

Local Access Forum
Horse Riders Sub-Group
Supplementary Report
November 2020

March report presented at LAF June 2020

Key Findings

1. Motor vehicles presented the highest safety related issues on-road, with respondents reporting worsening of behaviour over last 24 months.
2. Riding off-road dog attacks and owners/walkers were the biggest hazard, with dogs often not under full control.
3. Most incidents go unreported.
4. Increases in urbanisation and the related traffic, means that the Cookham and Knowl Hill routes are no longer the safe haven for equestrians that they were intended to be. The same goes for on-road linkages to bridleways across the Borough.
5. Only 22% of PROW in the Borough are accessible for equestrians.
6. Equestrians do not use roads by choice, they would prefer local safe off-road riding. Transporting horses to off-road facilities that offer permits, such as Windsor Great Park and BCA, or further afield to more rural locations, is not possible for 35% who do not have transport and not feasible, in terms of time and effort to do so on a regular basis, for the remaining 65%.

Recommendations

1. Education programme for vehicles, cyclists, dog owners and riders, so that how we can harmoniously share multi-use access. This could include signage in known hotspots.
2. Licencing or accreditation of commercial dog walkers, to encourage greater responsibility around horses.
3. Continue to work with RBWM PROW to investigate improvements to Cookham and Knowl Hill circuits to increase both safety and usage by creating additional multi-use paths, linkages, off-road riding access e.g. Ashley Hill Forest, provision of parking and safe road crossings.
4. Invite more volunteers for sub-group to fully investigate safety improvements in all areas of the Borough, particularly for Windsor and Ascot.
5. Review speed limits and improve signage in Cookham and Cookham Dean, Lee Lane, Burchett's Green Lane, Warren Row Road, Terry's Lane, Mileys Road, Twyford Road. Consideration could also be given to the 'Quiet Lane' initiative by CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England).
6. Identify which highway verges, cycleways, open spaces owned by RBWM which could be opened to multi-use, in order to separate horses from motor traffic.
7. Planning and developments in the Borough to consider impact on horse routes and incorporate multi-use access, rather than cycling only.
8. Create a dialogue with local landowners regarding the potential subsidies available through the new Agriculture Bill, as a conduit to opening up access to field headlands and upgrading footpaths/cycleways to multi-use, in order to create safe linkages and additional off-road routes.
9. Educate local riders to report maintenance issues to RBWM PROW

As a follow up to the June LAF, the group have now created additional reports to cover more areas of the Borough.

The objective is to raise the awareness of the safety issues faced by equestrians and how, in an ideal world, these risks could be reduced. There are some suggestions, within the control of RBWM e.g.

highway margins, access to council owned land, speed limits, traffic safety measures. However, the majority require the support of landowners to upgrade existing footpaths to bridleways, or access to field margins, by potentially accessing grants available under the Agriculture Bill, to open land for wider leisure use. Landowners, so far, have not shown a great willingness to do so, but for the betterment of the community as a whole, their co-operation is sought.

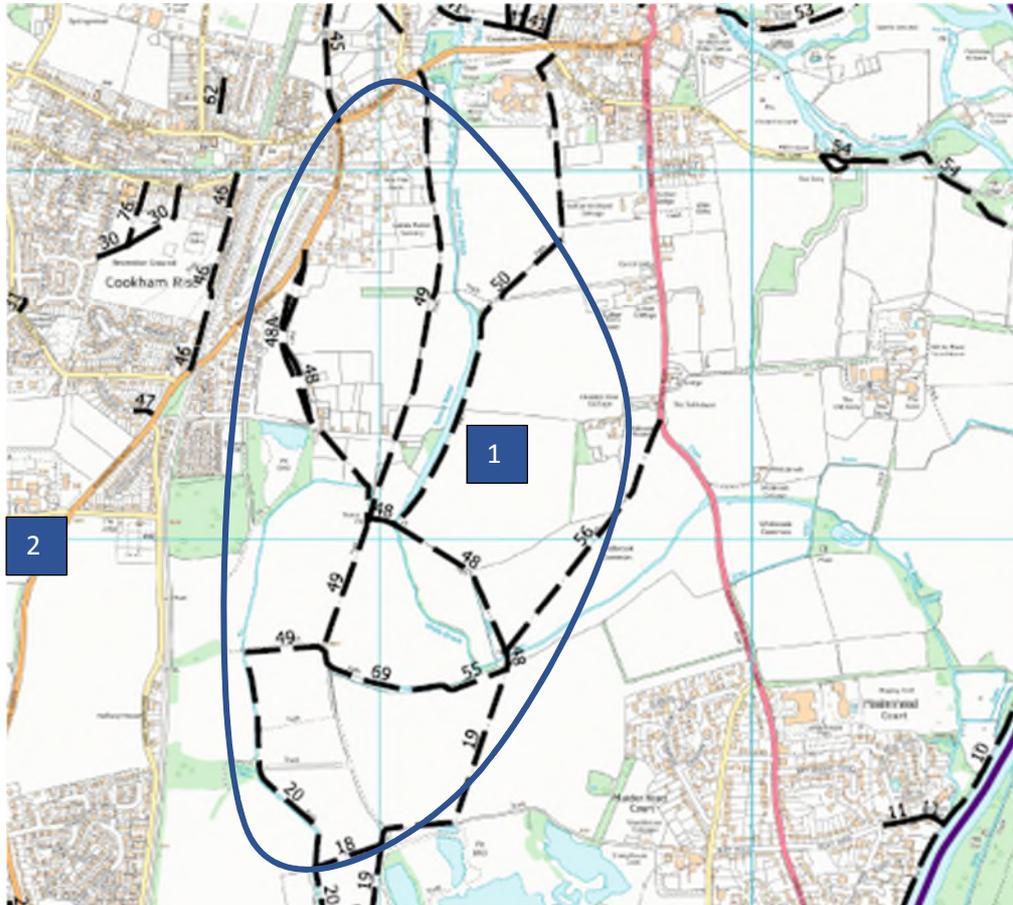
Supplementary reports;

1. Cookham
2. Fifield and Holyport
3. Knowl Hill, Walthams & Maidenhead Thicket
4. Ascot

Riding sub-group

Report 1 - Cookham

Cookham village south of Switchback & Cookham Rise



This area of Cookham does not have any accessible PRoW for horses, despite there being livery and private yards in this area. Field margins were previously available between Sutton Road and Strande Water, but these routes were closed to horses in July 2019.

To access the Cookham bridle circuit, riders need to mix with the busy traffic along Switchback Road, Whytelaydes Road or Lower Road through Cookham Rise.

