



# Cyclists Pedestrians and Equestrians, The South East

Debrief prepared by 2CV Social  
Practice for Transport Focus

May 2022

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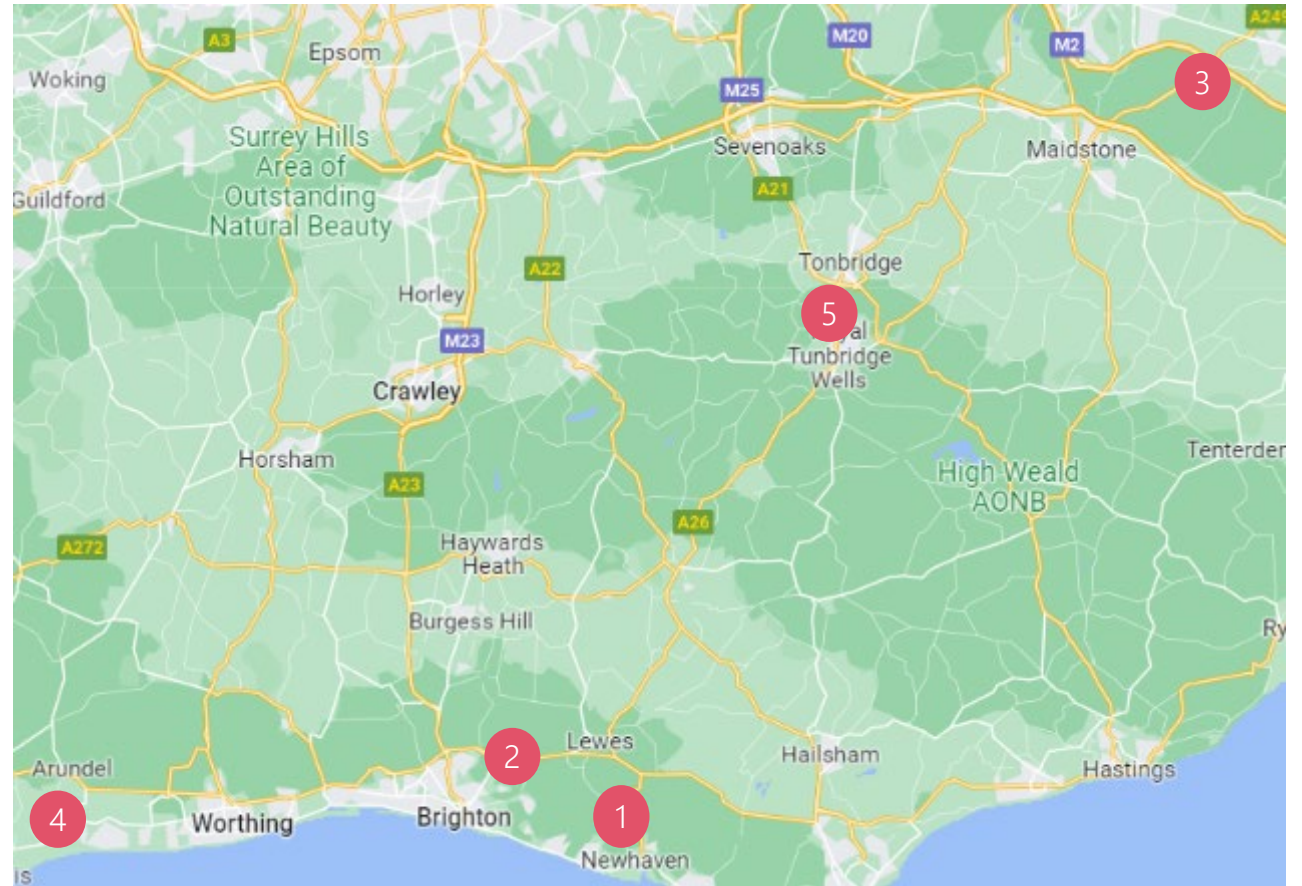


# Background & Objectives



# Research background

- In its role as watchdog for transport users, Transport Focus ensures that the views and needs of these road users are understood and represented
- This project is part of an ongoing body of research that looks to generate practicable and realistic measures that local National Highways teams can take to improve the experiences of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians
- The aim of this project is to develop 5 localised case study examples of the issues that cyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians (CPEs) face in making journeys that interact with the National Highways network.
- The five locations identified for the case studies were:
  1. A26 Beddingham – Newhaven 'Egret's Way' cycleway
  2. A27 Falmer-Lewes
  3. A249 / M2 Junction 5
  4. A27 Arundel Bypass (prospective)
  5. A21 Tonbridge - Pembury Cycle Link



# Why these sites were chosen by Transport Focus

**A26 Beddingham – Newhaven 'Egret's Way' cycleway**  
To understand whether the route (partially funded by National Highways) might be used as an alternative to the A26

1

2

**A27 Falmer Lewes**  
To explore the impact of the road at this location for cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians in the area

**A249 / M2 Junction 5**  
To explore the A249 / M2 junction and in particular, how the A249 impacts on cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians in the area

3

4

**A27 Arundel Bypass (prospective)**  
To explore how CPEs currently make journeys which interact with the A27 and possibilities for better access to the South Downs if the bypass is built

**A21 Tonbridge - Pembury Cycle Link**  
To understand what CPEs like and dislike about the recently completed purpose-built project & what lessons can be learned

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# Objectives

## The key project objectives were to...

1. Identify prevailing issues at agreed local sites through discussions of key stakeholders
2. Explore the experiences and perspectives of three distinct audiences (cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians)
3. Develop distinct case studies for individual locations informed by the experiences of the key audiences and views of stakeholders



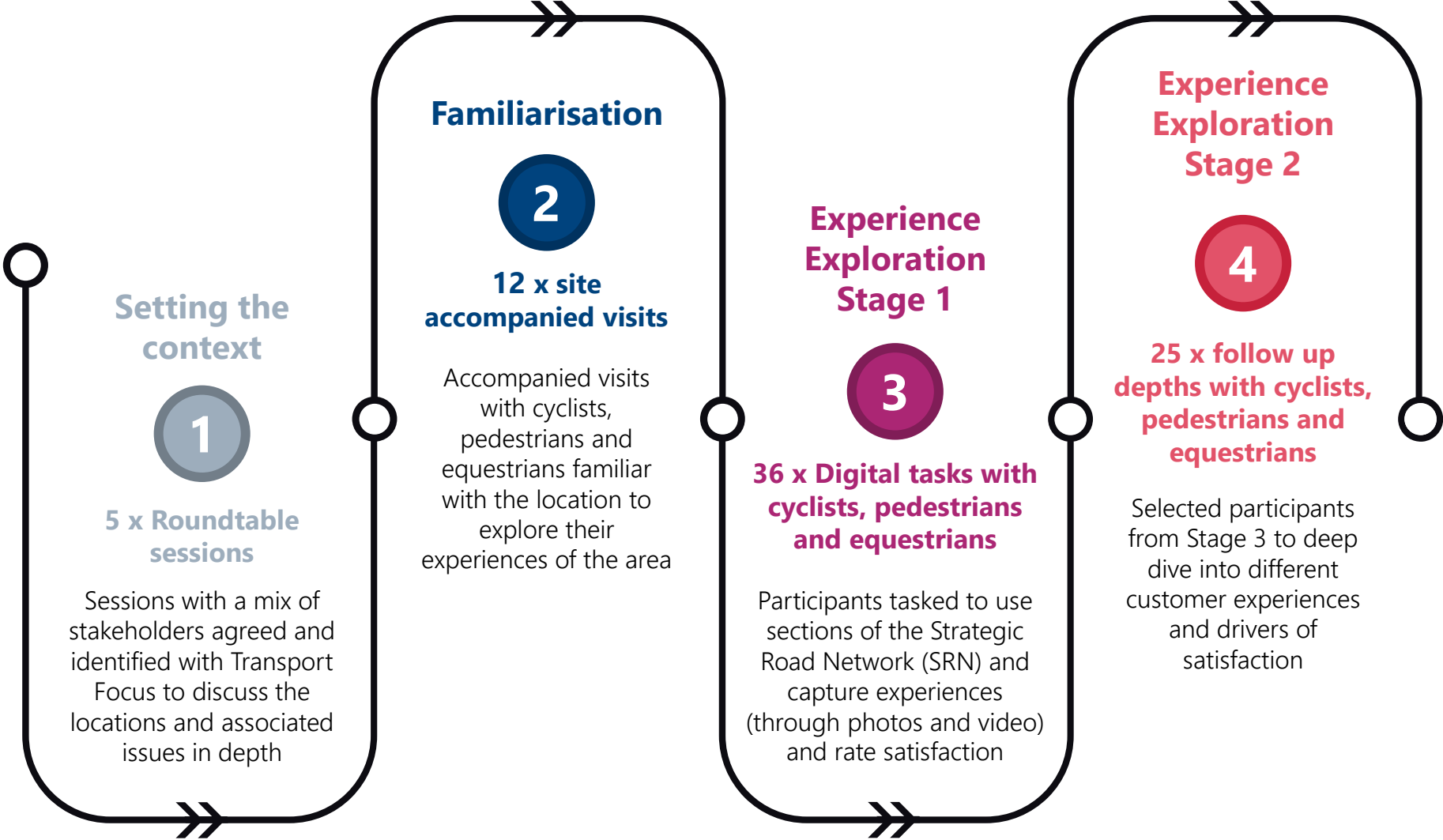


# Methodology



# A snapshot of our approach

## A staged approach





# Sample summary

A mix of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians familiar with the site and organisations representing them



## Stakeholders from across all 5 sites

**A26 Beddingham - Newhaven Cycleway 'Egret's Way'**: Chair Egrets Way Project; Chair of the Mid Sussex Area Bridleways Group; British Horse Society rep

**A27 Falmer-Lewes**: Ramblers society; Chair Cycling UK, Brighton; Cycle UK Lewes rep; Lewes District Council

**A249/M2 junction**: 2 x British Horse Society reps; National Highways

**A27 Arundel bypass**: West Sussex Cycle Forum, British Horse Society rep, Vice Chairman of the West Sussex Local Access Forum; South Downs National Park; South Downs partnership

**A21 Tonbridge - Pembury Cycle Link**: 2 x British Horse Society reps; National Highways



## A mix of CPEs on site visits

**A26 Beddingham - Newhaven Cycleway 'Egret's Way'**: 1 x pedestrian; 1 x cyclist

**A27 Falmer-Lewes**: 1 x cyclist; 1 x pedestrian

**A249/M2 junction**: 2 x pedestrian; 1 x equestrian

**A27 Arundel bypass**: 3 x equestrians; 1 x pedestrian / cyclist

**A21 Tonbridge - Pembury Cycle Link**: 2 x pedestrian



## A mix of CPEs for digital diaries & follow up depths

**A26 Beddingham - Newhaven Cycleway 'Egret's Way'**: 4 x pedestrians; 1 x cyclist; 2 x pedestrian/cyclists; 1 runner/cyclist; 1 x runner

**A27 Falmer-Lewes**: 4 x pedestrians; 1 x cyclist; 2 x pedestrian cyclists; 1 runner/cyclist; 1 x runner

**A249/M2 junction**: 2 x pedestrian; 2 x cyclists

**A27 Arundel bypass**: 4 x pedestrians; 6 x cyclists; 3 x runner/cyclists

**A21 Tonbridge - Pembury Cycle Link**: 2 x pedestrian; 2 x cyclists/pedestrians

### A good mix achieved in terms of:

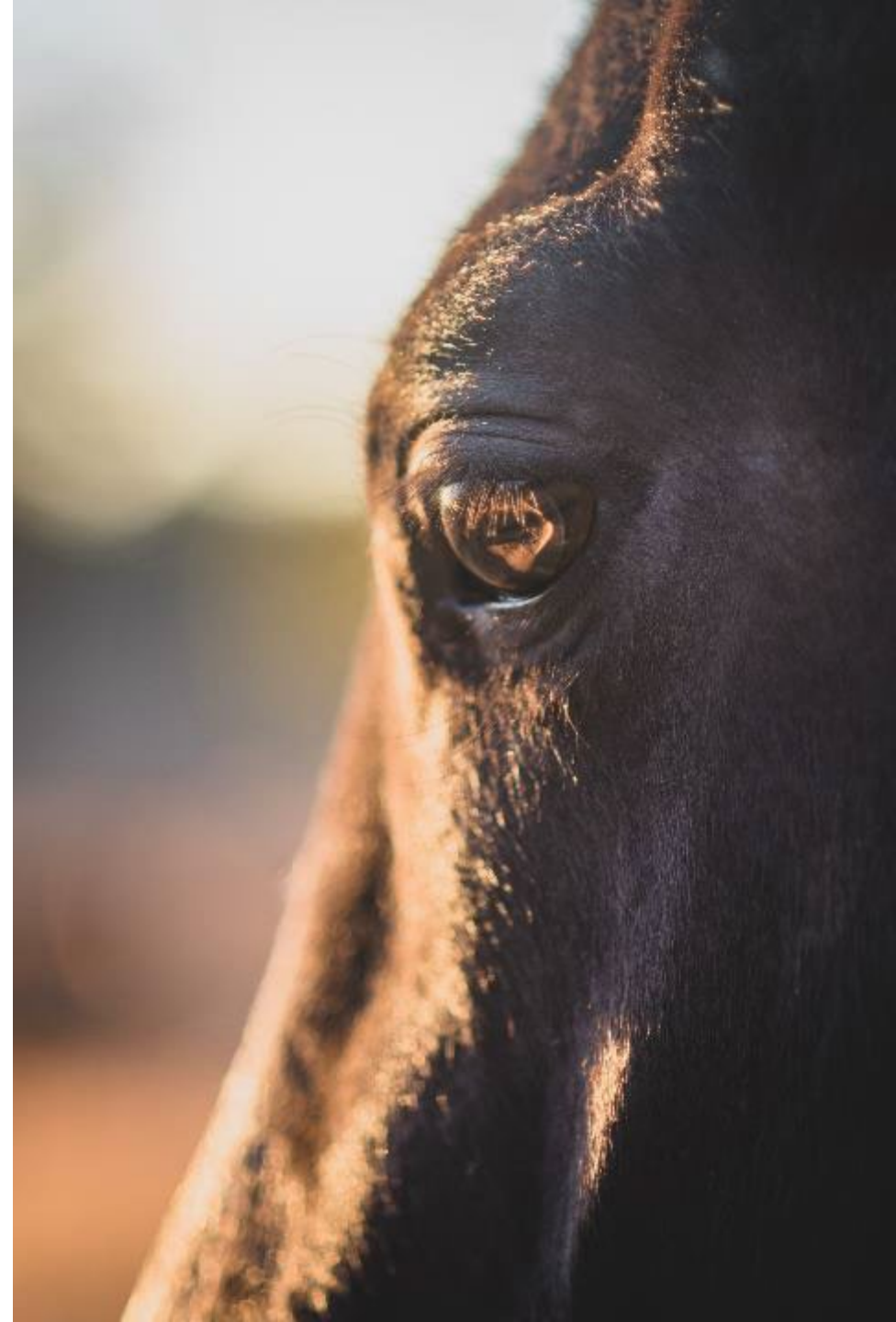
- Age and lifestage (young family – empty nester)
- Leisure vs utility
- Activity done with others (inc children) vs alone
- Level of experience and interest (hobbyist vs casual)

