

HIGHWAYS REPORT - Fault Inventory March 2021 Blue shows progress during the last month and red for several months

LOCATION	Postcode	Fault	Reference	CCC Status	Notes
Near Castle View		Pothole	W1980984248	Future Work	Submitted 2019
Raines Hall Farm		Pothole	W1980984249	Future Work	Submitted 2019
Pavements between aqueduct and Sedgwick House		Manhole cover Pavements defect	W1980956164 W1980956165 W1980956166	Further Assessment	Submitted BH February 2019 after 2 residents complained – update March 2019 assigned for future work Technical Team to investigate in next 4 weeks
Castle View Pavements	LA8 0JL	Repair all pavements	W1980958222	Further Assessment	Re-submitted March 2019 BH/ Technical Team to investigate in next 4 weeks
Sign – Wellheads Lane		Better position	W1880931996	Problem logged 27 Nov 2018	Completed V Upton/CRASH Committee /PC Jackson work scheduled to add extra sign on north side of aqueduct Jan 2021
Junction Carex Farm Junction Aqueduct/Back Lane		No Slow Sign No Slow Sign	W1980977462 W1980977463	Problem Logged Problem Logged	Submitted September 2019 Submitted September 2019 CRASH committee/PC Jackson investigating signage and road markings to improve safety Jan 2021
Back Lane J by Aqueduct		pothole	W2081002813	Problem logged	Future work
Back Lane Speeding Traffic		Speed of Traffic	W2081016228	Problem logged 15 October 2020	Enquiry Complete V Upton investigating signage for pedestrian crossing Request for consideration for 20mph speed limit refused - CRASH Committee Jan 2021 Cyclist safety signage to be installed Jan 2021 - CRASH Committee/PC Jackson-
Nanny Pie Lane from Brettaghtholt Roundabout		Sign to Sedgwick Hit	W2081013571	Problem Logged	Submitted 14/9/2020- looking into this matter

Updated 3rd March 2021 – S Roberts

Website Report 10/3/21

The website data show an increase in usage compared to the quieter period over the winter and during lockdown.

I have added guidance about how to get connected to Zoom meetings in anticipation of more residents wanting to attend the Annual Parish Meeting than our usual monthly meetings. I have also begun to add more information about the history of the village including material received from Janet Thompson who has passed on her archives from the period that she was Chair of the Council. Material relevant to the history of the canal and the restoration projects undertaken by residents from 1980-2020 will also be added to the Canal Wildlife Area section. All other sections are up to date.

Canal Wildlife Area Report 10/3/21

- a) The canal is checked regularly by councillors and there are currently no outstanding safety issues. Usage remains at an exceptionally high level as lockdown continues, with both residents and visitors (some of whom who park by the aqueduct) accessing the canal by paths and steps in the village. There is further evidence of cyclists using the path on a daily basis. This is increasing the wear and tear on the path and in parts the surface is becoming very muddy especially in the narrowest sections. We will need to assess it in the summer - it may be possible to top dress the worn sections once volunteering is safe. Unfortunately, dog fouling is evident despite signage being clearly visible. We appreciate local dog owners are acting responsibly and clear up after their dogs, but if it gets worse, especially as the weather improves and more children use the path, we could consult SLDC about ways of dealing with the problem. The wall along the western boundary will need to be assessed when felling has been completed but the post and wire stock proof fence is intact.
- b) James Park, our contractor, has continued to fell the trees earmarked by our woodland manager as and when the weather allows. 4-5 additional trees needed to be felled as they were leaning on the diseased ashes - A.Hearne confirmed this was permissible. He will complete the removal of timber when the fields are dry enough to allow access. The Back Lane section will require re-assessing at the next inspection due in September in order to plan the completion of Phase 3 of the CMP long-term management priorities and we may need to fell more ash. We thank Cllr Harvey for the offer of £450 funding towards the £5,000 costs of this felling.
- c) The Canal Wildlife Area Management Plan has been amended to record the current felling work and the review date has been changed from July to September/October to coincide with the recommended time to review Ash Die Back.
- d) Cyclists continue to use the Canal Path on a daily basis and this is contributing significantly to the damage to the surface (see above). We have received complaints from a resident regarding cyclists regularly using a private drive to leave and join the canal footpath. The resident has been verbally abused when trying to prevent them from entering what is his garden.
- e) LCRP issues
 - i) Council is requested to note the summary of the interim report of the User Survey carried out in 2020 to monitor usage of the whole Kendal to Crooklands section. It reflects increased usage, especially during lockdown with 33% of respondents using it more. It indicates 20% users live very close to the canal, while a further 33% live within a mile, (which leaves almost half or 47% of visitors not being local residents). 7% use it to travel from A to B, 16% for jogging, 35% dog walking and the rest for various nature/leisure purposes. Cleanliness on the path was referenced by ten respondents who complained about dog poo, horse poo and litter left along the path. The biggest concern amongst users was the condition of some unmaintained sections of the path - too muddy in winter, narrow and overgrown but some respondents expressed concern about possible widening the path because it "will detract from the character of the site and have a negative impact on wildlife." Cycling was "a divisive issue within the survey" with concerns about speeding cyclists (particularly those participating in Sports Cycling which is considered to be out of keeping with the peaceful character of the pathway, and potentially dangerous), motorbikes and horses outnumbered support for a cycle path by 7:1.

