

GTDP Community Sub-Group Cycling and Walking Investigation

Responses to Public Call for Feedback

An open call for feedback on cycling and walking routes in and around Thetford was launched at the Community Sub-Group meeting on 19th July 2017, and responses were collected until 8th September 2017. A total of 28 online and 4 hand-written responses were received, which are reproduced below.

Confused and unclear cycle signs on Norwich Road near Thomas Paine hotel. Am I allowed on my bike on the Norwich Road path towards Earl Street?

In Thetford town centre near Boots chemist how safe is the raised pavement as there are no signs that the path is raised

Thetford has so much scope, to have some of the best cycling routes in the country, I include off and on road on that. Commuting routes through town are appalling to non existent. I love cycling and am quite passionate about the sport /hobby I love, and would love to see it thrive, if I can help further please get in touch.

Proposed Footway/Cycleway improvements

1. Cycle path alongside Croxton Road from junction with Mundford Road to Thetford Academy and beyond to Croxton.
2. Creation of steps up embankment alongside railings to underpass linking Grenville Way to Glebe Close. Currently heavily used shortcut and eroding away.
3. Creation of shared cycleway/footpath along Mundford Road from junction of Churchill Road to Croxton Road junction by moving barrier further from kerb.
4. Creation of footpath along road linking Canterbury Way to Mundford Road
5. Creation of footway/cycleway tunnel under railway at Canterbury Way junction with link road above.
6. Creation of wider footpath/cycleway at edge of Recreation Ground linking Mundford Road to Brickfields Way.
7. Improvement to footway crossings at Mundford Road/ Norwich Road roundabout
8. Upgrade surface of path alongside River Thet linking Thetford Garden Centre to Hurth Way (Currently path not standardised and stops short of Hurth Way although regularly used
9. Provision of crossing point at Hurth Way linking River Thet path to north side of River Thet. (Ideally raise Hurth Way road bridge to create underpass footpath by river!)
10. Upgrade existing overgrown footpath between Hurth Way and Melford Common on north side of River Thet.

11. Provide graded entrance to the River Thet path negating need to cross Arlington Way twice to reach accessible path entrance.
12. Provide footbridge over River Thet on SW side of modern Melford Bridge road crossing, allowing those coming from Castle Street to join Arlington Way/River Thet path without crossing Castle Street twice and on bad bend.
13. Join tarmaced footpath running from Minstergate underpass to small bridge over ditch to the Blaydon Bridge. This existing path needs improved surface as is heavily used and needs smoother join with Blaydon Bridge.
14. Improve path/cycle way along Little Ouse Path to Abbey Heath weir.
15. Improve access to Abbey Heath weir Bridge.
16. Improve cycle path from Abbey Heath weir to existing forest ride which meets B1107 at bottom of dip. Also improve cycle access from bottom of dip on B1107 to existing High Lodge forest trail.
17. Improve Joe Blunts Lane surface to encourage cycle use.
18. Create cycle/footway alongside railway from Joe Blunt's Lane under A11 bypass to access safe route to A1075.
19. Create one way cycle link against existing traffic flow along Staniforth Road from Kingsway to Charles Burrell Centre.
20. Improve surface along avenue of trees from Gentle Bridge to BTO entrance.
21. Improve footway/cycleway alongside London Road from St Martins Way to Forest Retail Park.
22. Improve existing overgrown footpath between Fulmerston Road and Hilary Road alongside Queensway school.
23. Provide cycle path to Knettishall Country Park Start of Peddars Way
24. Provide footpath cycle way north bound on Norwich Road from junction with Churchill Road to Tesco.
25. Provide traffic free cycle path to Bury/Honington using old railway line

It would be great if the riverside path in Thetford could be given a hard finish, it would make accessing the river with children much easier — pushing wheelchairs and pushchairs along that bit can sometimes be difficult and gets everything filthy!

THETFORD Abbey Meadows

Please put a properly constructed path along the river part opposite haling path. Many people use this as a walkway to blaydon bridge when walking to & from the town centre, but it is dangerous when muddy.