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# A note on sample & recruitment

## A representative sample in line with the locations

- Not all the sites explored are the same. All have individual elements that impact on each audience differently
- And while we wanted to capture the experiences and opinions of all the different typologies in equal numbers it was not always feasible
- Certain sites lend themselves more appropriately to certain activities. For instance, the **A27 Falmer – Lewes** and the **A21 Tonbridge - Pembury Cycle Link** are not at all suitable or used for equestrian activity and as such our typology at this site was overrepresented in terms of pedestrians (walkers and runners) and cyclists
- Overall, the sample was also weighted more heavily in favour of cyclists and pedestrians for two fundamental reasons:
  - As a cohort, horse rider numbers are markedly lower than the other two and harder to recruit
  - Even though certain locations were viable for horses, many riders said they avoided them
- Equestrians were well represented by stakeholder groups and their views and perspectives captured. These are represented in our report





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# Overview of Experiences



# Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians want to be recognised

CPEs can feel that their needs are overlooked but there are clearly opportunities to enable them to better utilise spaces near roads in the ways that they would like

- It is important to acknowledge that the overwhelming majority of CPEs understand that the roads at or near the sites are **primarily for the vehicular traffic** and many unsuited to use by CPEs
- In this regard, many are **not expecting or demanding discrete provision for them as users *alongside* cars and lorries** but where feasible they want to be able to carry out activities safely and unencumbered
- That said, where discrete infrastructure is provided (i.e. dedicated cycle and footpaths that run alongside A roads), they do expect these elements to deliver against their needs and when they do not, CPEs feel **deprioritised and frustrated**

"I understand that we're not really meant to be on the same road as trucks going 70mph. We're not meant to share the space. But some concession to allow us to be on the vicinity of where we are allowed to be, that lets us access those places isn't much to ask." – *Pedestrian*

"They've gone through the effort of giving us a place to walk and cycle but it's not well looked after. It's an after thought, isn't it?" – *Cyclist*

- It is clear that there are opportunities to better deliver against the needs of CPEs with **greater understanding and awareness of the challenges they face** and the introduction / maintenance of features and infrastructure that overcome them
- Improvements to existing infrastructure and introduction of measures designed to enable use can go some way to demonstrate this understanding of challenges
  - And while not feasible across all National Highways real estate, infrastructure specifically built for CPE use (*A26 Beddingham – Newhaven 'Egret's Way' cycleway & A21 Tonbridge - Pembury Cycle Link*) that is well designed and maintained can be critical in showing care

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# Understanding of who is responsible for enabling better CPE experiences can help manage expectations

**CPEs do not apportion responsibility for the resolution of issues that impact negatively on their experiences to specific organisations but have high expectations they should be fixed**

- Often, when discussing frustrations and *how* these could be resolved (and by *who*), CPEs do not know or consider that specific, discrete organisations may have responsibilities for different areas of the sites they use (i.e. local authority vs central government/public authority etc).
  - And allied to this, understanding of *who* specifically is responsible for the maintenance and infrastructure of the SRN is sketchy
- As such, some of the issues that they identify as impacting on their enjoyment (littering/fly-tipping; anti-social behaviour; maintenance of public footpaths away from A roads; local roads infrastructure) do not fall under the auspices of National Highways specifically but may be the responsibility of local boroughs
- The lack of understanding of how the SRN and surrounding sites are managed can mean that CPEs often do not think about who should tackle issues
  - And there can be frustration if they perceive that organisations 'pass the buck'
- CPEs want to feel that authorities (regardless of responsibility) have an understanding of how their needs are or are not met and that they work together to meet them

**Where feasible National Highways and local authorities can communicate how they work together to better meet the needs of CPEs**

# Most prevalent issues experienced\*

Research identified a number of overarching key themes that impact cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians

While there are a variety of shared experiences and frustrations that this audience experience, cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians are quick to point out that they don't necessarily have common needs and that common solutions aren't always appropriate. This said, it was possible to identify key themes that impact experiences across the board when in close proximity to the roads explored

## Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians' ability to stay safe



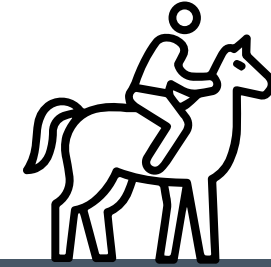
- Insufficient/unsuitable crossings
- Inadequate signage/lighting to draw motorists' attention to cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians'
- No/low barriers separating paths from road

## Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians' ability to carry out activity



- Limited access to bridleways/cycling & walking locations
- Unsuitable shared spaces
- Poor infrastructure (narrow paths, poorly maintained paths, vegetation overgrowth on paths)

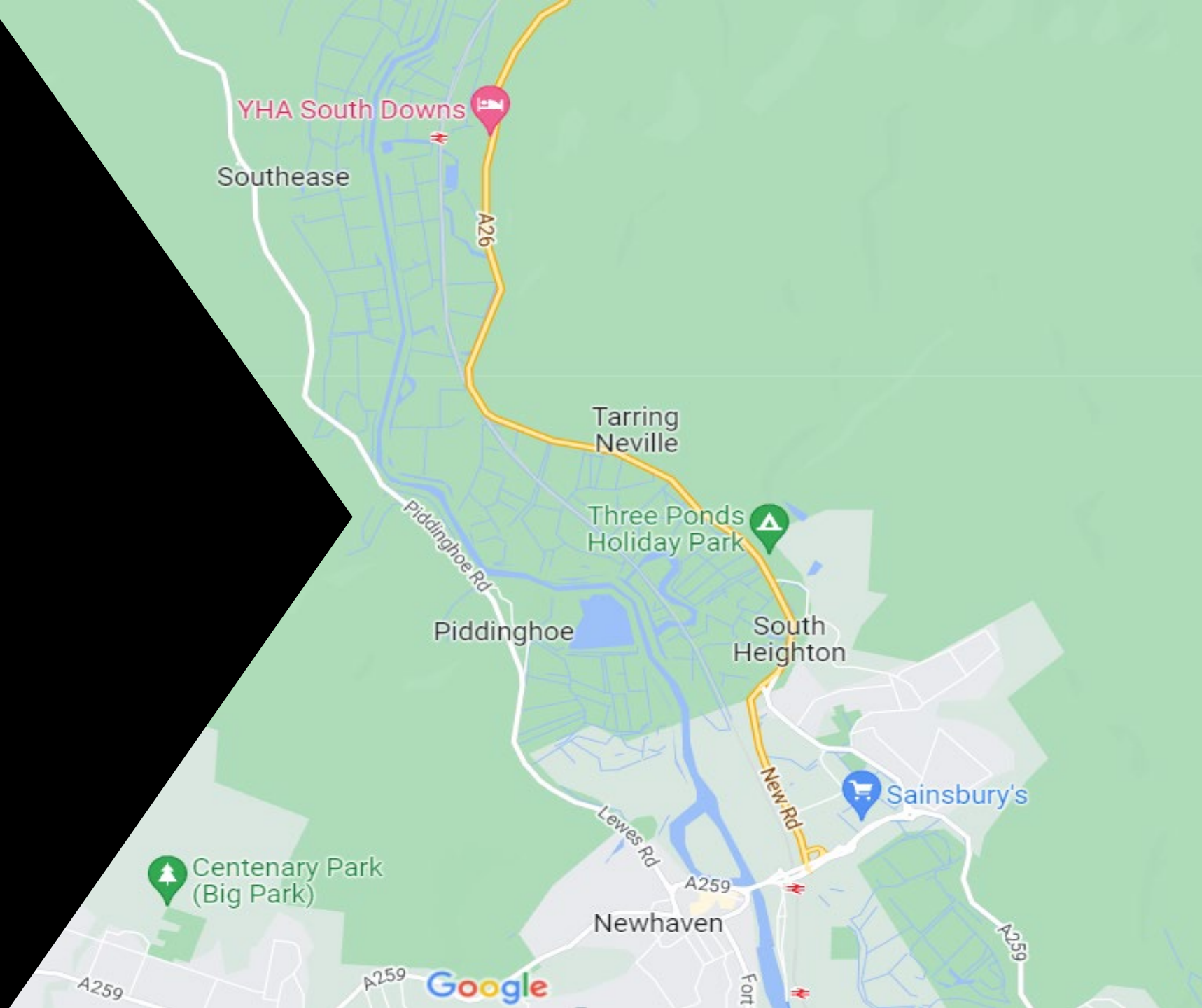
# Cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians share experiences but some frustrations relate to specific audiences



- Feel they come into more regular contact with vehicles compared to other audiences.
- Insufficient dedicated cycle paths to keep them safe on the SRN.
- Issues with access (lack of connectivity between walking routes; poor access to footpaths) to walking routes.
- Can feel deprioritised on shared pathways.
- Lack of driver education (how to approach equestrians etc.) and poor awareness of them as road users.
- A lack of access to the broader bridleway network (interrupted connectivity between bridleways).



# Site study: A26 – Beddingham, 'The Egrets Way'



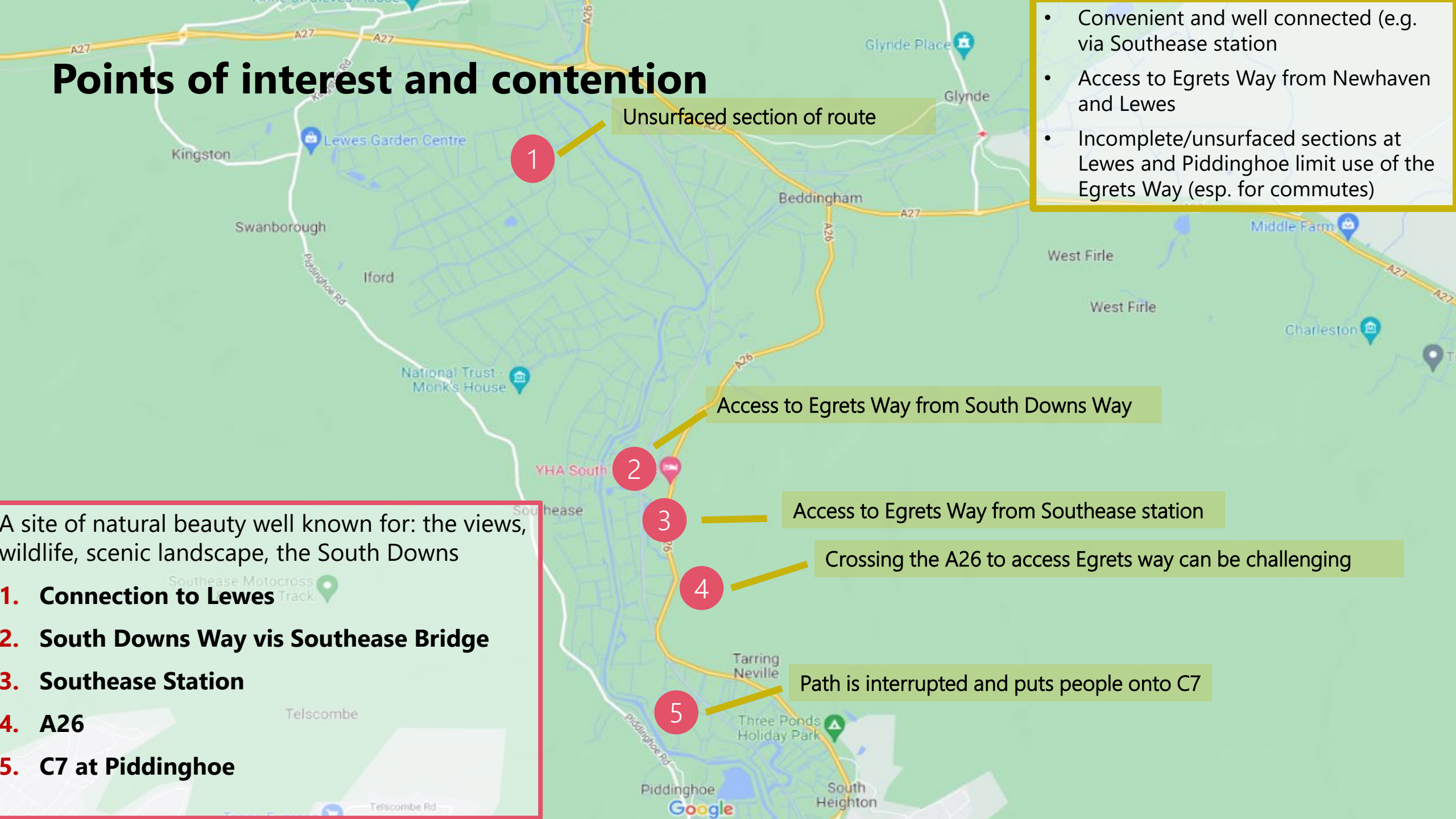


# A26 – Beddingham, 'The Egrets Way'

The Egret's Way is a purpose constructed cycleway (partially funded by National Highways) and is meant to provide cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians with a link to travel between Newhaven and Lewes, and to allow access to the South Downs National Park.

