

## **Green Lanes – Introduction**

### **The Issue**

Jersey Tourism has invested in the development of Jersey's Green Lane Network since its inception. The current proposals for rationalisation of Island speed limits would have the, perhaps unintended, consequence of destroying the scheme which has become so popular with our visitors as well as the local population. We do not believe that the retention of a 15mph limit in green lanes would be harmful to the overall speed limit proposition, and would allow the scheme to continue.

We believe that by increasing the speed limit even by 5 miles per hour will negate the original concept which was to "maintain the quiet, unspoilt and natural character of the countryside for people to enjoy". The provision of facilities was to be kept to a minimum and every effort was to be made to control the impact of cars and car parking in the countryside.

Motorists can and do exceed speed limits. The 15 mph speed limit was selected specifically to deter vehicular use. The network was developed for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and the 15 mph was arrived at after much debate concerning safety. One only has to review UK Government statistics relating to road deaths to see that speed is the all important factor and anything below 20 mph saves lives.

### **History of Development.**

The Island Plan made first mention of 'Green Lanes' in 1986 and a proposition was approved by the States of Jersey on 10th November 1987. The Plan referred to the identification of tree lined lanes which "were particularly attractive or of great character and antiquity" and stated that, "in co-operation with landowners, parishes and States' departments, every effort would be made to ensure that their character is maintained".

Quite simply, the Island Plan identified the need to maintain the natural beauty of the Island's narrow, tree lined lanes and wished to create a sustainable leisure amenity for walkers, cyclists and horse riders where people, not the car, had priority.

Nothing further happened until 1992 when the Constable of St. Peter developed plans with his parishioners for a network of green and scenic

lanes. The 'Green Lanes' in St. Peter with the distinctive road sign and 15 miles per hour speed limit were introduced on St. Peter's day on 29th June, 1994.

Jersey Tourism produced and tabled the subsequent report and proposition on Green Lanes which was approved by the States and worked with individual parishes on the implementation of the scheme.

### **Investment**

Jersey Tourism worked with several parishes during the original implementation of the Green Lane network post 1994. This included expenditure on road infrastructure and signage. Since that initial investment, the department's main marketing tools have consistently featured the network. Marketing activity includes TV advertising, advertisements in National newspapers, Press and media visits, on line campaigns and on island brochures. Jersey Tourism's lifestyle magazine - 'Pure Jersey' consistently mentions the network and has done since the first issue. This profile extends to visiting journalists who come to the island to write articles for magazines, TV and newspapers in the UK and Europe. The financial cost of this coverage has run into many thousands of pounds.

The 100 mile Cycle network was developed with the Green Lane network as its base with Sustrans, the Bristol based charity. The cycle network has cost over £1.2 million since its inception in 1997. All funding has come from the Tourism Development Fund.

### **Walking Tourism**

Walking is one of our key product areas and the Department spends £28,000 per year on creating walking festivals in the spring and autumn (average attendance 1000 + visitors per event) and an annual guided walking programme.

Jersey Tourism has successfully marketed the island as a walking destination with the result that a third (33.37%) of all staying leisure visitors now come to Jersey to walk (2008 Summer Visitor Survey). In 2009 there were 340,500 staying leisure visitors and the on island spend was £150 million.

The Green Lane network is a hugely important part of this walking infrastructure. We live in a small island where there is no 'right to roam' as there is in England and with a very high levels of car ownership, any impingement on this infrastructure will have an obvious and adverse effect.

**Jersey has very few unique selling points (USP) as much of the infrastructure in terms of leisure facilities and attractions can be found in other tourism destinations. Green Lanes are one of the few initiatives which can be truly described as unique to Jersey.**

In 2011, the German market provides the best opportunity for growth as the economic conditions are favourable and the transport links are in place to achieve a similar level of growth [17.4%] as that achieved in 2010. The total air seat capacity from Germany is to be increased by 28% to 8,715. However, the German market is more interested in outdoor pursuits, specifically walking – so any reduction in the walking infrastructure will have an impact.

In Tourism terms, the Green Lanes and other 'soft adventure' opportunities are of huge importance, particularly in the current economic climate and in competition with other tourism destinations:-

### **Cycle Network**

The existing cycling (100 mile) network was developed by Jersey Tourism with Sustrans; the Bristol based charity responsible for creating the UK's cycle network. Cycle routes were based on and around the Green Lane network because of the low speed limit and the physical beauty of these small lanes.

### **Marketing and Promotion**

Jersey Tourism is aware of the huge interest in this award winning scheme from its European Markets. The concept of 'Green Lanes' and the fact that a small island had put "people before the car" has achieved enormous press coverage over the years in Europe, particularly in Germany, Holland, Switzerland and Scandinavia.

The creation of the Green Lane network was also a key feature in a 2 year environment project which led to Jersey becoming the first destination to win

Green Globe status in 1996 – a programme established by the World Tourism Organisation. The Island also won a top award for the network in the same year which was voted exclusively by the UK's Guild of Travel Writers.

**If the Environment Scrutiny Panel is in any doubt of the value of Green Lanes to Jersey and the department's marketing effort, it need look no further than Google. If one uses this search engine and searches for 'Green Lanes in Jersey' some 175,000 references can be seen (as of 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2011).**

### **Green Lanes – Report & Proposition**

Whilst supportive of articles (a) (i) to (iii) and articles (b), (c) and (d) in the report and proposition (P.167), it is felt that it has been mainly written from a car user's perspective and insufficient credence has been given to non car users of the Island's road infrastructure.

There currently exists 50 miles of Green Lanes, some 10% of the total road infrastructure and this facility is a key part of Jersey's walking and cycling offering.

We consider that more cars will be encouraged to use these small lanes if the speed limit is increased – conversely making it less attractive for use for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

If the speed limit is increased, 'Green Lanes' will in effect, be no different to the remainder of the road infrastructure with a 20 mph speed limit. Thus, the existing unique Green Lane sign will no longer be relevant and will have to be replaced at significant cost estimated at £20k and to be funded by each Parish at a time when public expenditure is being reduced.

Green Lanes also form part of existing 'safe routes to schools' and increasing the speed limit could dissuade parents from encouraging their children to walk to school which could impact on the current strategy regarding health and obesity.

We need to protect these assets and unique selling points (USPs) in the current economic climate. To lose the Green Lane network and to impact

adversely on the existing Cycle network would cause irreparable damage to the Island's visitor offering.

### **The View of the General Public**

In the report much is made of the Speed Limit review carried out by TTS which attracted a response from 839 local residents.

It is worth noting that for other than the first question which related to whether there should be a change to the current policy the survey generated a significant level of 'opt out' for the ensuing questions.

The report highlights the 51.4 % who in response to question 7 indicated that they considered that the maximum speed for cars should be 20 mph as opposed to the 31.3% who indicated 15 mph.

However the report does not similarly highlight the responses to question 6 which provide a much more favourable attitude towards the retention of the current Green Lane scheme.

The question asked 'Do you think that the Green Lane scheme [whereby the maximum speed limit for cars in designated Green Lanes is 15mph] should be continued, extended or stopped. 40.6 % responded in favour of continuation, 37.1% responded in favour of extension and only 22.3 % thought that they should be stopped.

Therefore some 77.6% of respondees favoured a choice of either retention or extension at the current speed limit of 15mph.