There is an urgent need to install a dedicated cycle path in Croxton Road, Thetford. This should run from the junction with the Mundford road at the south of Croxton Road to at least as far as the Thetford Academy in the North. (Ideally running at least as far as Joe Blunt's Lane would also cover the entry point to the Thetford Skateboard Park). Very large numbers of Academy pupils use the Croxton Road as their access to the Academy and as these children are drawn from across the entire town many would benefit by being able to cycle safely to the school. There is already a cycle route within the town which ends at the extreme south end of Croxton Road. The current mix of pedestrians, cycles and very heavy school time traffic is a recipe for a serious accident to occur.

My husband and I are both retired and walk/cycle in and around Thetford regularly, rarely driving. Generally routes are few and poorly maintained in respect of marking/remarking and trimming of overhead foliage and grass/nettles both sides of walkways. No-one seems to check/trim regularly.

I can think of only a few cycle areas, namely:-

- (1) From Forest Retail Park to Elevedon
- (2) Minstergate to Abbey Estate
- (3) Newtown to St Martins
- (4) No. 13 Cycle Route from Hurth Way to Kilverstone Lane.

No. 2 above — would be much improved by better marking and it would be useful to have it extended through Monksgate allowing easier access to the Railway Station, and, via Ben Culey to the Healthy Living Centre, Breckland Leisure Centre and the Academy.

No. 3 above — from just before Jubilee Close there is overhanging foliage and the cycles route runs out here — many would find it useful to continue on either side up to Forest Retail Park or Lidl/Screwfix etc.

No. 4 above — No. 13 Cycle Route (no. 4 above) has washed away sand/soil to expose tree roots which are quite hazardous and far from easy to see! Also, if wet, there are many puddles and muddy areas — difficult for both pedestrians and cyclists and the grass/nettles encroach.

Joe Blunts Lane could be vastly improved and provide an excellent off-road route as a superb shortcut through to Norwich Road and housing estates for Academy pupils, and all!

Station Lane — a pavement would be useful Canterbury Way to Mundford Road. There are 3 businesses along here and it is a high usage shortcut for all.

Mundford Road is 40mph and no cycling route from Wyatt Way industrial estate to HLC, Leisure Centre or town. This could be extended to include through Norwich Road estate to Tesco and Garden Centre. Outside Thetford Football club there is regularly a huge puddle (on this side of road).

Lastly, but importantly, there is an obvious gap in walking/cycling route which is quite short alongside the Little Ouse river. From Minstergate there is a tarmac walk/cycleway to Abbey Estate (south), but where the Old Priory remains land finishes the path here turns right towards Monksgate and Abbey Estate (north). Instead of following the path here, many, parkrunners included on Saturdays (and privately during the week), have worn a soil route. This extends

alongside the river down to Blaydon Bridge, where a tarmac footpath from here already exists to Canterbury Way (south) and Bishops Primary School. It is very puddly and muddy, even dangerous in wet weather. It would be great to enjoy this as a pushchair friendly and safe off-road access to town for all.

Canons Close hard surface walkway to town has low points and is puddly in wet weather.

People are encouraged to walk and cycle for health and pleasure any help with options would be VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.

I have lived in Thetford for over 40 years, residing in Highlands and now the ladies estate. I am a keen runner and have always used the route from my house, along the Croxton Road, through the village and around the Devils Punchbowl, then back into town.

This was up until last year. as the town has developed and traffic on the Croton Road increased, it has become more and more hazardous to run this route. Even wearing high visibility clothing is not enough to keep drivers away from you.

Twice I have been clipped by wing mirrors of cars along this route. The second time was to me the last straw! I have now invested in a treadmill and run at home in safety.

I did speak to Croxton Council about having a pathway put in from the Academy to the Village but was told this is not a priority route. Someone should carry out a census of traffic on this road, and I am sure most users would describe it as a priority to get to the Academy and local estates from the bypass!

I miss running through our wonderful forest. I can still remember the deer running along the forest edge with me in the early mornings, and the fresh feel of oxygenated air coming from the trees. A pathway would encourage dog walkers and families to leave their cars at home and walk the 2.5km to the forest, rather than park there adding to air pollution and congestion.

