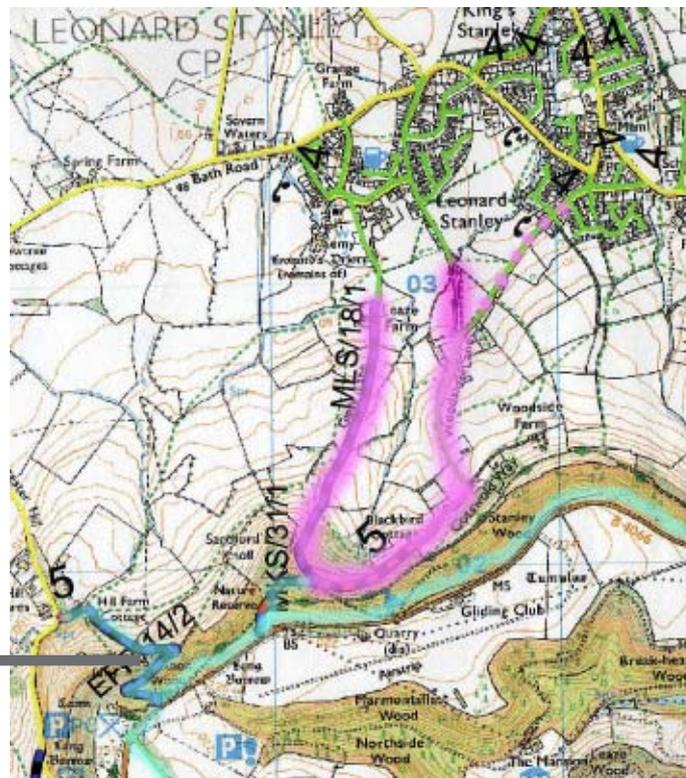


IMPROVEMENTS TO A COMMUNITY CIRCUIT FOR LEONARD STANLEY AND KING'S STANLEY, GLOS

AIM: TO IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF THE SURFACE OF THE CIRCUIT,
(shown below in pink)

Bridleway and
permissive
bridleway



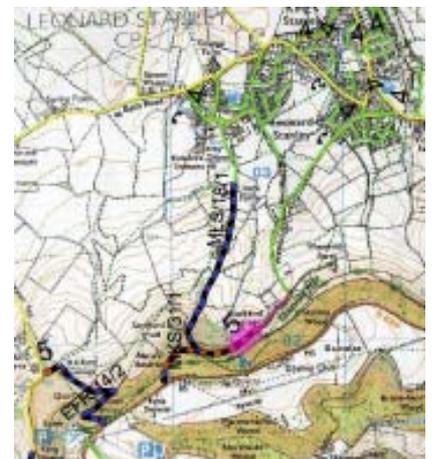
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THREE POOR AREAS ON THE ROUTE



STAGE 1 GIPSY LANE



STAGE 2 MARSH LANE



STAGE 3 WOODSIDE

The boundary between the two villages passes through both Gipsy Lane and Marsh Lane. The part we wanted to improve in Gipsy Lane falling entirely within the Kings Stanley boundary, and a few metres of the part we wanted to improve in Marsh Lane falling in Leonard Stanley, but the majority also being in King's Stanley.

(Mid Cotswold Tracks and Trails Group Improvement Report, Marsh Lane, Gloucestershire
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REPORT ON MARSH LANE IMPROVEMENTS by Pat Harris

HOW DID IT START?

In Autumn 2008, a local rider (Pat Harris) was talking to friends (including Liz McNab Jones) about the dangerous state of the circuit through Stanley Woods and Marsh Lane, and they decided to see if they could do something to improve it.

They learned that the track from Gipsy Lane was a bridleway, and therefore under the Glos County Council Public Rights of Way Dept., and that Marsh Lane and Woodside were types of Highway and therefore came under Gloucestershire County Council Highways Dept.

The initial response from PROW (Gipsy) was that inspection showed it to be out of repair, and that it would be added to a somewhat lengthy list of tasks to be done in the future.

The initial response from Highways (Marsh and Woodside) was that unsealed roads were very low priority compared to main roads and town paths etc., and that, whilst they would be put on the list, the chances of these over-riding other projects was slim. The local MP wrote to Highways about the issue in October 2009, and received a similar reply.

