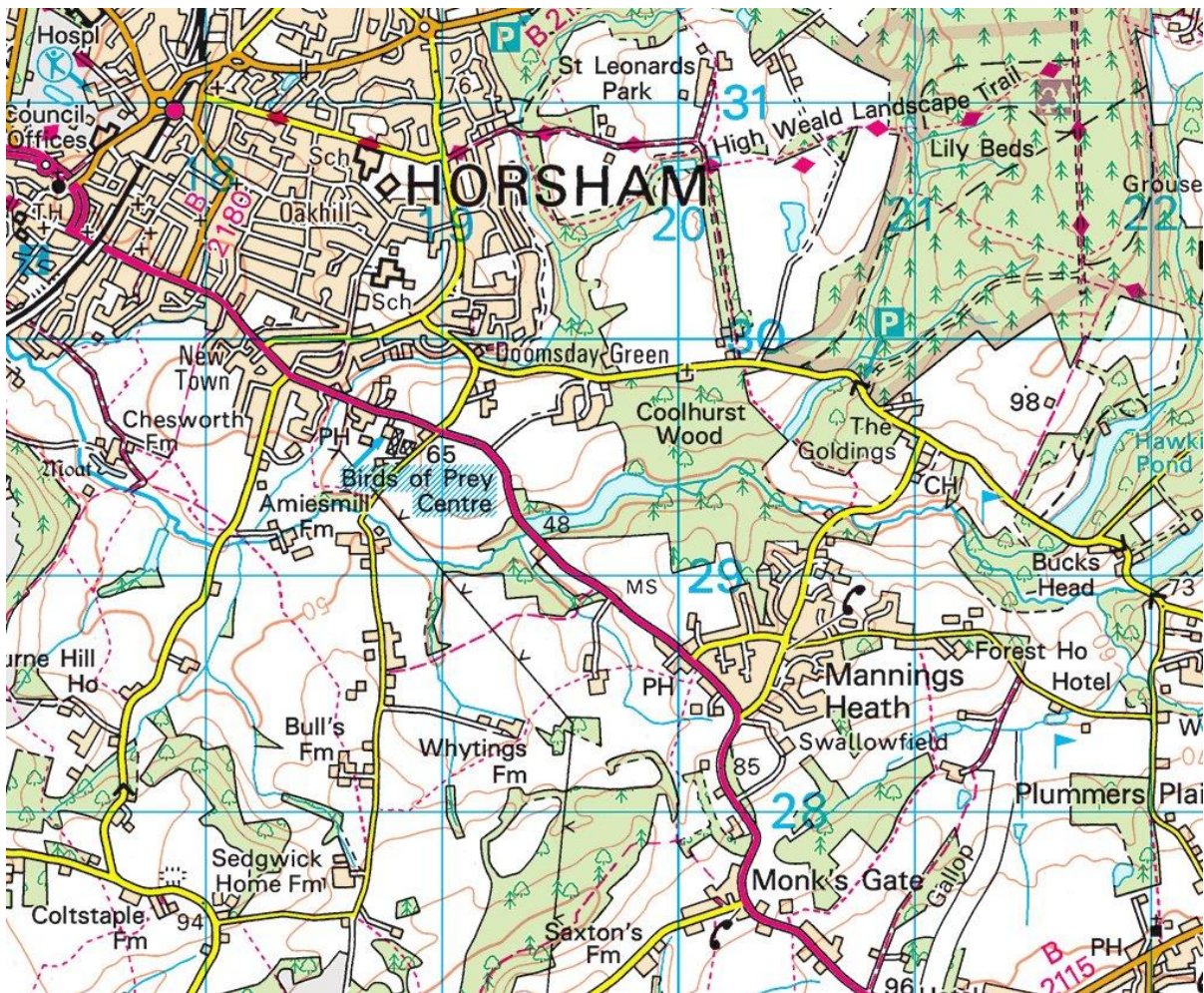


Mannings Heath/Monks Gate cycle route (Draft report)

The Nuthurst Neighbourhood Plan includes an aspiration for a safe cycle route from Mannings Heath/Monks Gate to Horsham.

The cycle forum was asked to investigate what options are available for making the route safe.



The current route along the A281 is dangerous and unpleasant both for cyclists and pedestrians and effectively bars all but the most determined from cycling into Horsham. In addition to the actual dangers along the route there is a high level of subjective danger. The route feels very dangerous because of the closeness to fast moving heavy traffic, and the lack of protection provided for vulnerable road users.

The current design of the road fails to provide a viable cycling and pedestrian route to Horsham.

Notes from riding the route into Horsham 30/7/15

Any cycle route would most likely follow the footpath on the southern side of the A281.

The path is very narrow (typically 1.5m but often narrower). You are very close to the road and it feels very scary, especially going the “wrong way” out to Mannings Heath facing the oncoming traffic. There is a high risk of falling into the road.

The surface is poor in many places. There are tree roots, manhole covers etc. These can be difficult to see because of the dark caused by overhanging trees and the path is unswept and covered in leaves in places. You need to pay attention at all times.

Overhanging vegetation needs to be cut back. Much of it is on private property?

There is a fair amount of street furniture (posts, signs etc.) blocking the path.

Where should the route start? Nuthurst Road?

Options

If what is being envisaged is simply making the current path shared-use then it will enable people to cycle legally into town but once it has been signed as a cycle route people would obviously start to use it, which could potentially be quite dangerous. Such a narrow part is not suitable for 2-way use or any sort of “heavy use”. The simple case of two ordinary cyclists coming in opposite directions could be very dangerous. Any mistake puts you straight into the road.

There are several sections where the path is separated from the road by a grass verge and there is scope for widening the path.

The Sustrans Design Manual¹ states the minimum width for a one-way cycle track is 2m (or 1.5m + 0.5m margin) on a busy road over 40mph. (p16)

The minimum space needed for 2 cyclists passing each other (two-way track) is 2.5m. (p7)

Would it be marked by a white line near the kerb? It would help to delineate the path and would be especially helpful since it is quite dark under the trees.

There is a difficult section by the garage where you have to cross a wide entrance.

¹ http://www.sustrans.org.uk/sites/default/files/file_content_type/sustrans_handbook_for_cycle-friendly_design_11_04_14.pdf

The section by the bridge is extremely narrow. This feels terrifying even when walking (you need to wait for a gap in the traffic before crossing to feel safe).

The route is not suitable for use after dark. There is a risk of not seeing the poor surface and of falling off or deviating into the road. An additional hazard would be lights from vehicles blinding you when going east).

Who are the likely users? Elderly people? Disabled? Such a route would be not be suitable for children or families. To be inclusive the routes should cater for buggies, bike with trailers etc.

Where are people mostly wanting to get to? Town centre? Station? Beyond?

Where should the route end?

The westbound route could end:

- At Sedgwick Lane (where the worst of the road ends)
- By the 30mph signs just before Kerves Lane
- All the way to East Street

The route needs to offer continuous protection from the worst of the traffic otherwise it won't be used.

Alternative route via Hampers Lane

An alternative route via Depot Road/Hampers Lane offers a quiet alternative or additional route from the north of Horsham/station to the north of Mannings Heath via Goldings Lane/Church Road. This would not be very direct (and as consequence would be unlikely to be used by commuters, shoppers, school children etc.) but potentially offers a quiet leisure route.

The footpath between Hammerpond Road and Golding Lane has scope for widening and upgrading (landowner permitting).

Combined with a route along the A281 this could provide an alternative route into Horsham as well as forming a potential circular cycle route.

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