



Ditch four wheels – it's better this way

by Rachael Woods

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Tenterden is gearing up to become more cycling-friendly and plans to open up new routes for those opting for two wheels

The town's cycling strategy steering group has held its first meeting, involving Cllrs Justine Nelson and Sue Ferguson, the public and representatives from Tenterden Cycling Club

The group's vision is to create a safe east to west cycling route through the town to cut down on car journeys, relieve pressure on parking spaces and promote healthier forms of transport.

A plan to add to the existing path in St Michael's that follows the old railway route, extending it from Drury Road into the centre of Tenterden, is one of the priority projects.

The cycle path has a good surface at the St Michael's end but deteriorates to gravel and disappears by the entrance to Turners Field, where cyclists turn into Drury Road. After that they face a steep climb up Haffenden Road and reach the A28 at Turners Avenue.

Tenterden Cycling Club is proposing a safer, child and mobility scooter-friendly route via Eastwell Meadows into town and also to provide access to the path for Homewood School.

The land at the old railway station is fenced off and overgrown and will need to be purchased and agreements would also need to be made with Kent and East Sussex Railway.

Another route earmarked



A steering group is determined to make Tenterden more bike-friendly

Picture: Getty Images/Stockbyte Platinum

for fast-tracking in the scheme is the footpath between Knockwood Road and Ingleden Park Road, with the proposal to upgrade the short section to make it suitable for shared use with cyclists and mobility scooter users, who can then avoid the A28. There are land ownership and boundary issues to be investigated with this scheme too.

A review of the town's cycle racks concluded that improvements were needed. Those at the town's supermarkets were criticised either for their design or inaccessibility due to being surrounded by trolleys.

Other measures to promote cycling considered by the group, include modern lighting for cycle paths and a change to road markings to allow cyclists to set off first once lights turn green, a measure already adopted in many busy city centres.

Tenterden's cycling strategy steering group's next meeting is on Wednesday, March 9, at the Town Hall from 7pm.

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'We need to encourage using a bicycle for shopping, going to work, school'

MORE PATHS

Cllr Sue Ferguson said "I'm sure given a few more safe cycle paths in and around Tenterden we can encourage a lot more people and families to get out on their bikes to keep fit and enjoy the countryside.

"Cycling on the A28 is scary and we need alternatives as soon as we can, we need to keep the cars and lorries away from the bikes.

"Until it's safer to do so we will not get the majority of people brushing the cobwebs off their bicycles.

"We need to encourage using a bicycle for shopping, going to work, going to school, cycling for fun."

■ Ian McCormick, chairman of Tenterden Cycling Club, said one of his first priorities would be to secure a cycle route from St Michael's into Tenterden and added: "I would like to see Tenterden become a cycling destination, with good access to the High Street and proper bike stands, so that cyclists can zip in and out to the cafes and shops."