Creating the facilities alone is not sufficient. As a regular walker/cyclist my concern is not larger commercial vehicles it is other vehicles travelling too fast, not signalling and passing other road users regardless of limited space. This causes dangerous situations. Also cyclists riding on/off pavements in random fashion, ignoring traffic lights and wearing dark clothing.

General Maintenance — existing pavements and paths poor, uneven surfaces and tree roots pushing up the tarmac in many places. One bad area is Abbey footpath, behind Monksgate, alongside the ditch. Also, pavements/path edges suffer encroaching undergrowth and trees branches hang low which need trimming. Trimming overhead would be good at the start of Abbey footpath from Minstergate, also the pavements from Jubilee Close to Forest Retail Park.

Green Lane nature area pathway Cycle Route No. 13 has a poor surface, not helped by any rain washing down the sand/soil and exposing tree roots. Opposite side to Busy Bees Nursery, for the first 50/100 yards gets very muddy and is almost unusable. Likewise, this path from here to Tesco suffers many puddles and mud. Added concern is the path side nettles almost meet when wet!

The Minstergate underpass regularly suffers flooding a concern as it is the only non-road access to town for pushchairs, pedestrians and cyclists.

Station Lane is a busy cut through, cycling and walking from Canterbury Way underpass to Mundford road needs consideration.

Mundford Road industrial area is not accessible by cycle unless the pavements are used — the

road is hazardous and many hgv's use it constantly. The existing pavements do not support cycling.

Blaydon Bridge, riverside walkway exists towards town (Minstergate) — grass worn to mud by multiple use — this requires hard surfacing.

I would like to support the campaign to get the muddy path alongside the river a hard finish.

I also cycle to work every weekday and think it would be great if there could be cycle lanes put on the main road through town. The existing path that runs along the grammar school playing field doesn't work. Pedestrians walk in the cycle lane. I understand why as the cycle lane is closer to the grass than the road! I know there could be problem areas due to the size of the road width but maybe something could be done that's better than what is there at the moment.

The undergrowth on Green lane is encroaching onto the path/cycle route. This path is not only a national cycle way but also a major walk route from Thetford town centre to Tesco's. People with pushchairs are being restricted in using the path as the nettles are encroaching into the babies / toddlers in the pram.

We are writing to request that it is considered that a hard finish is given to the riverside path in Thetford where each week Thetford Parkrun takes place. The area turns to mud so quickly and makes it very dangerous and messy to run, walk or cycle along. It is a much used area and it would be wonderful to have some hardcore put down.

Parkrun is great, free community event with approximately 200 people attending each week, so it would benefit a lot of people.

We thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

My route is a walking route from my house to the Town Centre of Thetford. To be safe I use the pedestrian alleyway and footpath from Hill House Lane into Harriet Martineau Close.

This pathway includes the playpark, where the footpath has numerous tree roots lifting the tarmac, where debris, mud, leaves, grass cuttings and sticks collect in the dips and cover the surface so that the uneven surface cannot be seen. This is very dangerous, twisted ankles, trips and falls are common. Along this pathway there are also weeds, bushes some with sharp spikes and tree seedlings growing through the wire netting fence, another hazard.

The alternative route is to walk along the main Croxton Road where there is no footpath between Hill House Lane and the Academy car park. This is a busy road and not safe for pedestrians.

The next difficult area on my route is between Ann Bartholomew road and the Church of the Nazarene. Another footpath where tree routes have raised the tarmac, same dangers, and there is an overgrown shrubbery beside the path, which was once maintained, but in recent years has been left to grow wild. Elder bushes have taken over the whole path and are dense and tall. In this area only about one third width of the path is useable.

Anyone or anything could hide in those bushes and not be seen. It is not safe to walk through here in the dark.

