THE WHITE BRIDGE LINK

Steyning & District Community Partnership

Results of White Bridge Link User Survey

Background

The White Bridge Link is an exciting new scheme to upgrade the current footpaths connecting Steyning, Bramber and Upper Beeding to create a safe, all-weather route across the River Adur suitable for walkers, bikes, pushchairs and mobility scooters. The plans have been developed by Working Party of local residents, under the auspices of the Steyning & District Community Partnership. You can find all the details at: https://visitsteyning.co.uk/whitebridgelink/

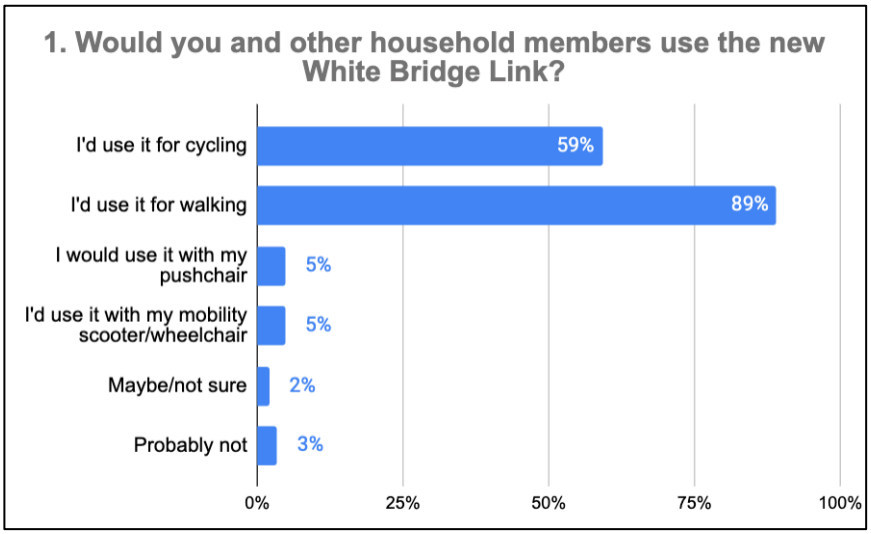
Two drop-in events were held in Upper Beeding and Steyning in April 2023 to present the scheme and get feedback. Although some practical questions and concerns were raised, both events showed there is widespread support and enthusiasm for the idea. An online survey was then conducted in July and August to find out whether local residents would use the new paths, and how they would use them.