- Primarily used for leisure and there is little anecdotal evidence of people using Egrets Way as an alternative to the A26
- Accessible and well-connected from towns (e.g via Southease train station), and to paths on the National Park
- Still, there are some issues to address, namely, insufficient signage, incomplete path, and proximity to traffic at specific points
- Users feel the site is not well known to people not from the area and feel there an opportunity to better promote it

# Points of interest and contention



- Convenient and well connected (e.g. via Southease station)
- Access to Egrets Way from Newhaven and Lewes
- Incomplete/unsurfaced sections at Lewes and Piddinghoe limit use of the Egrets Way (esp. for commutes)

A site of natural beauty well known for: the views, wildlife, scenic landscape, the South Downs

- 1. Connection to Lewes**
- 2. South Downs Way vis Southease Bridge**
- 3. Southease Station**
- 4. A26**
- 5. C7 at Piddinghoe**

Unsurfaced section of route

Access to Egrets Way from South Downs Way

Access to Egrets Way from Southease station

Crossing the A26 to access Egrets way can be challenging

Path is interrupted and puts people onto C7

# An overview of the Egrets Way

Site visit video illustrates key issues and experiences. Video features: 1 x cyclist & 1 x pedestrian



**Transport Focus: A26 Beddingham – Newhaven 'Egret's Way' cycleway**

from 2CV Research

Click to open link



<https://vimeo.com/701573350/2ee99ff040>

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# Issues for the area

**Egrets Way seems to deliver against the needs of users, yet, there are clear ways to improve the benefits and to tackle some issues that currently impact the user experience**

## **1. Lack of signage can impact experience**

- Signage is sporadic - difficult to identify that one is on 'The Egret's Way'
- No obvious signs indicating the path to the Egrets Way at places to access the site, e.g. at Southease Station; Lewes
- The connecting paths from the Egrets Way to the South Downs Way could be better signposted
- No/few signs to indicate cyclists and equestrians are allowed on the path
- No signs indicating whether certain stretches of the path on private property are accessible to users

## **2. Proximity to traffic at specific sections is off-putting**

- Current users of the Egrets Way who want to continue their journeys at the Piddinghoe stretch currently have to take the C7 which is a busy and narrow stretch of road. Awareness of the proposed Piddinghoe Phase 6 development is low

## **3. Currently, full potential is not being maximised**

- Perceived lack of awareness – the site is not thought well known to those who do not live locally. Some feel it can be better promoted.
- Lack of obvious places to park at access points (particularly Lewes & Newhaven) thought likely to impact use
- The site is flat and accessible from railway stations so there is room to promote it for wider user groups (those with accessibility issues, less confident walkers/cyclists, those without cars)
- The unsurfaced and incomplete parts of the path can limit/deter use

# Egrets Way - Frustrations



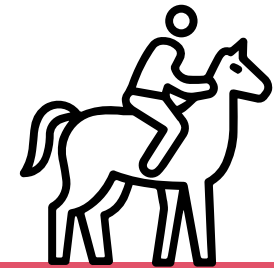
**Cyclists**

- Unsurfaced parts of the route make cycling challenging
- Wooden gates are difficult to open and pass through on a bike
- Lack of signage and clarity on whether cyclists can use certain sections



**Pedestrians**

- At Southease, car traffic makes it hard to cross the A26 safely and access site
- Lack of parking at access points
- Section on C7 where one has to go on the road can feel dangerous when it starts to get dark



**Equestrians**

- Less obvious signs to indicate site is open to equestrians
- Stakeholder mentioned that there is limited ability to access the route and that riders need to drive with horse box and park nearby so that the route can be used

## Egrets Way - Frustrations



I took the car to Southease and parked to walk to Egrets Way. It was really hard to cross over the road safely as the road curves out of sight and I had my dog and a bag and the cars were rushing past me at 60 miles an hour. I felt unsafe. - **Pedestrian**

Having used this path hundreds of times, I don't know where the start is. We found this finger post with Egrets Way after a while of searching. - **Cyclist**



## Egrets Way - Frustrations



As it currently is I would not recommend anyone try and go the full length because the short Piddinghoe 'highway' [C7] stretch is so dangerous.  
- Pedestrian



The route at Piddinghoe is less clear. The riverbank route says pedestrians only. And getting my bike through this gate was hard.  
- Cyclist

# Egrets Way - Frustrations



Accessing the Egrets Way from Lewes town is challenging in winter due to mud. Almost unpassable at times.- Cyclist

Signage is poor from the towns and villages along the way. Nobody would find the Egrets Way from Lewes unless they knew it was there. Visitors to Monks House National Trust might walk this way to visit Southease but there's no signage so they probably hop in the car instead. - Cyclist





# Egret's Way - Delighters



## Cyclists

- Surfaced parts of the route deliver a good cycling experience. Raised surface ensures excess water runs off and avoids waterlogging



## Pedestrians

- Overall, a wonderful, uplifting, safe and inviting place to walk in for exercise and pleasure
- Accessible for visitors via train stations and those coming from / wanting to join up with the South Downs National Trail
- Huge variety of walks on offer, not just along the Egrets Way but accessing smaller paths in National Park



## Equestrians

- A safe route with access to other rides in the South Downs National Park

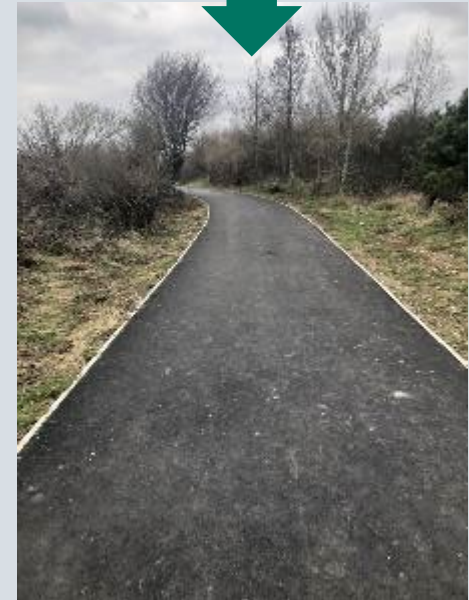
This interpretation board tells the story of the historic Grade 2 Listed Swing Bridge. It is a point of interest on the Egrets Way where it meets the South Downs Way National Trail as it crosses the river Ouse at Southease.-**Pedestrian**



The start of the route from Newhaven is very good. Loads of room for cyclists and walkers – **Cyclist**



Within 5 mins from Egrets Way in the section between Southease and Beddingham there's a beautiful river that my dog loves to play in.- **Pedestrian**



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# Suggested improvements

There is room to further promote the Egrets Way to maximise awareness of it. It's also important to raise awareness of the specific Phase 6 development which will lengthen the path and improve experiences of it

## Cyclists

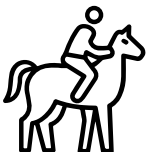


- Completing the Egrets Way so the entire route between Lewes and Newhaven is joined up - when complete it could provide a more viable alternative to commuting by car on the A26
- More and improved signage – including indication of location as well as directional signs
- Infrastructure improvements: **improved maintenance/drainage** where path is not fully surfaced; where appropriate, **greater delineation** of path for different users; access gates to path to be more 'bike' friendly



## Pedestrians

- More and improved signage – as with cyclists, **directional signage is needed**. There is also appetite to increase and improve **informative signage** (about area, wildlife, history, facts related to health on walks)
- More parking options at **access points** would encourage greater use of the path

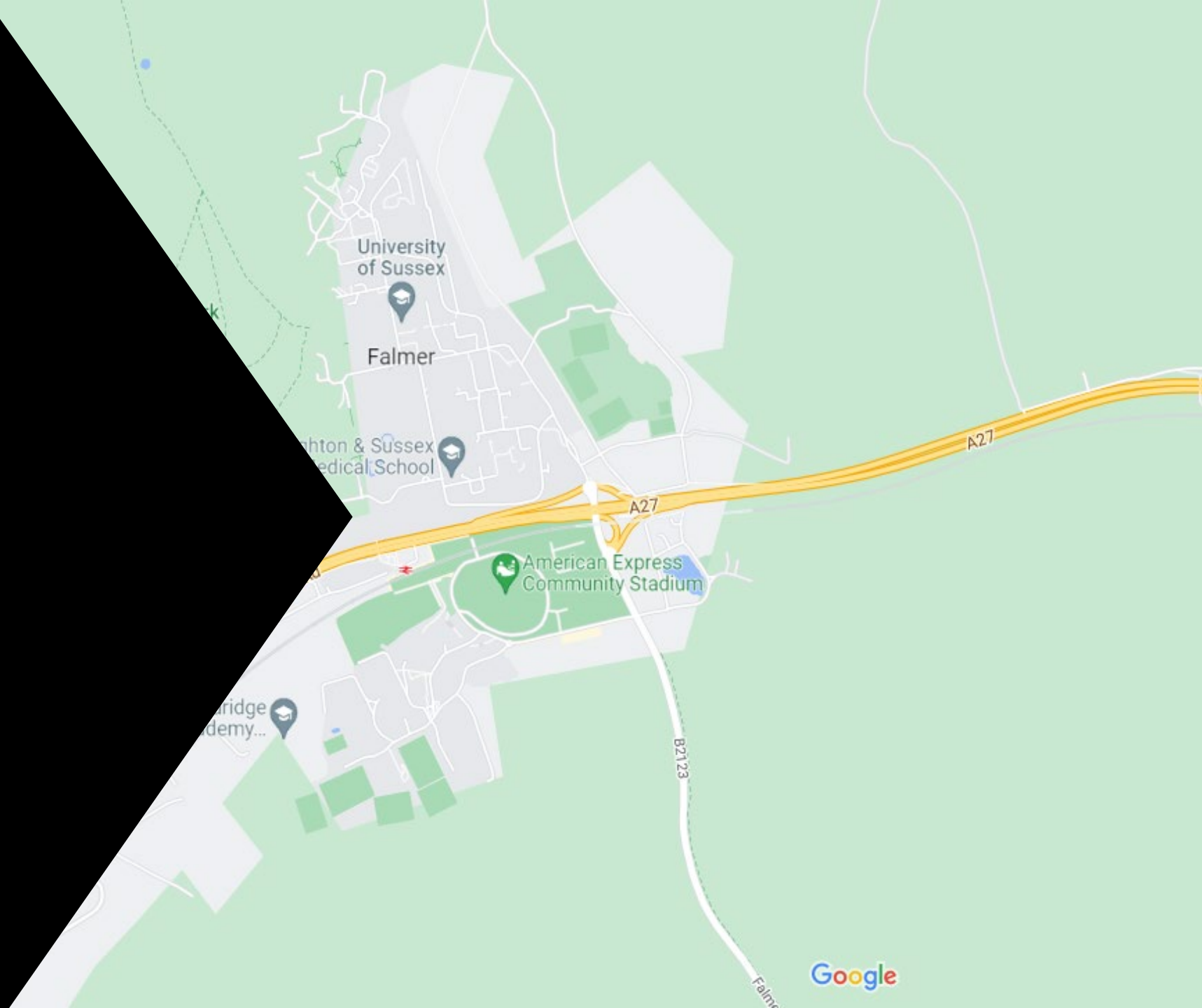


## Equestrians

- Clarity/confirmation of whether equestrians are also entitled to use the route
- More obvious access points to the path