Lastly on my hazardous journey, is the ongoing problem of stinging nettles on Croxton Road beside the pavement between Woodlands Drive and the post box. These nettles now cover almost half the width of the pavement and as this is the main route to the Academy it is used

twice daily by school children. An accident is waiting to happen if someone is stung and jumps out into the road. Surely there should be a programme for regular maintenance of all these areas mentioned, or must pedestrians suffer because they choose to walk?

Reference, "muddy Riverside Path" We (The Parkrunners) would like to see an improvement to the surface of the pathway for a long time now, we have to put-up with pools of water of which there are many whenever It rains. It is not only parkrunners that have to put up with this situation, but many people use this pathway to enter the town to get to places like "Iceland store" there are mothers who use prams who find it difficult to traverse along this path, also of course the elderly people who are perhaps not so steady on their feet.

I know the town looks a better place, but I would question the area outside Boots the Chemist. which as you probably know is not a popular place. So i'm sure that most people would rather have a gravelled path. on which to walk to town than have these wacky Ideas. that cost a fortune.....

May I make the following suggestion re cycling / walking , could a pathway be provided from Joe Blunts lane (Norwich road end) to the entrance to Churchill Road , this would provide a safe entrance to the town for the incoming residents of the new estate , also for the residents of the care home (Red House)

Generally, I feel the provision of walking and cycling routes in Thetford is good and I generally use them when I can.

I feel the foot/cycle path along Green Lane could do with more regular maintenance — the section between Cloverfields Church and Tesco is often narrowed significantly by vegetation, particularly stinging nettles overhanging the pathway. Could these be cut back more regularly? The path is well used and many people would benefit.

The cycling provision in Thetford could be described as woeful at best. Most of the "cycle lanes" lead to nowhere. Some are downright dangerous such as being directed into oncoming traffic on a sharp bend round St Martins Way. One other surprising omission is the lack of a Cycle Lane to Thetford Academy along the Croxton Road. How a new High School was approved and built without a Sustainable Transport link beggars belief.

Over the last month or so I have submitted various complaints to the "report it" site on TTC web site and Norfolk county council. Concerning the poor state of Green Lane, Joe Blunts Lane and the path between the rear of cloverfields and the river. None have been cut this year although I have been told all sorts of rubbish about cutting being carried out 3 times a year, and how it is now imminent.

I even spotted a man with a measuring wheel in green lane about five weeks ago, though why he needed to measure a lane which has been on the map for centuries I can't imagine. Even the tarmac path between woodlands and fairfields is impossible with a pushchair. On a separate issue there is a stand of invasive Himalayan bean or Japanese knot weed (not sure which) close to nuns bridges I have again been assured that the matter is in hand though I have little confidence that anything will be done until it's too late.

I would like to see much better provision for cyclists in and around Thetford. For example, better cycle routes from the fairfields estate area down into the town centre which currently requires negotiating the bottom end of croxton road with all its parked cars. Cycling with children around the town is much more difficult than it should be. It would also be great to have better kept access to the forest from town and the housing estates. The path from Thetford to Brandon seems to stop at the power station, it would be brilliant if you could walk and cycle all the way from Thetford to Brandon.

I think that there should be a cycle route the whole length of London Road and Norwich Road as these are main arteries through the town. It should also be easier to get onto the main roads out of town such as those to Watton and Brandon as presently the busy roundabouts make this difficult.

I think that Thetford is poorly served for safe cycle routes and I would definitely drive less if it were improved.

Here are my views as a regular cyclist in Thetford. You may use any or all of it if you think it is useful.

On Feb 4th a couple of years ago, I narrowly avoided being squished by a drunk driver on Norwich Road. Police and courts seem to be unable to stop drink driving. The only thing that stopped this one was a lamppost. Looking at the damage done to this lamppost was a graphic illustration of what this car would have done to me if it had passed a few inches nearer. I now avoid cycling on main roads.

I now cycle on pavements often, and frequently have near misses with pedestrians. These near misses never happen when I am on the pavement as it is my responsibility to avoid pedestrians, and to dismount whenever it is necessary. Pedestrians walk out into the road in front of me when I am on side roads without looking, they cannot hear me coming.

