

REQUEST FOR BUCKDEN PARISH COUNCIL TO COMMIT TO THE SLOW WAYS PROJECT

Issue The Parish Council is invited to pass a motion endorsing the Slow Ways project and to appoint a champion to support the initiative and promote it to residents.

Proposal: It is proposed the Council should:

- Appoint a councillor to be a Slow Ways Champion on behalf of Buckden Parish Council
- Commit to promote Slow Ways for local residents to walk, review and use routes
- Consider where new paths would strengthen the Slow Ways network
- Encourage Councillors and Officers to walk and review a Slow Way
- Liaise with local groups to promote and support the Slow Ways project

Background The aim of the Slow Ways project is to create a comprehensive network designed to help people walk off-road between areas of population. The project, supported by Ordnance Survey, wants to get people walking between locations they might otherwise drive or take public transport to by using existing off-road paths and bridleways. This is not just walking for pleasure this is walking to visit people, travelling to meetings, going to shops, charity fundraisers or travelling to school or work. It is about elevating walking from a hobby to being part of our national transport infrastructure.

Benefits

- Health benefits
 - improving health and wellbeing by encouraging physical activity for short trips and longer journeys
 - Offering alternatives to private or public transport
- Environmental benefits
 - reducing pollution and emissions through active travel options as an alternative to carbon-based transport
 - contributing to the decarbonisation of local and national transport systems and helping to address the climate emergency
 - connecting people to 'nearby nature', heritage, places and communities
- Transport benefits
 - encouraging modal shift – supporting more people to walk more of the time, for more purposes
 - providing safe, direct and enjoyable routes between neighbouring centres of population
 - linking active travel to public transport hubs
 - promoting greater use of existing paths
- Economic benefits
 - saving people money by encouraging an inexpensive form of travels
 - spreading economic activity by inspiring visits to, and stays in, more places
- Community benefits
 - sharing a positive, empowering, rewarding and inclusive project
 - offering a source of community engagement, focus, identity and pride
 - boosting the equity of use of path networks
 - increasing the use of currently under-used paths – thereby keeping them open and valued

Reference: <https://slowways.uk/>