

QUIET LANES.

Beautiful country lanes are being abused by both cars & commercial drivers, making the use of them for recreation by walkers, cyclists and horse riders increasingly difficult and dangerous.

There are increasingly more families walking, jogging and cycling down the lanes, but usage by vehicles has increased as well, often without respect for the environment.

Drivers using Satellite Navigation devices mean increased use of country lanes by drivers who probably are not aware of the limitations of country lanes where there are no pavements for pedestrians, unless there is signage to warn them. Impatient drivers are also guilty of destroying the verges along the edges of country lanes. Verges can offer a unique opportunity to create natural wildlife corridors, teeming with biodiversity and providing important habitats for a range of plants, birds, mammals, and insects.

The verges must be protected but are in great danger of being lost due to inconsiderate drivers attempting to pass where there is insufficient space.

A National 'Quiet Lanes' sign should indicate:

- a. 20mph limit.**
- b. The lane is narrow and single track with occasional passing places and blind bends. Drivers may be required to reverse into passing places, particularly to avoid large vehicles e.g. tractors.**
- c. Wildlife verges which must be respected, not used as extra passing areas.**
- d. The probability that drivers will meet walkers, dog walkers, joggers, cyclists and horse riders on the roadway – all of whom have priority.**
- e. Footpaths and bridleways may be accessed from the lane, meaning that people, children, dogs or horses may appear without warning.**
- f. Drivers should only proceed down 'Quiet Lanes' exercising extreme caution.**

As a result of the Pandemic, the idea of living safely in the countryside has become more popular, therefore with more and more people wanting to safely use country lanes as an important part of their leisure – they need to feel safe. Additionally, more people are working from home bringing increased use now and in the future all during the week. Drivers may only be doing 40mph, which they may feel reasonable, but certainly does not match road conditions particularly if they meet another driver doing the same speed.

This needs a National Campaign, and we have contacted CPRE who have offered their support.

We need to start at local level – our Parish and the surrounding Parishes, our MP, the Ramblers Association, Cyclist associations, the British Horse Society, and District and County Councils. The first step could be to have the idea endorsed by our Parish Council and to include a statement on our E-Bulletin to encourage local support.