The rider survey highlighted aggressive attitudes towards horses on the roads around Cookham, both verbally and behaviour in cars. The notice below, appeared on Strande Lane w/comm 26th October.



It reads:

Polite Notice*

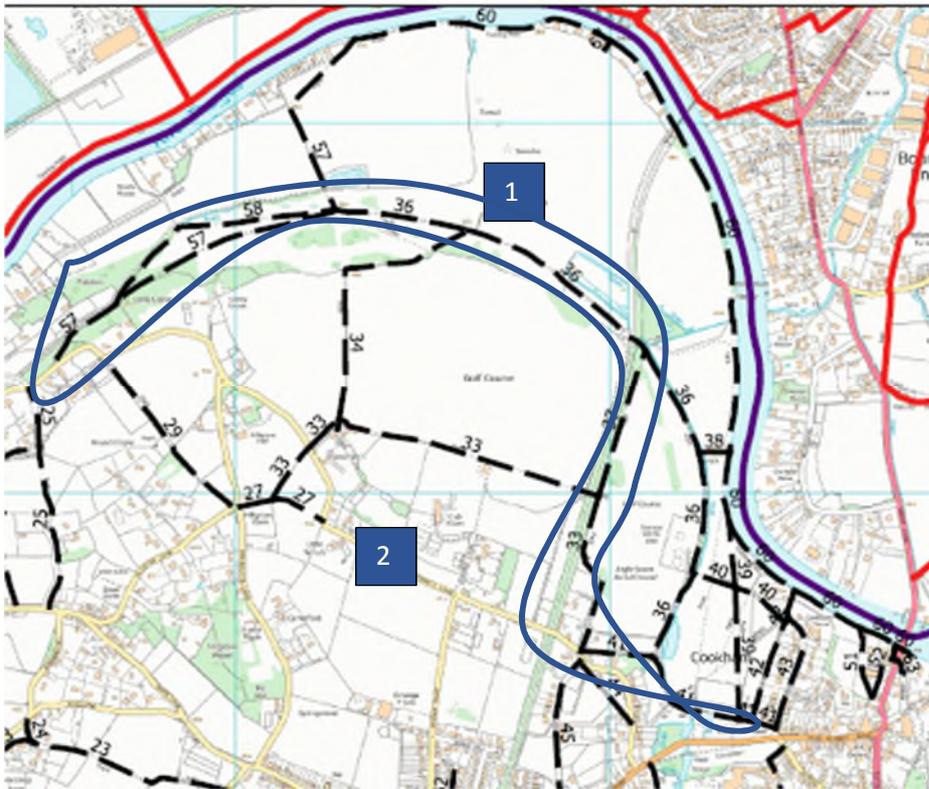
No more horses on Cookham Roads

* (a sarcastic reference to the hi-viz worn by some riders)

Suggested Improvements

1. Approach landowners Summerleaze, Copas farms to potentially open some field margins and National cycle route (48) on the land between Switchback Road and Lower Cookham/Sutton Road.
2. Make the shared foot and cycle path, which is Highways margin, from railway bridge, along Switchback Road to Malders Lane into a multi-user PRow, so that the Cookham BC can be accessed with greater safety.

Cookham village to Winter Hill

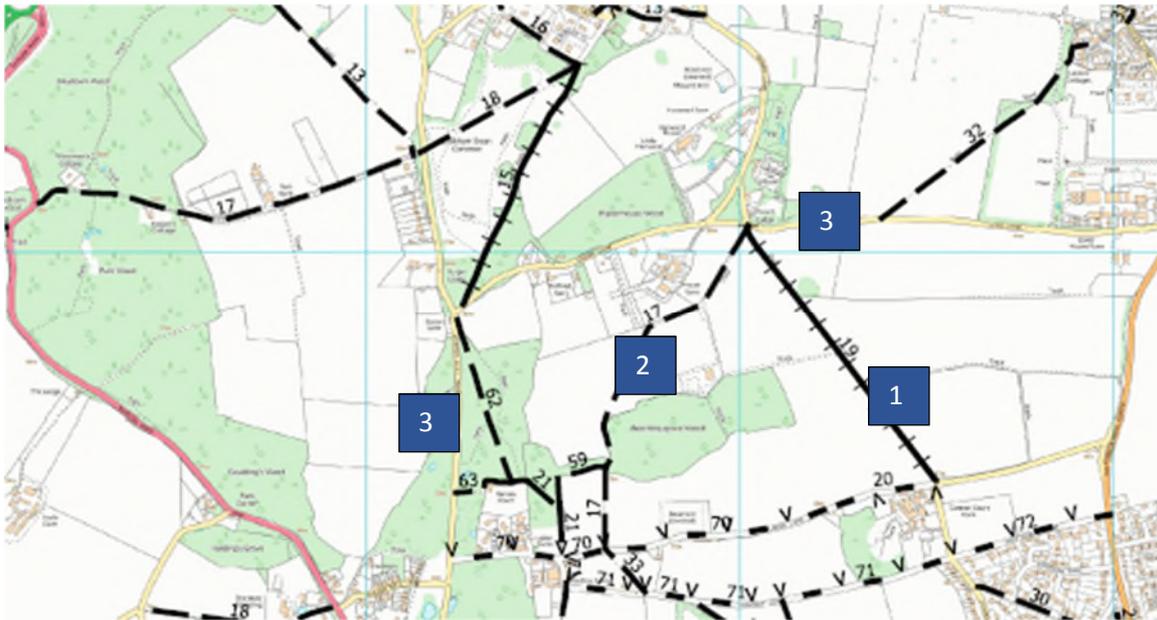


This area does not have any accessible PRoW for horses. Any riders from Cookham village wanting to reach Cookham Dean and Winter Hill, need to use the busy roads along Whyteladyes Road, Lower Road or Terry's Lane, which is quieter but narrower, with both cars and cyclists coming a little too fast at times.

Improvement suggestions

1. Approach landowners, Copas Farms, to open access to Cock Marsh along the bottom of the hill along FP41, FP36 to Railway bridge. then FP57 to Gibraltar Lane/Winter Hill. We understand that the FP36 from railway bridge & FP57 to Gibraltar Lane is National Trust managed, who have shown a willingness within the LAF to explore access opportunities. It is also part of the route identified for a potential Cookham cycle route, so would be ideal if this opportunity was opened up for equestrians also.
2. Reduce speed limit on Terry's Lane from national to 30mph and/or consider 'Quiet Lane' initiative, which would benefit riders and cyclists.

