

**RIDGEWOOD TO LOVE LANE AND PEG HILL FOOTPATH PROPOSALS**  
**CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

**SUMMARY OF RESPONSES**

**Response Level**

Ridgewood to Love Lane and Peg Hill footpath proposal consultation leaflets were delivered to schools and nurseries in the local vicinity. In addition, the questionnaires were also delivered to 434 households within Yate North and Yate Central wards and posters attached to the gates at either end of Ridgewood. A total of 441 questionnaires were distributed. The consultation was also available to download from the Town Council website, was publicised in the January 2009 Town Council newsletter, on Town Council noticeboards and an article appeared in The Gazette.

18 responses were received from the following:-

<b>STREET NAME</b>	<b>NUMBER OF RESPONSES RECEIVED</b>
Melrose Close	1
Jubilee Gardens	
Walnut Avenue	2
Melrose Avenue	1
Elmhurst Gardens	
Dorset Way	3
Wiltshire Avenue	2
Barnhill Close	
Lime Croft	2
Couzens Close	1
Address not provided	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>TOTAL PERCENTAGE/ NUMBER OF LEAFLETS</b>	<b>4.1</b>

Consultees were asked to submit their views on proposals to divert, extinguish and create new sections of the Ridge Wood to Peg Hill footpaths. The following specific questions were asked:-

1. What do you think of swapping the grey route to the green route?
2. What do you think of adding the red route?
3. What do you think of adding the yellow route?
4. What do you think of adding the blue route?
5. Do you have any other suggestions for ways to improve the tracks along the hillside?

Not all respondents provided an agree/disagree answer to the questions asked. Those who did responded as follows:-

	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
What do you think of swapping the grey route to the green route?	9	3
What do you think of adding the red route?	7	4
What do you think of adding the yellow route?	9	-
What do you think of adding the blue route?	7	2

The following additional comments were received:-

1. (a) Thanks for letting me have a copy of the proposed changes to the footpaths through Ridgewood – Peg Hill. They all appear to be OK except for the swapping of the Grey path which you show on the map as D-E. You say that at present this cannot be used but unless I am thinking of another path there is a section of this path towards the D end which is in use – this is accessed by a set of steps passing under a tree and runs out at the top of the slope up from the existing pathway (Yellow route) which was refurbished last year at point D. This section could be retained as I and several of my dogs walking colleagues use this from time to time. Admittedly it can be muddy at times but that’s walking!!!!
- (b) My only other observation for the improvement of all the pathways through the wood and along the top of the ridge (Green Route) is that the prohibition of cycles both on the paths and in the woods themselves would be most welcome by all who walk through the woods and should be enforced. My understanding is that the agreement between the Ridgewoods and Hansons is that the woods are pedestrian only and that cycling is strictly prohibited. However whilst there is a plethora of signs concerning dog dirt the mention of “not cycling” is limited to a few small notices at only two or three points along the paths. Why can we not have large “NO CYCLING” signs erected at each entrance with perhaps the threat of a fine if caught.
2. (a) Clearly the routes A - B; T - U and H - G should go as they serve no useful purpose. However we regularly use N - F and do not understand the comment about a 'horrid steep slope'. We are both in our 60's and find the small step formed by a tree root at point N no problem, the rest of the path is on a gentle gradient. The proposed path F - G would only duplicate the current P - D path that has pleasant views across a wide area. Some while ago it was suggested that this path be stopped-up and replaced with something like F - G - C. This could well happen if the new path were built!
- (b) We are in favour of retaining and improving D - E, again a nice walk through woodland. The remaining items are essentially a tidying exercise and we have no particular views at this stage. Rather than spend money on additional paths an investment must be made in improving the surface of those paths currently in regular use. By this we mean put down material to reduce muddy patches and most importantly erect gates or similar to

discourage cycles from these footpaths. The Peg Hill Skate Park attracts bikes and their inconsiderate riders along these footpaths. Many of these riders are a menace and they also drop vast quantities of litter that is rarely picked-up by the council. Just take a walk on the former Love Lane and do carry a plastic sack. You could also usefully erect a 'Doggie Bin' in this area.