As the bridleway appeared to have a better chance of being done, and as it was almost unused because it was in such a poor state, Pat and Liz decided to make this STAGE 1.

STAGE 1 - GIPSY LANE

PROW were consulted on the possibility of community fund-raising, and were very positive. The officer of works prepared a work-schedule and gave an estimate of approx £4000.

Pat worked with the local bridleway group, Mid Cotswold Tracks and Trails Group, and raised £600 from donations, and Liz organised a wine and cheese evening at the Leonard Stanley village hall which raised £473.50.

At this point PROW allocated the extra funds for the project and the initial work was done November 2009. Bad weather delayed the stone topping by several months, but was completed by mid 2010.

STAGE 2 - MARSH LANE

Meanwhile, Pat and Liz had been looking at the remaining 2 sections, and decided that Marsh Lane should be Stage 2, as it had a larger user-base, and would benefit most people. Liz and friends held a village Safari Supper and auction, and £469 from the monies raised were pledged to Stage 2 of the circuit improvements.



Problem 1 - The Cost

Highways were consulted, and went out to their contractor for a quotation for replacing the existing broken drain pipe. This pipe was of a small diameter, and was corrugated with holes in and was considered inadequate. Highways now specified a 13" pipe with two manholes to facilitate manual rodding, as their drain clearance lorry could not operate within the confines of the lane, or on the unsurfaced road. The work-schedule and the contractor's response were based on a normal specification for a full road and the result was astronomical at £30,000. At this point Pat and Liz drafted in other fund-raisers and informally became "The Marsh Lane Improvement Group". Highways were asked to reconsider the work-schedule, and to lessen the specification to suit the usual usage of the lane, which was on foot, bicycle, horse or small carriage. They did this, and their contractors came back with a figure a third lower than the original at £20,000, but still too high to fund-raise for.

STAGE 2. - MARSH LANE PROBLEMS

The gully is about 8" deep



In July 2010, with Highways agreement, and armed with the new specification and Highways maps showing buried utilities, MLIG asked local individual contractor A to quote against the same specification and this reduced the figure by almost half to £11,579 plus VAT. Highways indicated that they would provide £3,000 and action any notices or road closure deemed necessary up to £1000, leaving the village to raise approx £8,500 + VAT.

MLIG then looked at various grant possibilities, but most would not fund work that was legally the responsibility of the county council, and the few that might would only accept applications from charities. MLIG did not feel comfortable trying to form a charity for this one project.

Problem 2 - Employing the Contractor

Highways could not directly employ contractor A as he was not on their register of approved contractors, even though he had all the necessary licences and insurances. MLIG could not employ the contractor as they could not find insurance to cover their liability. At that point all suggestions seemed to stall frustratingly.

Solving both problems with multiple co-operation

Early in 2011, John Kay from Highways came back to us with a suggestion to use this project to test using the new Big Society Grant, being able to prove community support. The proposal was for King's Stanley Parish Council to enter an agreement with Glos Highways, whereby KSPC would employ the contractor and Glos Highways would project manage the work. The costs would be shared between Highways, Community fund-raising (MLIG promised to do this on behalf of the PC), and the BS Grant.

During April, after a presentation to KSPC from John and Pat, and a site visit, KSPC agreed, and the fund-raisers then formalised themselves into the STANLEYS TRACKS, TRAILS & AMENITIES GROUP (STTAG). We opened a free-for-community-groups bank account with the Co-op, and provided KSPC with our written constitution agreeing to liaise and fund-raise on behalf of the villages, and to pay such monies to KSPC. We included a clause saying that if we were unable to fully raise the monies or if the project should falter for any reason, we would pay any monies raised to the two village halls as it would be impossible to redistribute monies raised via various events. Highways also agreed to pay their donation and the BS grant to KSPC, to allow them to pay the contractor. Agreements were drawn up by KSPC to ensure they were covered against liability for raising money or managing the project.

As KSPC had now agreed in principal to employ the contractor, they quite properly asked STTAG to get them three quotations. We then had the news that contractor A could no longer do the work, so with some trepidation we went out to three other contractors - B, C and D. One of the new quotations, from contractor B who lives and has his work premises in the village, came back at £6,130 + VAT. Meanwhile KSPC had discovered that they could reclaim the VAT as the works were to the benefit of the village.