Switchback Road to Cookham Common

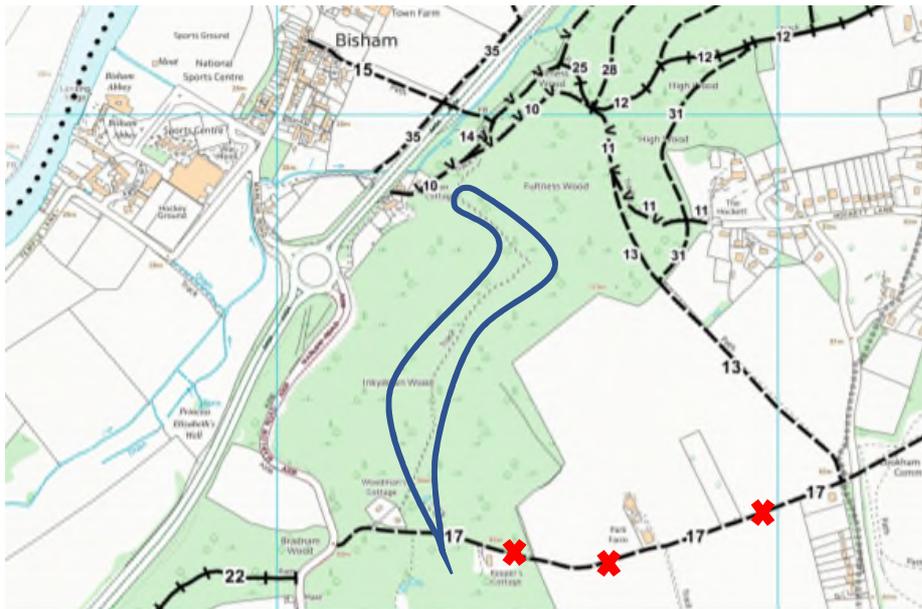


The Cookham BC can be accessed along either Malders Lane By-way 20 & 70 or Nightingale Lane By-way 72 & 71. The BW19 from Malders Lane to Long Lane has been surfaced in unsuitable material, making it slippery in the winter and extremely hard (like concrete) in the summer. Long Lane is narrow, with high hedges which means it can't be used safely to ride from Switchback Road to Cookham Dean. Previously it's understood that there was an accessible grass margin along Long Lane. National Trust has created accessible tracks through the woodland along Winter Hill Road, so that horses can access Pinkney's Green.

Improvements

1. Request that landowner, Copas Farms, replaces the unsuitable surface on BW19
2. Approach Copas farms to create a circular route by making FP17 into a bridleway, thus avoiding Long Lane
3. Reduce speed limits; Winter Hill Road, Long Lane and investigate if any safe margin could be made
4. Where the Cookham Bridleway circuit crosses Winter Hill Road near to the Brickworks there needs to be a sign of a horse making drivers aware of horses crossing for the next ½ mile as cars accelerate fast from the 30mph limit.

Cookham Common to Bisham Woods



The Woodlands Trust created a permitted bridleway through Inkydown Wood as part of the Cookham bridle circuit, joining FP17 through Park Farm. However, the permitted bridleway has been withdrawn by Park Farm for several years, breaking the circular route through Inkydown Woods to Cookham Dean Common.

Improvement suggestion

1. Approach Park Farm to reinstate the permitted bridleway.

Cookham Rise to Cookham Dean



Kennel Lane, which runs from Whytelaydes Road to Church Road in Cookham Dean, is designated as FP22, but both its name and historical map references would indicate that in fact should be a bridleway or by-way. In a Cookham Parish Council publication, it is referenced as an old roadway http://www.cookhamparishcouncil.org.uk/wa_files/pp_cookham_vds_part2.pdf

Berks XXIV 6 inch plan Surveyed 1875 Published 1882



This historical map shows Kennel Lane as a track and does not have a FP designation. The tithe map 43/1B from Diocesan Tithe records shows roads and lanes including Kennel Lane as an established route for public access. The Inland Revenue map IR 126_3_13 shows the greater part as a white road.

Landowner was approached in March 2009, but declined to upgrade to BW.

Milestones statement reference #22

Improvement suggestion

1. Raise a DMMO to upgrade to a bridleway.

Fifield North of Forest Green Road

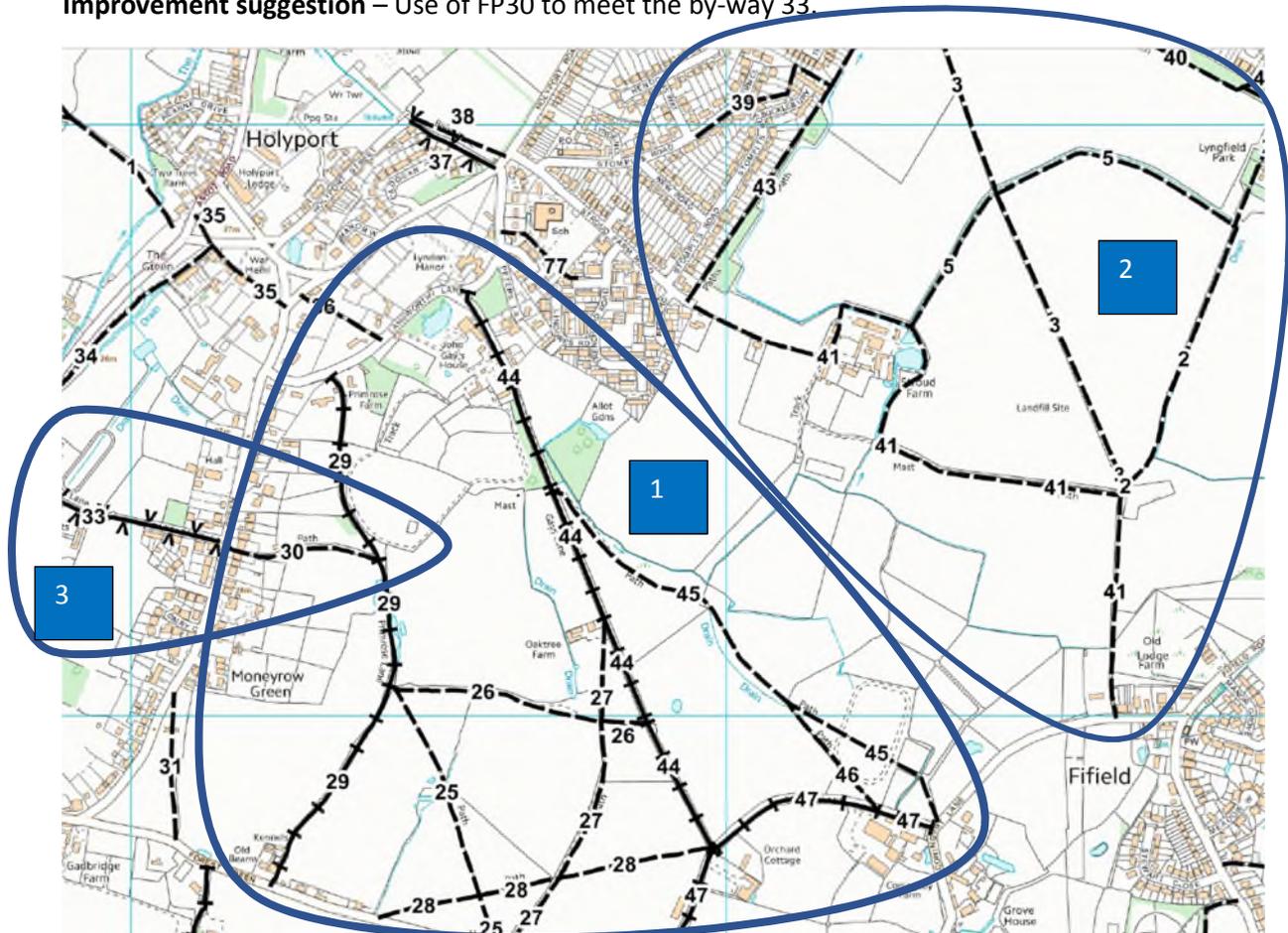
1. From Coningsby Lane, possible to hack over to Holyport using BW 47 & 44. Ideally a circular route could be back via BW29, but this ends on busy Forest Green Road, necessitating a .5 mile hack to BW47.

