

Parishes to Town: Active Travel Project

Stage 1 report

Introduction

During March 2022, I cycled through the lanes and villages around Faversham and met many Parish and District Councillors and local residents from Graveney, Boughton, Dunkirk, Selling, Sheldwich, Painters Forstal (Ospringe), Newnham, Doddington, Eastling, Lynsted, Teynham & Oare. Thank you all for your input into stage 1. The next step is to move to stage 2, which is to engage in more detail with those communities that are keen to pursue an active travel agenda and to work out how this project could help to deliver your aspirations.

Please can you review the report, identify errors and omissions and give feedback on how you wish to engage further in the Parishes to Town project.

Summary of stage 1 findings

Multiple specific concerns were summed up by one Parish Councillor, who said:

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

Some residents had the sense that KCC Highways doesn't recognise villages as communities but, rather, as inconveniences getting in the way of driving between two other places. *“We have to ensure that people can drive along this road, in case the A2 is blocked”.*

While, as a relatively experienced and confident cyclist, I didn't find the lanes dangerous to cycle (except the A251!):

- Many roads are intimidating and not safe for less experienced cyclists and for those on foot, especially the young and the elderly;
- There is a definite perception of danger, together with anecdotes about actual collisions / near-misses;
- Without reducing the number and speed of vehicles, we are unlikely to see an increase in cycling or walking;
- Achieving more cycling and walking will require roads and lanes to be calmed – fewer, slower vehicles; and
- The attractiveness of lanes is being eroded by the volume of large vehicles - not just surfaces, but informally 'widened'.

Note: It appears the Dept for Transport to be interested in lowering speeds on rural lanes. Continued pressure from Parish Councils may help encourage this process.

Recommendations

These can be categorised under three headings:

- 1) Identifying places with the greatest potential for active travel;
- 2) Suggesting possible actions for Parish Councils, collectively or individually;
- 3) Leveraging / integrating with other projects

1) Places with the greatest immediate potential for active travel are those that fulfil some or all of the following criteria:

- sited on a potential cycling network with Canterbury, Sittingbourne and Whitstable (and, possibly Lenham);
- have a larger population;
- are in close proximity to Faversham;
- have routes are deliverable in the short to medium term, if funding were available;
- bring support from the Parish Council and residents.

Boughton and Teynham satisfy the first four criteria - Parish Council support to be confirmed.

Boughton: lies on the strategic route between Faversham (3.5 miles) and Canterbury (5.5 miles) and, with **Dunkirk**, has a significant population (c. 3,500). The preferred routes in each direction (plus a possible route to Selling station) would require relatively complex interventions to make them safe and attractive. Key barriers to cycling are from Brenley Corner to Faversham and alongside the A2 near the Holiday Inn.

Teynham: With a population of 3,000, Teynham is on a strategic, largely flat route between Faversham (5 miles) and Sittingbourne (4 miles). With traffic calming, Lower Road provides a suitable route into Faversham. It is not currently on NCN1, but could be, with minor re-alignment of the route. A route from Teynham could be accessed by people from Lynsted.

In addition, **Sheldwich** could also deliver modal shift, since it is even closer to Faversham, has significant numbers of primary school children travelling from Faversham and the Parish Council has demonstrated the desire to develop an active travel plan.

Graveney, Painters Forstal and Oare are close enough for people to walk or cycle into Faversham and existing roads or public rights of way could be improved to facilitate these. Graveney lies on / near the National Cycle Network route 1.

While **Newnham, Eastling and Doddington** are too far from Faversham for walking, the advent of e-bikes make cycling altogether more possible. The current road layout is relatively hostile to those on bicycles, with or without e-assist and would need calming, in terms of speed and volume. They villages lie on a potential strategic route from Faversham to Lenham.