- (c) Another very necessary change is to prevent vehicles, mainly cars, from obstructing the footpath alongside the skate park on Peg Hill. We regularly have to walk in the road to pass these vehicles.
  - (d) There are many contentious issues to these proposals and a public site meeting is needed to allow full discussion of the pros and cons of the proposals
3. I think it is a very good idea to improve these footpaths for everyone to enjoy. But as a resident whose property backs onto the Ridgewoods, I would like some assurance from yourselves that improvements will be made at the entrances, to prevent motorbikes and mini bikes from speeding around the footpaths. Last summer we were inundated with these machines, not only disturbing our peace and quiet and upsetting the wild life, but families walking with young children had to jump very quickly out of their way. Something must be done before a fatal accident occurs. We have contacted the police on numerous occasions, but it takes up to four hours before they respond, if they respond. Once these entrances are improved to stop this reckless behaviour, I am sure it will be a natural peaceful haven that everyone can come and visit.
4. (a) Opposed to swapping the grey route to the green route. The Official and original route of the footpath along LYA77 is no longer used because the Quarry operator (Hanson's) erected fencing which prevented this being used and directed the footpath along a thin walkway at the very edge of the Ridge. This proposed change to the footpath route will not be of any benefit to the people who use the footpath and therefore I feel the original and official route of the footpath should be re-instated.
- (b) Opposed to adding the red route. The creation of an additional footpath along the bottom of the Ridge would serve no useful purpose and destroy even more of the wood, which I feel we all should be protecting. If people want to walk along the bottom of the Ridge they can use the footpath on the opposite side of Greenways Road.
- (c) The footpath along the Yellow route from D to J and then onto E has been used for many years and the council have "improved" the footpath surface on a couple of occasions to my knowledge. I would therefore support your proposal that the yellow route from D to E via J is adopted as an alternative to the Grey route from D to E. I also have no objection to the yellow route from J to K being adopted as this has been used as long as I can remember, but I would object to the yellow route to C as this would serve no useful purpose.

- (d) Opposed to adding the blue route. I would prefer to see route LYA74 re-instated, than the creation of another footpath from L to M.
  - (e) I would like to see footpath LYA77 and LYA74 re-instated, but other than that no. I want to see this area protected from changes and development and consider most of the proposed changes to be undesirable to the long term future of the woods.
5. It's OK with me.
6. (a) Thank you for sending us the revised route for the proposed footpath. We note that you have altered most of the route. The matter was discussed to considerable length at the Friends of Ridge Woods meeting. We can see your intentions and understand the wisdom of reorganising the rights of way, although it was observed that in so doing it did make a nice clear field for development!
- (b) In an ideal world, a footpath for all to enjoy may have advantages for members of the public. Unfortunately we do not live in an ideal world and the selfish minority always seem to spoil things for the majority. To spoil things with graffiti or torn up paving can be replaced, when natural life is destroyed the results are more permanent. Regrettably that is the situation which we find now in Ridge Wood. We have been criticised by some of the public for the work which has been done so far in the wood, for spoiling the natural place it was. We can live with that, but unfortunately turning a blind eye to sensible cyclists has allowed mountain bikes and motorcycles to create wanton damage. Our efforts to discourage those who damage the wood have been unsuccessful. For some years we have complained to the Council and the Police about the destruction being done by vandals on wheels, all to no avail. Recently the activity has become more organised and with greater destruction, causing us to contact the police with a firm complaint. Upon meeting with the Police last week I am informed that there is nothing they can do because the wood is still private property.
- (c) We feel that to connect the existing path to Peg Hill will just increase the problem and to a greater extent.
- (d) A member of the Chipping Sodbury Town Council was at our meeting, and pointed out that the proposed route is in fact under their jurisdiction and they feel that as there is now a path to Peg Hill along the Wickwar Road, another path is not only undesirable but unnecessary.
- (e) Taking these factors into consideration, the meeting agreed unanimously that the proposed path linking the existing path to Peg Hill would be detrimental to the wood and residents. We therefore must oppose it.
- (f) We now also have to take steps to overcome the cycle problem in the wood.
7. I agree with the footpath proposals in the consultation leaflet and also think that the leaflet was well presented.

