



## RENFREWSHIRE LEISURE LANES



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## ABSTRACT

Leisure Lanes is a concept being developed and implemented in Renfrewshire, Scotland to improve connectivity between on-road and off-road route networks, promote healthy, safe activity and provide a code of conduct for all users of the routes. The Initiative encourages multi-user participation on the rural network (cyclists, walkers, horse-riders and drivers can use the routes).

The expected outcome is to encourage use of safer routes, promote ecotourism and increase visitor numbers in Renfrewshire's rural areas to participate in healthy, sustainable leisure activities. Initial results indicate awareness of the Leisure Lanes concept and branding as well as increased visitor numbers.





## INTRODUCTION

Renfrewshire council area is located on the west of Scotland's central belt. The area is predominantly urban with rural settlements located throughout the council area.

The Leisure Lanes initiative aims to encourage walkers, cyclists and horse riders to utilise low-volume trafficked rural roads within Renfrewshire for leisure purposes. The project advertises and defines routes, raises driver awareness that the route is utilised by others and attracts visitors to the rural area for leisure, health and ecotourism purposes.



The project is being implemented to make best use of the existing rural network of rural routes throughout Renfrewshire through branding and extensive marketing the aim is to encourage people into the countryside, provide a well publicised code of conduct and provide features to easily identify and define the routes.



We are currently two years into this three year pilot project (from concept to implementation and review). Physical features have been introduced defining the leisure lanes network and advertising is on-going to highlight the branding and the location of the pilot network. Surveys have to be undertaken to establish levels of take-up, levels of awareness and levels of satisfaction in addressing the issues raised in the rural areas.

## BACKGROUND

The idea for leisure lanes was formulated from responses received on Renfrewshire's Access Strategy. Many respondents highlighted that they were already utilising routes in the more rural areas however they highlighted their concerns over safety as the routes were used by different forms of transport. In particular, the equestrian groups had experienced problems through other users' lack of awareness of how to approach and pass their horses. Cyclists indicated their frustrations at a lack of integration of the National cycle network with the existing rural roads and lanes that they utilised particularly for leisure purposes. In addition, the Council recognised the need to participate in the health agenda and encourage citizens to increase their levels of activity to improve health and fitness levels.

Renfrewshire's Core Path Plan was also being defined and it was essential to find out which routes were being used for leisure purposes and where there were gaps in the network. This would provide the basis for developing a network suitable for residents and visitors to Renfrewshire and allow the council to carry this out within existing budgetary limits. The intention was to capitalise on existing routes and where possible to link on and off road paths to expand the network and this would encourage more activity in the rural areas for healthy, sustainable use.

The need and aspiration to provide an extensive network of rural routes for leisure and commuting purpose also compliments in to the Health agenda for Scotland that tries to encourage activity that can be incorporated into everyday lifestyles and encourage activity that is carried out in a sustainable manner. Thus, providing links between settlements and signed routes for leisure in particular was considered to be a good way of encouraging people to take up healthy activities.

## AIM

The aim of this project is to encourage walkers, cyclists and horse riders to utilise the low volume trafficked rural roads within Renfrewshire for leisure and commuting purposes. The project aims to advertise the routes and make rural villages and towns more accessible by alternative modes of transport.



In summary, the detailed aims of the Leisure Lanes project are :

- Encourage multi-user participation on rural roads.
- Encourage co-operation between users
- Increase pedestrian, equestrian and cycle use to improve health.
- Link off road routes via roads to facilitate missing links to aid the formation and extension of a core path plan for Renfrewshire.
- Encourage local residents to utilise the routes for walking and cycling by improving linkages, raising awareness of the routes and improving safety by raising awareness of different types of traffic that will be experienced on the routes.
- Encourage ecotourism and increase day-visitor numbers to Renfrewshire to improve local economies.

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

A council working group was set up (internal and external representatives) to take forward the concept of leisure lanes from initial ideas to implementation. The group comprised representatives from transport policy, planning, biodiversity and tourism. The group considered the consultation responses from the Access Strategy and used this as the basis for taking forward the Leisure Lanes concept. Given that the main issue to be addressed was more considerate multi-user participation on rural lanes and roads it was agreed that one of the main thrusts of the project had to be development of a code of conduct for all users and ensuring that this was widely advertised and understood. In order to carry this out the group agreed that it was essential to develop easily identifiable branding for Leisure Lanes.

The remit for the group therefore was:

- Design of recognisable and distinctive logo and branding.
- Preparation of a code of conduct leaflet and associated marketing
- Preparation of an information leaflet outlining land management roles and responsibilities for various user groups i.e. farmers and residents adjacent to the routes.



- Campaign development and marketing to promote the network of leisure lanes (overcome fears and concerns of those already using rural routes and to re-assure those who would potentially use the routes).
- Route selection by surveying all rural routes within Renfrewshire. Routes were examined in detail, photographed and mapped to highlight where connections could be made between on and off road paths and cycle routes.
- Detailed design of physical features to designate leisure lanes.
- Secure funding for the project from external bodies to support the project.
- Implementation, tendering of works and award of contract.