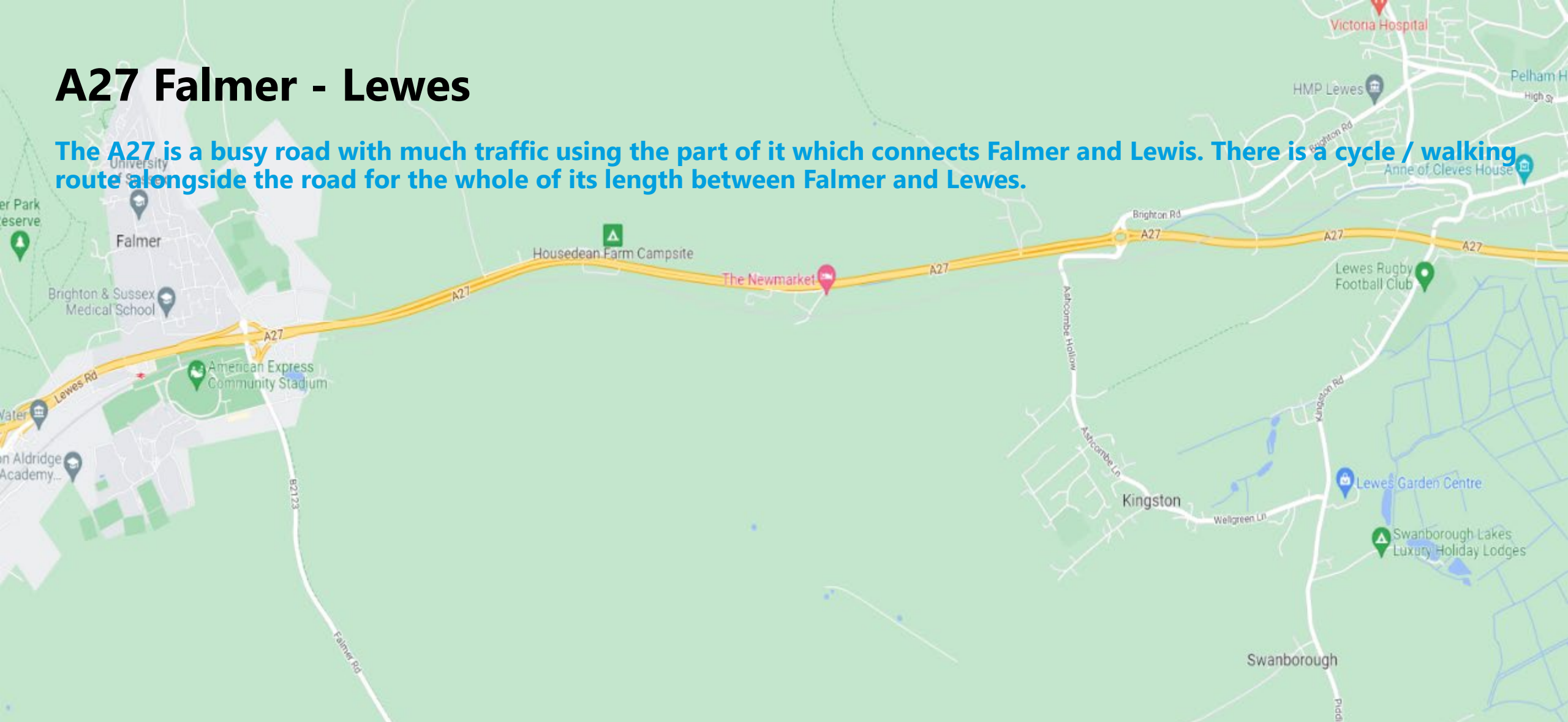


# Site study: A27 Falmer - Lewes



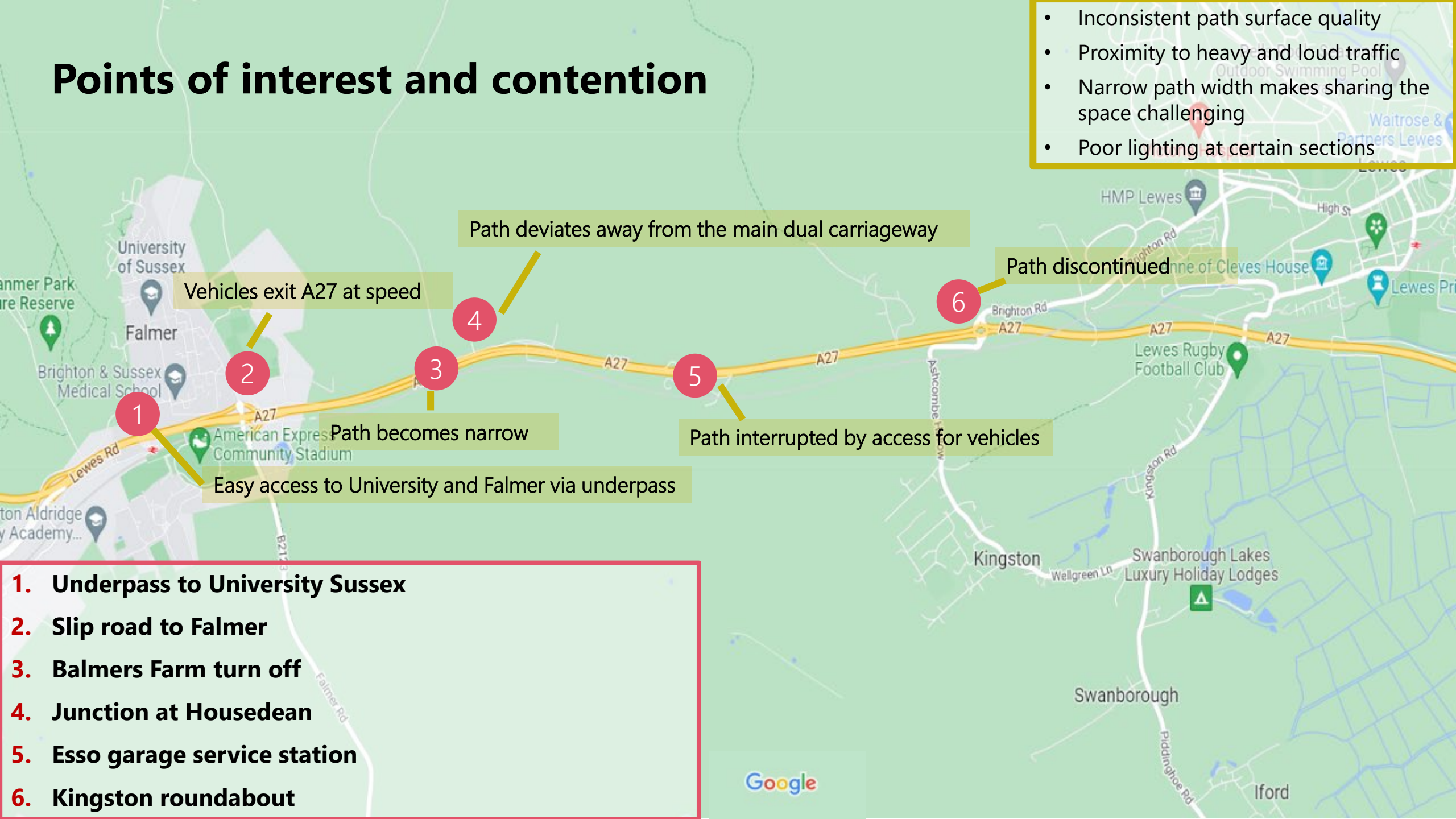
# A27 Falmer - Lewes

The A27 is a busy road with much traffic using the part of it which connects Falmer and Lewis. There is a cycle / walking route alongside the road for the whole of its length between Falmer and Lewes.



- Given the length and busyness of this stretch of road, pedestrians tend to interact with this site in sections rather than the whole length
- The South Downs are accessible via the A27 and is a destination for many walkers
- Some cyclists use this site as a viable route for commuting and travelling between Lewes and Falmer
- Most issues identified focused on travelling alongside rather than crossing the A27

# Points of interest and contention



- Inconsistent path surface quality
- Proximity to heavy and loud traffic
- Narrow path width makes sharing the space challenging
- Poor lighting at certain sections

Vehicles exit A27 at speed

Path deviates away from the main dual carriageway

Path discontinued

1

2

Path becomes narrow

3

Path interrupted by access for vehicles

Easy access to University and Falmer via underpass

4

5

6

- 1. Underpass to University Sussex**
- 2. Slip road to Falmer**
- 3. Balmers Farm turn off**
- 4. Junction at Housedean**
- 5. Esso garage service station**
- 6. Kingston roundabout**

# An overview of the A27 Falmer - Lewes

Site visit video illustrates key issues and experiences. Video features: 1 x cyclist & 1 x pedestrian



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# Issues for the area

Cyclists and pedestrians have a number of shared frustrations relating to: feeling safe; the suitability of shared pathway. The specific facilities and infrastructure intended to deliver against are called into question by CPEs

## 1. Proximity to heavy traffic

- Both cyclists and pedestrians are quick to point out that, despite having a dedicated route for them, they can often feel unsafe
- Barriers to protect them and signage to alert drivers of their presence are not thought adequate
- Insufficient points to cross and having to give way at some access roads can make cyclists and pedestrians feel deprioritised

## 2. Poorly maintained / insufficient infrastructure

- The surface of the path is inconsistent, with points of poor quality (pot holes and debris) that can be hazardous
- Sections of the path are overgrown with grass and moss from the verge making the route narrower than it is meant to be
- There are few dedicated crossing points along the A27

## 3. Inadequate path width

- The width of the cycle and footpath varies significantly along the route and at certain sections of the path, cyclists and pedestrians note that it feels too narrow
- This narrow path width makes sharing the space between CPEs feel challenging and unsafe

# A27 Falmer - Lewes - Frustrations



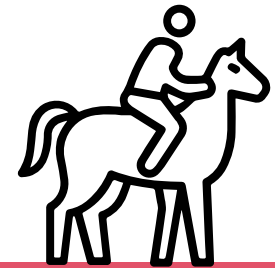
**Cyclists**

- Poor quality surfaces (pot holes etc) can make journeys difficult
- Path not wide enough at points
- No designated/specific cycle path and sharing space can be challenging



**Pedestrians**

- Noise and turbulence from traffic is loud and can impact on ability to hearing cyclists approaching
- Lack of barriers between the road and pedestrians can accentuate safety fears
- Insufficient lighting at specific points can deter use in late afternoons and evenings



**Equestrians**

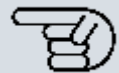
- Site is not appropriate for equestrian use



# A27 Falmer - Lewes - Frustrations



I've not walked this stretch before. I wasn't prepared for the experience. It was pretty noisy and scary at times. Noisy because of its proximity to a continuous flow of traffic and scary because the traffic was moving at speeds of up to 70 mph with no protection for the path users -  
**Pedestrian**



Video. Click ▶ to play

The petrol station [Esso Rontec Lewes service station] is halfway along the route and is a hazardous section for pedestrians and particularly cyclists. Road users do not give way and pull in and out of the station at speed with no concern for those using the cycle/footpath -  
**Pedestrian**



Video. Click ▶ to play



# A27 Falmer - Lewes - Frustrations



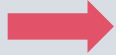
← The cycle lane is very thin and there is nothing between the path and the road so no protection from oncoming traffic. Cycling along there into oncoming traffic is an unsettling experience as if a car or a bike had an issue, like a hole or weather or human error, I would be dead instantly – **Cyclist**

The path feels far too narrow in places. The oncoming cyclist here feels too close. We could barely get past each other. **Cyclist** →



# A27 Falmer - Lewes- Frustrations

This the roundabout junction with turn off for Kingston. I always turn off here from A27 as can't find a path to carry on with safely. – Pedestrian



Trying to cross here [Esso Newmarket service station] is just a non-starter. I don't feel safe. I definitely wouldn't try this if I was with my kids. - Cyclist



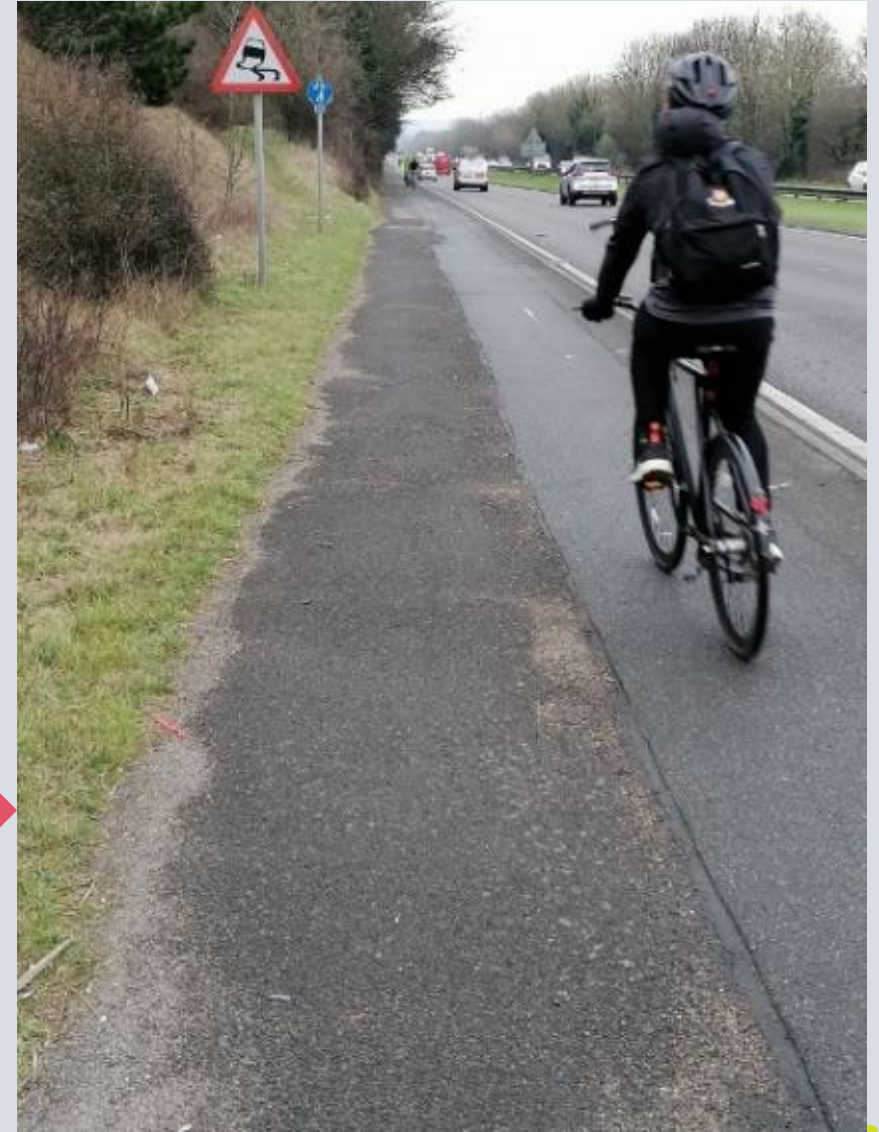
Video. Click  to play

## A27 Falmer - Lewes- Frustrations



This shows a typical example of the broken-up path surface. These ruptures continue along most of the entire route. – Cyclist

The surface has been patched up unevenly so that here the right-hand side is smooth, and left is bumpy. This means cyclists use the right hand rather than left-hand side as they could potentially risk causing collisions. – Cyclist



## A27 Falmer - Lewes- Frustrations



This shows how narrow and overgrown the cycle path has become in sections. Just here, there is a road sign to navigate and at this point and others, there is not room for two cyclists or cyclist/pedestrians to pass by each other safely, particularly at night! – **Cyclist**

This is the stretch of road between Kingston and Lewes. I don't like this stretch as you're away from the road and surrounded by trees. If you're in danger, the drivers won't see you and they are probably unaware that there is even a footpath there. It also doesn't have any street lighting so I wouldn't walk in the dark along there. The footpath is also shared with cyclists and they should have their own cycle lane as it isn't very wide. – **Pedestrian**



# A27 Falmer - Lewes - Delighters



## Cyclists

- By Housedean Farm, there is section of the path separated from the road with trees in-between: beautiful and feels safe



## Pedestrians

- Signage that helps walkers better enjoy their experiences are appreciated, including direction to walks and floor signs indicating presence of bikes
- Dedicated crossings points including underpasses and bridges



← A brief section after Housedean Farm that deviates away from the main dual carriageway on a separate road, offering some relief from the dangerous traffic, and a chance to take in the view and fresh air. If only the whole route was like this! - **Cyclist**

I like these directional signs pointing out countryside walkways you can get onto by turning off from the A27. – **Pedestrian** →



← Although we did not use this crossing over the A27 this time, there are lots of crossings over the road that I appreciate and makes my crossing safer. – **Pedestrian**

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# Suggested improvements

As noted, many of the frustrations experienced are shared by both cyclists and pedestrians and relate to feeling safe and the suitability of shared pathway.



