedestrians and cyclists. Depending on the route(s) chosen to the west of Brenley Corner, a possible enhancement could be to route westbound cyclists to north and east of the roundabout (contraflow) instead of south and west
- From Brenley Corner, the route along London Road into Faversham is not adequate. The various off-road alternatives to the north and to the south of London Road are described in the attached detailed report. In summary, these are:
  - Parallel with London Road to the north or south (Duchy of Cornwall land).
  - Along London Road (north) and then connecting with an upgraded ZR496. Provides direct link to Love Lane new developments.
  - Homestall lane and then upgraded ZR496. Would require resolution of landownership issues and traffic calming in Homestall Lane
  - Homestall Lane and Graveney Road – current preferred route by some cyclists. Would require traffic calming of Homestall Lane and segregated infrastructure on Graveney Road (which could benefit Graveney and Goodnestone)
  - Note: routes ending at the south end of Love Lane would need to consider how to traverse the railway lines. While redeveloping the Long Bridge would be costly and complex, it should not be dismissed, as it could be an iconic landmark and bring significant benefits for both pedestrians and cyclists in both existing houses and new developments.

*Action required:*

*Swale Borough and Boughton Parish Council to discuss preferred routes, based on identified barriers and solutions*

*Boughton Parish Council to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan includes adequate provision for developing cycling*

*Request re-phasing of lights at Brenley Corner from KCC / National Highways to benefit pedestrians & cyclists*

*Plan to deliver minor improvements east of Brenley Corner: Canterbury Road, Stockers Hill, including 20mph in The Street*

*Discuss possible off-road routes from Brenley Corner to Faversham with landowners north and south of Watling St*

*Ensure that the Love Lane / Watling St junction includes provision for cycling*

*Assess alternatives for cycle routes from Love Lane into the centre of Faversham*

*Cost benefit appraisal of new 'iconic' Long Bridge*

Other routes into Faversham from Boughton and the surrounding area considered not deliverable in the short to medium term:

1. Via Staple Street and Graveney Road. Slightly further with greater elevation and little natural surveillance in many places, the route is narrow and not on the desire line for much of Boughton. It has the advantages of avoiding the A2 and Brenley Corner and could link up to a dedicated cycle route along the Graveney Road. Would require Staple Street to be a quiet lane and/or access only.
2. Chalkley Road and upgraded footpath ZR496. Direct and off-road, but would need conversion to bridleway and, crucially, safe crossing of the A299 – dependent on National Highways plans.
3. In the absence of safe infrastructure along Watling Street, some leisure cyclists use bridleway ZR 633 and ZF38 and Salters Lane. Relatively and pleasant, the route is indirect and the surface on the bridleway is poor in places. Could be considered as an alternative if other routes cannot be progressed.

A link to Selling station, which might be useful for commuters and others could be considered as part of a Quiet Lanes project in the longer term, but is probably a lower short-term priority.

## **Selling**

With a population of 1,000 and 4.5 miles from Faversham, all routes have significant barriers for cycling: hilly and fast, narrow lanes. Potential for a route depends partly on the Duchy of Cornwall development scheme. Potentially reconsider with a route from Sheldwich – see below

*Action required:*

*No further action proposed at this stage*

## **Sheldwich**

Although there is some Parish Council support for a cycling route into Faversham, particularly given the number of children being driven from Faversham to the local primary school, the low population and complications of delivering a route make it a lower priority. Options considered:

- Selling Road or Plumford Lane. Both are slightly indirect and would require significant traffic calming – maybe as part of Quiet Lanes project
- The existing bridleway / track roughly parallel with the A251 or a new track behind the hedge on one side or other of the A251. More direct, but complex in terms of land ownership and would be more costly – a possible route was drawn up in 2005.

Sheldwich has many footpaths and bridleways which make walking, cycling and riding for leisure important. A cycling safe route to Faversham would open up the potential for a safe route to Badlesmere. The Parish is considering drawing up a Highways Improvement Plan.

*Action required:*

*No further action proposed at this stage.*

## **Painter's Forstal**

Despite having a relatively small population (c 400), the village's close proximity to Faversham – 2 miles to the station / less to Abbey School would enable residents to benefit from better cycling and walking provision. A cycling route to Painter's Forstal could, in the longer term, be extended to Eastling. Although outside the scope of this project, leisure routes to the surrounding countryside are also important for walking, cycling and horse-riding for both residents and visitors. Painter's Forstal is considering installing new bike stands, to make it a more attractive centre for leisure cyclists.