It is believed planning permission 18/03725/FULL to relocate Maidenhead Target Shooting Club to Oak Tree farm has been declined, however it is now going to appeal. The development of outdoor shooting ranges, along BW44, would introduce a hazard on one of the few safe off-road routes in this area. We would implore the council to reject the appeal for safety reasons.

Improvement suggestion – Join BW29 to BW44 using FP26 or FP25

2. Land between Coningsby Lane and A308 – no access for horses
It is believed the land would not be suitable for horse access
3. Link through Moneyrow Green to Ascot Road, no link from BW29

Improvement suggestion – Use of FP30 to meet the by-way 33.



Holyport to Stud Green

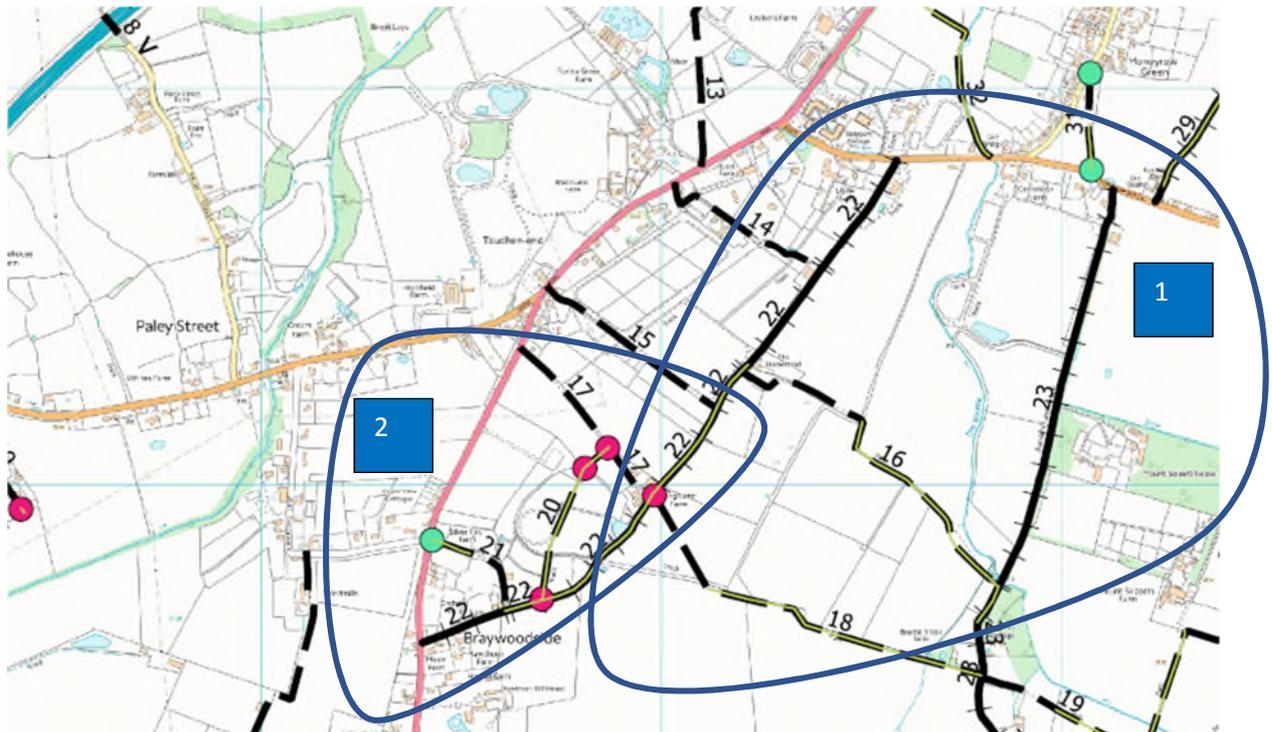
From by-way 33 or the verge alongside FP34, the safe access is using FP34 over the footbridge to the road, but this is narrow and horses can't turn easily. Instead riders need to go to Ascot Road and cross The Bourne using the white railed road bridge, which then means horses are on the 'A' road for longer than necessary, until the right hand turn into Stud Green.

Whilst riders wait to turn right into Stud Green, they are positioned on a slight bend and visibility for traffic approaching from behind (from Holyport) is therefore potentially dangerous.

Improvement suggestion – minimise use of Ascot Road by widening and extending FP34, providing a wider margin to safely cross the road into Stud Green. Install road signs to warn motorists.



Braywoodside to Paley Street



1. To reach BW22 from Fifield & Holyport, there is a disconnect of .5 mile along Forest Green Road from BW29.

Improvement suggestion – safer linkage using FP16 or FP18, from BW23.

