

How one lane in Sussex can increase Safety, Beauty and Environmental Benefits.

The entrance to Willingford Lane from the A265 at Burwash Weald is misleading lorries, because at this point it is 2 lanes, then suddenly narrows to one lane at the first of the many blind bends in the 2-mile length of lane.

It's twisty, very steep in many places, with blind bends and blind summits. The reason for the increase in fatalities and accidents in the last 15 years is because traffic is driven faster, due to the lane looking wider than it is. Entering the lane makes drivers think if they meet another vehicle, they'll be able to pass each other because there is no warning that it suddenly narrows, so they hit head on.

The verges were eroded by large lorries and juggernauts, widening them in some places by up to 3.5 feet, which encouraged traffic to go faster. After traffic flattened the wildflower verges it was easy to drive over them. If this continues the lane will become a suburban road instead of the ancient, historic route way in the High Weald.

There has been an increase in delivery vehicles with on-line shopping, and **lorry** drivers using sat navs only meant to be used in a **car**.

The lane is often blocked with traffic stuck not able to go forward or backwards.

Reinstating the verges was solved by 2 Nature Recovery trial sites that were selected to regenerate the wildflowers, and has been very successful, not just increasing the wildflowers, but has slowed down the traffic in these 2 areas.

For the last 15 years there have been numerous accidents in every part of the whole lane. Looking at just one tiny section there have been 3 accidents outside Tom's Cottage in just the last 9 months.

The survey by Sussex Biodiversity in 2016 identified flowers in the lane which are rare in Sussex and scarce nationally. Hence in 2018 the lane was given protection and classified as a '**Wildlife Lane with Notable Verges.**'

These verges serve an important value in connectivity with the two SSS sites at Willingford Meadows, plus providing pollinating corridors for bees and insects, including glow worms.

The stables in the lane find fewer people horse riding because of the speeding traffic. It is very popular with a high number of cyclists for the challenging steep hills; they too have been hit by traffic coming around blind bends.

Plantlife was set up 30 years ago to address the loss of wildlife verges and meadows. It is estimated that Britain has lost these pollinating areas the size of Wales. County Councils have embraced a new regime in roadside verge maintenance called '**The Good Verge Guidelines**' produced by Plantlife.

By not cutting verges so ruthlessly and often, Councils are now seeing very beneficial changes to our roadside verges. The appearance of the verges that are cut less are flourishing and providing not only attractive roadsides, but valuable pollinating corridors, and saving councils an enormous amount of money.

A simple solution of a sign at both ends of the lane saying *Narrow single-track lane*, would give drivers the choice of choosing another route, or heed them to drive slower.

Or, as in South Lane, Dallington (that leads into Herrings Road) a sign with an image of a lorry with a line through it, with the message "*Not suitable for large vehicles.*" This would prevent the daily blockages, angry drivers, and accidents.

We would please like to know what are the reasons for erecting this sign in this particular road. It is so much wider than Willingford Lane, and hasn't the volume of traffic, or the problems of traffic driving on the verges.