## Cyclists

- Improved maintenance to ensure a consistent standard of surface quality
- Wider paths with a dedicated cycle lane if feasible



## Pedestrians

- More barriers between road and pavement to offer some level of protection from traffic and help users feel safer
- Improved lighting on the pathway would make pedestrians feel safer and encourage use at different times
- Widening the footpath and separating cycle lanes would mean pedestrians would no longer need to move across to let cyclists past

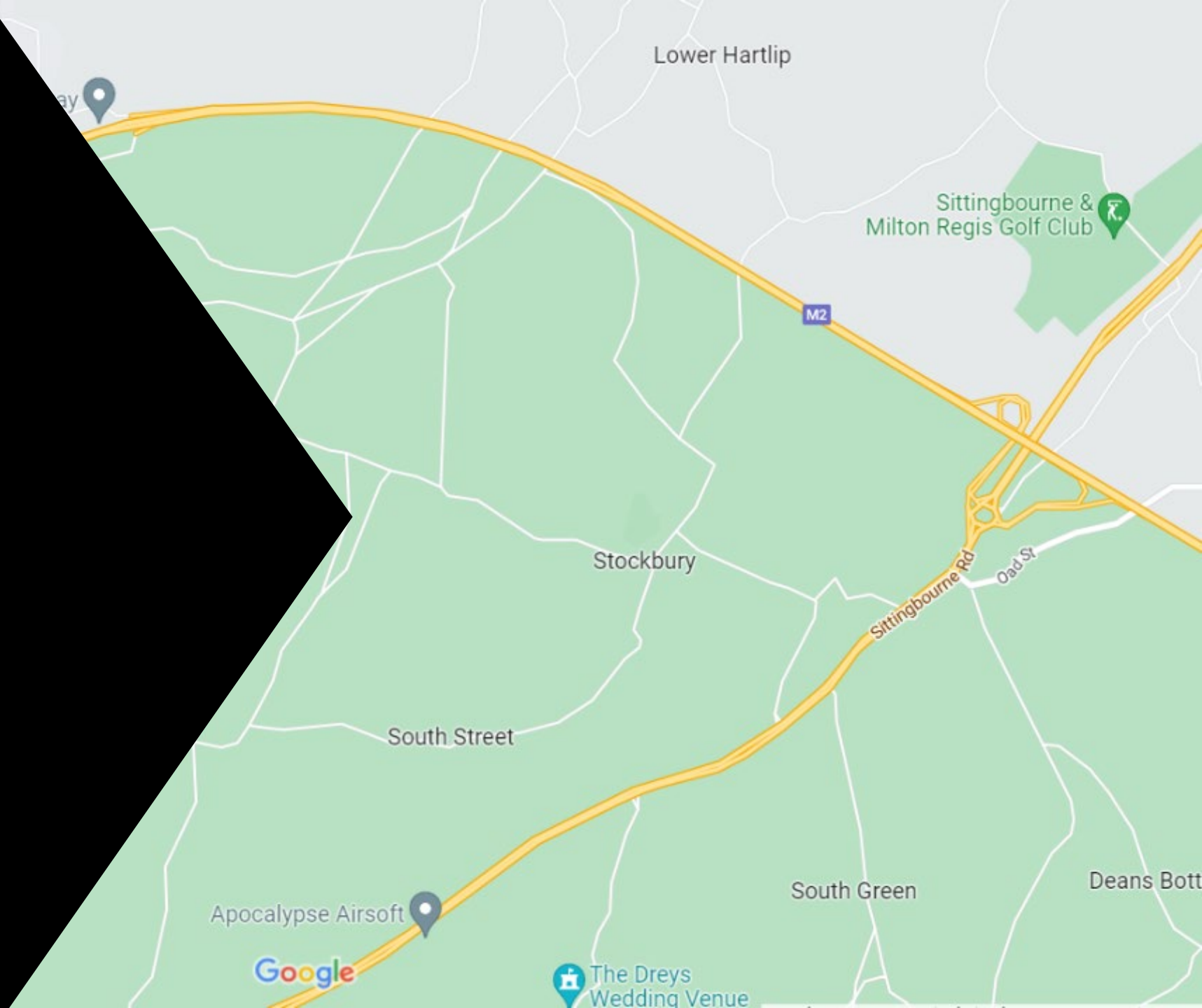


## Equestrians

- This site is not appropriate for equestrian users



# Site study: A249 / M2 Junction 5



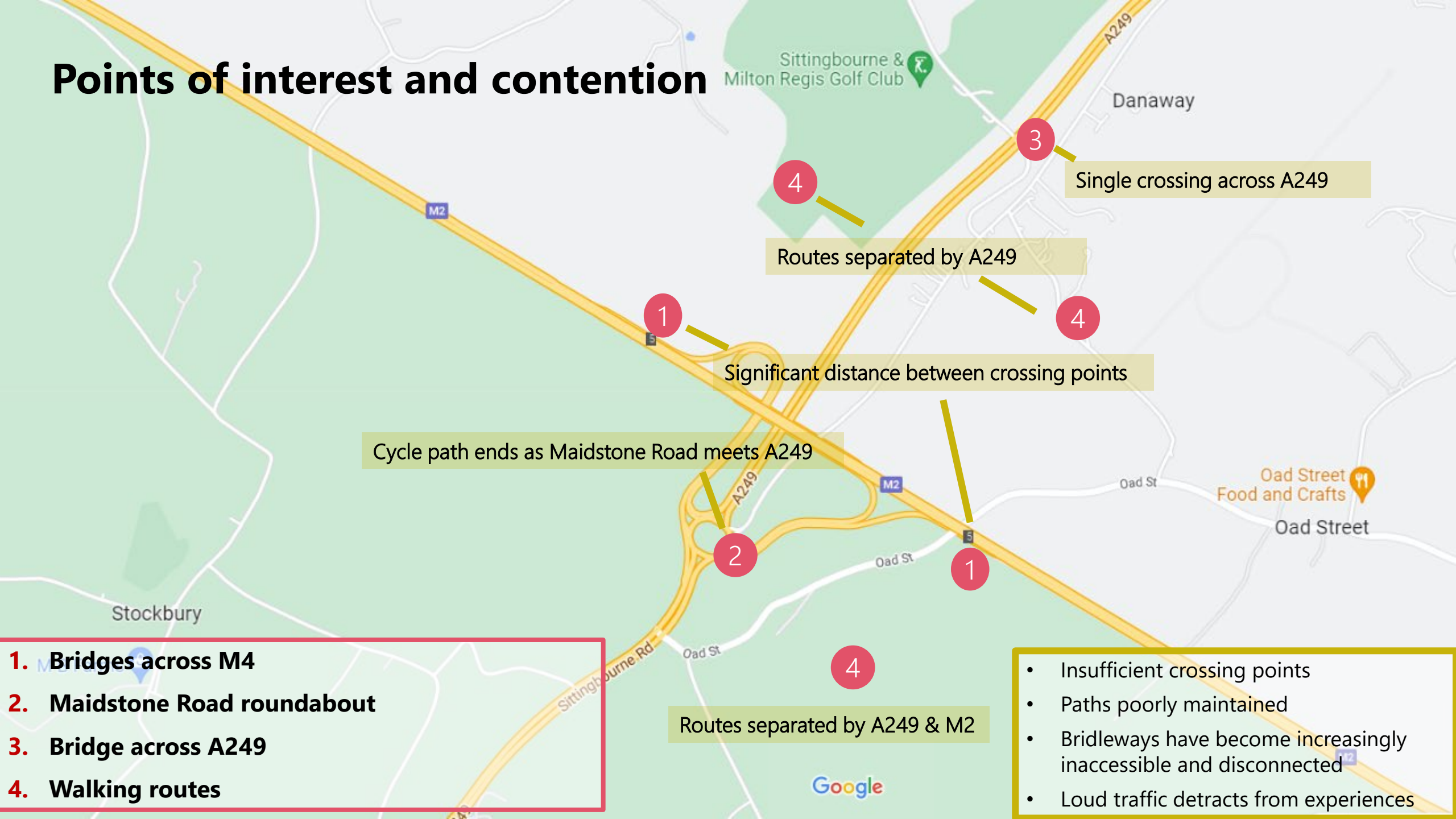


# A249 / M2 Junction 5

The A249 is a busy road where local areas of interest and countryside are dissected by part of the SRN. The A249 / M2 junction and areas around it particularly detract from cyclist, pedestrian and equestrian experiences. Research explored the junction as well as areas close to it where pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians carried out activities. The section of the A249 north of the roundabout is SRN and was the focus of CPE experience for this case study

- The site allows CPEs to access many local beauty spots visited for leisure but is also situated near some towns and hamlets (Oad Street, Borden) for utility trips (e.g. shopping)
- The junction can be seen to divide the area into four quadrants. Some feel that it severs walking, riding and cycling connectivity between the quadrants, and there are few crossings.
- The site is felt particularly vehicle focused with little or no dispensations for non-vehicular users
- Footpaths further away from the A249 and the M2 make for more enjoyable experiences; not only are these less noisy, but they are also wider and in better condition.

# Points of interest and contention



Cycle path ends as Maidstone Road meets A249

Routes separated by A249

Single crossing across A249

Significant distance between crossing points

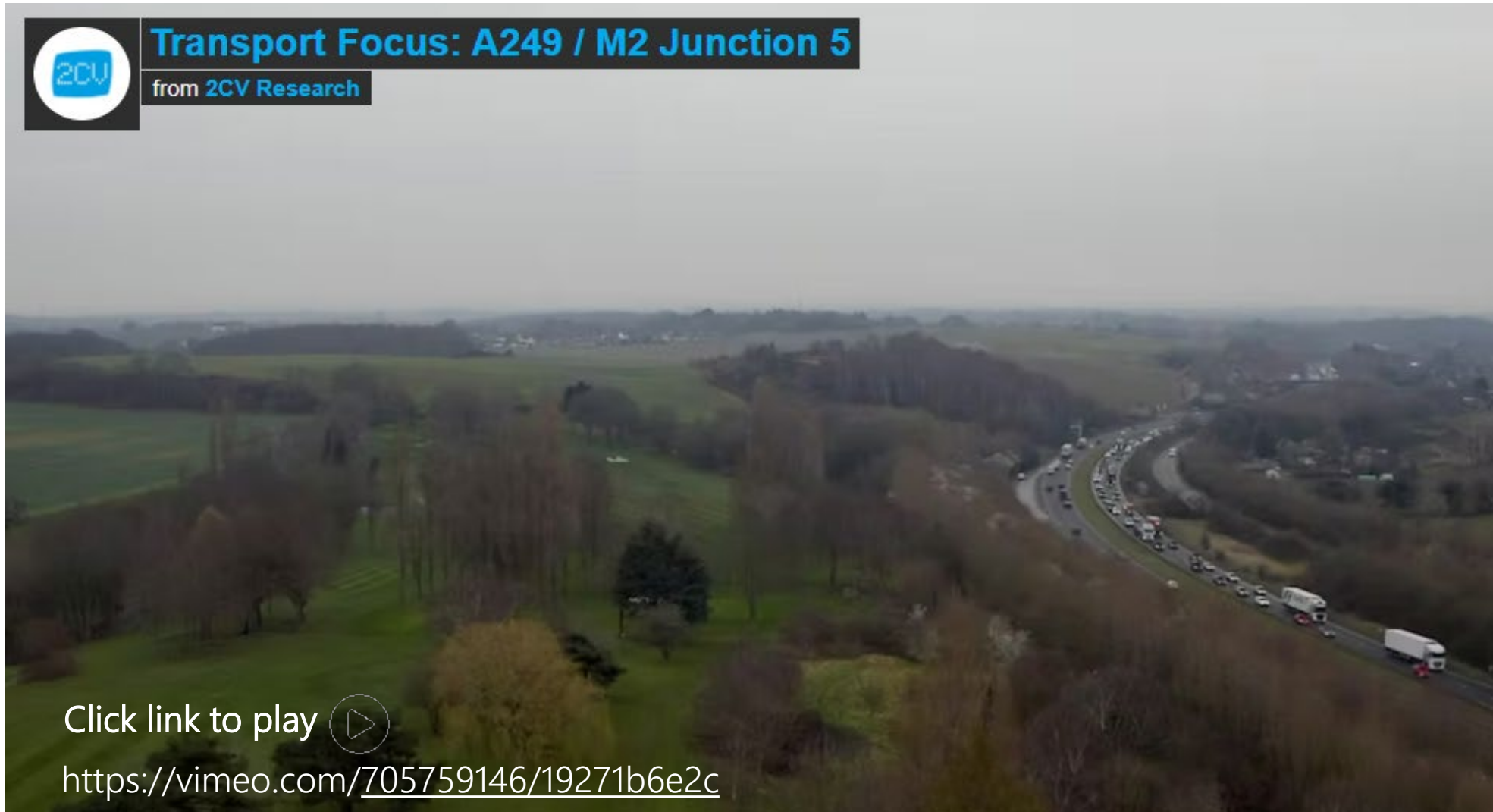
Routes separated by A249 & M2

1. Bridges across M4
2. Maidstone Road roundabout
3. Bridge across A249
4. Walking routes

- Insufficient crossing points
- Paths poorly maintained
- Bridleways have become increasingly inaccessible and disconnected
- Loud traffic detracts from experiences

# An overview of the A249 / M2 Junction 5

Site visit video illustrates key issues and experiences: Video features: 2 x pedestrians & 1 x equestrian stakeholder



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# Issues for the area

**CPEs experience a number of difficulties that stem from insufficient, poorly maintained, and poorly connected paths, as well as the proximity to two main roads. Many frustrations relate to quality of footpath provision unconnected to the SRN**

## **1. Junction acts as a barrier**

- The intersection of these at the M2 and the A249 effectively limits the ability of CPEs to utilise the surrounding location to its maximum potential

## **2. Lack of infrastructure**

- In places, there is no obvious infrastructure to help CPEs navigate the junction, and these two roads can make them feel that they have been deprioritised
- Very little directional signage for CPEs, and few signs alerting car drivers of CPE presence

## **3. Proximity to and increased traffic**

- Several of the paths used by CPEs are close to the M2 and A249. Noise levels from cars detract from their enjoyment on journeys
- Traffic from A249/M2 can be redirected to smaller, quieter roads near the junction, hindering CPE enjoyment on journeys in these supposedly quieter areas too