2) Parish Councils to consider:

- Developing HIPs to include Active Travel plans. Consider role of utility cycling and/or walking, especially with the implications of e-bikes for more remote villages. Note also needs for walking / cycling / horse-riding as leisure.
- Promoting the use of e-bikes.
- Reviewing “Don’t Lose your way” map. <https://gis-dlyw-ramblers.astuntechnology.com/map/>. While the deadline for claiming potential lost ways has been removed, the elapse of time might make it harder to re-instate lost rights of way in future. Particularly relevant where development might occur. More likely to benefit leisure / walking than utility cycling, but there may be overlaps.
- Joining together to promote 20mph in villages and lower speeds on rural lanes, saving TRO / consultation / design costs.
- Promoting quiet lanes for walking or riding (horses or bikes); making some lanes access only for motor traffic - physically or signed.
- Exerting pressure through organisations such as KALC to lobby the DfT to reduce speed limits on rural lanes.
- Developing safe routes to schools by working with schools on travel plans and current travel modes to achieve modal shift. Consider, in particular, Abbey and Queen Elizabeth secondary schools plus primary schools in Faversham and multiple villages.

3) Integration with other projects

- Coast to Downs project. Primarily promoting leisure routes, improvements might bring opportunities in the longer term for developing routes for commuting or similar. Current routes being considered are Perry Wood to Faversham and Conyer to Doddington.
- School streets. While KCC is promoting these mainly in towns, there may be opportunities to improve safety around rural schools.
- Identify whether there are synergies with climate change / other air pollution targets from KCC.

Common themes identified

School run: Graveney - children driven from Seasalter and elsewhere; Luddenham mentioned by Oare and others – unofficial one-way system instigated; Sheldwich (children driven from Faversham (along A251); Boughton and Hernhill; At Selling school, children from other villages were offered places one year when there were few / no local children. In the following year, local children could not get a place, because of sibling preference. A full review of all primary school travel plans, (expected) catchment areas and mode of transport would be beneficial.

SatNavs are a common problem, redirecting people off main roads when there is congestion or when drivers select shortest routes. Action: investigate whether declassifying some lanes and removing them from SatNavs might bring some medium-term benefits.

HGVs. While some clearly need to access properties, others are using lanes inappropriately, possibly following a SatNav. In cycling around the lanes, in separate places, I saw two (foreign registered) HGVs that were clearly lost.

In the smaller, more remote places, cycling and walking for leisure might be as, or more important than utility. In places closer to Faversham, such as Oare, Graveney, Painters Forstal, both walking and cycling into Faversham are possible. For Boughton, Selling, Sheldwich, Teynham and Lynsted, cycling is an option with the right infrastructure. With the advent of e-bikes, additional places become easily within reach. Action: consider implementing an e-bike trial hire scheme with one or more villages where the challenge to cycling is distance or topography.

Possible next steps

- Obtain school travel plans, to identify catchment areas and travel mode as evidence base
- Investigate possibility of removing some lanes from the SatNav map.
- Consider role of (and interaction with) leisure cycling and walking
- Consider re-routing (or adding to) NCN1 (Sustrans)
- Work with a village on an e-bike hire scheme
- Work with Sheldwich PC on detailed design for cycle route
- Add more detail on walking opportunities around Faversham

Specifics findings

Graveney: speed (and sometime volume) of motor vehicles through the village make walking or cycling dangerous. A safe route for walking into **Goodnestone** is a high priority and a safe walking / cycling into Faversham would also be appreciated. NCN 1 goes through Graveney, but is deemed dangerous along Seasalter Road and takes a somewhat tortuous route to Faversham. At the very least, traffic calming on Seasalter Road, surface improvements by the Creek and a more direct route near Iron Wharf Boat Yard should be considered. Alternatively, if safe, a routing along the Graveney Road is more direct and faster.

Graveney to Boughton via Dargate, Hernhill and Staplestreet. The lanes felt pretty safe and not busy, but probably not a focus for utility cycling in the short term.

