



Friends of Tooting Common

Andy Flood
Senior Transport Planner
Wandsworth Council

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Dear Andy

Tooting Common: Quietway proposals

This is a response by Friends of Tooting Common to the consultation by Wandsworth Council on the proposals for Quietway 5, which is planned to run through Tooting Common.

We certainly support the intention of increased provision for cycling in general.

However as indicated before there are concerns that the proposed route will add to pressures on an already very busy section of the shared cycle/ pedestrian path. Related to this, there are also concerns about a minority of cyclists who currently travel too fast, and this issue is likely to be exacerbated by the introduction of a new "designated" cycle route. We welcome the plans for additional signage to highlight pedestrian priority on the shared path, but we would stress that this needs to be very clear to cyclists that pedestrians have priority, and we fully support the comments by the Tooting Common MAC on this. (We would be glad to be involved in the more specific discussions in due course on the precise form of the signage.)

We also think that there should be consideration of other measures to discourage cycling at excessive speeds, including improved enforcement.

We have some comments on the issue of path surfacing. We have strong concerns about the bonded material currently proposed in the Quietway scheme. We share the concerns of the Tooting Common MAC that this hard, bonded, surface could encourage excessive speeding by some cyclists. We also share the MAC's concerns that the bonded surface proposed is too hard and coarse a grit surface, and could well cause injury to children or adults falling on it. This is of particular concern in view of the large number of children and families using the shared pedestrian/ cycle path, particularly along Chestnut Avenue.

We therefore consider that the surface currently proposed in the Quietway scheme is certainly not appropriate. As to what should be used instead: there would certainly be a good case for a less hard, unbonded, surface like Breendon gravel to be used for the main shared path, as the MAC propose in their comments, since this would help to deter any cycling at excessive speeds. Also, a looser, gravel surface on this main shared path would have the advantage of helping to give a more "natural" feel to the Common.

On the other hand, we have some concerns that a gravel surface could be somewhat more difficult for access by buggies and wheelchairs than a harder surface (as, currently, the tarmac surface). It will be clearly important that there is good access for buggies and wheelchairs on the Common, and particularly on the main section of the shared path on Chestnut Avenue, currently used by many families.

Also, we note that in certain parts of the Common where there are now gravel paths there are considerable problems of puddles of water. If gravel is to be used, there would need to be care taken to ensure that this problem of waterlogging did not arise.

We therefore think that there needs to be further, careful consideration as to what would be the best surface for the Quietway route, taking into account the above considerations, and before final decisions are made. We would be happy to be involved in this consideration.

Finally, a general and longer-term point. We note that there is currently separate consideration and consultation underway, in the context of the Tooting Common Heritage Project, of the closure of Dr Johnson Avenue to vehicles, and its replacement by a shared pedestrian/ cycle path. This proposal is apparently being considered out of reference to the Quietway proposals. Although the timescales for the two proposals are currently different, it would seem preferable, at least in principle and on a longer term perspective, that if the closure of Dr Johnson Avenue is decided, that in considering plans for pedestrian/ cycle paths on a busy part of the Common, the planning of the use of Dr Johnson Avenue, and of the Quietway proposals, are considered and brought together, and possible solutions developed on that basis.

Best wishes

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Chair, Friends of Tooting Common

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