## **4. Some CPE paths are poorly maintained**

- Footpaths are rendered narrower due to vegetation overgrowth and large fallen branches that are not removed
- Barriers (e.g. fences) separating footpaths from cars are in poor condition
- Litter on ground (esp. in parts of path close to laybys for trucks)
- Evidence of motorbikes using CPE paths illegally. Unfortunately, this has resulted in anti-social behaviour and vandalism

## **5. Equestrians have arduously campaigned for improvements but their requests are turned down**

## A249/ M2 Junction 5- Frustrations



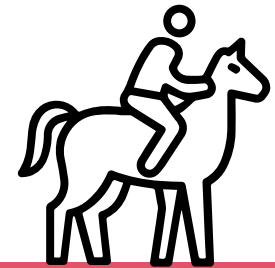
**Cyclists**

- No designated / specific safe cycle paths making interacting with the junction unfeasible



**Pedestrians**

- On footpaths along the A249, litter detracts from experience (presumed to come from lorry drivers and motor bike user)
- Issues with quality of paths (e.g. motorbikes on paths are noisy / dangerous and their wheels make the soil uneven and muddier; overgrowth and fallen trees can obstruct paths)



**Equestrians**

- Equestrian stakeholders raise several longstanding issues, and feel deprioritised

## A249/ M2 Junction 5- Frustrations



The Maidstone Road effectively comes to an end at Junction 5 and A249 roundabout - there are no paths or cycle paths. I have never seen anyone cycle or walk there as it is simply impossible. I would definitely install some means of pathway - **Cyclist**

Fallen trees blocking the way get reported but nothing gets done about it - **Pedestrian**



## A249/ M2 Junction 5 - Frustrations



As I head towards the M2 crossing I have to be quite close to the motorway and the noise of the traffic is very loud. - **Pedestrian**

There are large amounts of rubbish from lorry drivers on the A249 who park overnight even though they are not supposed to. – **Pedestrian**



# A249 / M2 Junction 5 - Frustrations



## Equestrians raise several longstanding issues

- As this area's roads have been developed, the sense is that "horse people have been forgotten". Footpaths were made originally for pedestrians but very few of these were also made into bridleways
- Equestrians describe the M2 and the A249 as "effective barriers" preventing connectivity between the few existing bridleways
- The result is many equestrians avoid the area and have to drive their horses to other locations to access different routes
- Equestrian interest groups have repeatedly requested a range of improvements but these have been turned down by authorities including Highways England
- There are footpaths that could effectively also be bridleways with little change - they are already appropriate and wide enough

"We are a minority, but in this part of the world, we are not as small as one might think – this is a densely populated horse area" – **Equestrian stakeholder**

"You end up with a few straggly bits of bridleways and horse routes per quadrant, but these are separated and not connected to each other...The M2 and the A249 make very effective barriers' – **Equestrian stakeholder**



# A249/ M2 Junction 5 - Delighters



## Cyclists

- Some dedicated cycle lanes to keep them safe from traffic
- Ability to access countryside and local beauty spots



## Pedestrians

- Some sections of footpaths along A249 have trees and vegetation which create a sound barrier from the cars on the A249
- Footpaths away from the A249 are quieter, with a calmer more rural feel
- Aspects of natural / scientific interest on footpaths along the A249



This sandy landscape is quite unique, and completely different from the rest of the footpath. Sadly, there is rubbish here too. - **Pedestrian**

I like this designated cycle lane because it protects people that like to cycle from motorist. Sometimes when you're cycling, you are always having to swivel your head in case of onrushing cars. – **Cyclist**



Away from the main roads, you get lovely views of the landscape. - **Pedestrian**

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# Suggested improvements

There is room to increase and improve the infrastructure for CPEs. In particular, paths running alongside and close to the A249 need to be better maintained.



## Cyclists

- Dedicated cycle paths particularly at and near the A249 junction

## Pedestrians



- Wider, well-maintained footpaths; where close to roads, barriers separating pedestrians from cars to increase feeling of safety
- Monitoring and policing to prevent illegal use of footpaths by motorbikes and ensure footpaths do not remain littered
- More crossing points to better link up public footpaths across the four 'quadrants'

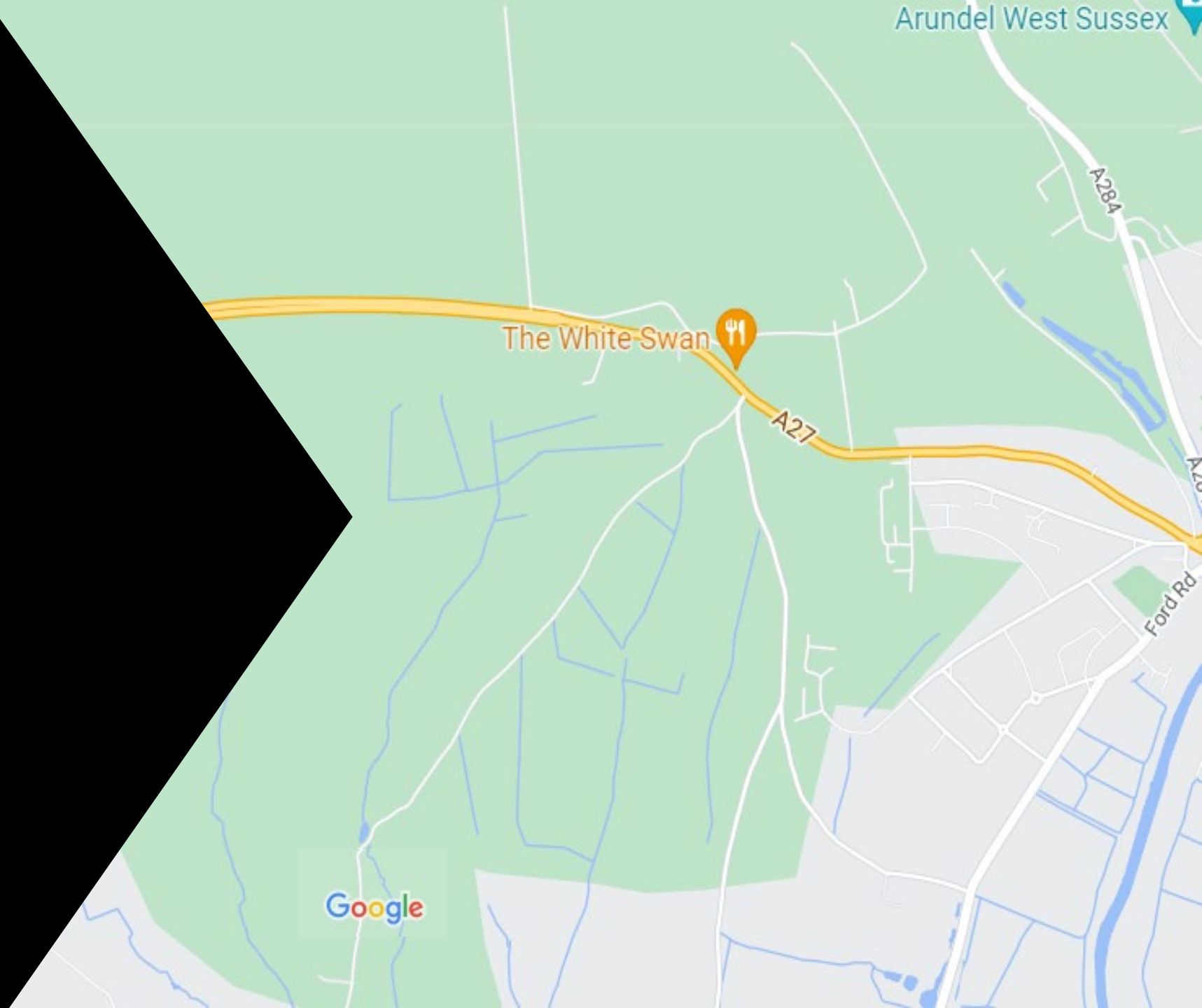
## Equestrians



- Generally, there is room for improved collaboration with equestrians to repair the relationship between them and relevant authorities (e.g. National Highways)
- An opportunity to seriously consider equestrians' requests for more bridleways and improvements (e.g. footpath south of the Sittingbourne Golf Club could potentially be a bridleway; M2 foot crossing could have parapet raised so it is suitable for horses)



# Site Study: A27 – Arundel Bypass



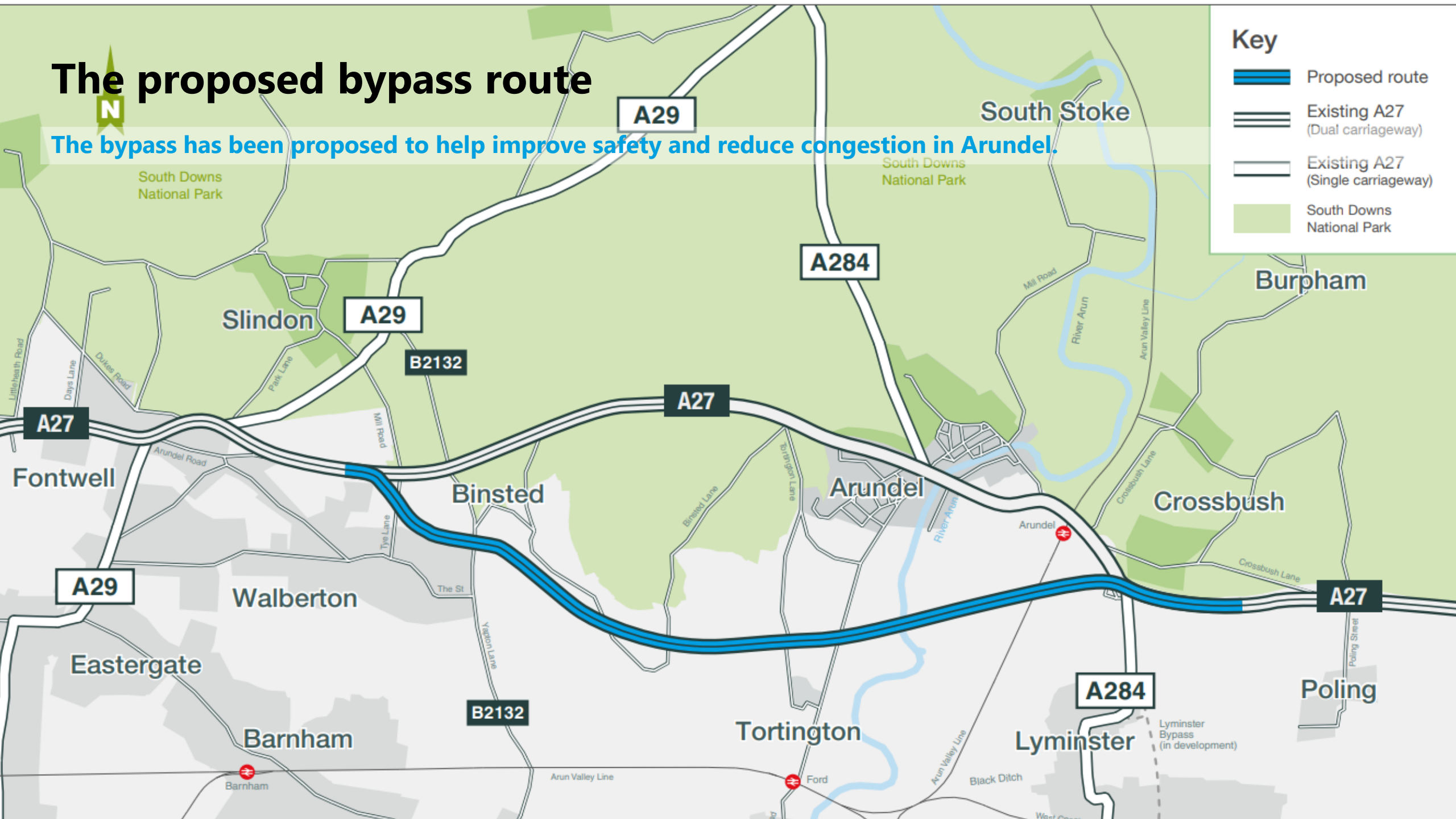
# A27 – Arundel Bypass overview

The A27 is a busy road with Arundel to the south and the South Downs to the north side of the road. Currently, the single carriageway section of the A27 through Arundel is highly congested, which leads to severe delays and unpredictable journeys

- The area is used extensively for leisure activities but proximity to Arundel means the A27 is also used by cyclists and pedestrians for utility journeys
- This section of the A27 acts as a barrier limiting access to the South Downs.
- The proposed bypass is a highly contentious issue with detractors unconvinced that it will solve the congestion issues and that it will have a negative impact on surrounding villages (Walberton & Binsted) and the environment
- Those in favour believe the bypass will mean less traffic on the existing road, making it easier to cross