Boughton Pop. 2,000; 3.5 miles to Faversham and 5.5 miles to Canterbury, mostly flat.

I met two local residents, a councillor and a teacher at Queen Elizabeth school – both keen to promote active travel. They pointed to the success of the Crab and Winkle route and could see advantages of building something similar to link to Boughton and both Faversham and Canterbury. In the latter case, linking up with the Crab and Winkle, creating a strategic inter-urban network.

Boughton lies on the strategic Faversham and Canterbury route. Numerous possible routes to Faversham.

1. Via Staple Street and Graveney Road. Slightly further, greater elevation, little natural surveillance in many places, narrow and not on desire line for much of Boughton, but does avoid the A2 and Brenley Corner – probably not a priority, unless it can become a quiet lane.
2. Canterbury Road to Brenley Corner, which is currently acceptable in many places. Consider better signing throughout and improvements on the approach to Brenley Corner, particularly the track which runs parallel to Canterbury Road. If and when Brenley Corner is redesigned, safe cycle facilities should be included. A fully segregated and better surfaced bi-directional cycle lane on the south-western side of Canterbury Road would be an improvement, although it currently feels relatively safe. Between Brenley Corner and Faversham, there are a range of alternatives:
 - a. Homestall lane (currently too busy and narrow in many places – traffic calming and lower speed limit needed) and:

- i. Graveney Road (busy, wide enough for a bi-directional cycle route, perhaps in place of the existing footpath on the south side of the road), would also serve Goodnestone and Graveney and, in due course, Hernhill, Fostal and Dargate. Would need traffic calming, lower speed limit etc. Is Graveney Road best route for motor vehicles from Faversham to A299?
 - ii. Footpath ZR 496. Direct, but would need conversion to bridleway. Could also serve new development on Love Lane, reduces time on Homestall Lane compared with above alternative
- b. Canterbury Road (west)
- i. North side, making use of existing footpath, would need widening. Any scope for cycle lane INSIDE existing field?
 1. As far as a possible new road into new development and then ZR 496 or Graveney Road; or
 2. Love Lane and Whitstable Road; or
 3. Love Lane and Long Bridge: would be costly and complicated but could be an iconic project that would improve walking connections to the railway station and town centre from that part of Faversham
 - ii. South side – through potential Duchy of Cornwall development

Link to Selling station – 2 miles; 12 mins. A route using existing, mostly flat quiet lanes – Horselees Road and Fox Road – or improved footpaths (ZR625 and ZR 631) from Brickfield Lane via South Street, could be a useful link for those accessing the station.

Link to Canterbury (out of scope of this project). The most direct route is via Harbledown (5.5 miles; 30 mins), but an alternative, quiet route could be developed through Blean Woods. Both routes include Dunkirk Hill, whose steepness is a slight barrier, obviated by e-bikes; the Blean Woods alternative avoids some of the unappealing A2, particularly the challenging service station / Holiday Inn slip road, which currently presents some danger to cyclists. This route is slightly longer, has more elevation, lacks natural surveillance and would need physical intervention.

Note: As Boughton is developing its Neighbourhood Plan, adding a Highways Improvement Plan might prove beneficial.

Dunkirk Population 1,400 – 4.5 miles from Faversham and Canterbury: The councillors that I met are clearly engaged with their community. They are sceptical about whether active travel can be achieved in any meaningful way. A priority for them is the need for more space for

motor vehicles, particularly parking. Councillors were critical of the new signals at Brenley Corner, which they regarded as costly and bring few benefits. Action: check costs and reasons for new signals.

Selling Population 1,000 – 4.5 miles from Faversham: I spoke with a councillor about possible routes from Selling to Faversham. The possible routes identified all have significant barriers, including topographical challenges and fast, narrow lanes. Potential changes to road layouts if the Duchy of Cornwall development scheme progresses could make the route along Selling Road much more attractive.