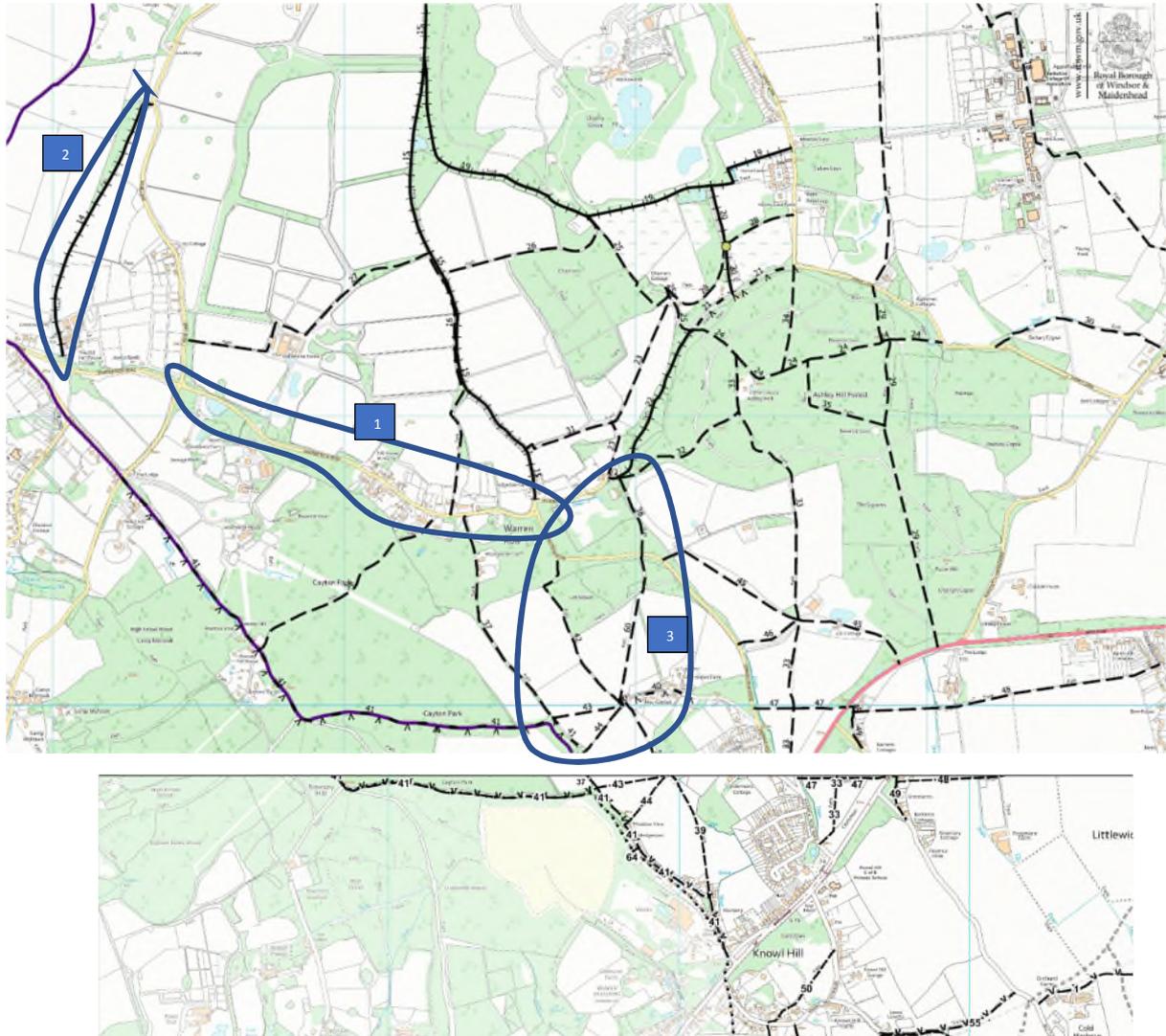
2. BW22 ends on Ascot Road, so getting to Paley Street from Braywoodside would require .25 mile on the busy Ascot Road.

Improvement suggestion – Using FP21 as a BW, which riders can then cross the road directly into Shepherd's Lane.

Riding sub-group

Report 3 - Knowl Hill Bridle Circuit

Hurley to Warren Row



Hurley parish has one of the better shares of accessible PRow for horses, including part of the Knowl Hill bridle circuit. There are a couple of points to raise;

1. The section of the Knowl Hill bridle circuit from Pudding Hill along Warren Row Road to Rose Lane is approx. 1.4km. Due to significant urbanisation of the M4 corridor since, this is no longer a safe riding route. Not only is this used as a cut through from A4 to Henley by motor vehicles, but is also a popular route for cycling clubs/groups attracted by the cycle café in Warren Row.

RBWM have made approaches to the landowner of Woodpecker farm to upgrade the FP37 'Star Lane', which for part of its route from A4 is a restricted by-way 41, but without success.