8.
  - (a) I am concerned mainly about the new path at the bottom of the slope, from where the kissing gate comes out onto Greenways Road (point K) along towards Love Lane (point F) the Red route.
  - (b) Along by the wooden fence there is a ditch for water from the woods to run along into a drain. When you are constructing this new path will you make sure that nothing is done to block the flow of the water. When the path from the kissing gate to Greenways Road was built it was made higher than the ground around, sending water into my garden and flooding my extension several times. We have had many talks with a council representative and Hansons and they have now solved the problem. We just want you to make sure this does not happen again when you are putting in the new path.
9.
  - (a) My concerns relate primarily to the footpath proposed (red route on plan), and the spur(s) to be created to Greenways Road.
  - (b) There is a high probability by creating a “lower path” that unofficial cut-throughs will be forged from the lower to upper bank and used as biking/scrambling terrain primarily by children (as is done in other areas of Ridge Wood); this will damage the natural vegetation, which is currently a haven for wildlife and a rich habitat for various breeds of birds. I appreciate that children need areas in which to play, but the wider area already boasts a good level of facilities already for children/young adults (eg. The skate park on Peg Hill).
  - (c) The fields adjacent to Greenways Road are used to graze horses for most months of the year, except during Winter; I am concerned that if additional access is created to the fields the animals would be more vulnerable, particularly where dogs are not kept under control or from individuals who may wish to cause harm to the grazing animals.
  - (d) I am not in favour of the footpath proposed (red route) for the reasons given above, and am also against the new spurs onto Greenways Road due to the limited kerbside space and likelihood that people will be encouraged to loiter around the area. I struggle using the current kerbside, for instance one of the bus stops is in the hedge (although this will not be a problem for much longer as First is withdrawing the service) and I would not like to see a pavement incorporated, mainly as it will encroach on the existing hedgerows (as explained above).
  - (e) I am not in agreement with creating a new footpath (red route) or spurs to Greenways Road, however, I am in support of the existing footpath (green route) being improved.
10. I quite frequently walk in Ridge Wood and am very familiar with the area. I am surprised to find that “the path we’ve all been using for years” was not a proper footpath – I have frequently walked it, both on my own and as a walk leader. I would welcome and fully support proposals 1, 2, 3 and 4.

11. 1) yes, 2) yes, 3) yes, 4) yes would make a nice circular walk. This scheme would be a great improvement provided the paths are accessible to prams and wheelchairs with a firm surface. I think footpath LYA 78 should be reinstated to allow a convenient route from central Yate to the new shopping area to be built in Chipping Sodbury car park.
12. I am intrigued that the public consultation ends today but there appears to have been no publication of the proposals except for a notice placed very low down on the kissing gate at Greenways Road. We regularly use this gate and would dispute that this notice has been there for the 6 week period. Additions to footpaths are always welcome for walkers such as my wife and I, however the question has to be asked as to how the quarry company have been able to a) dig a big hole across a public footpath and b) stockpile stone stocks over a large section of the same path? (LYA77). If permission was granted to divert this path, then it should not be showing as a public footpath!
13.
  - (a) I am in favour of swapping the grey route to the green route.
  - (b) The fields on which you propose to route the red route are regularly flooded in wet weather, draining over Greenways Road.
  - (c) The yellow route is also flooded in wet weather. However, the main concern I have with this route is that some time ago I was told that there was a badgers set on the slope just inside the kissing gate on Greenways Road (point K on your map ). I have not seen badgers myself but there are various tracks going up the slope towards the proposed green route and I have also seen what looks like badger fur in the area. So this would need to be checked out by a badger conservation group.
  - (d) The fields on which you propose to route the blue route are regularly flooded in wet weather, draining over Greenways Road.
  - (e) The proposed green route has a couple of areas at the Ridgewood end that need some safety barriers erecting as they are close to the slope.
  - (f) I would also like to see some seats erected on the green route looking over the magnificent views across Yate and beyond to the two Severn bridges and the Welsh hills.
  - (g) I assume that no work would be started on these areas until the autumn, after the bird nesting season is over.
  - (h) I am concerned that these proposals would leave the way open for the quarry owners to eventually build on the stockpile site and, with the opening of the red/blue/yellow paths, the closure of the popular green path. I would appreciate your comments on this concern.