It was essential that to take this unique project forward, all parties involved would have to work together and allow a degree of flexibility in their approach rather than working completely within existing guidelines. Key components such as ensuring works would be safe as well as fit for purpose would be retained however design flexibility had to be built in to increase creativity and allow this project to emerge.

The programme for the leisure lanes project as set out by the Working Group was as follows:

#### Year 1 – Initial phase – Feasibility study

- Outline of potential routes
- Public Consultation
- Design of logo
- Develop code of conduct leaflet
- Ground survey work
- Pilot area identified
- Secure partnership funding
- Agree signs and physical features

#### Year 2 – Phase two – Implementation

- Signage of route
- Implementation of physical features
- Distribution of leaflets
- Promotion and marketing

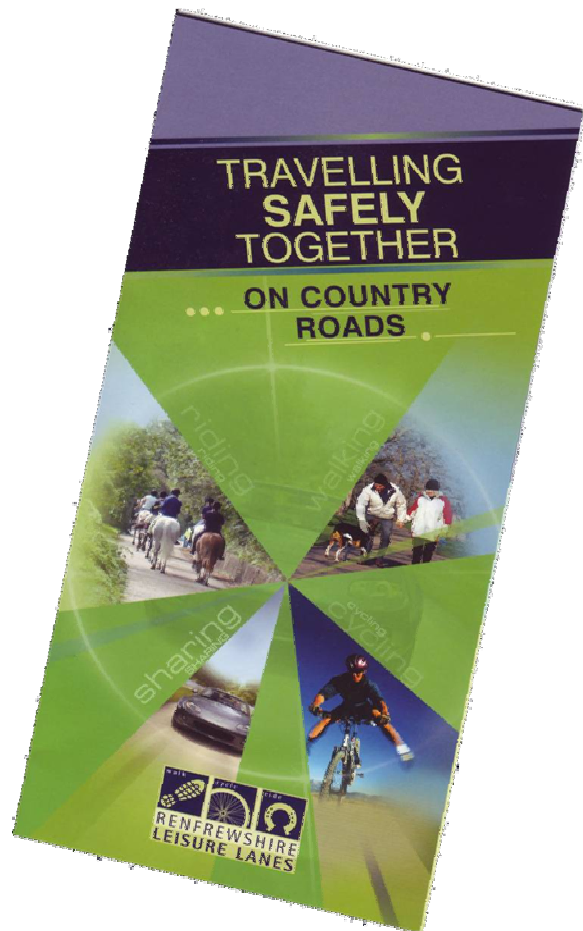
### Year 3 – Phase three – Rolling out

- Monitoring and review
- Identify additional missing links across council area
- Seek and secure additional funding
- Marketing / Advertising
- Roll out project

### INFORMATION LEAFLET

An information leaflet was produced for the different user groups of the leisure lanes. The leaflet outlined roles and responsibilities and explained how each group could best utilise the area and maximise benefits for all other users. The essence of the leaflet was to set out roles and responsibilities however it additionally formed the basis for advertising the leisure lanes brand. The leaflet was entitled “Travelling safely together on country roads”.

The leaflet advertises the existence of the code of conduct, highlights the branding and sets out how individuals can help make the routes safer and more pleasurable for all to use. The leaflet also compliments the access strategy and the other advertising of cycle and walk routes throughout Renfrewshire. Appendix A contains the leaflet content.



The leaflet was distributed to libraries, community halls, doctor surgeries, health centres, shopping centres, within council buildings and was made available on the council's web site. The leaflet was also distributed to all groups who had participated in the Access Strategy consultation and this included equestrian groups, stables, walking groups and community groups across the area.

The leaflet targeted those who already use the routes in order to highlight to them that changes had been made following the consultation. In order to encourage increased useage of the routes the leaflet was also advertised in the press and in the Renfrewshire magazine which is distributed to every household in Renfrewshire. The main aim of the leaflet was to raise awareness of Leisure Lanes and the Leisure Lanes logo and to promote the code of conduct, particularly to those already using the routes.

A separate leaflet was also produced for those living along the routes. This leaflet also highlighted good practice for land management and set out responsibility of each party in terms of land management and maintenance.

