

EAST BOLDON FORUM

November 2020

COMMENTS ON THE INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE MOOR LANE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLING IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

East Boldon Forum (EBF) would like to give its **support** for the permanent continuation of the Moor Lane pedestrian and cycling improvement scheme.

EBF is a constituted body recognised by South Tyneside Council and is close to completing a Neighbourhood Plan for East Boldon. Within the emerging plan we are proposing a number of policies which will support walking and cycling in general, and the concept of Active Travel Routes in particular. Moor Lane is one such route identified in our draft plan.

We are delighted that South Tyneside Council is trialling this initiative for Moor Lane. We have shared information about it with our 200 plus membership and so far we have received no negative feedback.

Members of our Executive have been monitoring the use of the route since it was opened on 26th October and have found it well used by cyclists, walkers and joggers. All age groups seem to be represented by users, ranging from the very young, (push chairs are now a regular feature), to those who walk at a more leisurely pace. One of our members met an 83 year old lady walking the route this week. She asked if we would respond for her because she does not use social media. She said "This it is wonderful. It is good for the soul." She is appreciative of the fact that the initiative will also give further protection to the SSSI.

Feedback from users is very positive. One East Boldon resident who uses a wheelchair said that the road was generally 'too dangerous to use', but the new lane had allowed her to access an area of countryside usually 'off limits'. Local bird watchers have told us that they are also supportive of the scheme and welcome the opportunity to observe birds without the worry of speeding cars and the noise from motor vehicles. They report some walkers becoming regular visitors to the 'bird feeders' and whole families getting involved since the scheme started. They also say that there are record numbers of birds visiting the feeders with mallards and moorhen now venturing towards the feeder station. With the reduction in traffic volume, there is less litter being discarded, and that is being removed more quickly by the increased numbers of pedestrians using the route.

In normal circumstances Moor Lane is a dangerous road with traffic sometimes exceeding the existing 40mph limit. It has no footpaths and several 'blind bends', the effect of which is to discourage use by walkers and cyclists alike. However, the walking and cycling lane now provided allows safe access to Boldon Flats, a wonderful habitat for birdlife, and also links East Boldon safely to a wider network of off-road footpaths.

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The current measures, however, could be improved with the addition of the following:

- Reduction of the speed limit on the west bound lane to 20 mph. The narrowness of a single traffic lane and the close proximity to walkers and cyclists in the traffic free lane means that speeds in excess of this cannot be safe or justified.

We congratulate those who have worked to implement this initiative and would encourage the Council to make it a permanent fixture.

Dave Hutchinson
Forum Secretary