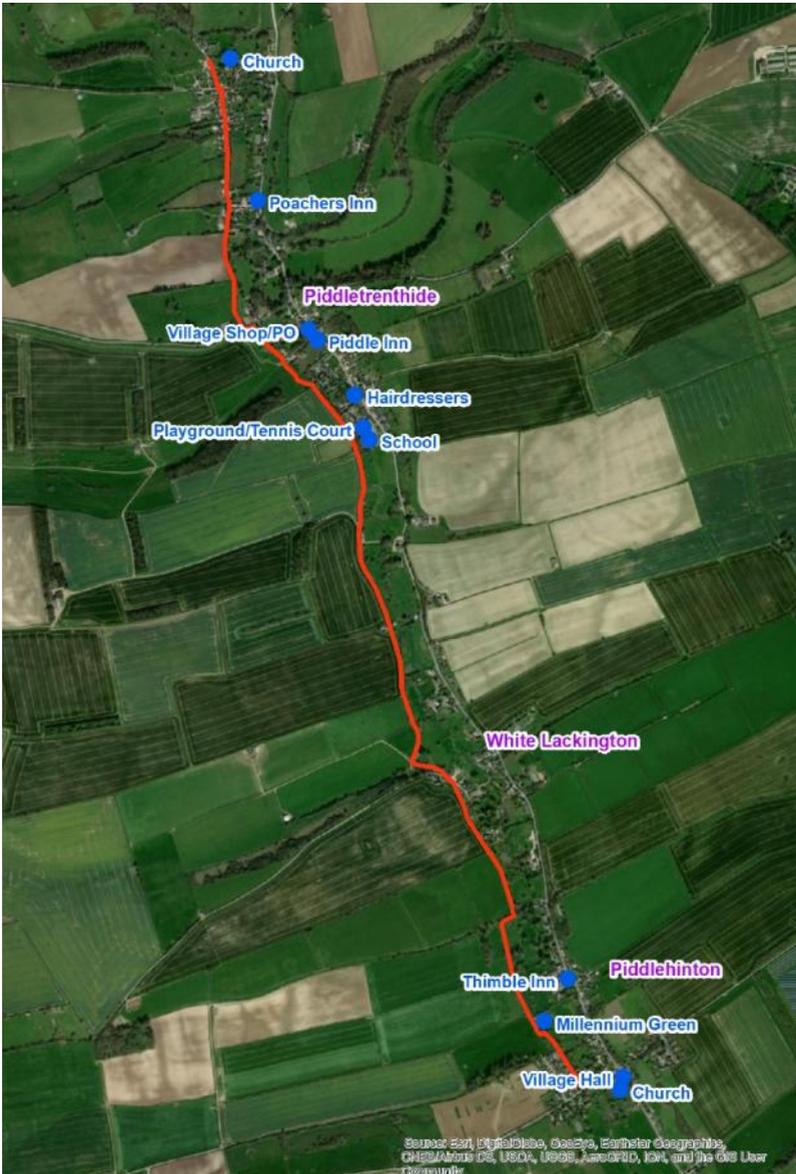




Piddle Path Improvement Plan (PIIP)



Sources: Esri, DeLorme, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Introduction

There are a number of objectives of the Piddle Path Improvement Plan (PIIP), not least of which is the provision of a 'safe route to school' (and other points of interest in the community) and a reduction in traffic on roads through the valley. The B3143 through the three settlements of Piddlehinton, White Lackington and Piddletrenthide is narrow, heavily trafficked and there are few pavements for safe access by pedestrians.

Project Description

The proposed improvements would follow the existing bridleway which runs parallel to the B3143, following the River Piddle from Rectory Road in Piddlehinton to the church in Piddletrenthide, a total of approximately 2.5 miles. The bridleway is linked, via numerous footpaths and bridleways, with the Wessex Ridgeway, Cheselbourne,



Plush and Cerne Abbas amongst others. The initial proposal is to make this section of the bridleway accessible all year round for horse riders, walkers, cyclists, wheelchairs and buggies, without changing its right of use. The proposal would also include: gates with horse friendly catches along the length of the bridleway; enhancing the access points to the path; and replacing the current stiles with pedestrian and mobility access gates.

In the Winter and Spring months the bridleway is impassable for the majority of the community in certain areas along its length making it unusable as a link between the three settlements. The two main issues are drainage and surfacing.

There is evidence in parts of a metalled surface and some of its length appears to have a hardcore base beneath the mud.

There are two major flooding areas which need to be addressed:

-) by Millennium Green which then runs into the village of Piddlehinton; and
-) between Sun Lane and Swan Lane where the stream breaches its banks.

