

**The C7 at Piddinghoe and Egrets Way Phase 7**  
**Note from meeting on Monday 26 June 2023, 3pm**  
**Piddinghoe Village Hall**

**Present:**

**Piddinghoe Parish Council**

Paul Bevan, Chair  
Noel West, Councillor  
Alison Stevens, Clerk

**East Sussex County Council**

Andrew Keer, Local Transport Scheme Manager, Infrastructure Planning and Place  
Nicholas Mitchell, Principal Scheme Development Officer  
Michael Higgs, ESCC Road Safety team  
Nathan Rose, ESCC Contract Management Group  
Ruby Brittle, ESCC Contract Management Group  
Ian Tingley, WSP Senior Engineer

**South Downs National Park Authority**

Andy Gattiker, National Trails and Rights of Way Lead  
Alex Pringle, Transport Officer

**Egrets Way Project**

Neville Harrison, Chair  
Wendy Brewer, Deputy Chair

**SUSTRANS**

Josse McKenny, Engineer  
Adrienne Soudain, Project Manager Active Travel

**MAIN POINTS OF DISCUSSION**

**Background**

In 2022 Piddinghoe parish council commissioned a highways feasibility study from ESCC to explore practical options for improving road safety at the northern and southern junctions with the C7. ESCC was asked to take into account plans for phase 7 of the Egrets Way path to connect the northern end of Piddinghoe village with the section at Deans Farm (EWP7).

The report of the feasibility study had concluded that simply extending the 40mph speed limit out of Newhaven would not be effective in slowing traffic past Piddinghoe without changes to the highway environment, particularly at the southern junction; traffic is already slower at the northern junction. It suggested alternative safety measures at the northern junction such as footway improvements, refreshing road markings and signs, laying coloured surfacing, and pruning back vegetation to maximise visibility. For the southern junction a redesign would be required to improve sightlines.

Paul Bevan explained that the parish council would not seek to proceed with these suggested improvements under the Community Match arrangements - indeed some were felt to be highways maintenance responsibilities in any case. The council is instead keen to assist the early implementation of EWP7, since the on-highway section of that scheme would need to involve measures to slow traffic past the village and improve the design and safety of the northern junction in particular.

## **Egrets Way**

Neville Harrison briefly outlined the history of the Egrets Way project and explained its wider local, national and international significance. It forms a key element in both the County Council's and National Park's Cycling and Walking Network, and National Highways have shown their commitment by providing substantial funds towards phase 6. He confirmed that discussions had proceeded positively with two key riparian owners and that a legal agreement is already in place with one. The pinch-point just north of Harping Hill however will require an on-highway solution of some 200m and the support and approval of ESCC as Highway Authority.

### **ESCC position**

Andrew Keer noted that, as a more ambitious investment than any of the minor works suggested by the feasibility study, EWP7 is beyond the £50k limit of Community Match. It would be competing with many other schemes across the county for a small capital budget of £3m a year. Although supported in the LTP and LCWIP, he could not see the prospect of EWP7 winning through, nor would it benefit from the funding available for coastal town regeneration. However once designed and ready for implementation he could raise with the ESCC policy team the possibility of an application to the Active Travel England Capability Fund. He explained that ESCC does not have highway engineers available to contribute to design work; that resource is contracted out and has to be paid for under s278 arrangements.

### **Next steps**

Andy Gattiker concluded that the only way forward was therefore for the SDNPA to work with the Egrets Way Project and Sustrans to find the resources to commission the design work for EWP7 to a stage when it can get ESCC buy-in via s278. Regrettably Alister Linton-Crooks's temporary absence will stretch resources so next steps might take months rather than weeks. Neville Harrison and Wendy Brewer agreed with Andy Gattiker that there could be a number of potential sources for the capital funds for the EWP7 once the design is ready and has ESCC backing.

In the meantime, Ruby Brittle undertook to follow up those recommendations in the feasibility study concerning maintenance issues, such as vegetation encroaching onto footways, flooding at the northern bus stop, and the visibility of road signs. She would also clarify for SDNPA colleagues ESCC's arrangements for proceeding in due course under s278.

## **OUTCOMES FOR COMMUNICATION**

1. We are all committed to the implementation of EWP7. There is goodwill on all sides.
2. The recommendations of the feasibility study will not be pursued under Community Match.
3. Despite the policy support for Egrets Way in the LTP and LCWIP, there is little prospect of EWP7 attracting support from ESCC's oversubscribed £3m/year capital programme, nor do ESCC do have in-house technical resources to contribute to the design work for EWP7.
4. SDNPA will work over the next months with the Egrets Way Project and Sustrans to identify resources to work up designs for the whole of EWP7, both the off-highway and on-highway sections.
5. The scheme design will be developed in consultation with affected riparian owners; ESCC's input and approval will be sought under a s278 arrangement.
6. Once the scheme is designed ESCC will explore an application to the Government's Capability Fund for capital funding.
7. ESCC will follow-up the highway maintenance recommendations in the feasibility study.