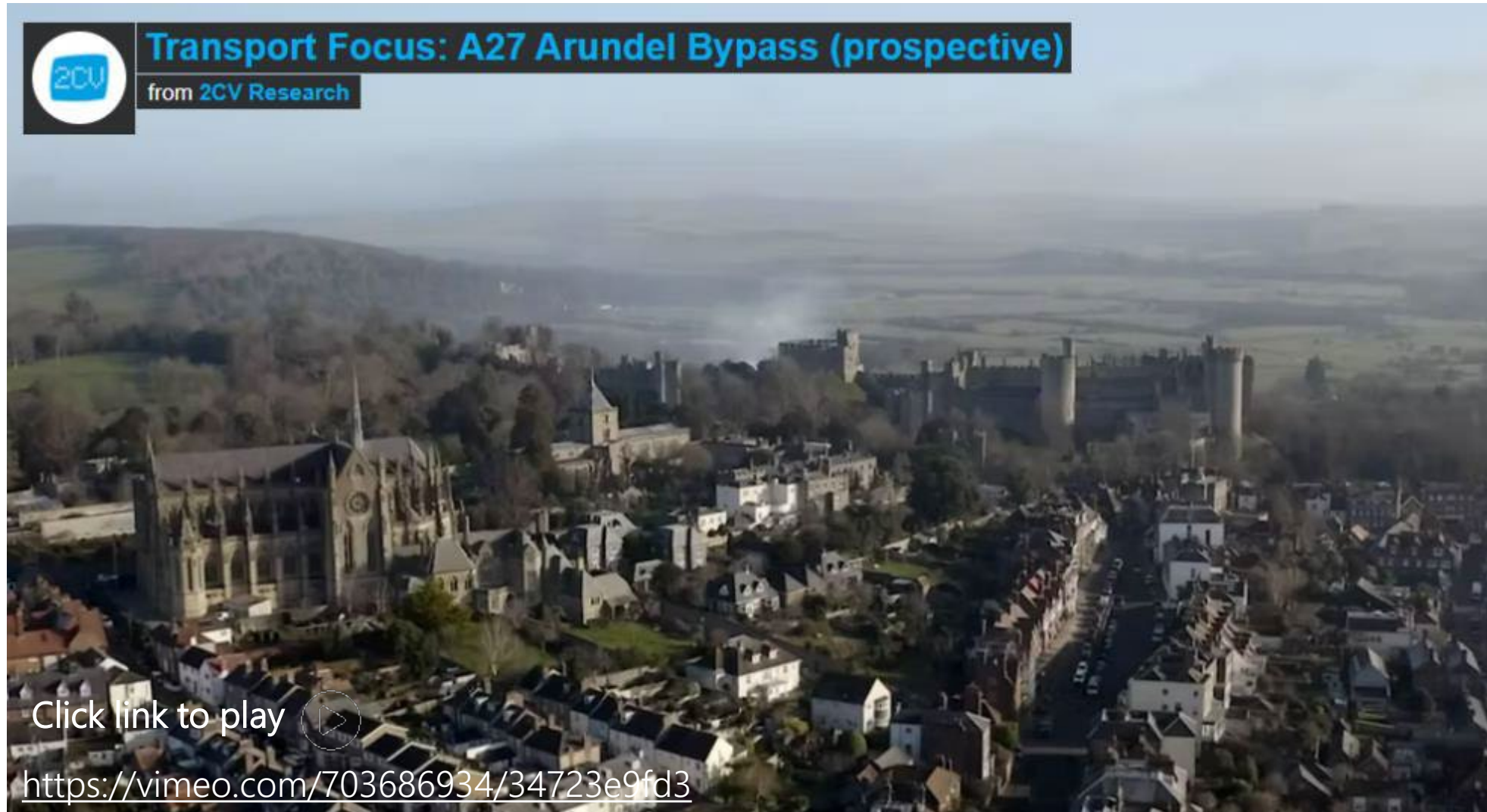
# The proposed bypass route

The bypass has been proposed to help improve safety and reduce congestion in Arundel.

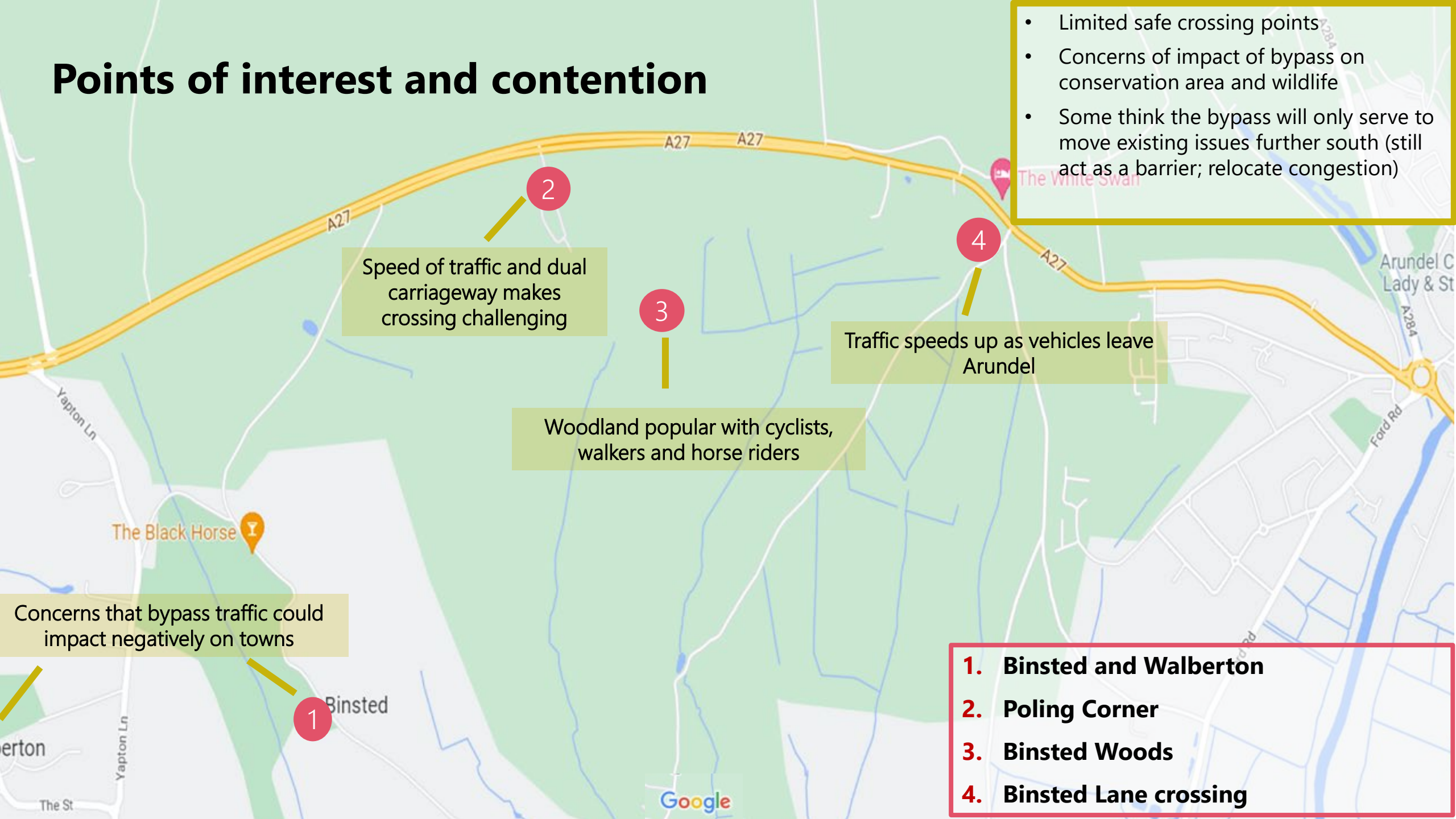


# An overview of the A27 Arundel Bypass

Site visit video illustrates key issues and experiences. Video features: 2 x equestrians & 1 x pedestrian/cyclist



# Points of interest and contention



- Limited safe crossing points
- Concerns of impact of bypass on conservation area and wildlife
- Some think the bypass will only serve to move existing issues further south (still act as a barrier; relocate congestion)

Speed of traffic and dual carriageway makes crossing challenging

Traffic speeds up as vehicles leave Arundel

Woodland popular with cyclists, walkers and horse riders

Concerns that bypass traffic could impact negatively on towns

- 1. Binsted and Walberton**
- 2. Poling Corner**
- 3. Binsted Woods**
- 4. Binsted Lane crossing**

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# Issues for the area

As the bypass is still at the planning stage, many were unable to predict its impact and were only able to focus on the current A27 and how it impacted their experiences.

## 1. Current A27 is a barrier to South Downs

- With the A27 cutting off access to the South Downs, cyclist, pedestrian and equestrian activity is limited to south of the road, where there is an existing bridleway and footpath network in Binsted Woods and beyond that is well used
- The pandemic allowed many to cross the road safely and access the South Downs

## 2. Heavy traffic

- Pedestrians and cyclists (particularly those near Tortington Lane) are put off cycling or walking into Arundel by the volume and speed of vehicles on the single carriageway route into the town

## 3. Lack of crossing opportunities

- CPEs all comment that there are few opportunities to cross safely. Existing crossing options are thought unsuitable (particularly where the A27 becomes dualled) or too far away to be practicably useful
- Issues commonly mentioned are poor site lines (particularly at the Binsted Lane crossing) caused by overhanging foliage and lack of signage alerting drivers to the presence of non-vehicular users. It is hoped the bypass may deliver more dedicated, safer non-ground level crossing opportunities

## 4. The impact of the bypass

- There is some local opposition the bypass. These campaigners believe that the bypass will impact negatively on local wildlife and increase traffic and pollution in areas currently unaffected

## 5. Paths along the A27 are poorly maintained

- Footpaths nearer Arundel can be overgrown and narrow - making walks and cycles into town feel unsafe



# A27 Arundel Bypass - Frustrations



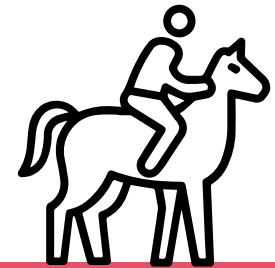
Cyclists

- Shared paths that run along beside A27 (near Arundel) lack sufficient width
- Lack of infrastructure (crossing points and paths) puts people of using the site more (for leisure and utility journeys)



Pedestrians

- No barriers to separate walkers and runners from traffic in more built up areas
- Increased evidence of fly tipping in local woodland
- Neglected pathways and poor surfaces make walking and running hazardous



Equestrians

- A lack of dedicated crossing points to allow riders to cross safely
- Insufficient signage to alert drivers to CPE activity
- Those south of the A27 have limited riding based on smaller bridleway network

As noted, the proposed bypass does provoke some quite strong reactions with some voluble opposition to it noticed. Some CPEs feel that the bypass and traffic will impact negatively on smaller towns that it will pass by (Binsted, Walberton and Tortington) as well as on local wildlife

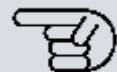
# A27 Arundel Bypass - Frustrations



Why give us footpaths if we can't use them. This path is so overgrown that you can hardly see where it should be. – Pedestrian



Walking along this stretch of the A27 is not fun. With no barrier I feel exposed and vulnerable. Not to mention the noise! – Pedestrian

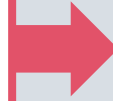


Video. Click ▶ to play

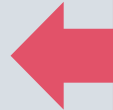
# A27 Arundel Bypass - Frustrations



The busy roundabouts and junctions at Arundel have nowhere safe to cross. – Pedestrian



This is path into Arundel just stops. I'd cycle into town, but this doesn't make it easy. I tend to cycle in using the back roads. – Cyclist

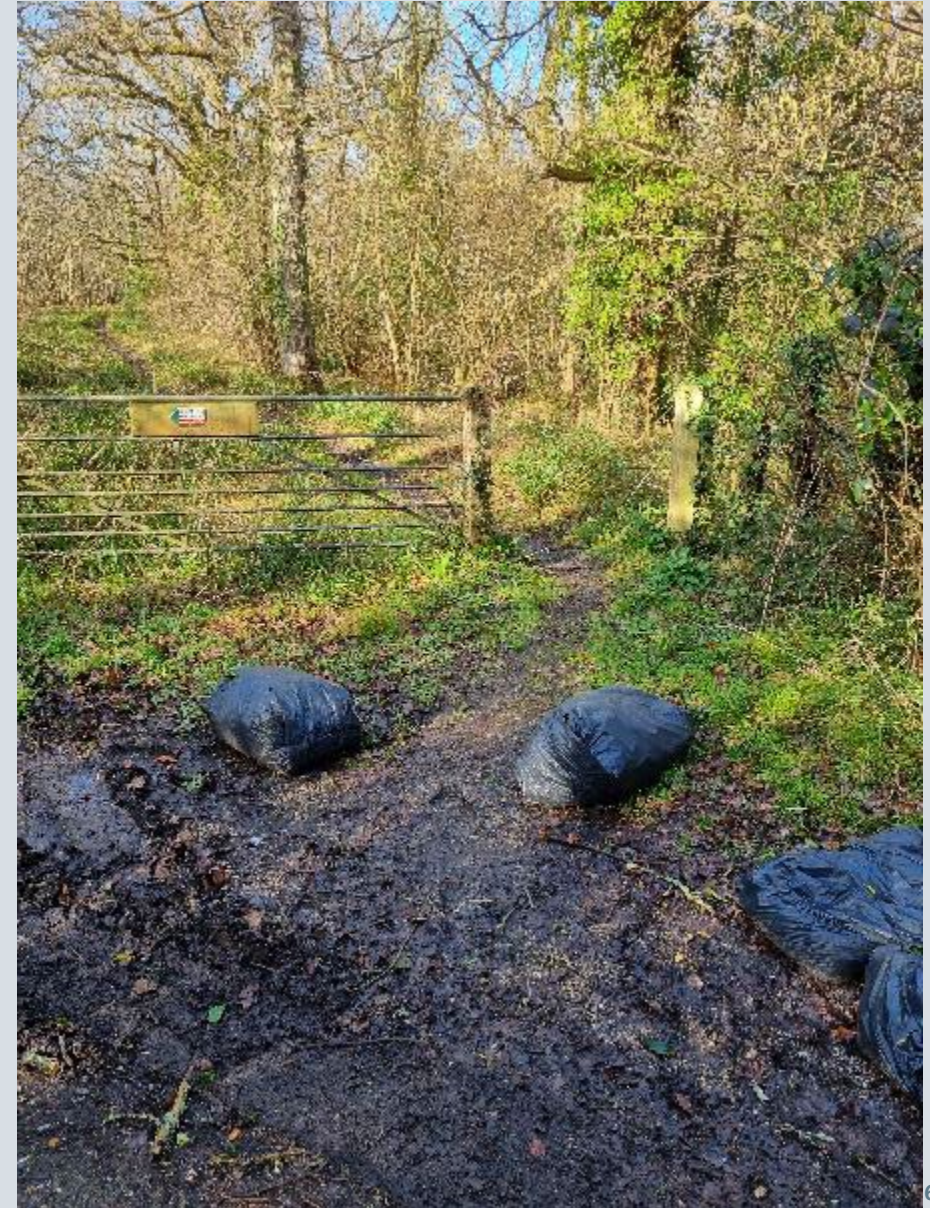


## A27 Arundel Bypass - Frustrations



Fly tipping is becoming more prevalent here. It really detracts from my enjoyment. – **Pedestrian**

Crossing the A27 here means either going along the footpath, which you're not meant to do on horse back or going through the hotel car park, which is with the permission of the landlord. – **Equestrian**