Three main options, with some variants exist for walking or cycling between Painter's Forstal and Faversham:

**Option 1:** The most direct route for cycling to Faversham station, Abbey School or the new facilities at Perry Court is via Eastling Road / Brogdale Road. Currently unsuitable for less confident cyclists, this option would need significant intervention to make it usable: traffic-calming to lower the speed and volume of motor vehicles on Eastling Road. Similar interventions would be needed for walking: there is no pavement between Painter's Forstal until shortly before Brogdale Farm. North of the M2, the direct route through ZF18 through Perry Court could also be used for cycling if permitted. The alternative route along Brogdale Road is slightly longer and the junction at London Road is not ideal for vulnerable road users.

*Possible interventions:*

*Reduce the speed limit along Eastling Road to 30mph and on Brogdale Road to 20mph*  
*Improve the footpath in Lorenden Park nature reserve as a walking (not cycling) route to Eastling Road*  
*Add pavements or footpaths parallel with Eastling Road from ZF357 @ Lorenden Park to Brogdale Farm*  
*Make the junction with London Road safe for pedestrians and cyclists – already included in Faversham’s LCWIP as a “Critical Junction”*  
*Add pedestrian crossings of London Road where ZF18 emerges on London Road and/or the Abbey School and/or Brogdale Road*  
*Upgrade ZF18 for use by bicycles*

**Option 2:** A variant after Eastling Road is Vicarage Lane, Mutton Lane and either Water Lane (walking and cycling) or ZF11 (walking). Depending on the final destination, this is slightly longer and still requires a solution for Eastling Road and uses the polluted London Road to reach the Abbey School. Ospringe Road is a suitable alternative for the town centre and the station, either from Water Lane or via ZF11 and King George V recreation ground. Vicarage Lane is already suitable for walking and cycling. Making it a Quiet Lane with no access to through traffic and a lower speed limit would make it even better.

**Possible interventions:**

*Reduce the speed limit along Eastling Road to 30mph*  
*Formalise the footpath in Lorenden Park nature reserve as a walking route to Brook Farm on Eastling Road*  
*Add pavements or footpaths parallel with Eastling Road from ZF357 @ Lorenden Park to Vicarage Lane*  
*Make Vicarage and Mutton lanes “Quiet Lanes” – 20mph speed limit and marked no entry for motor vehicles (except access)*  
*Reduce speed limit on Water Lane in Ospringe to 20mph.*  
*Consider making Water Lane a “School Street”*  
*Add pedestrian crossing at exit of ZF11 onto London Road*

**Option 3:** This alternative uses Painter’s Forstal Road and either Water Lane (cycling) or ZR365 / ZF13 (walking). Traffic speeds are too high along the route, particularly on parts of Water Lane, to feel completely comfortable for all those who are walking or cycling. A footpath for walkers already exists along Painter’s Forstal Road and for all but 600m of Water Lane between ZR361 and St Peter’s and St Paul’s Church. ZF13 is a suitable off-road alternative for walking to avoid that part of the route. A lower speed limit and possible motor vehicle access restrictions on Water Lane would make it suitable for all, whether walking or riding.



***Possible interventions:***

*Reduce speed limit on Painter's Forstal Road and Water Lane to 20mph / 30mph*

*Add London Road crossing points to LCWIP (done)*

*Replace stile on ZF14 at Water Lane with kissing gate*

**Eastling**

Pop. 350, 5m to Faversham station. Eastling Parish Council has a nascent Highways Improvement Plan would benefit from further detail about traffic calming measures in and around the village, including 20mph in the village. A safe cycling route to Eastling depends on the link between Faversham and Painters Forstal. Lower priority for now.

*No further action required*

**Newnham & Doddington**

With a combined population of just under a 1,000, Newnham is 5 ½ miles from both Faversham and Lenham and Doddington is 1 ½ miles near to Lenham. The road is fairly heavily used for journeys between Lenham and Faversham. Parish Council has concerns about the speed and volume of through traffic. Outside of the villages, the road is fast and the surface poor for cycling. Given all of the considerations, the villages are currently a lower priority for this project, although e-bikes could change that. Both villages could consider applying for 20mph – Doddington already has some physical traffic calming and streets in Newnham are mostly narrow. An inter-urban route between Faversham and Lenham is possible, but outside the scope of this study.

*Action required:*

*Parish Councils to consider promoting e-bikes and applying for 20mph*

**Teynham**

With a population of 3,000 and located about 4m from both Faversham and Sittingbourne and near to Lynsted, Teynham is strategically important for cycling. It should be on NCN 1, although the current alignment takes a detour to the north. A route could be relatively easy to deliver along Lower Road if the number and speed of vehicles were reduced. Traffic calming in Lower Road has community support and is a priority for the Parish Council, albeit this is more about community wellbeing than to support cycling and walking directly. Sustrans are developing a feasibility study for this route.

A survey of school students at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School shows that there is some demand for cycling from Teynham.