What I would like to see is a change in the law that allows cycling on the pavement, but puts the responsibility of safety firmly on the cyclist. (If you hit a pedestrian, it is your fault). I think there is a similar scheme in France where 'if a car hits a cyclist, it is the car drivers fault.

Something needs to be done about country lanes also. If you see a walker on a country road walking with the traffic, they are regarded as idiots. Cyclists however must do that by law.

SUBWAYS

The subway (under the A1075) at Minstergate leading from Monksgate to the town centre floods badly.

The subway (under the A1066) from Churchill Road/Grenville Way to Glebe Close is hard to find and very unpleasant to use — its invariably dingy, dark and slippery with the build up of slimy leaves, earth etc which have not been cleared. actually coming out into Glebe Close isn't ideal either — it's a very circuitous route into town.

The Croxton Road subway is the ideal — well lit, usually tidy and a straightforward link — although this one also floods at times.

The Footbridge over the railway line leading from Woodlands to Admirals is treacherously slippery in the cold weather. Considering the number of children who use this walkway, a more suitable

surface is essential — it would prevent many a sad start on wintry days.

It would be good if a map showing ALL the footpaths, shortcuts and 'twitchells' which are available to use in Thetford, the ones currently available are good but do not cover the wide range of shortcuts which can only be discovered with perseverance!

More signs indicating the various paths/subways would also be appreciated

We are invited to comment about the walking routes around Thetford.

The Little Ouse Path and the walk around Abbey Heath is a very unpleasant experience now.

The Little Ouse Path is overgrown and full of litter. There are beer and drink cans, rubbish, fly tipping, old mattresses etc and people seem to be sleeping out amongst the shrubs and trees. Fallen trees also make the route difficult at times. Used hypodermic needles have been seen.

The Abbey Heath Weir still has the upturned mattress that has been there for years that acts as a refuse bin but the rubbish is never cleared away.

Refuse bins would be good along the route and the odd bench or two for older people would be a bonus but I expect this is asking too much.

Similarly the Abbey Heath circular route is strewn with litter.

Who is responsible ? Does no one care ?

The main routes out of Thetford (Hurth Way, Mundford Road, London Road, Norwich Road) are all 40 mile an hour speed limited. It would be much pleasanter, safer, and more agreeable to residents if the speed limit was lowered to 30 miles an hour. Mundford Road needs a pedestrian crossing, as residents take their lives in their hands trying to cross at the roundabout — even a central island further along the road would be an improvement. The existing crossing on Hurth Way (very well used) is not responsive to pedestrians, and makes them wait until the road is clear or 30 seconds have elapsed, whichever is sooner. A 15 second wait would be more appropriate, and would encourage journeys on foot from Cloverfields to the town centre.

Walking over the three Nun's bridges is a frightening experience, which is unfortunate as this is one of the prettiest parts of town. Could the road be made one way or closed to traffic?

Cycling: I would like to cycle more, but the only ways to get out of Thetford seem to be along 60 mile an hour roads. Even the Sustrans National Cycle route along Kilverstone Road is subject to a 60 mile an hour limit, which on a narrow and winding road is not safe for cyclists. Some cycle paths leading out of Thetford would be welcomed, particularly as the forest itself is so cycle friendly.

Living in Thetford, specifically at Anne Bartholomew, and working in town I use both the number 13 and 30 Cycle routes. This cycle route goes along Croxton road onto old Croxton road continuing into White Heart street. It allows me to take a healthy alternative and reduce congestion on our roads busy roads into town.

There is a daily safety danger during the academic year traveling south. There's is no dedicated cycle path along this road and the bumper to bumper traffic on the entirety of Croxton road. All rushing and paying little regard to the high way code, parking on junctions, parking on yellow zig zag lines outside of Thetford Academy is a daily occurrence. Once you're at the end of Croxton road you have to cross the road to the cycle path to cross the A134. See picture

Cycling Feedback 1.