## A27 Arundel Bypass - Frustrations



This crossing [Poling Corner] has been avoided by horse riders for years. It's not been used as a bridlepath, occasionally and very rarely do cyclists use it; also for the same reasons stated, it's dangerous, and you're unable to see oncoming fast volumes of traffic. It would be nice to see an underpass on the A27, this would be safer than any bridge or road crossing that could be provided. - Equestrian

# A27 Arundel Bypass - Delighters

There are few specific 'delighters' identified by specific audiences for this site. Overall, the ability to access and enjoy attractive landscape applies universally



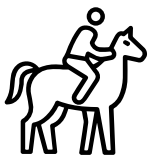
## Cyclists

- Quick access to the surrounding countryside and town centre makes the site suitable for leisure and utility journeys



## Pedestrians

- Woodlands and surrounding countryside used for leisure and exercise



## Equestrians

- There are bridleway networks North and South of the current A27



The surrounding area is beautiful and precious which is why the bypass makes all the locals nervous, because of the need to protect the extraordinary surrounding environment and wildlife. – **Pedestrian**

There are quite a few rides in the area and bridleways are well kept. Being able to ride around here is a joy. – **Equestrian**



My main reasons for walking are to keep fit and I love exploring and being amongst nature and going on woodland walks. – **Pedestrian**

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# Suggested improvements

As noted, many CPEs focus on the current stretch of A27 rather than the more abstract concept of identifying issues regarding proposed bypass. As such many solutions are focused on resolving existing issues that may be applicable to the bypass



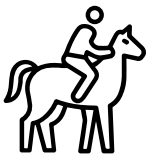
## Cyclists

- Crossings at busy roundabouts to encourage journeys into and around Arundel
- Improved, wider dedicated cycle lanes when cycling along A27
- Regular maintenance of cycle infrastructure



## Pedestrians

- Where feasible, safety barriers to ensure pedestrians feel safer when walking along A27
- Improved foot paths along A27
- Better crossing options
- Maintenance of walking infrastructure, especially next to roads



## Equestrians

- More dedicated crossings (underpasses, Pelican crossing, defined central reservation) to enable crossing

The bypass is seen by some as an opportunity to deliver against the need for crossings and to protect wildlife. Green bridges and tunnels are seen as ways for mitigating harm to wildlife and to recreational access



# Site study: A21 Tonbridge – Pembury Cycle Link





# A21 overview

At this location, a cycle link has been built alongside the A21 - connecting Tonbridge and Pembury

- The Tonbridge – Pembury cycle link is a relatively new route which has been completed to provide a mixed-use pathway and alternative to using the A21
- The route is targeted at CPEs who are making journeys between Tonbridge Station and Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury
- There is a degree of commuting along the route – with the section between Tonbridge and the ‘North Farm Estate’ at the Pembury end being the part of the route that is most used by commuters. It is also used as a leisure route for individuals and families alike.
- This site was chosen as a way to gather feedback on CPE experiences and identify key lessons to be learnt about the recently completed purpose-built project.

# Points of interest and contention



- Accessing North Farm industrial estate via crossings is perceived to be dangerous for pedestrians
- Narrower parts of route makes mixed-usage (between pedestrians and cyclists) more challenging
- Cyclists would like signage to be more visible and reflective when it is dark – making it obvious that the cycle link is continuous

Surrounding woodland is beautiful but some concerns around safety if walking there alone

Cycling signage along entire route could be larger and more visible; equestrian signage is also perceived to be lacking or confusing

Better signage desired for multiple crossings leading to North Farm industrial estate

High levels of traffic when approaching industrial estate

Having to dismount can make the route feel less continuous and smooth for cyclists

Pathway narrows leading to Nottcutts Garden Centre – making shared space more limited

- 1. Access to start of route at Tonbridge/Vauxhall Lane**
- 2. Underpass at Well Wood intersection**
- 3. Underpass at Longfield Road / Tonbridge Road**
- 4. Part of route which passes directly alongside the A21 after Pembury Walks**

# An overview of the A21

Site visit video illustrates key issues and experiences. Video features: 1 x pedestrian



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# Issues for the area

CPE experiences are largely positive; the cycle link is perceived to be a pleasant alternative to the A21 with opportunities for families to walk or cycle together. Main challenges relate to narrower sections and lack of adequate signage. Overall awareness of route is also perceived to be low and traffic noise can be uncomfortably loud at times.

## 1. Contrast between pleasantness of overall route vs. approach to North Farms Industrial Estate

- Overall feedback suggests that people enjoy using the overall link but the approach to the estate is much less pleasant owing to high volume of traffic. Junctions at the Tonbridge end are also complicated and make CPE experiences more challenging.

## 2. Narrower points of the route make it more challenging for mixed usage

- This can make it much harder for pedestrians and cyclists to travel alongside one another; the approach to Notcutts Garden Centre is a particular sticking point for cyclists as there is a perceived lack of signage relating to width of route

## 3. Overgrown debris can also contribute to narrower width and / or make it feel more dangerous for cyclists

- Large branches from surrounding woodland area can block parts of route – it might be that this is owing to recent post-storm conditions vs. a major general issue

## 4. Signage for cyclists and pedestrians alike is not always perceived to be adequate

- Small, round cyclist signs are barely visible and / or not reflective – making cycling in the dark more challenging
- Pedestrians would like to see better signage at the crossing leading to North Farms Industrial Estate to warn drivers

## 5. Equestrian signage can also be confusing and / or lacking; can also feel overlooked at crossing points

- Current bridleway signage is either non-existent or shows signs for pedestrians and cyclists *only* – meaning that it is unclear whether equestrians are allowed on the route or not

*N.B. Our research participants were not keen users of underpasses in general owing to overall safety concerns (feeling vulnerable, assumptions of being poorly lit). This was not specific to the A21 area specifically (i.e. underpasses at Well Wood intersection / Longfield Road and Tonbridge Road).*

# A21 - Frustrations



## Cyclists

- Lack of connected cycling path in places – meaning that cyclists can feel like they are constantly mounting and dismounting vs. being able to cycle on one continuous path
- Some issues with surface quality along cycle lane – broken glass, occasional dog mess and branches nearer to parts of lane that backs onto woodland area where vegetation has been cut but not cleared
- Some clashes between cyclists and pedestrians when pedestrians wear headphones and do not hear cyclists coming
- Desire for better lighting where some parts of the cycleway are badly lit



## Pedestrians

- Concerns that some cyclists see the route as a “training route” and travel at high speeds – leading to clashes between cyclists and pedestrians – a desire for more signage to remind cyclists to watch their speed
- Crossings near to roundabouts close to Longfield Road – a lack of warning for drivers about possibility of cyclists and pedestrians using these crossings to access North Farm Industrial Estate
- Woodland parts of route feel less safe, in terms of personal safety – meaning that pedestrians may not walk these parts alone



## Equestrians

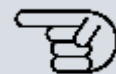
- Bridleway signage at the start of WT 429 bridleway is perceived to be unclear as it is hidden behind cycle track sign
- Fast traffic at northern end of the cycle route/public bridleway WT429 means that equestrians can feel unsafe – ideally would like to see the introduction of a lower speed limit on the slip road from A21
- Desire for a fence barrier along parts of the route that feel too exposed for horses

## A21 - Frustrations



This is a cyclist dismount sign. It is on the main road leading to the hospital but is also seen all along the route. It frustrates me because it means you are continuously mounting and dismounting along the route. – **Cyclist**

This shows me cycling where the cycling lane narrows significantly. This is frustrating as it leaves less room for other cyclists / pedestrians and would benefit from advanced warning and clear signage to show the lane is narrowing. – **Cyclist**



Video. Click ▶ to play

## A21 - Frustrations



I find the size of the signs is too small. They are often not visible in the distance and are only noticeable when you are close to them. They are often not at all visible at night. – Cyclist

This shows the pathway on opposite side and the width of the pathway is a lot narrower. This means that you are limited to the side of the road you are able to cycle along. – Cyclist



## A21 - Frustrations



There is a considerable amount of debris on the path in places making it significantly more dangerous for cyclists as in some places large branches would cause issues. This makes the usable width of the path far narrower. – **Cyclist / Pedestrian**



The road that the path runs along is busy and fast all the way along, hence areas where the path requires a crossing over the A21 can be dangerous with fast traffic. – **Cyclist / Pedestrian**



As you go up the hill with the slope stabilisation measures on your right, some of the bolts that are holding the slope in place stick out at low level, which could cause a severe injury if a horse caught its leg on them, or a rider fell on them. If possible, some means of covering them or perhaps cutting them so that they are more flush with the ground would be helpful.  
[...]  
There is also what appears to be some tangled up wire netting, with no obvious purpose, that could become caught on a horse's hoof if it stepped sideways and could cause a serious injury.  
**Equestrian stakeholder**



## A21 - Frustrations



At the start of public  
bridleway WT 429 the  
bridleway sign is not  
particularly obvious behind  
the cycle track sign and it is  
quite difficult to see exactly  
where it is pointing to. It  
would be helpful if the cycle  
track sign also had a ridden  
horse symbol on it. –  
**Equestrian stakeholder**

Uncertainty for anyone  
riding a horse is  
compounded by the fact  
that this is almost  
immediately followed by a  
small waymarking roundel  
that does not have a horse  
symbol on it. – **Equestrian  
stakeholder**



Approaching the same gate from the South (going  
downhill) is even more intimidating for horse riders,  
since as the horse moves round the gate the horse  
will be facing the dual carriageway with no fence to  
prevent it from galloping onto the A21 if it were to  
take fright at, say, a flapping tarpaulin on a passing  
lorry. [...] Although the young trees may eventually  
form more of a barrier than they do at present, a  
few metres more of fencing between the non-  
motorised user path and the A21 at this point where  
the bank is low, would make it safer. – **Equestrian  
stakeholder**

# A21 - Delighters



## Cyclists

- Wider pathways in some places (e.g. leading to Tunbridge Wells Hospital) - providing enough space for cyclists and pedestrians alike
- Feeling safe on parts of the cycle link where there is a fence between road and cycle link – separating cyclists from drivers
- Feeling safe enough to cycle on pathway with children as a family activity at weekends



## Pedestrians

- Perceived to be a convenient route that is easy to walk along and be completed in sections and then loop back to start – the implication is that pedestrians take this route for an A to B journey as they would go elsewhere for a 'proper' rural walk



## Equestrians

- Perceived to be good waymarking and solid fencing when journeying southwards



This is the end of the cycle route which is the end of the main road from the hospital (Tonbridge Rd). I like the width of the pathway which allows ample room for cyclists and pedestrians. When you are riding a bike, it makes it easier to pass pedestrians. – **Cyclist**

My favourite gardening centre is right on the route and is handy for me to pop in and pick up supplies. – **Cyclist**



This shows a nice wide lane. Although it is next to the road, I feel it is wide enough to give me confidence and assurance that there is plenty of room to remain safe whilst cycling. – **Cyclist**

## A21 - Delighters

Arriving at the Tunbridge Wells Hospital. It's great that I can have a clear, safe route to the hospital and can get there without having to drive. – Cyclist



When it is possible the route is entirely separated from the road by fences such as these. This makes it feel safe and secure from the traffic – Cyclist / Pedestrian

I love the open space and gorgeous views on this route. It makes my journeys more delightful even on a dull day. – Cyclist



## A21 - Delighters



Continuing southwards, there is good waymarking. – Equestrian stakeholder

The next gateway has the gate hung so that the gap is further away from the A21, which is much safer. The waymarking roundel includes the horse symbol and there is excellent solid fencing in both directions (we found the vehicle gate propped open across the gap at this point, but there was ample room for a horse to go through the gateway without having to move close to the A21). This is all far better – Equestrian stakeholder



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# Suggested improvements

Many feel like the cycle link is still relatively unknown and that there could be more of a push to increase overall awareness of the route. There is also a call for adequate signage leading to narrower parts of the cycle link where the space becomes more challenging for shared mode usage and is perceived to be more dangerous.



## Cyclists

- Desire for greater advertising to spread the word and persuade more people to use the cycle link
- Adding adequate signage ahead of narrower parts of the route to ensure that cyclists have enough prior warning
- Enlarge cycling signs (and make reflective, if possible) to ensure that cyclists are able to easily follow route / are on correct side of road AND are able to see signage when it is dark



## Pedestrians

- Providing better signposting at crossing points to ensure that drivers know that cyclists and pedestrians may cross – especially near to Longfield Road



## Equestrians

- Better signage along the whole route to show that equestrians are allowed to use the route – making it clear to all users that horses may appear from bridleways – current signage is perceived to be confusing when some signs show cyclists and pedestrians only
- Ensuring that any dangerous debris is removed e.g. wire netting which could cause injuries to a horse's hoof



**Moving  
forward**

Public  
Bridleway



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# A summary of improvements

These improvements are aimed at addressing issues related: to safety; ability to carry out activities; overall enjoyment

- **Raise awareness of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians:** cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians feel that there is a lack of warning to alert drivers to the possibility that cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians will be sharing the road with them or may be in the vicinity of sites. An increase in signage alerting drivers to the possibility of their presence could raise awareness and prompt more care.
- **Increased crossing opportunities:** cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians feel that the number of crossings available to them is severely lacking, forcing them to cross at places where there are no crossings; to discontinue their journeys or to divert to some of the limited crossing opportunities that they have.
- **More multi-agency working:** Collaborative/integrated working to better provide solutions/resolve issues for CPEs could be key for improving experiences. Currently this type of collegiate problem solving is not apparent and can make this audience feel that issues are siloed, and responsibilities abrogated.
- **Improved and regular maintenance of pathways:** Many cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians feel that paths are neglected and not properly maintained, making them hazardous. This can result in them avoiding certain routes. cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians want to see more pathways that are designated for them and their mode of travel.
- **Better delineation of cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians on shared infrastructure:** The hope for wider, dedicated pathways is that it will allow cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians to share spaces safely/efficiently with each other. Currently, many cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians report on how rare it is to find suitable shared pathways, often having to give way on paths or even being aware that certain paths just aren't suited to them and their mode of travel.
- **Improved dedicated provision:** More projects like A21 Tonbridge – Pembury Cycle Link and A26 Beddington – Newhaven 'Egret's Way' cycleway that have the need of these audiences at their core can drive satisfaction. These two sites demonstrate how routes near busy sites can benefit CPEs.



**Let's talk.**



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