Earlier work identified the need to decide the best route between Faversham and the junction of Lower Road / Four Oaks Road:

- 1) Current NCN1 routing of Bysing Wood Road and Tin Shop Hill (a 0.5m detour which avoids the steep section of Bysing Wood Road)
- 2) Bysing Wood Road in its entirety (more direct, but rather steep – 6.6% per Strava)
- 3) Colegate Road via Oare – longer, but takes in Oare. Oare Road would need traffic calming or segregated infrastructure
- 4) Bridleway ZR327, which connects to the Western Link – most direct, least elevation gain, but would need significant work, Land ownership is also a barrier.

*Action required:*

*Await the Sustrans feasibility study*

### **Lynsted & Kingsdown**

The parish has a population of 1,150 and there is demand for commuting by bike into both Faversham (6m from Lynsted) and Sittingbourne (4.5m). Similar issues as other villages regarding speed and volume of traffic. Would benefit from safe cycle route from Teynham to Faversham. A link from Teynham to Sittingbourne would probably also benefit Lynsted, although the direct route is shorter @ 4 miles and, in any case, outside the scope of this project.

*Action required:*

*Await the Sustrans feasibility study on the Teynham route (above)*

### **Oare**

Close to Faversham town centre (1.5m to Faversham station), Oare is a prime candidate for both walking and cycling into town. Two main alternatives are along Oare Road, or along the Western Link to Bysing Wood Road. Neither Oare Road or the Western Link are currently suitable routes for walking or cycling, with fast traffic and would need traffic calming features. The cycle path along Bysing Wood Road needs upgrading, but the walking route into Faversham town centre is relatively pleasant. Oare Parish Council is interested in extending 20mph to cover the village.

*Action required:*

*Enhance Faversham LCWIP with routes from Oare*

## Appendix: prioritisation schedule

Location	Population (4)		F'sham distance			Times		Elevation gain (ft)			PC support	Delivery? (5)	Cycling		Walking		Dependencies	Other notes	
	no	rank	Station	Edge (1)	Rank	Cycle station (2)	Walk edge (3)	Out	Back	Avg			Priority	Notes	Priority	Notes			
Graveney	1,000	5	3.5	2.5	5	20	1 hr+	-	-	0.00%	Y	Y	1	Proximity, NCN 1			Solar Way	(less via Graveney Rd)	
Goodnestone			2.5	1.5	2	15	36	-	-	0.00%	Y	Y	1	Proximity	1	Proximity			
Hernhill	1,000	5	3.5	2.5	5	20	1 hr+	150	200	1.52%	Y								
Dargate			5	4	11	30	1 hr+	240	230	1.14%	Unknown								
Boughton	2,000	2	3.5	2.5	5	20	1 hr+	100	200	1.52%	Y	Y	1	Strategic, Selling link, PC support			Brenley X; Duchy of C	5.5m to C'bury West	
Dunkirk	1,400	3	4.5	3.5	9	25	1 hr+	200	400	2.16%	Limited	Y	2	Strategic			Boughton	4.5m to C'bury West	
Selling	1,000	5	4.5	3.5	9	25	1 hr+	-	200	1.08%	Unknown		2	Coast to Downs			Duchy of Cornwall		
Selling Station			4	3	8	25	1 hr+	-	150	0.95%	Unknown		2	Coast to Downs					
Sheldwich	400	11	3	2.5	4	20	1 hr+	-	200	1.52%	Y		2	Demand, proximity			Identify off-road route	+ 1 mile via Selling or Plumford Ln	
Painters Forstal (Ospringe PC)	750	8	2.5	1.5	2	15	36	-	150	1.89%	Y		1	Proximity	1	Proximity			
Eastling	350	12	5	4	11	30	1 hr+	-	300	1.42%	Possibly								
Newnham	350	12	5.5	4.5	14	35	1 hr+	170	240	1.01%	Y						e-bikes	?Strategic	
Doddington	500	9	7	6	16	40	1 hr+	160	300	0.95%	Y						e-bikes	) route to Lenham	
Stalisfield	200	14	7	6	16	40	1 hr+	110	500	1.58%	Unknown						E-bikes, Eastling		
Lynsted & Kingsdown	1,150	4	6	5	15	35	1 hr+	150	240	0.91%	Unknown		2	Teynham link			Teynham route		
Teynham	3,000	1	5	4	11	30	1 hr+	120	120	0.57%	Possibly	Y	1	Strategic, NCN1			PC support?	4m to Sittingbourne	
Oare	500	9	1.5	0.5	1	10	12	-	-	0.00%	Possibly	Y	1	Proximity	1	Proximity		Oare road calming?	
	13,600																		

(1) currently Western Link, Watling St, Love Lane

(2) Speed 10 mph

(3) Speed 2.5 mph

(4) Current population per <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/> - exclude current/project developments

(5) Subject to funding and detailed design