

Promoting Accessibility, Health and Wellbeing

Part 1: Walking, Riding and Driving



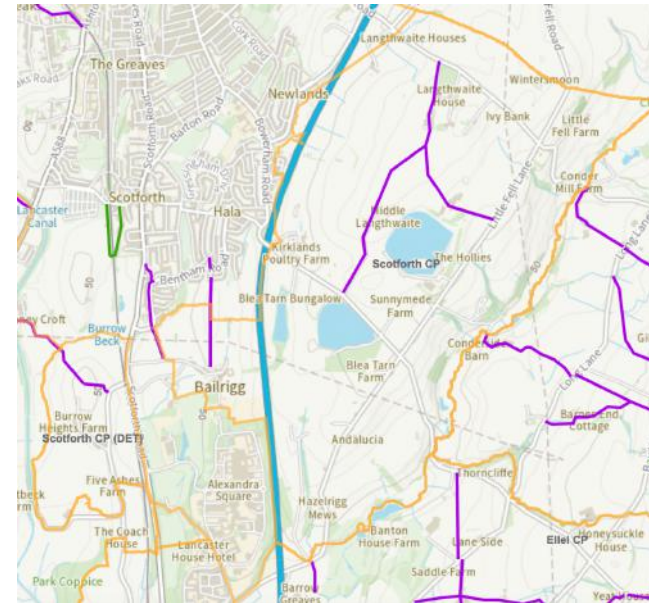
Background - a journey through the parish:

This document is a collection of journeys taken across the parish by foot, cycle, horse and car. Its purpose is to allow the reader to understand the lanes and paths across the Parish. Therefore, this document provides information for the evidence base on the Scotforth Rural Neighbourhood Development Plan's policies on improving access and safety within Scotforth parish.

The document consists of a review of the current experience of residents and visitors and concludes with recommended initiatives that would improve accessibility, health and wellbeing. Taken together these initiatives provide a vision of what we wish to see delivered whenever and wherever funding and consents become available from whatever source, be it developers, landowners, County or district councils or other elsewhere.

Walking in the parish:

Figure 1: Existing Public Rights of Way



Walking from Lancaster Canal to Burrow Heights Drumlin

The parish has footpaths bordering the Western edge that are along the Lancaster Canal. This is accessed at the canal bridge on Tarnwater Lane. Unfortunately, this does not link up to another footpath in the parish without having to walk on very busy roads which have no grass verges e.g. Tarnwater Lane and Burrow Road.



Approximately half a mile along Burrow Road the footpath once again appears at Birksey Brow, where it is sign posted at the foot of the steps, recently improved by the parish council.



Here you can access the field to carry on or take a moment on the seat in this wooded glade (trees planted by the parish council) to take in your surroundings. Once refreshed, it is a short climb to the trig point, famous for being the landmark on the parish council website. Here the views are of local woods and undeveloped farmland; there is another seat gratefully donated by the landowner to take this in. Local legend states that the huge rock perched here, rather precariously, is a meteor. At this point, the footpath plunges down an extremely steep slope to the stream below, over the charming wooden bridge, disappearing into the neighbouring parish.



Walking from Bailrigg to Langthwaite

So, it is back to the road, across the Northwest mainline, across the busy A6, to Bailrigg Lane, a somewhat quieter road, just downgraded to 30mph. In the hamlet of Bailrigg the signed footpath becomes a peaceful path through fields with views over the Morecambe Bay estuary and Lakeland hills beyond. Then, once again, this path does not link with the next without walking through a housing estate and the very busy and fast Blea Tarn Road. Once on the footpath, which is signed, you find spectacular views both West to the Lakeland hills and East to the Forest of Bowland AONB. On this footpath you will use stiles and 'kissing gates' maintained by the farmers and PROW grants. Some of these stiles are ancient and have been heavily used by generations of local people. These fields are full of dairy cattle in the summer season, although unfortunately walkers with dogs

are not always following the 'Country Code.' During Covid-19 lockdown these paths were a lifeline for locals being able to use them for their daily 1-hour walk.

The footpath splits, and you can go North using stiles and steps, eventually to busy Langthwaite Road, passing through the farmyard of Langthwaite Heights Farm. Alternatively, you can go East through a yet to be upgraded 'kissing gate,' taking you through the farmyard of Lower Langthwaite Farm to busy Littlefell Lane. At this point on either route, you are left on busy minor roads, that are being used as 'rat runs' to Lancaster University (the area's largest employer) and the motorway Junction 33 at Galgate.

Once again, the only way to continue eastwards along PROWs is to walk along busy minor roads until joining the PROWs in the neighbouring parishes of Quernmore and Ellel.



Burrow Road has some grass verges, but these are frequently used for parking by those working at, or attending the nearby Lancaster University, not wanting to pay for parking. These are then rutted and quite unsafe to use and become an eyesore on this lovely tree lined lane. Speed is a great problem here and extremely hazardous for walkers as there are no grass verges as you get closer to the next footpath entrance. A lower speed limit or speed humps would improve road safety along this whole stretch of road.