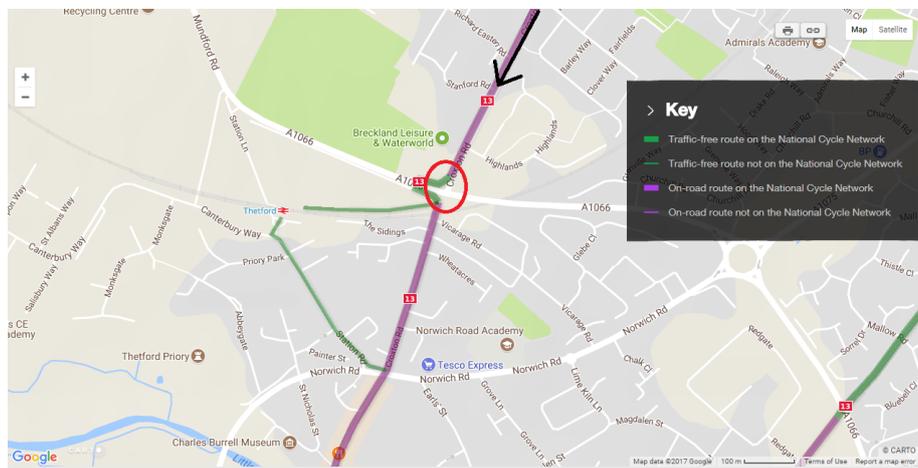
This junction isn't great at the best with nowhere to safely stop, see picture Cycling Feedback 2. Cars passing on the left-hand side quickly pass and waiting for gaps in oncoming traffic can be quite scary. Further down the 13/30 routes, there is a great junction which would be really helpful is implemented in the same way. See picture Cycling Feedback 3.

This site it self often have incidents with one being quite serious in April — <http://www.edp24.co.uk/news/pedestrian-injured-after-collision-with-car-on-croxton-road-in-thetford-1-4972613>

Another early in the year during rush hour — <http://www.thetfordandbrandontimes.co.uk/news/woman-hurt-in-three-vehicle-collision-in-thetford-1-4386198>

The building of new homes will, of course, increase traffic at these busy times, therefore, increasing the danger to all users of the road.

luckily, traveling North bound on my return leg of the day is much safer a cyclist can come off the traffic free cycle routes onto the road.



A high priority path for hard surfacing is the riverside path between the priory ruins entrance near the Norwich Road and the first footbridge to the south. This path frequently gets muddy in winter, but is (as well as being a pleasant path by the river for its own sake) a critical part of the Thetford Parkrun route. The Parkrun must be one of the most successful community initiatives in the town in recent years and it should be given every support, including preventing erosion issues along the route, and I think this stretch of path is the element where this potential problem is greatest.

A key area for focus given the proposed Thetford expansion should be improved cycle paths on Croxton Road, in particular around Thetford Academy. In addition, there would be a massive benefit to residents if you were able to cycle out into Thetford forest, without crossing a major road. From a walking point of view, there is a short stretch along the river used by people walking into town and also by Thetford parkrun which needs improvement. This is along the river between Blayden bridge and the priory. Finally, improved lighting along Green Lane would make it a lot more useable in the winter months — short low level lights might be an option here.

From west side of playing field Elm road end going south — nettles. Further south, how about a wider path going east–west at bottom of Elm road playing field as this links up with the felled forestry (open) and unfelled. If Elm road grass cut more, dog walkers could avoid each other on way to woods.

Over grown bushes blocking path off St Johns Way to Caxton Way. Off this path heading North North West, parallel to Danepak site is also overgrown.

Difficult access to forest, crossing the A11 Dual Road from Brandon Road and Sainsburys Roundabout. The underpass at Elveden is too far out and doesn't lead anywhere only onto Elveden Estate which you are not allowed on.

Also from Kingfisher Lake's on right track that leads to Two Mile Bottom could be signed as a route but is overgrown with bracken on last section beside railway — you can get to Santon Downham + scouts camp bridge.

Walking/Cycling options from Nunnery Drive into the town centre especially via Nuns Bridges) are difficult especially for families/elderly making their way over the bridges inbetween traffic.

Cycling in town centre prohibition not enforced!