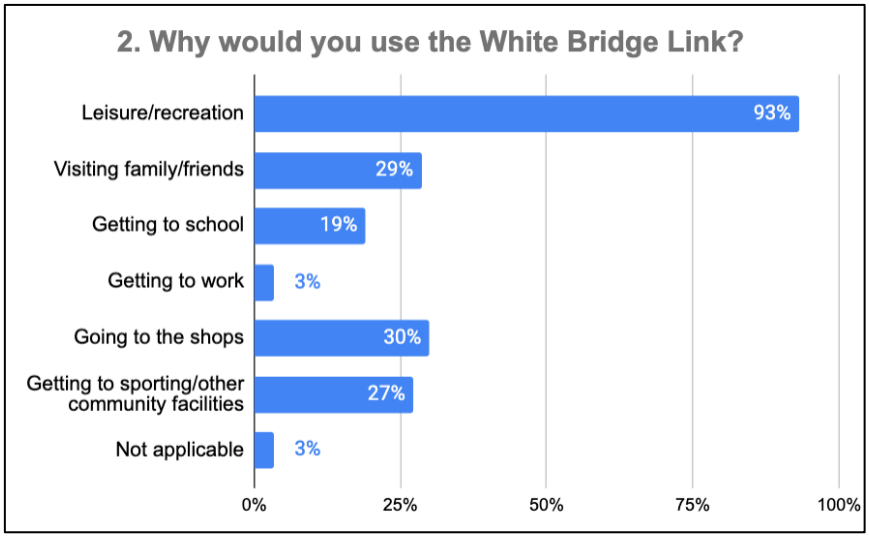
Results

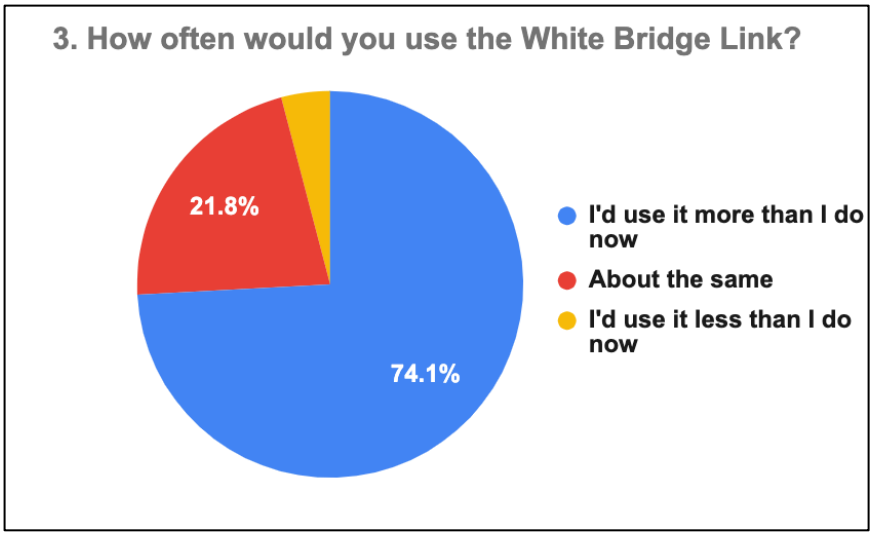
A total of 147 survey responses were received, 56% from residents of Steyning, 25% from Upper Beeding, 14% from Bramber, and 5% from elsewhere.

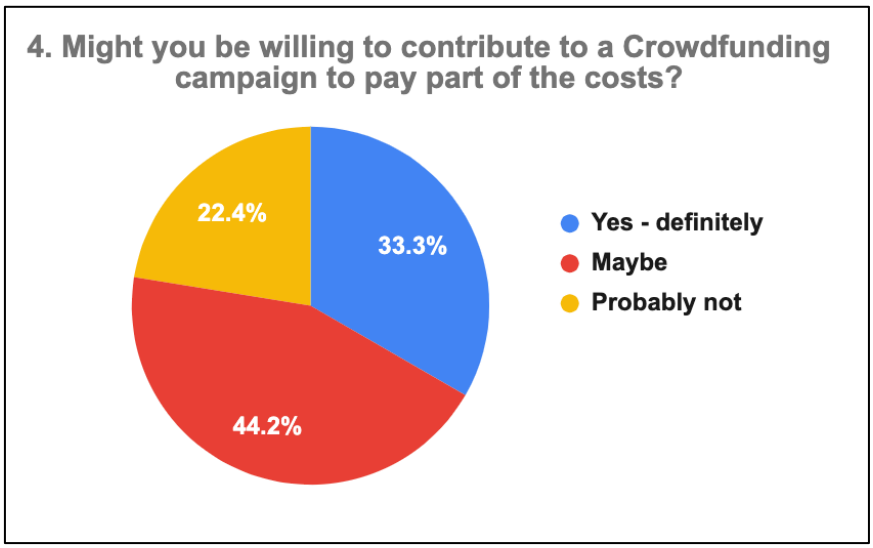
The graphics below show the responses to the four questions asked. The headline results were that:

- Walking would be the most common use of the new paths, followed by cycling, but 7 residents said they would use it with a pushchair, and 7 would use it with their wheelchair or mobility scooter.
- Leisure and recreation would be the main use for the new paths, but a range of other uses were also cited including visiting family and friends, going to the shops, getting to community facilities, and getting to school.
- Nearly three quarters of respondents said they would use the paths more than they do now.
- Encouragingly, 33% of respondents said they would definitely be willing to contribute to a crowdfunding campaign to pay part of the costs, and a further 44% said they might do.