Sheldwich Pop 400. Several Parish Councillors were keen to meet. They are fully engaged with their residents and looking to achieve a modal shift towards walking and cycling. A route plan was drawn up as long ago as 2005. They are particularly worried about the safety of children attending the local primary school – many of whom come from Faversham. They would really appreciate a safe cycling route into Faversham, possibly combined with Selling (via Selling Road) or Painters Forstal (via Plumford Lane). Two other alternatives are: 1) using an existing bridleway / track roughly parallel with the A251, or 2) to build a new track behind the hedge on one side or other of the A251.

Walking, cycling and riding for leisure are also important, with Sheldwich sitting at the node of many footpaths and bridleways. Providing a safe route for cycling into Faversham will open up the potential for a safe route all the way to Badlesmere. The Parish is considering drawing up a Highways Improvement Plan. Action: Further work with Parish Council to draw up a HIP and design possible cycle routes into Faversham.

Painters Forstal Pop. 750: Close to Faversham – 2 miles to the station, slightly less to Abbey School. While the most direct route uses Brogdale Road, this is not currently suitable for less confident cyclists and would need traffic-calming. The alternative, via Water Lane is marginally longer and would require using Watling Street to access the Abbey School, but Ospringe Road is a suitable alternative for the town centre and the station. Need to ensure that footpath ZF18 through Perry Court is re-opened. Question whether could be cycle route. Leisure routes to the surrounding countryside are also important, for walking, cycling and horse-riding. Painters Forstal is looking to install new bike stands, to make it a more attractive centre for leisure cyclists.

Eastling: Pop. 350, 5m to Faversham station. Would benefit from enhancements to Painters Forstal. Action Find and follow up with Eastling representative

Met Parish Councillors and local residents from Newnham, Doddington and Lynsted. Similar issues,

Newnham: Pop. 350; 5.5m to Faversham station. (5.5m to Lenham / 400ft of elevation)

Doddington: Pop. 500; 7m to Faversham station (4m to Lenham / 300ft of elevation)

Comments for Newnham, and Doddington. Relatively fast road. Surface not brilliant for cycling. Unlikely to be a key destination for active travel into Faversham, although e-bikes could change. Consider inter-urban route between Faversham and Lenham in the longer term, but outside the scope of this study. Major concerns are speed and volume of traffic, particularly in the peak time and when nearby more major roads are closed or congested.

Lynsted: Pop. 1,150; 6m to Faversham station Similar issues as other villages regarding speed and volume of traffic. Would benefit from safe cycle route from Teynham to Faversham (and, to an extent Sittingbourne, although the direct route is shorter @ 4 miles)