By August 2011 all seemed to be in agreement, and all safe-guards were in place. STTAG began to look at fundraising again. We approached a company that was building a small estate of houses in Leonard Stanley, and they agreed to put £500 towards the track improvements as a good-will gesture to the community, and other small fundraisers were bringing in smaller amounts of monies.



By the autumn we approached contractor B to get a date for starting the work, only to discover that he was then not able to do the work. As contractors C and D had quoted considerably more, we were then tasked with finding another contractor who would be acceptable to the Parish Council and the Highways, and whose costs would still be close to the price we had agreed with Highways and for the grant. We contacted Gloucestershire's Public Rights of Way Department to ask if they could suggest someone who might be suitable, as this is similar to the type of work they regularly undertake. They were very helpful and came back with two contractors to contact, and one came back with a quotation of £5595, so we actually had a little left over for contingency or towards extra topping stone, which had been discussed and added to the "wish list". The Rights of Way Dept. also agreed to project manage on behalf of the Highways, as this was more typical of their type of work.

Doing the work and enjoying the track

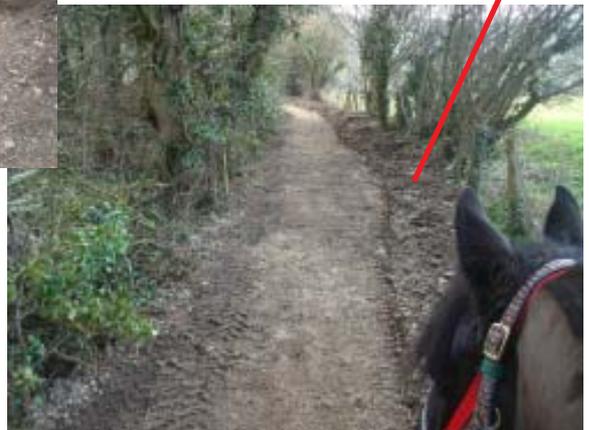
By February 2012 we were back to the position of all parties being in agreement, and the initial work was completed in the spring.



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Manholes set into
13 inch pipes

Manholes and
pipes here



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The flattened track
before the
top-coat of stone

The end results were really good, but we decided that some extra fine topping stone would just make it perfect, and put up a notice saying we hoped to get that done soon. STTAG had some monies for the project not yet called upon and Leonard Stanley Parish Council made a donation of £300. To add to this we contacted a company building a small estate of houses in Kings Stanley, and the gentleman agreed instantly on the phone to pay for the stone itself and the cheque arrived two days later. We had almost exactly the amount we needed to cover the contractor's costs, and were considering putting in the last bit of cash ourselves when we were approached by a five year old wanting to hold a cake sale for the track! Leonard Stanley Primary School approved the idea and supervised year-one holding their cake sale. We attended to assist - yum. They raised £82 and we then arranged for the class to take a walk to the lane and explained about the water running from the woods, through the lane and down to the river, and then out to the Severn and away to the sea.

SUMMARY

This project took four years to get done, but I have since met walkers, joggers, a lady on a mobility scooter, a family of pushchair, dog, child on scooter and child on bike, as well as riders and cyclists, all enjoying the path, and it held up well during the floods and snow of winter 2012/2013.

Total Cost £7,495.

Gloucestershire Highways

Liaised on the whole project

Signed an agreement with the Parish Council allowing them to employ the contractor

Provided maps of utilities under the track

Provided one share of the money

Secured a Big Society Grant for a second share of the money

Kings Stanley Parish Council

Employed the contractor

Took in the monies from Highways, BS Grant, and STTAG (community fundraisers)

Reclaimed the VAT

Gloucestershire PROW

Assisted with identifying a contractor

Project managed the work on behalf of the Highways

Leonard Stanley Parish Council

Donated to the project

STTAG

Campaigned for the project

Liaised throughout with all parties

Co-ordinated the community fund-raising

Community Donations included:

Wine and Cheese Night

Personal Bric-A-Brac Sale

Apple Day Bric-A-Brac Sale

Individual Donations

Donation from a Safari Supper and Auction

Primary School Cake Sale

Donation from Banner Homes

Donation from Colburn Homes

Stage 3 : Woodside, is yet to be tackled.