ii) Council is requested to note the information from the Chairman of the Lancaster Canal Trust's January Newsletter and feedback from residents in Stainton: The First Furlong has been drained to assess the damage to the liner and concrete blocks caused by pressure from groundwater. It is currently being refilled but no long-term solution has been found. There are also checks being carried out on the new Stainton to Well Heads Lane path with concerns over the deterioration of the surface and whether the edges which curve down towards the water filled canal are a hazard for cyclists. The new barricades/speed calming measures at Well Heads Lane are proving an unpopular urbanisation of the canal path and ineffective at stopping speeding cyclists.

iii) Repairs on the CRT owned section of the path over the aqueduct have not been completed yet. We were able to assist in liaising between local residents and LCRP to enable access arrangements to be made.

iv) Cllrs Holmes, Tanham and Smith attended the Kendal to Lancaster Towpath Trail NLHF Project Steering Group on Wednesday 24th February 2021. There has been no progress made on many open actions due to COVID. This includes the wildflower project which is postponed and there has been no success in finding funding to improve safety on the Aqueduct steps. There was no information about the problems at Stainton regarding the first furlong and the safety of the footpath. There was a presentation about the proposed "interpretation" of the towpath trail which is under development. There will be large black silhouette installations in 5 locations including at the aqueduct (probably on CRT land where the existing sign is located) and further waymarkers including one on the field side of Sedgwick Hill Bridge. We requested that the information on the old CRT aqueduct information table be transferred onto the new installation so the information is not lost. We requested information about maintenance of them once installed, but this has not been decided and we reported the difficulty we have experienced getting the current signage repaired. LCRP are still asking for local stories about the canal to include on the trail.



v) We have received correspondence from Carrie House explaining that she is planning to recruit three long-term "community champions" one for each village at Sedgwick, Hincaster and Stainton. They could support the LCT monitor their areas by identifying maintenance issues, keeping it tidy; they would have a direct line to Canal & River Trust to report any bigger issues. They would be trained and equipped. As the CRT section in Sedgwick is so short (just the aqueduct) and as it is adjacent to our section, it may make sense for us to offer a volunteer to support Carrie in this?

f) Councillors were invited to attend a meeting with Adam Bunce (2020 Consultancy) and Richard Franks (LCRP) as part of the Feasibility Study of a scheme to convert the entire length of the Lancaster to Kendal Towpath (including the council owned section) into a cycle path. The meeting was recorded but we have not, as promised been provided with a copy of the recording. We explained that when the plan was first discussed in 2016-7, we had been given assurances by LCRP, that the very narrow section in Sedgwick would not be included and that the route would follow the existing cycle path running north-south through the Parish. However, they told us that the current plan, which aims to create a leisure and heritage attraction, now includes the Wildlife Area and the access paths along Back Lane. There were no details about how wide the path would be, although it would be over 2m and possibly 3.5m and no proposed design for the surface. We pointed out that our section is not wide enough for a multi-user path and that in order to widen it to even 2m would mean the destruction of the grass verges which are full of spring bulbs and wild flowers. We were told that the path was intended for leisure cyclists only, not commuters or "fast cycling" and definitely not as a "route to get from A to B". The speed of cyclists would be regulated by calming measures such as barriers and chicanes. We pointed out that this will disappoint several of our residents who have expressed the desire for a safer cycling commuter route to Kendal. No details were given when we queried how such barriers would be able to deter cyclists but remain accessible for wheelchair users and buggies. It is expected that any conflict of use, particularly at narrow pinch points can be solved by cyclists "dismounting or giving way to people on foot." There was a reluctance to accept that we already experience problems with cyclists on the canal path. When we raised the lack of parking in the village as an issue, we were advised that users wishing to access the path at Sedgwick could use the car park at Levens Hall. We responded that as it was so far away, this was not a satisfactory solution.

