

## **Cycling around Stansted Mountfitchet**

Our objective is to provide a wider choice of safe cycling routes in and around Stansted Mountfitchet, but the urban topography presents logistical difficulties, especially travelling between the northern and southern areas of the village. This is due to the challenging steep gradients and separation caused by the London-Cambridge railway line. The proportion of private roads in Stansted is high but fail to provide safe, continuous links across the village.

Like many other smaller historic communities nationwide, the core routes in Stansted Mountfitchet are narrow and heavily used. This fails to offer a safe environment for those wishing to cycle, which has recently been acknowledged by the declassification of 'National Cycle Route (NCR) 11', between Station Road, Stansted and Wendens Ambo. The arterial B1383 is the only north-south route through the village, but it is narrow and assessed at 150% 'stress level'. All the factors described above are physical barriers to the less confident cyclist to enjoy 'The Freedom of the Road'.

The recently withdrawn former Uttlesford Draft Local Plan failed to include any infrastructure benefits for Stansted Mountfitchet. However, the 2018 East Herts plan, for improving walking and cycling routes, in and around Bishops Stortford, should add pressure on Uttlesford to provide a safe link between Stansted and Bishops Stortford.

### **What opportunities exist for offering cyclists greater freedom through off-road cycleways?**

#### **Travelling South from Stansted Mountfitchet.**

- **SA1 - To Stansted Airport:** - The proposed development of the North Stansted Airport area, it is hoped, will offer a safe cycling route between the village and Stansted Airport. This would commence at the eastern end of Church Road to follow Bridleway 60 and continue to the 'Round Coppice' roundabout. It will also provide a connection to the 'NCR 16', the Flitch Way and onward to Great Dunmow.
- **SA2 - To Birchanger and Great Dunmow:** - There is already an established route used by many cyclists, following Parsonage Lane, (Bridleway 27), and on to Birchanger, (via Bridleway 5). From Birchanger it follows Bridleway 18, (now part of 'NCR 16'), over the M11 towards the Flitch Way, ('NCR 16'), ongoing to Great Dunmow.
- **SA3** – Potential part of route to connect Birchanger to North Stansted Airport development.
- **To Bishops Stortford:** - At present, the only direct route is via the very busy B1383 and any progress to find a safe alternative will involve the co-operation of Landowners, Uttlesford District and Essex County Councils, to consider three potential 'Cycle Corridors'.
  - **BS1 -Via Parsonage Lane, through Birchanger Village to the A120:** -  
The issue here is that a cycle and pedestrian bridge will need to be built over the very busy A120 to gain access to Bishops Stortford. However, the recently published "Bishops Stortford – Walking and Cycling Strategy" could exert pressure on both UDC and ECC to commission a joint initiative.
  - **BS2 – Via Forest Hall Road, Totts Lane, into Birchanger to join BS1:**  
All roads mentioned here are tarmacked and provide onward connection to **NCR16**.
  - **BS3 - Via Footpath 25, Birchanger path 28, to 'Bat Willow Park', Bishops Stortford:**  
This Cycle Corridor is more problematic as it involves widening and surfacing Footpath 25, which follows parallel to the Stansted Brook, crossing the B1383 at its junction with Gypsy Lane and following that lane before going off-road. The Birchanger path 28 would need widening and surfacing. A cycling and pedestrian bridge over the river Stort would also need to be built. There would be need for an extension of a path from Bat Willow Park, requiring the co-operation of Bishops Stortford Town Council.  
*Road safety will be the main issue here in view of the need to cross the B1383.*

*NB. Church Road will be the main "the feeder route" for Cycleways BS1 and SA1*

## Travelling North and West from Stansted Mountfitchet.

### Accessed from Bentfield End: -

- **SB1 - Northward: - Via Pennington Lane**, (a tarmacked 'Protected Lane'), either on to the B1383 or, following Bridleway 55, which connects to the ancient 'Harcamlow Way', (Ugley Parish Bridleway 33 and Manuden Parish Bridleway 19). Negotiations would be required with Landowners, Ugley and Manuden Parish Councils to provide a robust surface for cycling. There are great opportunities for onward travel through the wider countryside.
- **SB2 - Westward: - Via Bentfield Bower onward to Manuden and beyond**, following tarmacked roads which grant access to many other country routes.
- **SB3 - Southward: - Via Limekiln Lane**, (a 'Protected Lane'), either to the B1383 or Hazel End. *(The issues here are the very busy B1383 and a very steep hill to Hazel End).*

## Travelling North and East from Central Stansted Mountfitchet.

- **SC1 - Via Gall Lane, Footpath 17, alongside the Ugley Brook to the High Lane roundabout:** The establishment of this proposed route will depend on negotiations with Landowners and S106 money injection. It would provide easy cycling access to Lower Street from Walpole Meadows and offer access from central Stansted to Pennington Lane and Alsa Street.

### Onward travel via Alsa Street

- **AS1 - Northward via Alsa Street and Snakes Lane:** - This route follows through Ugley Green and on to Elsenham Station Level Crossing. From there onward travel into Elsenham and Henham is possible. These are all on tarmacked roads.
- **Eastward on Alsa street:** - There are two alternative routes.
  - **AS 2 - Via Footpath 44 through Alsa Wood over the M11 to Elsenham path 32:** All Landowners and Elsenham Parish Council would need to be consulted to widen the footpath and provide a stable surface.
  - **AS3 - Via May Walk, Stansted Road into Elsenham:** Part of this route is unmade with a gravel surface but suitable for cycling.

### Travelling East from Stansted Mountfitchet: - The only eastward route, by road, is via Grove Hill which presents serious safety issues for road cycling. One possible alternative is the following: -

- **SC2 - Via Gall Lane and Footpath 18:** - This pathway, by-passes the single lane bottleneck at Grove Hill. It is not ideal, but for the less confident cyclist, it offers a safer passage.

## ROUTES WITHIN THE VILLAGE

As mentioned previously, there are limited options for a North-South village cycling route. Church Road does offer such an opportunity but will require S106 money and Landowner approval, so that a safer passage along this busy road is achieved.

Forest Hall Road offers an easy East-West route and access into Birchanger.

However, it has been noted, cyclists travelling from Birchanger, via Parsonage Lane, are finding their way via Foresthall Park, Stoney Common/Mountfitchet Estate and Water Lane to Lower Street.

***The issues here involve the safety of pedestrians, especially where travelling includes the use of 'twitchells' and the railway footbridge, where cyclists will need to be aware that it is a pedestrian environment and dismounting will be necessary, as outlined in regulations within the new Highway Code taking effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022.***

# PROPOSED CYCLEWAYS

