



CYCLE QUIETWAY PROPOSAL ALONG WANDLE TRAIL
A response by Wandle Valley Forum to London Borough of Merton

August 2015

Wandle Valley Forum was established in 2005 and is the primary consultative forum on Wandle Valley issues for the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust; the London Boroughs of Wandsworth, Merton, Sutton and Croydon; Greater London Authority and other statutory bodies

1. Wandle Valley Forum has reviewed the proposals for cycle quietway along a significant stretch of the Wandle Trail as part of a route between Clapham Common and Wimbledon and we offer the following comments:
 - We welcome the opportunity to help shape the proposals ahead of public consultation, while being disappointed not to have been engaged at the formative stage of determining the principle of whether or not the Wandle Trail is suitable as a quietway and in the development of the proposed interventions
 - We support investment which will improve the experience of using the Wandle Trail for all users and both manage and reduce conflict between different users
 - We are concerned by the scale of the interventions required to implement the cycle quietway and the lack of flexibility over both width and lighting evident in the requirements set down by the Mayor of London. It is essential that these requirements can adapt to the special circumstances of the Wandle Trail and be sensitive to its character, wildlife and landscape and to the experience of other users. If the quietway requirements cannot adapt to those of the Wandle Trail then it is not a suitable quietway route. We believe the overall effect of the interventions will be to the detriment of the large majority of users who are not cycling the Wandle Trail
 - We welcome the removal of gates and barriers which are redundant due to other access controls and to make all entrances compatible with the Equality Act
 - We welcome proposals to improve the underpass north of Wandle Meadow
 - We question the need for no fewer than 37 new lighting poles along a short stretch of the Wandle Trail. This will urbanise the route and introduce additional light pollution. Cyclists using the route are required to use lights on the public highway during hours of darkness
 - We would welcome confirmation that an appropriate assessment of the impact on the interventions on the Lower Wandle Local Nature Reserve has been undertaken and that it is consistent with the agreed management plan
 - We would welcome confirmation that the interventions have been shown to have no adverse impacts on this important feeding ground for bats and are consistent with the legal protection afforded bats and their roosts

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Please respond to Chair, Wandle Valley Forum, c/o 43 Bramcote Avenue, Mitcham CR4 4LW

- We question the assumption that a 3m wide route is required to reduce conflict between users. Experience elsewhere along the Wandle Trail has shown this to be excessive and insensitive to its character and to encourage higher cycling speeds. Much of the proposed quietway is along a natural corridor just 30m wide which has been a focus of significant recent debate regarding the investment in the path. It is imperative that the new proposals are informed by this recent debate and not constrained by a 3m width requirement. Further, we do not understand the need for an additional 1m strip of excavated soil running alongside the quietway – this will cause significant visual harm, unnecessary loss of habitat and an increase in cycling speeds
- We question the need for Intervention 7 when the current bridge is wide enough for cyclists to pass in opposite directions
- We ask that the proposed surface and the design of the key entrance gates contribute to reducing cycle speeds and continue to bar access by motorbikes

2. Given the proposed quietway extends into Wandsworth it would be helpful to have details of any possible impacts on the Wandle Valley north of the Merton boundary and to know that the issue is being considered strategically.

3. We should be happy to expand on any aspect of this submission and look forward to contributing to the proposals if they develop.

About Wandle Valley Forum

Wandle Valley Forum brings together people and organisations that care for the River Wandle and its diverse network of open spaces. We provide support and an independent voice for over 80 community groups & voluntary organisations and for everyone who shares a passion for the Wandle. Wandle Valley Forum monitors planning applications for developments which impact on the special qualities and character of the Wandle Valley. We make representations on developments which raise Valley-wide issues by reason of their strategic significance or potential to set a precedent.