2. Why would you use the White Bridge Link?
Leisure/recreation
93%
Visiting family/friends
29%
Getting to school
19%
Getting to work
3%
Going to the shops
30%
Getting to sporting/other community facilities
27%
Not applicable
3%
0%
25%
50%
75%
100%


3. How often would you use the White Bridge Link?
21.8%
74.1%
I'd use it more than I do now
About the same
I'd use it less than I do now


4. Might you be willing to contribute to a Crowdfunding campaign to pay part of the costs?
22.4%
33.3%
44.2%
Yes - definitely
Maybe
Probably not

Comments

Respondents were invited to make comments on the scheme, and a total of 53 responses were received (see below). The majority were favourable, but a number questioned the value and benefits of scheme. The comments will be taken into account by the Working Party in developing future plans.

Comments in favour

- Bring it on
- I think this proposal is amazing. Whilst I don't have children, the roads as you say can be very dangerous for children commuting, out to play, and even adults who have mobility issues, or adults who aren't confident on bicycles. It would provide such a great link to encourage people to get out more into steyning and in a safe manner no matter the weather. Especially in our elderly population who might not have safe alternatatives to commute or even to just get along the river path for a nice outing
- Great idea you have my full support
- Great idea.
- Excellent proposal. I can't wait for it to be done!
- An excellent project. Ensure the plans include future maintenance of the path.
- Strongly support this project idea.
- Brilliant idea for school children, push and wheel chair users young and more sedate cyclist. Concerns about cyclists who might be 'in the zone.'
- It's a great idea and thanks.. Pls have clear directions to it from nearby roads. And On the bridge pls make path for cyclists separate from pedestrians to minimise collisions!
- This is a great idea. It would allow our child to walk to and from school throughout the entire year without getting his shoe's wet and muddy during the winter. It would also be a lot safer to access the Downs link cycle path from Upper Beeding to Henfield with young children as it would avoid having to cycle through Bramber. I would certainly use this path to cycle to access shops, library, GP, as well as pubs and cafes.
- Brilliant idea . Much safer . Great asset to the local community. It will avoid cycling on the narrow road in Beeding where there are always cars parked on one side and fast flowing traffic .
- As chair of the Brighton and Hove Local Access Forum I'm always impressed with initiatives that encourage active travel and allows them to access green spaces. This is an excellent plan and I hope it goes ahead.
- This is a great idea, much safer for the children travelling to and from school.
- Great for our children to access SGS on foot from Beeding/Bramber and vice versa. Wonderful to join up our little villages/towns without having to navigate the busy roads. Making a more direct route sounds extremely sensible and fun. It may encourage more children to walk to school, rather than get in individual cars. Great for the environment and all our health and well being. All the very best...how exciting!
- Good initiative! Long overdue to protect our children and provide alternatives to cycling on the road
- This a fantastic idea and really important for the Beeding school children to safely get to school without having to cross a busy bypass
- Well done to all involved in this initiative - it's an excellent solution for school children and a relief to parents who worry about the road dangers for their children.
- It's a great project that will enhance connectedness between our villages.

- I live near the river and it will be great to be able to use the new improved path all year round whatever the weather
- This such a great project and deserves support
- Great project as it is difficult to cross in the winter.
- Great idea.
- A safe, convenient route for children is vital. It will encourage cycling rather than car usage.
- A brilliant idea , I'm in full support
- I would also use it for running