Blea Tarn Road has a well-known, local, Animal Rescue centre situated on it where volunteers take the dogs out for frequent walks. There are wide verges along the road but unfortunately these are only cut once a year, so for much of the summer walkers have to use the road. This is a wide, straight road where excessive speeds are reached and is extremely dangerous. It culminates at the most dangerous crossroads in town and surroundings areas, where frequent accidents occur. A much lower speed limit is urgently required, that will deter drivers who again use it as a 'rat run' to avoid the speed cameras and congestion of the A6, those going to the University at peak period, and those going to use the motorway at Junction 33.



Littlefell Lane is again a wide, straight 'racetrack' of a road with a number of dangerous blind summits. Walkers do have provision of grass verges that can be used when necessary. The views to the East are spectacular looking out for miles of the Conder

Valley and over to Clougha Pike and the rolling hills of the Forest of Bowland. There is an area suitable to park cars and the parish council have placed a seat here for walkers and cyclists to stop and take in this breathtaking vista in front of them.



Langthwaite Road is another straight, dangerous road where speed limits need to be reduced for the safety of all users. The crossroads with Littlefell Lane is notorious and has frequent accidents where the garden wall of a nearby property is in a constant state of repair by the landowner. On discussion with the valid land/wall owner he says there are approximately 3-5 accidents in the wall each year!



Littlefell Lane meets Hazelrigg Lane, Blea Tarn Road and Proctor Moss at one of the most dangerous crossroads in the whole area. **Hazelrigg Lane** is wide, straight, and flat, with cars speeding in excess of the legal limit and accidents happening, we have been told, sometimes weekly, by residents living close by. There is another local animal centre here where volunteers walk the dogs frequently for daily exercise. There are no footpaths here, only grass verges that again have impeded usage when the grass grows long in the summer and is extremely wet and muddy in the winter, however, as the cars are so inconsiderate with their speed these have to be used.



Five Ashes Lane connects Burrow Road to the A6 near the main entrance to the University. It has parking restrictions to prevent university staff and students narrowing it and has a sharp 90 degree bend onto a narrow railway bridge that makes it unsuitable for large vehicles.

Burrow Heights Lane is a cul-de-sac from Burrow Road to Burrow Heights Farm. It is lined with a variety of houses and, being unclassified, has a 60 mph speed limit despite it being single track and/or bendy in places.

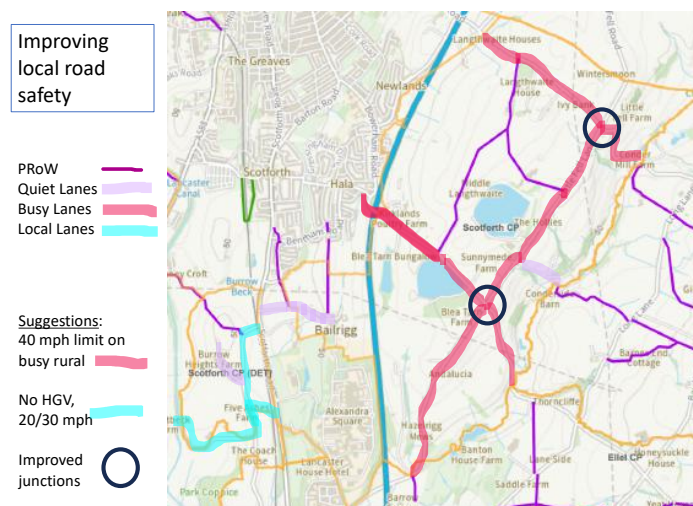
Bailrigg Lane is a cul-de-sac from the A6 to Bailrigg Farm. This has a most picturesque single track initial section until where it is joined by the main cycleway between the city

and the university. Thereafter it broadens into a quiet lane with a large number of pedestrians and cyclists going to and from the university. It has street lighting and hence a 30 mph speed limit. A development proposal to cut across the lane at Low Hill house with a road from the Health Innovation Campus and to close the single track section of the lane to vehicles was refused. The parish council want to see the single track section retained as a one-way route towards Bailrigg if ever the Health Innovation Campus road does connect with Bailrigg Lane because of its importance as the gateway into the village.



The map below (figure 3) shows the vision for improving the safety and tranquillity of rural roads in the parish. Speeds on the rural roads east of the M6 ought to be limited to 40 mph whilst those west of the A6 ought to be limited to 30 mph and no HGV's except for deliveries. This will improve safety and discourage them being used "rat runs".

Figure 3: Improving road safety on rural roads



Concluding summary:

The journeys in this document have been recorded by one of the parish councillors from Scotforth Parish Council, to illustrate the heritage and beauty of this rural parish. However, it has also highlighted that lanes that were once quiet or frequented only by slow moving horses and carts are now routes which endanger pedestrians, cyclists and horses.

The vision for expanding the footpath network together with road safety measures that would greatly improve accessibility and safety for both residents and visitors has been set out. Clearly none of this can happen without funding and landowner/highways consent so we wish to see every planning application and highways plan consider how each can accommodate and deliver this vision.