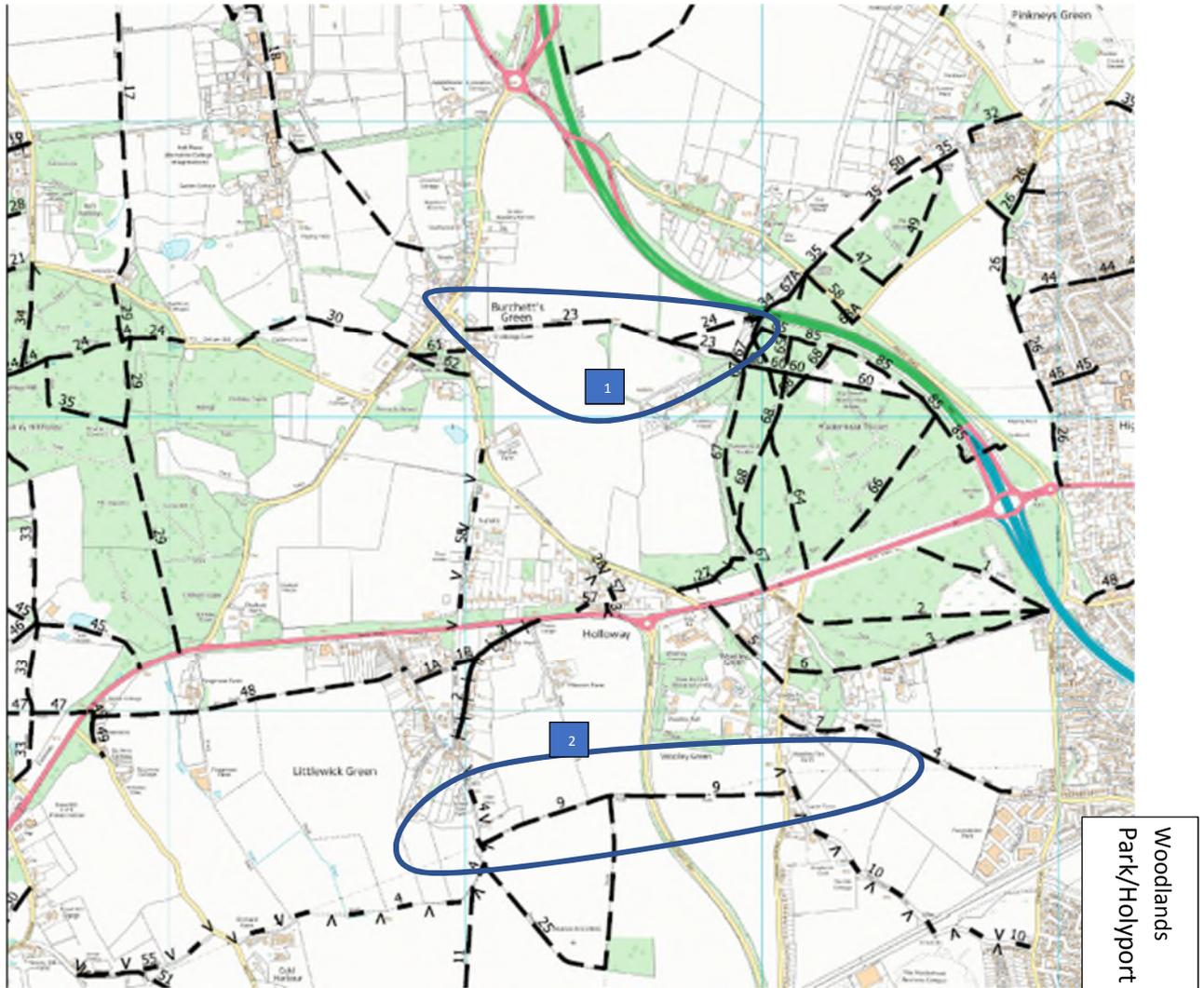
Improvement suggestion -make approaches to the landowners in section '3', some belonging to Cayton Park, to see if they could offer any off-road options.

RBWM to check if there's any possibility of a highway margin along Warren Row Road

- The surface of BW14 is poor and gets extremely wet and boggy.

Improvement suggestion – Resurfacing and drainage

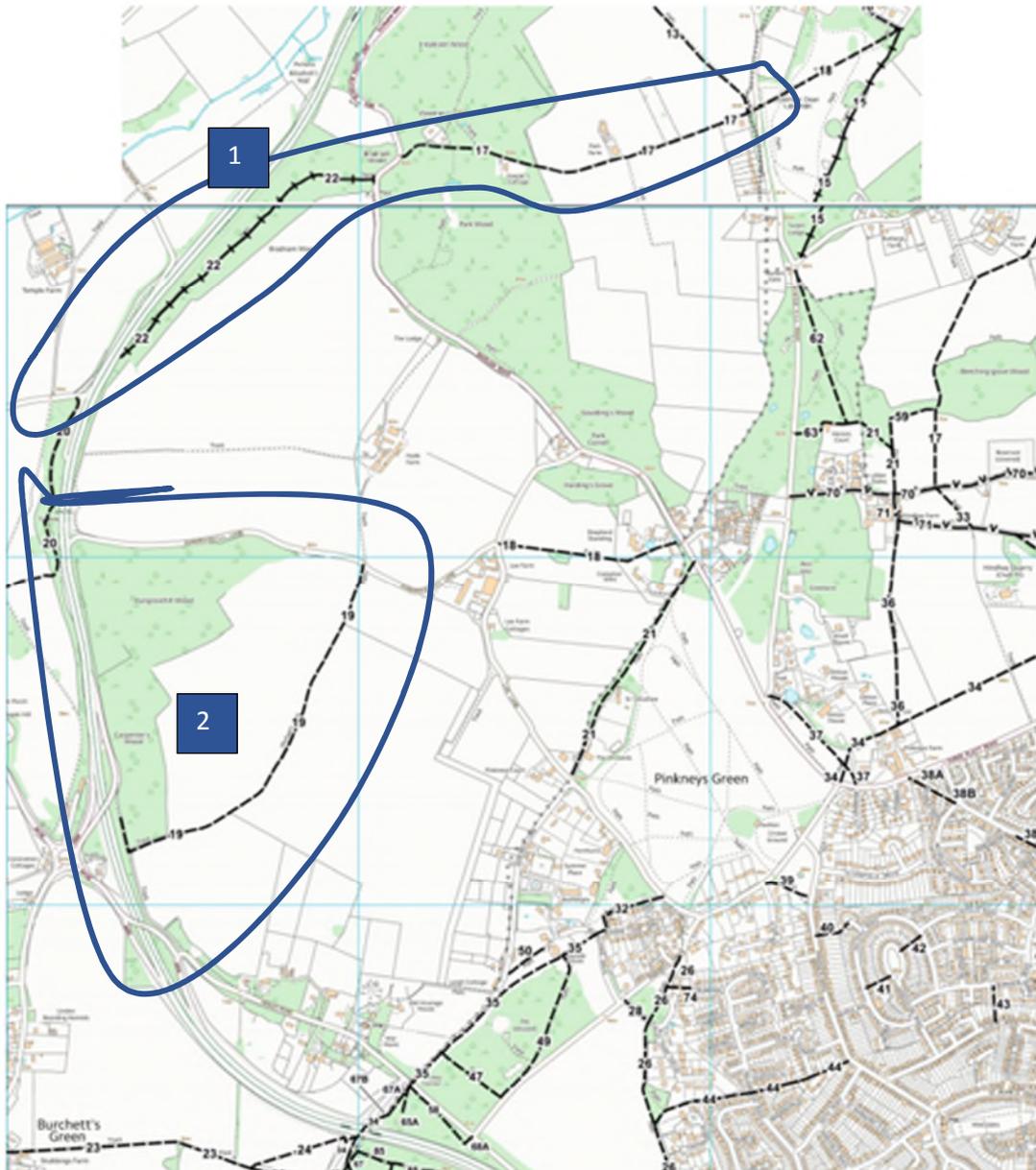
Linkage Knowl Hill to Cookham circuits



To join the Knowl Hill and Cookham BC via Maidenhead Thicket there are 2 potential improvements;

- Whilst it is possible to connect the Knowl Hill circuit from Burchett's Green down Burchett's Green Lane, then BW17 to the Thicket, this road is a rat run from A4 to Henley Road, creating potential safety issues. A safer route would be using FP23 from Burchett's Green to Stubbings, landowner is believed to be Rayner. This linkage is mentioned in the Milestones Statement 2020/21 reference #17
- Riders from Woodlands Park/Holyport direction can access Maidenhead Thicket and Cookham using by-way 10 to Cherry Tree Lane. However, should they wish to join the Knowl Hill circuit, they would either have to ride from Cherry Tree Lane along the A4 or take a circuitous route via Burchett's Green. A better and safer solution would be to upgrade FP9, already a permitted cycleway, to a bridleway. This small link drastically improves linkage of both circuits, for all riders. It is understood that approaches have been made to the landowner, believed to be Westcott/Copas, without success. Milestones statement reference #3.

