



FAQs

North from Piddlinghoe The C7 and the Egrets Way

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What has the parish council done to improve safety on the C7 road?

The safety of the C7 is the responsibility of the highway authority, East Sussex County Council (ESCC). For many years the parish council has been pressing ESCC on C7 safety: traffic speeds, the risks of crossing by foot, bike or horse at the northern and southern junctions with the village, and of exiting The Street and driveways close to those two main village junctions.

Most recently in 2022 the parish council paid ESCC to undertake a feasibility study to address these concerns. ESCC proposed measures such as refreshing signs and road markings, but declined to reduce the speed limit even to 40mph. Their argument, backed by Sussex Police, is that changes need to be made to the road environment and alignment that would, through visual cues to drivers, make lower speed limits self-enforcing. It is not just a case of changing the signs and installing cameras.

2. What about the Safer C7 Project?

The parish council has also contributed to the Safer C7 Project, a collective effort by Parishes of the Lower Ouse (POLO) to convince ESCC to make changes to improve safety for all users along the length of the road. After a £40k study, proposals have emerged for consistent village gateway treatments, crossing points and other measures that should warrant lower speed limits. Funds have been sought from the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) to make a start on these, but they will need the agreement of ESCC and the details have yet to be discussed.

3. What is Egrets Way Phase 7 (EW7)?

The Egrets Way is a project by the Ouse Valley Cycle Network (a charity) to create a shared-use path between Lewes and Newhaven. This is to encourage 'active travel' by allowing walkers, cyclists and equestrians to avoid the busy C7. After some 15 years, thanks to the support of landowners, the SDNPA and others, eight miles of path have been completed; only the half mile between the northern junction with Piddlinghoe village and Chapel Barn remains. This is a 'missing link' not only in the Egrets Way but also in the strategic network into which it connects.

This last section is the most challenging. Between Magnolias and Kiln Cottages there is no space for a shared path away from the road plus there is a pinch-point in the highway itself. So the path will need to be squeezed through alongside the road, separated by a kerb. The proposed works would be within the adopted highway as understood from ESCC's plans, although there will be points where some features of the highway verge (such as kerbs, vegetation, bunds) may have to be moved or removed to accommodate the path and road side-by-side. As well as for the first time creating a safe passage for non-motorists north from Piddlinghoe both along and across the C7, these changes to the road environment should justify a speed limit reduction to at least 40mph.

4. Why is the parish council backing EW7?

The parish council's dialogue with ESCC over the feasibility study confirmed that there is no prospect of investment at Piddlinghoe given competing priorities to address serious accident blackspots across the county.

By contrast the Egrets Way is a flagship project for the National Park, relating to one of its key purposes to encourage access for all, and connecting directly to the South Downs Way national trail. The Government has

allocated specific resources to promote cycling and walking via Active Travel England (ATE). The SDNPA has secured funds from ATE for the design work on EW7, and is confident of finding the capital investment over the next two years to complete this final phase.

In 2023 the parish council therefore resolved that the best way of getting the changes needed to make the C7 safer is to 'piggy-back' on the completion of the Egrets Way, behind which there are resources and momentum. The minutes of the meeting of 7 March 2023 record:

It was also agreed that the Parish Council should work with all parties involved to achieve urgent progress on Egrets Way phase 7 in order to meet the council's objectives of a lower speed limit and other road safety measures at the northern junction.

5. Who is in charge of EW7?

The main sponsor and lead is the SDNPA; their Cycling Projects Officer Alister Linton-Crook is the lead official. Both ATE and ESCC have key roles in approving the scheme design and commissioning the highway works.

The parish council has no powers to authorise or implement the project. But as a stakeholder and consultee it has an influencing role. The chairman has been invited to project meetings to contribute local knowledge and to advise on and facilitate consultation arrangements.

6. What stage has the EW7 project reached?

In September 2024 the SDNPA contracted engineers Sustrans to commence the first stage; this involved undertaking surveys - eg of topography, land ownership and traffic - as a basis for initial design options. This work concluded in April 2025 with two alternatives: (A) a shared path on the east (river) side of the C7, and (B) a shared path on the west side of the road with crossing points towards each end of the section. The changed alignments and safety measures would warrant a lower speed limit of 40mph. Both options are supported in principle by ATE and ESCC.

7. What public consultation has there been?

In October 2024 owners of the most closely adjacent properties were offered one-to-one meetings to introduce the project, explain the work plan and timescale, and request any permissions necessary for survey work. On 23 October a collective meeting was also held for those in the wider vicinity. Subsequently the parish council publicised and hosted a public meeting at the village hall on 19 November 2024.

In May 2025, with the two options now drawn up, the project team planned to once again hold one-to-one meetings with the landowners most closely adjacent followed by a collective meeting of those in the vicinity. The preferred option was then to be presented publicly at the parish council meeting on 15 July as a precursor to a full public consultation.

However because of landowner objections arising from the one-to-one meetings that timescale has slipped. The parish council has asked for further consideration to be given to the detail of these initial options, in particular to the proposed highway alignment and the exploration of further measures to secure ESCC's agreement to a speed limit of 30mph.

8. When will the plans for EW7 be made public?

Once the further iteration of the plans requested by the parish council has been completed the project team plans to hold a public meeting as a launch for a full public consultation. Hopefully that will be in the autumn.

If you have further questions please contact the Parish Clerk at clerk@piddinghoe-pc.org.uk.

Piddinghoe Parish Council
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