

03 Quiet Lanes checklist for action

1. A strategic approach

- > First think about your area and its various routes – look at a detailed map and identify where a Quiet Lane or a Quiet Lanes network might be appropriate.
- > Make sure a Quiet Lanes network, rather than traffic calming, is suitable for your area by thinking about what the project is aiming to achieve and what links it could create (between services, or existing bridleways for example).
- > Think about the problems and transport issues in your area and about how Quiet Lanes might contribute to solving these.
- > Consider whether alternative measures such as a lower speed limit, lorry restriction or traffic calming might be more appropriate.

2. Consult your Local Transport Plan

Find out whether your local highway authority has plans for Quiet Lanes in your area by looking at its Local Transport Plan (LTP). In rural areas, these are prepared by county councils and unitary authorities. The LTP sets out the authority's policies and strategy on transport for five years. Most LTPs will be reviewed in 2004 – providing an ideal opportunity for the authority to promote Quiet

Lanes. Central Government provides funding for the measures contained in the LTP and asks local authorities to produce Annual Progress Reports each year which set out how the strategies are being implemented and any changes they want to make to it.

Copies of your LTP can be found in your local library. Consider:

- > if there are already plans to develop Quiet Lanes initiatives in your area;
- > what policies in the LTP would support the development of a Quiet Lanes network; and
- > whether the Annual Progress Report (submitted to Government at the end of July) could contain proposals for Quiet Lanes.

3. Gauge local support

The key to the success of a Quiet Lane is local support and community involvement from the start. It will be up to your local authority to consult the community. You may, however, wish to get involved at an early stage – the more local support there is, the stronger the case for Quiet Lanes. You could:

- > engage with the local community and find out if there is local support for a Quiet Lane network. The Quiet Lane initiative will be seriously undermined if no one is willing to

use it or change their behaviour accordingly;

- > contact neighbouring communities to find out if there would be support for Quiet Lanes in their area too; and
- > write to parish councils and other local groups who might have an interest (like walking, cycling or riding groups) and ask if they would be prepared to support Quiet Lanes.

4. Contact your local authority

Write to the Head of Transportation of the county council or unitary authority asking for a Quiet Lanes initiative to be developed in your area and included in the Local Transport Plan:

- > suggest some possible lanes and point out the routes which could be included;
- > explain the benefits of Quiet Lanes and how Quiet Lanes would fit into a broader strategy for improving community links and the quality of life in rural areas, and how it would complement the Local Transport Plan and its aims;
- > be persuasive and enthusiastic, and indicate the extent of public support; and
- > ask for a meeting to discuss your ideas, possibly concerning a particular proposed Quiet Lane.

A two-stage consultation process is advised with the local highway authority consulting the local community on the advantages and disadvantages of a Quiet Lane and seeking views for possible lanes. This should then be followed up with consultation on more worked-up proposals. In practice, however, community participation in the project should be ongoing.

5. Write to your councillors

Write to your local county or unitary councillors, asking them to support the Quiet Lanes initiative and take up the case within the local authority. The views of the Chair of the Committee responsible for transport will be particularly influential. You can encourage their support by writing, composing motions for the Council to adopt, promoting Quiet Lanes as an item on the agenda of council meetings and promoting the idea in the local media.

6. Raise public awareness

You might also wish to take the initiative and raise awareness in your area about Quiet Lanes, if you have the time and resources. Create and use media opportunities to build local support for your case. This might be through a press release to the local media, or through the letters pages of

the local newspaper, or writing short articles for local newsletters. A model press release is included in this pack. Further measures could include:

- > distributing leaflets about the benefits of Quiet Lanes to the community to rouse local interest;
- > using a survey (which could be included in the leaflet) to get an initial view of what people think about having a Quiet Lane or network in their area. A model survey form is included in this pack as a guide if you would like to do so; or
- > holding a public meeting so you can talk to people face to face, gauge their views and have more detailed discussions.

Alternatively you could encourage your local authority to take the steps outlined above and support their activities.

7. Engage the community

Encourage your local authority to involve local people in the design and development of the proposals from the outset. You can then respond with constructive suggestions when asked and in turn reinforce to your local authority the need to consult and listen to local opinion. This can include comments on:

- > the location, nature and extent of the network;
- > the appearance of any signage which is proposed; and
- > ideas on making Quiet Lanes work on the ground.

It is essential that the community who will be using the Quiet Lanes are involved and consulted throughout the whole process. This can be via meetings, workshops, and literature requesting the public's views.

Once a Quiet Lane has been developed, it is vital that the local authority monitor and advertise the Quiet Lane. People need to know that it exists and why it exists in order to change driver behaviour on the road.

8. Drive carefully

If you are a motorist, do your bit to help make rural roads safer for all users and set a good example to others: drive carefully at all times, no matter how well you know the road – you never know what might be around the corner!