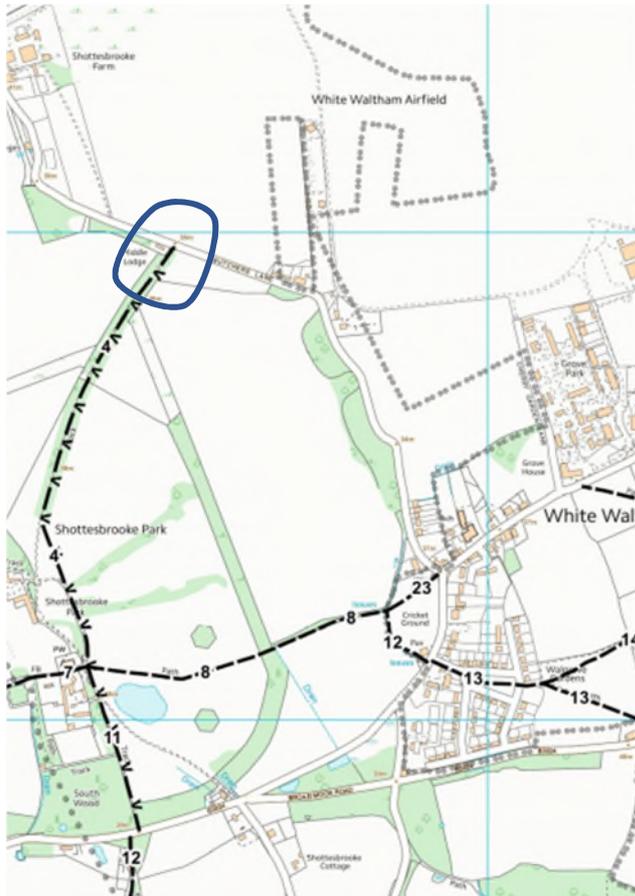
A308 Pinkneys Green, Dungrove Hill to Stubbings



1. Here is a perfect example of unusable bridleway. BW22 starts on a downhill bend of the A308 and ends at the A404 dual carriageway. It is easy to assume that historically, this was a route connected perfectly from Cookham Dean, down what is now only FP17 through Park farm, down to the Henley Road above Temple. This is referenced in Milestones Statement ref# 12 & 15, suggesting BW22 to meet Dungrove Hill Lane, however, without any opportunity to enter the BW from A308, it is difficult to see how this would be worthwhile.
2. Upgrade Bisham Footpath 19 to Bridleway and divert the path to adjoin the Henley road A404. Horse riders do use the footpath from Henley Road just before the Motorway bridge on the right through Dungrove Woods to Dungrove Hill Lane. Milestones statement reference #13.

Shottesbook and the Walthams PROW

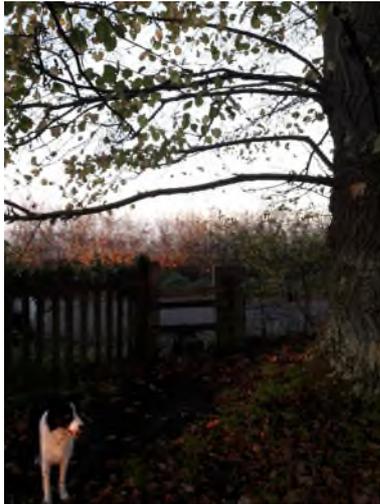
Looking at Appendix 7 in the PROW Management and Improvement Plan 2020-21



Part of the Knowl Hill Bridleway circuit goes through Shottesbooke Park, by-way 4. The entrance from Butcher's Lane is a heavy metal up and over gate, which is totally unsuitable for horse riders, taking 2 two hands to open/close, clearly taking your hands off reins is dangerous. Alternatively, the rider has to dismount, but it is not easy or possible for some riders to re-mount from the ground nor the low tree stump either side of the gate.



Walkers are able to use a stile near to the gate, however, this would not be the best position for an alternative horse access gate due to the large tree trunk near to the stile.

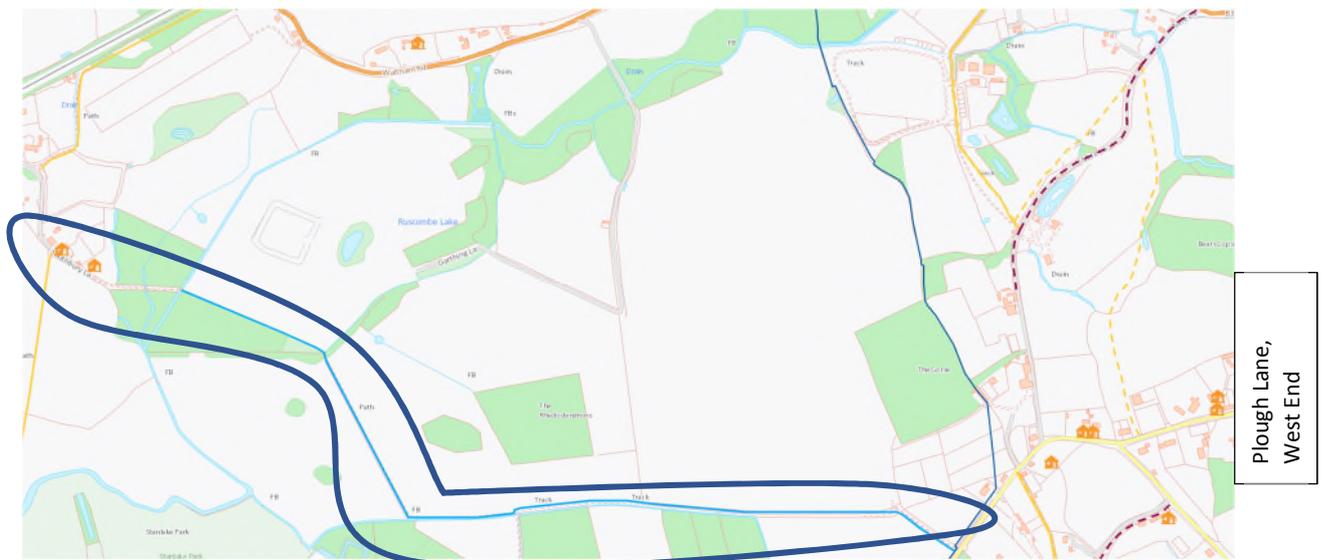


Numerous approaches have been made to the landlord numerous times by RBWM PROW department to ask for a horse gate, the BHS would pay for the gate if the landowner would install. Despite being followed up numerous times, the landlord has never responded.