Against/doubtful

- I already use the route on foot with dogs off lead. Sharing with bicycles makes it less attractive. It is fine as it is.
- The use of this route by cyclists, mobility scooters and the sheer increase of people using this route will make it completely unnattractive to me. Thanks for ruining a lovely local walk.
- If cyclists are allowed to use it they should have bells to alert walkers of their approach if coming from behind, and have a 5mph speed limit for them. It works as it is so why change it. if it aint broke dont fix it
- I was born within 100 yards of Kings Barn Farm and have always used the existing path to the river. Whilst an all-weather path from Kings Barn Lane giving access to St Peter's Church and Saltings Way is welcome it is being proposed to solve a problem that should never have existed. Young SGS schoolchildren should never have been located at the Towers and it should have been for SGS sixth formers as originally envisaged. The majority of the school year occurs during the winter months when the daylight hours are restricted and this makes it dangerous for young cyclists and walkers on the roads between Steyning and Upper Beeding. However I believe that there should be very serious concern about the safety of young cyclists and walkers who will now be encouraged to travel to school over the proposed new path in the hours of darkness. This is particularly true when it is blowing a gale and raining hard and the children have no option but to arrive at home or at school drenched. I would far rather the funds be used to purchase electric shuttle buses to take the schoolchildren safely and warmly between the three villages and school campuses. I would be grateful if the survey of current modes of travel of the SGS Towers schoolchildren (Foot, bicycle, school bus, public bus, private car, taxi etc.) be made public since without such a survey the justification for this significant expenditure will be unsubstantiated.
- I have no idea why I should care about this.
- I walk the FOOTpath daily. Making it accessible to bikes will make it unsafe to access for walkers. Have any of you tried walking where bikes have access? It's been as it is for a very long time, leave well alone.
- Bearing in mind the general disregard cyclists show for walkers on the Downs Link paths designating this new path as having access to cyclist sharing with walkers will just suffer from the same behaviours. As a walkers using the downs link tracks we are constantly looking over our shoulders waiting for the next cyclist expecting use to move out of the way so they don't have to slow down or give way to us.
- Survey seems biased. Slanted towards positive use of route rather than the serious issues of light pollution, policing, impact on agriculture and nature.
- I can't believe on one hand they are promoting exercise and people walking and on the other hand not repairing these routes or bridges in a timely manner. There isn't even a sensible feasible alternative route suggested.

Suggestions/questions

- The council should be paying for this as they won't fund the bus for the school children
- At the day consultation I was at a lady suggested narrowing the path to save costs. It was quickly dismissed because there are guidelines about two bikes fitting on the path at the same time. Maybe you should rethink that? Like country lanes on roads there could be passing areas every so often? Cars can manage single lane roads surely bikes can? It could make a huge cost difference?
- Will there be any form of lighting for winter months?
- I live very close to this path and would use it much more if I could walk to the bridge from the Steyning side if I didn't have to walk through the cows. If they are grazing away from the path I'll walk across. Often on my return they are either on the path or gathered together by the exit gates. So most days I walk elsewhere. I appreciate that this is my issue and not the cows farmer etc. Are there any plans to perhaps fence the path. It might be worth asking in your survey why the use of the path won't change by other users if built.
- My interest in contributing would depend on the level of support from the Parish, District and County Councils.
- My only concern is the safety of school children cycling along busy roads with no cycle paths such as Church Street and Kings Barn Lane
- Will the short stretch from Kings Barn Lane to the bridge be cattle proof?
- It will need to be maintained properly
- Keep an open mind on design should it be possible in the future to include equestrians
- I worry about the safety of pedestrians. I have walked this way all my life and it's OK for walkers. I can no longer walk the old railway route to St Botolph's because of the fear of cyclists who approach silently and at speed. I have been knocked over once and almost knocked over countless times and ended up in the hedge. I hope this new path will be used by schoolchildren rather than speeding adult cyclists.
- I'm concerned about children using it to cycle to school as it's a quiet rural path and out of sight of passive surveillance- if an adults were taking groups of children to and from school I'd feel happier.
- That the path is wide enough to separate walkers from cyclists, if both using same path it would be dangerous for walkers - a painted line down the centre of path does not work - as at Widewater Lagoon.
- Will the White Bridge link be maintained once completed? The other footpath going south hasn't been.
- Dog poo bins
- Good to make this route useable year round, as it currently floods or gets very muddy
- Hope it would be possible to use an electric tricycle on the whole of the route
- what about equestrian use ????
- Please ensure that any staggered gateways on the route are wide enough to allow access to off- road mobility scooters. Some on the Steyning Twittens are extremely tight, some impassible.
- I would like to know why this link will not be open to equestrians? There are very few bridleways in this area and to be able to ride my horse SAFELY from Upper Beeding to Bramber would be brilliant. Why, yet again, are horse riders left out of the equation? We also deserve somewhere safe to ride. I would be willing to contribute to the crowd funding if horse riders are going to be allowed to use it.