- (i) Finally I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about a problem in Love Lane. In the summer months the youngsters from the skate park are staying late through the nights and are lighting fires, tearing down the hedgerow for fuel for their fires. They have also taken hay, put out for the horses from the field the other side of Love Lane. A fence needs erecting between the skate park and the hedgerow. This needs to be a strong enough fence to stop the youngsters from cutting it down as was the case in Ridgewood last year. This would also solve the problem of rubbish in the lane including broken bottles which are a problem for dog walkers.
14. (a) I have just read through your footpath proposal for Ridge Wood area, and would like to wholly agree with your proposal. Although I didn't realise many of the old marked paths currently were unusable, with alternate routes cropping up nearby, the proposed new 'red' route which doesn't replace any existing path especially makes sense, and the moving off LYA77 to the green route is also sensible.
- (b) The only other possible enhancement might be to have an official path which goes along the top of the 'ridge' between Melrose Close and Barnhill Road before dropping down to Quarry Road (or maybe out to Barnhill Road), so that the views across Sodbury Common towards Old Sodbury can be appreciated
15. (a) I have just learned about the proposals to alter footpaths in the Ridgewood to Peg Hill area. The claimed consultation does not appear to have been adequately publicised, hence the late submission of this e-mail.
- (b) I strongly object to the closure of the footpath labelled LYA77.
- (c) For some time, my fellow residents and I have been concerned about the nuisance and disturbance from dust and noise caused by operations in the quarry stockpile area. It appears to me that Hanson should have applied for planning permission before using this area for stockpiling stone and barring public access to the footpath. The use of this land is therefore illegal and the stockpiles must therefore be removed and the footpath labelled LYA77 reinstated. I intend to seek legal advice about this situation.
- (d) While there is currently an existing footpath along the green line on the plan, it is my belief that this developed many years ago by default when the PROW-LYA77 was illegally obstructed by the quarry stone stockpiles and by fences at either end. I consider this green route to be an unsuitable alternative to LYA77 because it is often obstructed by bushes, nettles and brambles that catch in clothing causing damage and sometimes personal injury. The path also passes perilously close to the edge of a steep slope, which in places is showing signs of imminent collapse, thereby presenting a hazard to public safety.
16. (a) The proposals are ill explained. The map and accompanying proposals on the third page are so convoluted as to render them very easy to misinterpretation.