Some of the path could be remedied by simply scraping and levelling, other sections may need resurfacing. Resurfacing would take place where necessary and would be of a material in keeping with its environs and committed to suiting all users of the path.

How Will it Benefit the Village's Inhabitants?

The road (B3143) is unsuitable for walkers as there is no pavement other than in the very centre of Piddletrenthide. The 30mph speed limit is often exceeded (as recorded by the speed watch committee) and the road is used by very heavy vehicles. In places, the B3143 is narrow and parked cars (often belonging to parents dropping children off at school, or residents visiting the shop or pub) can create a hazard. Cycling on this road cannot be considered safe and many parents cite this as the reason that they don't allow their children to cycle on it. There doesn't appear to be any scope for creating an in-road cycle lane given the space constraints and parked cars. Consequently, there is currently no 'safe route to school'.

The improvements would aid all users of the bridleway including horses and their riders by reducing equine injuries that can occur in deep mud. The improved



bridleway would also enable local villagers to access the shops, village halls and facilities without using the road, creating a cleaner and healthier environment for us all. It would also open up access for those with mobility issues or recovering from surgery, enabling those with buggies and wheelchairs to exercise locally and reducing the need to drive somewhere in order to exercise.

It is known that regular and frequent exercise significantly reduces stress, the likelihood of sedentary diseases such as obesity and the associated risks of heart disease, strokes, diabetes and some cancers. Walking, running, cycling and riding significantly reduce stress and improve mental health. When available on our doorstep, exercise can become part of a

daily routine, and when undertaken in company can aid social cohesion.

All users would benefit from an improved surface and an all year-round off-road link for the settlements between Piddlehinton and Piddletrenthide.

Background to the Piddle Path Proposal

This idea is not new. A plan to improve the bridleway is documented in the Piddle Valley Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2033 (p22) and this was formally approved and adopted by the former West Dorset District Council on 1st July, 2018.

Key points from the Neighbourhood Plan as regards the Piddle Path include:

- J In 2008 'Road safety was the main concern mentioned by two out of every three responses to the Parish Plan questionnaire'.

- J The Plan notes that there was a School Travel Plan dating back to 2013 which 'also found that many adults and children would prefer to walk or cycle to school but find this difficult due to the volume, speed and type of traffic that uses the local roads during peak times.'
- J The Plan proposes an all-weather cycle route along the existing bridleway and found that this was supported by 'three-quarters of those responding to the parish plan questionnaire'.
- J Furthermore, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy 6 of the Neighbourhood Plan: 'The enhancement of existing and provision of a new safe walking and cycling connections will be supported'.



Prior to the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan, in 2012 the Piddle Valley Parish Plan also showed strong support for an off-road all-weather bridleway with 74.9% of respondents being in favour. Residents also expressed concern regarding traffic and transport issues at the 2013 Village Fetes. This information can be viewed in the newsletters on the Piddle Valley Community Website ([Piddle Valley Community Website - Home](#)).

A school survey conducted in December 2020 received 121 signatures of support and we also have the support of the Church, local businesses as well as other members of the local community. A Facebook supporters page was set up in December 2020 and currently (early February 2021) has over 150 members. In addition, the proposal already has permission and support from one of the land estates.

Current Status

During the COVID19 lock down, many more people have taken to cycling and walking and there was a sense of community developing between the three somewhat isolated settlements. With the government incentives for pop up cycle lanes; walking to school; local exercise; reducing obesity; improving mental health; and sustainable transport, it seems an opportune moment to make this improvement.



We have a Piddle Path Action Team (PPAT) comprising of five voluntary members of the local community, each offering different areas of expertise. We have many offers from the community of further help and support. We are also in contact with a number of similar, local, volunteer-led projects who are offering support and advice.

We are consulting with the British Horse Society (BHS) and other equestrians to ensure that any proposed improvements are sympathetic to their needs and to ensure that the proposals also enhance their use of the bridleways.

Dorset Council has been on site and has funds for this type of project, and we are also approaching other sources of funding. The track is being surveyed for drainage and deviation from the definitive map.

The Future

The Piddle Path would provide a linkage between the three settlements of Piddlehinton, White Lackington and Piddletrenthide as well as a 'safe route to school' and other places of interest within the valley. It would protect and enhance the animal and plant biodiversity in the valley and promote the open green spaces and woodland.

Please join Piddle Path Improvement Plan on Facebook



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/piddlepath> to be kept informed on progress and for any further questions, please email Maria de Figueiredo Mariadefig@yahoo.co.uk.