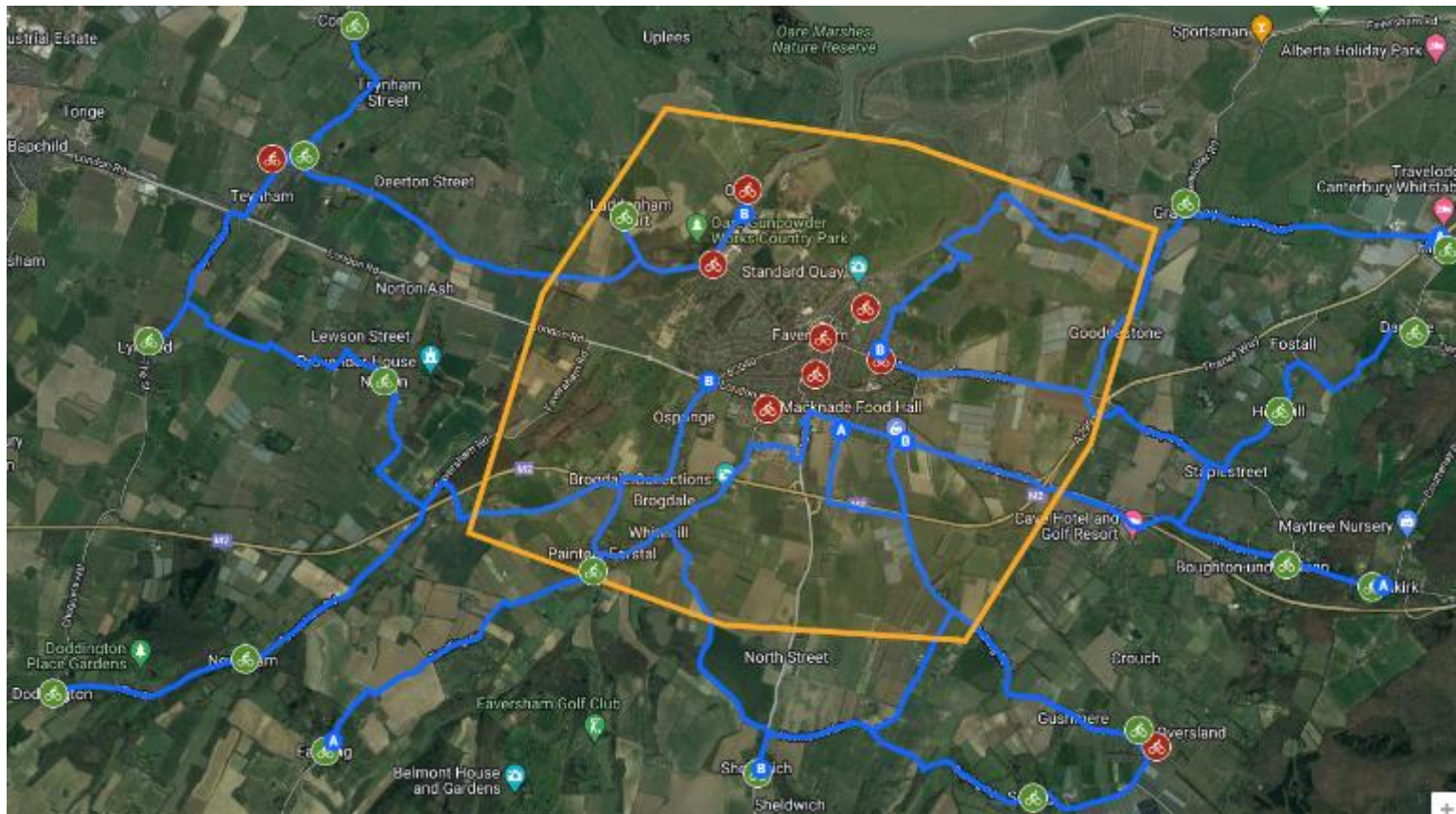
Teynham: Pop. 3,000; 4.5m to Faversham station (and 4m to Sittingbourne). Paul Townson is newly elected to the Parish Council and considers that there is great potential for a route to both Sittingbourne and Faversham, which could be delivered along Lower Road. The main issue that needs solving is the number and speed of vehicles using Lower Road to avoid the A2. Further work would be needed on the entry to Faversham. The current routing of NCN1 avoids the steep section of Bysing Wood Road, taking a 0.5mile detour. Possibilities include: using the steep section, entering via Oare or using bridleway ZR327 to connect to Lower Road. NCN1 currently misses Teynham completely and re-routing should be considered.

Oare: Pop. 500; 1.5m to Faversham station. Spoke to a councillor who was enthusiastic about the need for Oare to have better Active Travel connections with Faversham to enable more walking and cycling, including an extension to the 20mph zone to Oare village.