- (b) It is difficult to understand why the Council would circulate proposals with no indicative costs, particularly in the current economic difficulties. Can you confirm any such broadly based costings and whether the understanding with the landowners is that they might be shared.
  - (c) But my main point is in the form of a question: Why doesn't the Council try to make an agreement with the landowners to secure an additional 125m of path by way of a mutual understanding simply to change the documents concerned to remove the perceived legal impairment. This would surely be a simpler and cost free way to "help sort things out" as your consultation document puts it. Moreover, the description "a horrid steep slope to Greenways Road" is a real exaggeration. I walk up and down that slope regularly and I note that it has been resurfaced to make for a more robust and secure surface.
17. (a) Whilst we fully support the proposals to rationalise the rights of way on the Definitive Plan, ie delete footpaths LYA 74, LYA 77 and LYA 78 and substitute P-D and add new route R-S; delete footpath D-E and substitute J-E and links to J-K and J-C; delete footpaths H-G and F-N, we are however totally opposed to the footpaths M-L, C-G and F-G ie. the proposed blue and red routes. The reasons for our objections are as follows:
- Wildlife corridors in the north Yate area have been drastically eroded over the years due to extensive housing developments. One of the only ones to survive is the escarpment, the area of land at the base of the escarpment and the field running from the Ridge Wood to Peg Hill/Love Lane (your C-G and F-G route). This is a long established and well-used wildlife corridor used by foxes, badgers, rabbits, buzzards and the occasional deer etc. We should be striving to maintain, if not improve and protect these wildlife corridors, not compromising them. The creation of a footpath C-G and F-G in this vicinity will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on this corridor as increased numbers of people using the area will create greater levels of disturbance and have a direct impact on the wildlife. There would also be the potential for nuisance to residents as detailed in our comments below.
  - We fully understand and applaud your intentions to enable the less mobile to have more access to the woodland, however, your proposal would also result in cyclists and motorbikes being able to gain access and use this footpath as a shortcut to the Peg Hill skateboard park. There is already a great deal of nuisance and damage being caused to the Ridge Wood by cyclists and motorcyclists. A mountain bike trail has been established in the actual woodland causing much damage to the woodland floor and creating an obvious danger and hazard to anyone walking in the woods. In fact cyclists/motorcyclists should not even be using the footpaths in these woods. A few weeks ago a dead-hedging event took place to try to prevent the use of the mountain bike trail and the subsequent damage being caused to the plants and shrubs planted to enhance the woods. Within hours the dead hedging had



been opened up and the mountain bike trail reinstated. The Police have been informed and a crime number allocated. The formation of this new footpath will give the impression of condoning and formalising a flat cycle/motor cycle route to the skateboard park and this will exacerbate the existing problem in the Ridge Wood. We would point out the Management Agreement between South Gloucestershire Council and Hanson's (the owners of the Ridge Woods) state that the woodland will never be used for biking activities.

- Due to the problems experienced in the Ridge Wood we are extremely concerned that the cyclists/motorcyclists will use the area behind Barnwood Close and Lime Croft for "illegal purposes" ie. Parties, BBQ's, as a motorcycle and cycle dirt track etc with all the consequential nuisance to residents of noise and rubbish etc. Although in general, the skateboard park users go there to enjoy the facility, there is a small element that cause a noise nuisance well into the small hours of the morning. Whilst this is not too much of a problem when it is contained within the skateboard park we are extremely concerned that this will spill over into the areas surrounding route C-G, F-G and in particular M-L (the red and blue routes) and this will greatly affect local residents and wildlife. To prevent such activities and still have a footpath a substantial, robust and expensive fence will be required on both of its sides and for the full length of proposed footpaths C-G, F-G and in particular M-L (the red and blue routes). It would also be necessary to put motorcycle restrictor gates at all the entry points although this would inevitably cause problems for wheelchair, prams and pushchair users.
- As an alternative to this proposal we would counter-propose the extension of the pavement along the field side of Greenways Road from Lime Croft/Love Lane through to Ridge Wood/Dorset Way. This would give more accessibility for people with less mobility, prams/pushchairs and in fact for all users. This suggestion would also give easier access to passengers using the bus stop which is situated half way along this land at the side of Greenways Road.

(b) To summarise we answer the questions on the last page of your leaflet: 1) Very good; 2) No; 3) Very good; 4) No.

(c) Finally we thought that the whole ridge, this footpath and the Ridge Wood is in Chipping Sodbury Parish area not Yate and as such can we expect to be consulted by Chipping Sodbury Council on these proposals?

18. Based on the information supplied in the brochure, as much as anyone can make sense of anyway, the proposal seems OK.