We summarised the areas of concern as expressed to us by residents at that time and since, together with the concerns we have as landowners:

- the mixing of cyclists and pedestrians on the narrow section and the inevitable conflict of use this would cause is not acceptable.
- the removal of verges and shrubs along the very narrow section of towpath in the Wildlife Area required to widen the path would be unacceptable
- the introduction of cycle-calming obstacles would be an unacceptable urbanisation of the area
- the widening of access paths would have an unacceptable impact on the centre of the village
- the parking issues caused by an increase in users is unacceptable to residents in the centre of the village
- the indirect implications of a potential increase in the number of visitors eg traffic, litter and anti-social behaviour is a significant concern for residents
- the implications to the council regarding public liability and insurance are a concern
- the lack of arrangements for maintenance is unacceptable

We understand that the scheme cannot go ahead without all 14 landowners' agreeing to sign away their permissive rights but the LCRP are confident that it will be a reality within 6 years, despite there being no funding for compulsory purchase. We asked about how, even if our section were used, the adjacent section past Sedgwick Hill Bridge would be navigated with the steep drop to the road bridge and pointed out that the trail would then have to follow the road anyway for a significant distance to bypass the section destroyed by the A590. Our section is 450m which is far shorter than this section.

We concluded by stressing that we see no problem in improving the path for pedestrians and better celebrating the heritage of the canal but that we did not support shared use with cyclists; our preferred option being for cyclists to be diverted off our narrow section in the same way as the inevitable diversion over the A590.

As agreed in February, details of the scheme and the above discussion were included in the newsletter and residents' views invited.

g) Residents were asked to comment on the proposed LCRP scheme in our newsletter and we have received some feedback. As we expected, the issue is proving both emotive and divisive. Views can be summarised as follows; (a full summary of responses will be given at the meeting.)

- There is wide support for improving the surface of the path for walkers (especially where the path is not currently made up) and for celebrating the canal's industrial heritage.
- Several people have expressed support for cyclists being able to use the path and 2 of these said they plan to attend the March meeting to convey their opinions. Getting children who cycle off the road seems to be a major reason for support of the scheme
- There have been many more comments from those expressing significant concern about allowing cyclists to share the footpath and they share a lack of belief that any calming measures would ever make shared use feasible.
 - Some have reported they have experienced abuse from cyclists and that the wildlife area is the only place they can walk on made up paths, away from traffic.
 - Some have told us about how hard residents worked to restore the area from a rubbish tip to its current condition.
 - Others see the intrusion into the area by cyclists and removal of the verges as unacceptable. The loss of bulbs planted over the years by different village groups would upset many people.
 - Residents living close to the aqueduct tell us that there is no space for visitors to park and do not accept that they would use the Levens Hall Car Park as it is over a mile walk away.
 - One resident questioned whether local infrastructure eg roads, parking, litter bins and public toilets was sufficient to support such a significant development.
 - One resident has asked us to raise the health and safety of cyclists because if the existing path was widened, it would take it to the edge of the very steep embankment.
- It should also be noted that many people who wanted their views heard, did not wish to attend a virtual meeting

Given that there are neither details about the design and construction of the scheme nor funding in place, coupled with the fact that other landowners are yet to agree to it, it has been proposed that the Council should continue to collate and voice residents' views, but that there is currently no point in carrying out a wider, costly and time-consuming formal consultation with residents. Such a consultation could however take place if a suitably detailed plan is published and if the funding is secured to make it viable. It may also be futile to consult if

the other landowners involved do not support the proposal. However, we will continue to support existing initiatives in the Parish to improve cyclist's safety such as better signage and highways improvement schemes and continue to work with LCRP in other aspects of their work.

- h) Cllr Holmes and Tanham attended a Nature Recovery Seminar - the precarious state of the nation's flora and fauna were highlighted and information was shared regarding a formal strategy for nature which will be adopted by the government. This will promote environmental consideration by authorities and large public companies. Concern was raised about how effective this would be when planning regulations are being loosened, which is accelerating not slowing down loss of land through urbanisation. Wildlife areas have been mapped countrywide, with a view to creating a coherent pattern of corridors and refuges for wildlife - we requested details about how Parish owned land like the Canal and Millennium Field could be included.