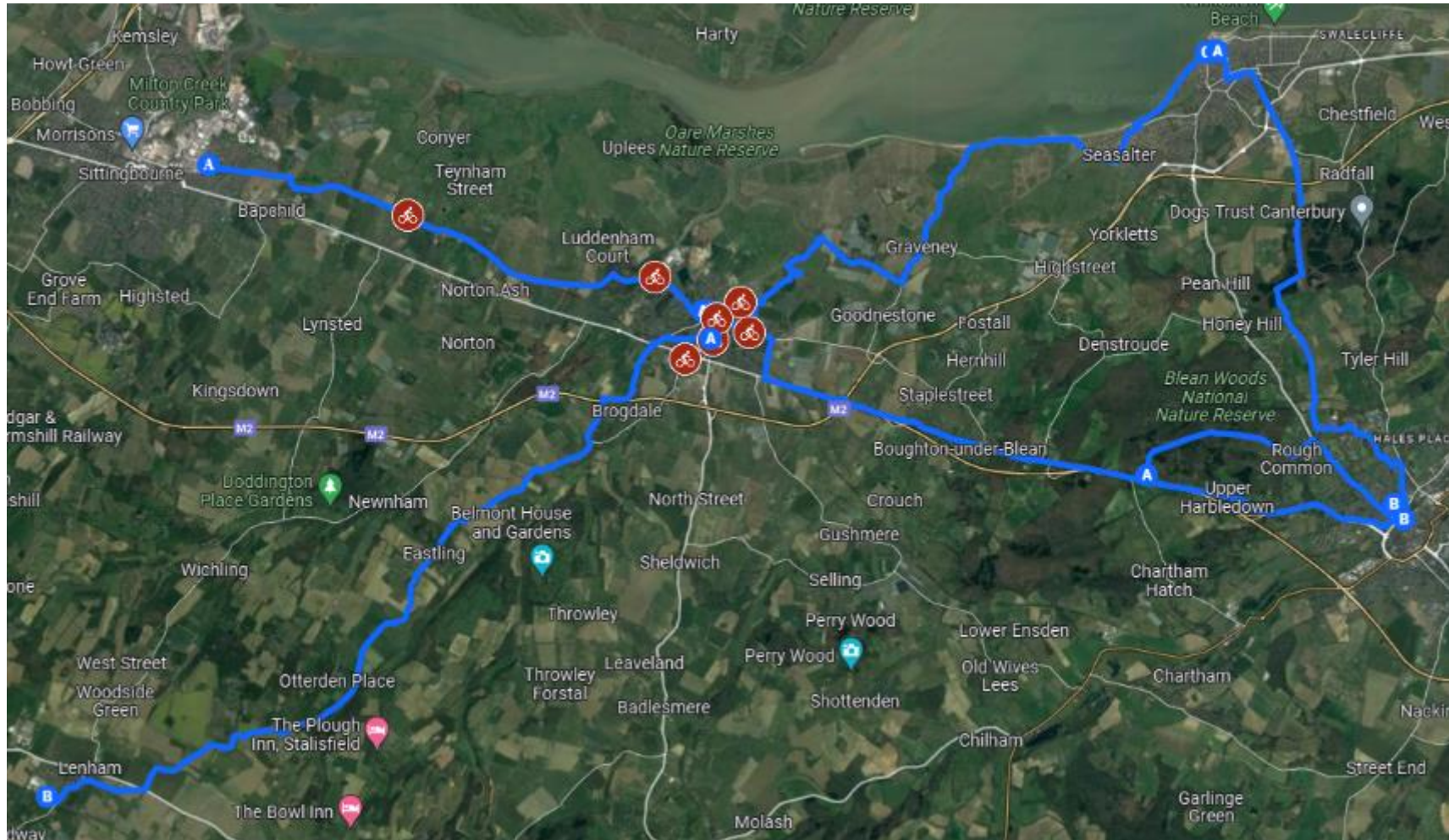
Potential cycling network

The following maps give a rough indication of a possible cycling network linking Faversham to the surrounding villages and further afield. More detail is in the separate Appendix to this report

1) Potential cycling routes (blue) and walking limits (orange)