The Walthams

This is point initiative has proposed co-operation with Wokingham Borough council and RBWM to increase off road riding. There is a possible riding Circuit from Plough Lane West End Starting on Def Map 14 via a bridleway going West towards Twyford, this is relatively long off road bridleway and ending at Ruscombe Church.

Milestones statement reference #5





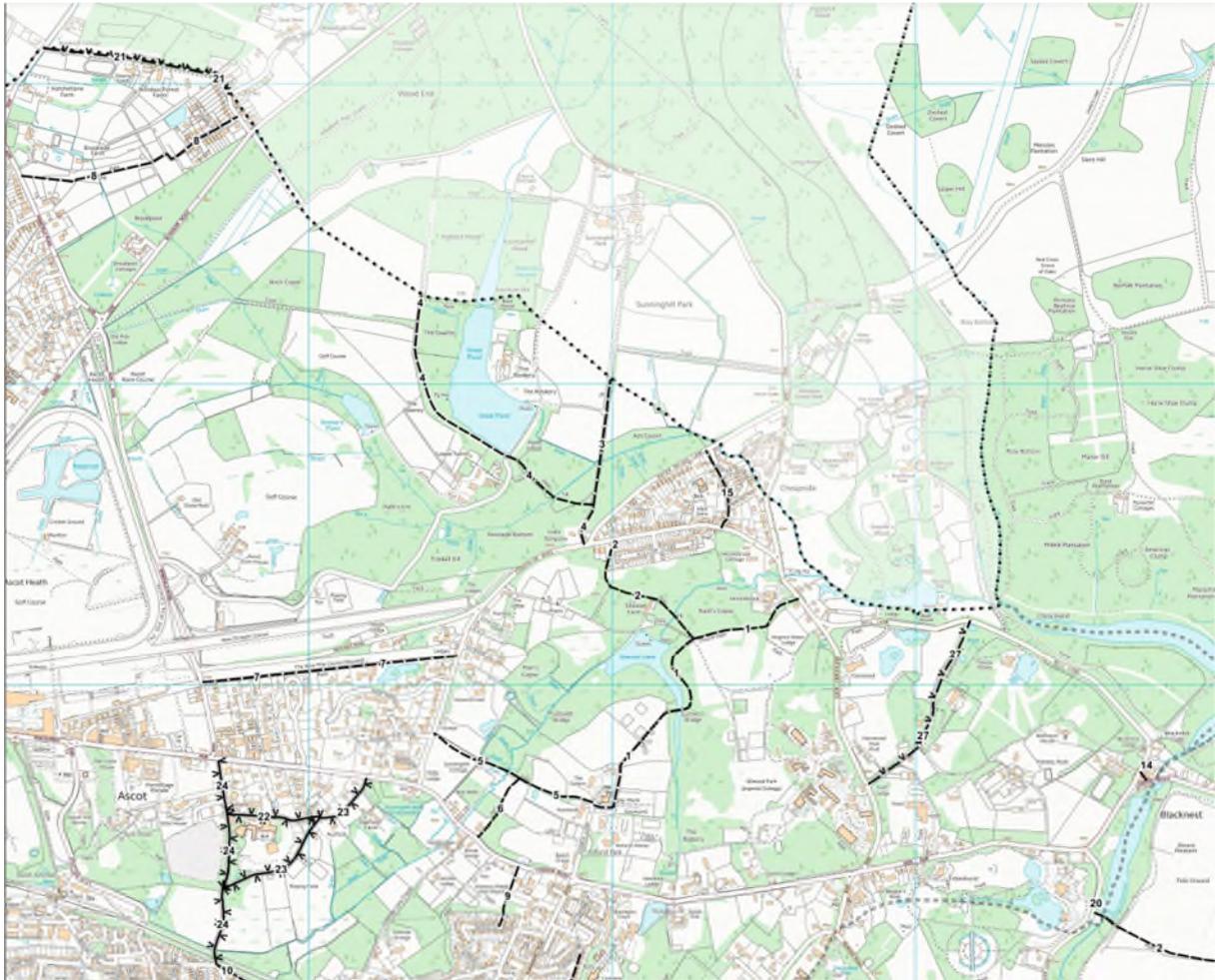
Joining the B3024 back towards Waltham St Lawrence, this is not ideal as a busy road and would have to cross near the railway bridge to join footpath 4 Wokingham where the end is at Milley Farm Waltham St Lawrence as footpath 9 on RBWM Def Map 8 which is part of RBWM. The footpath follows the railway line is straight for approximately 1+ miles and follows the boundary of a flat ploughed field and is well drained and would be good for horse access. This would enable riders to join the Knowl Hill circuit at Waltham St Lawrence near bridleway 20.

Riding sub group

Report 4

Ascot and Sunningdale area

A BHS colleague looked at the possibilities of riding in this area. The only footpaths that would be worth looking at actually fall into the Bracknell Forest boundary, or Surrey, in the area there are not many livery yards and those that there are many ride in Windsor Great Park with Access through the Ascot Gate.



Def Map 21 highlights the limited opportunities for horses, unless riding in Windsor Great Park (permit circa £270 pa)

It is noted that in the Milestones statement there are numerous mentions of upgrading footpaths to cycleway. Examples below, could potentially be reviewed to see if any are of use to equestrians.

61	New cycle route alongside Winkfield Road from the entrance to Ascot Racecourse and Royal Ascot Golf Course to the junction of A330 and A329 London Road/Ascot High Street
62	New cycle route from A330 Winkfield Road alongside New Mile Road, Cheapside Road and Watersplash Lane to B383 Sunninghill Road

Additionally, there are 2 references to upgrading FP to BW

63	Upgrade Sunninghill Footpath 5 to a bridleway usable by cyclists
64	Upgrade Sunninghill Footpath 1 to a bridleway usable by cyclists