

Mobility Scooter and Wheelchair Users

It is too easy for the able-bodied, to overlook the needs of those with mobility deficiencies. It is the view of the Parish Council that those 'deficiencies' should not preclude people the opportunity to an access to shops and free movement within the village. Similarly, such deficiencies should not deny "free passage" to enjoy the open countryside.

The hilly nature of the village's topography presents serious difficulties for wheelchair and mobility scooter users where roads and pathways were not designed for ease of passage. Speed Bumps, especially along some private roads, are not wheelchair/scooter friendly objects.

The historical design of buildings fails to allow for modification to grant access for those with mobility-assistance vehicles. Another hazard that needs to be overcome is the vehicles being parked on footpaths.

There are a number of 'Twitchells' which are narrow and in need of resurfacing in order to facilitate trouble free passage for these vehicles, but it's the steep hills and narrow footpaths which present the greatest obstacles to safe travel. Dropped kerbs in certain places have made it a more hazardous experience to use and it is almost impossible for people with mobility issues to travel direct between Stansted, Birchanger and Bishops Stortford, owing to an architectural feature of the Old Bell pub and unsafe and poorly maintained footpaths. Similar issues are faced when travelling north alongside the B1383 Cambridge Road.

As highlighted within the text on **Cycleways**, there is potential to utilise Bridleways as assets for multiple use to gain access to the countryside. The object is to provide some routes to be designated 'Mobility Friendly' to offer trouble free travel to enjoy wider horizons.

The map below highlights five potential routes which could become designated as such:

Route MA – Access can be gained via the Bentfield/Hargrave Estate areas west of the B1383 Cambridge Road on to Pennington Lane, a 'Protected Lane, popular for walkers and cyclists. Access can also be gained from Walpole Meadows. On reaching the end of the lane there is the hazard of having to cross over the B1383 to return into Stansted where again crossing the roads, by the Walpole Meadows roundabout, will present a hazard.

Route MB – This proposed route starts at Alsa Street, following it through to the Aubrey Buxton Reserve car park and forward, via May Walk, (the surface of which will need repair), to the B1051 Elsenham Road. To return to Stansted there is a footpath but there is no safe route via Grove Hill. The safe alternative would be to establish a surfaced path along Footpath 18 to Gall End to connect with Gall End Lane.

Route MC – Subject to S106 funding, this multi-use path would prove a most valuable asset for all travelling between Walpole Meadows and the village centre and open up further possible routes for the future. From Gall End Lane there are a number of central areas where care will be needed to negotiate road junctions.

Route MD – This is a circuitous route following Water Lane, 'Black Bridge', West Road, Footpath 24, along Forest Hall Road, Walson Way and Church Road. This route can be accessed from within the Mountfitchet and Foresthall Estates and offering further potential for the future. Crossing hazards at Stoney Common and Church Road will need to be noted.

Route ME – This potential route will require landowner consent and S106 funding, starting from Church Road, near to Churchfields, following Footpath 54 to St Mary's Church, and returning to Church Road near Foresthall School. This would be a valuable multi-use asset.