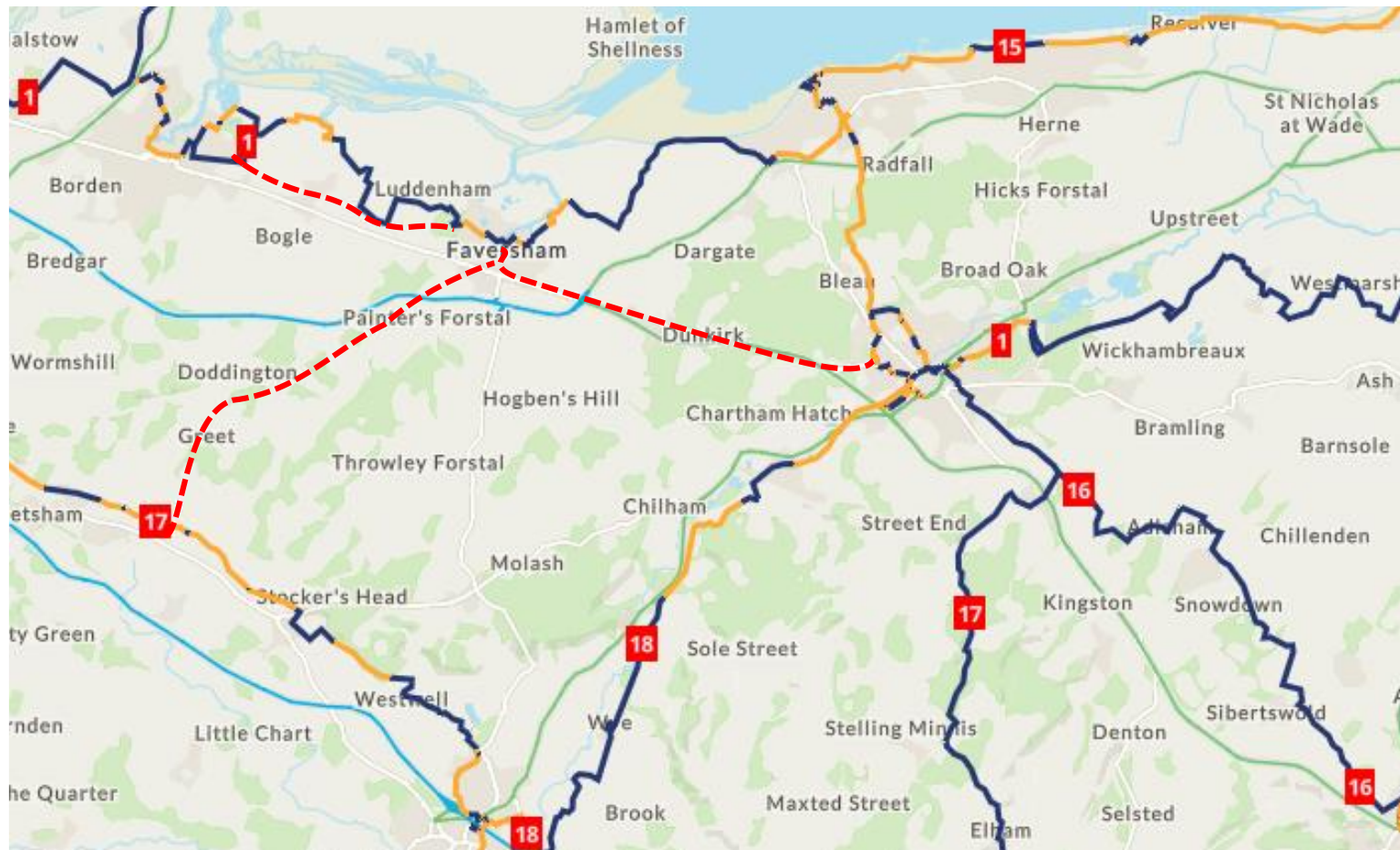
2) Potential inter-urban cycling network



3) Current National Cycling Network (context)



4) National Cycle Network plus possible new strategic routes



5) Public Rights of Way (context)



Parishes to Town: Active Travel Project
Stage 1 report

8th March	Where	Who	Contact details
10am	Village Hall, Graveney	Cllr Claire Boggia Alan Stewart Lisa Stiffell (Clerk) Teresa Bowles	boughtongreys@gmail.com alanstewart20@outlook.com clerkggpc@gmail.com
12pm	Queen's Head Pub, Boughton under Blean	Cllr Jeff Tutt, Dunkirk PC Cllr Kevin Kemp, Dunkirk PC Cllr Paul Ray, Boughton under Blean PC (DNA)	cllrtutt@dunkirkpc.org.uk Cllrkemp@dunkirkpc.org.uk
2pm	4 Granary Cottage, Selling, ME13 9QY	Cllr Kris Barker	kris.barker@favershamtowncouncil.gov.uk 07817 970012
5pm	Village Hall, Sheldwich	Cllr Bill Harbour Stephen Blythin David Simmons Lisa Stiffell (Clerk) Robert Perry Tim Valentine Dave Austin (Badlesmere) John & Sheila Nimmo Philip Weston Philip Scutt	bill@foxhillstud.com 07973 890671 stephen.blythin@btinternet.com davidsimmons@swale.gov.uk sblpc@live.com robdiperry@gmail.com timvalentine@swale.gov.uk dave@badlesmerelees.com johnsheila.nimmo@googlemail.com phil.weston236@outlook.com philscutt@gmail.com
9th March			
9:30	Plumford Farm	Andrew Keel Chris Elworthy Kathy Lockwood (Clerk)	andrewkeel@msn.com 07860 206321 chris.elworthy@ospringepc.org ospringepc@gmail.com

Parishes to Town: Active Travel Project
Stage 1 report

11am	Palace Farm, Down Court Road, Doddington	Cllr Cat Horn, Stalisfield PC Cllr Graham Cuthbert, Doddington PC Cllr Linda Morgan, Lynsted PC Cllr Vanessa Ross-Russel, Lynsted PC Cllr Sue Elworthy, Newnham PC Lynsted Parish Clerk	linda_j_nb_morgan@yahoo.co.uk 07342 676655 vanessa@rossrussell.com 07766 464229 susan.elworthy@btinternet.com LKPC@hotmail.co.uk 01622 739324
3pm	Teynham	Cllr Mike Whiting Dover Castle	MikeWhiting@Swale.gov.uk
4:30pm	Oare	Sonia Jackson	cllrsoniajackson@gmail.com oarepc@aol.co.uk
5pm	Oare	Pippa Gladhill (20s Plenty)	pippagladhill@icloud.com
23rd March			
11:15	The Street	Alastair Gould James Perkins Sarah Muteham (clerk)	AlastairGould@Swale.gov.uk jmp@queenelizabeths.kent.sch.uk boughtonclerk@gmail.com 07740 706189
4pm	Teynham Community Hall	Paul Townson Clive Brodigan Hayley Steel (clerk)	p.townson@teynhamparishcouncil.org chairman@teynhamparishcouncil.org clerk@teynhamparishcouncil.org
6th April	Eastling	Julia Bailey, by telephone Eastling (Clerk), Wendy Licence	julia.bailey98@outlook.com eastlingpc@gmail.com

Next steps action list

Re QE _ headteacher keen. dma@queenelizabeths.kent.sch.uk

Possible suggestions

Turning (some) lanes into 'access only': while many of you thought this was impractical, I'd be keen to hear of places where this could work

Lower speed limits throughout the rural areas, including 20mph in village centres. This idea received widespread support

Focus on e-bikes: the growing popularity could bring a step change in the number, type and range of journeys that are feasible on two wheels

For settlements closer to Faversham, especially Painters Forstal, Oare and Goodnestone, focus on walking as well as cycling

Add maps...