## CRITERIA FOR DEFINING A LEISURE LANE

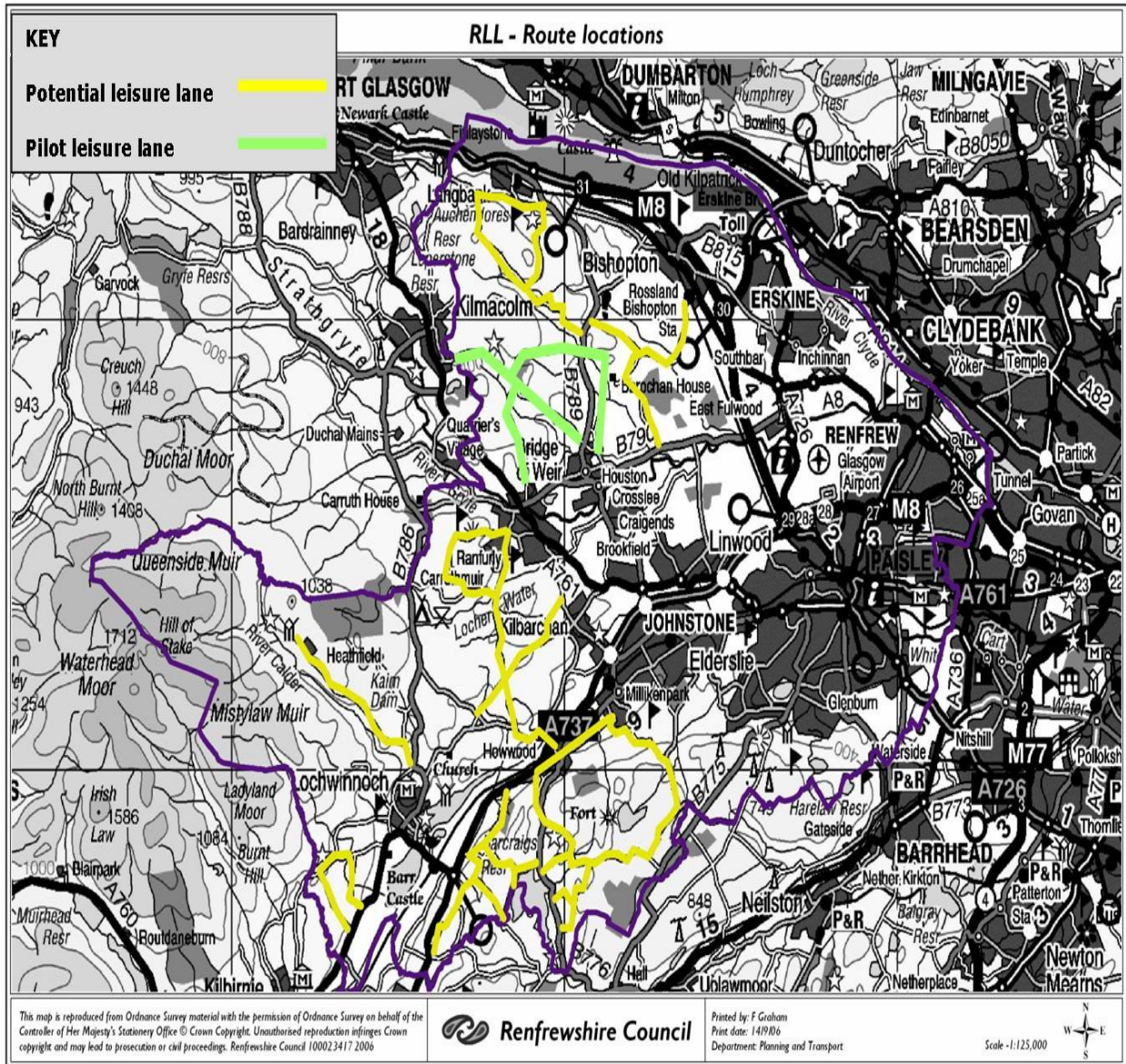
The working group agreed on criteria for setting up a leisure lane network. The lane or road had to typically have less than 50 vehicle movements per day (or fewer than 5 vehicles per hour through the day time), was part of a network and provide suitable surfacing for walking, cycling and horse riding. Many of the leisure lanes had considerable numbers of pot holes and this contributed to keeping vehicle speeds low on the routes. The routes also tended to be single-track roads of 3 to 4m width with passing places for vehicles.

The leisure lanes tended to connect existing on and off road tracks and cycle routes throughout an area, thus providing additional links (often more direct links) and connections that contribute to extending the path network.

## POTENTIAL LEISURE LANES NETWORK

In eight separate areas within Renfrewshire a network of routes were identified as suitable pilot areas for leisure lanes through meeting the set criteria (Fig). One pilot area was chosen to implement the first leisure lane project. This covered 15 km in the north of Renfrewshire and made connections with the existing off-road paths network.

## RENFREWSHIRE LEISURE LANES



## FEATURES

There was much discussion regarding suitable features that would be distinctive in outlining to users that this was a Leisure Lanes area and that would also be sympathetic to the rural, countryside environment. The features would have the purpose of defining the extents of the leisure lane network, highlight to all users that there was a need for caution and that they would encounter other users and in addition the features would mark routes for walkers etc to follow.



Features considered were gateways, warning signs, the need for traffic signs, wooden vertical sleepers, branding, false cattle grids painted on the road surface and symbols throughout the area as markers.



It was agreed by the working group to go ahead with using reclaimed wooden railway sleepers, mounted vertically into the ground in cement. These wooden features would naturally blend with the countryside area, would carry the required information and signing and would be a good use of existing materials.

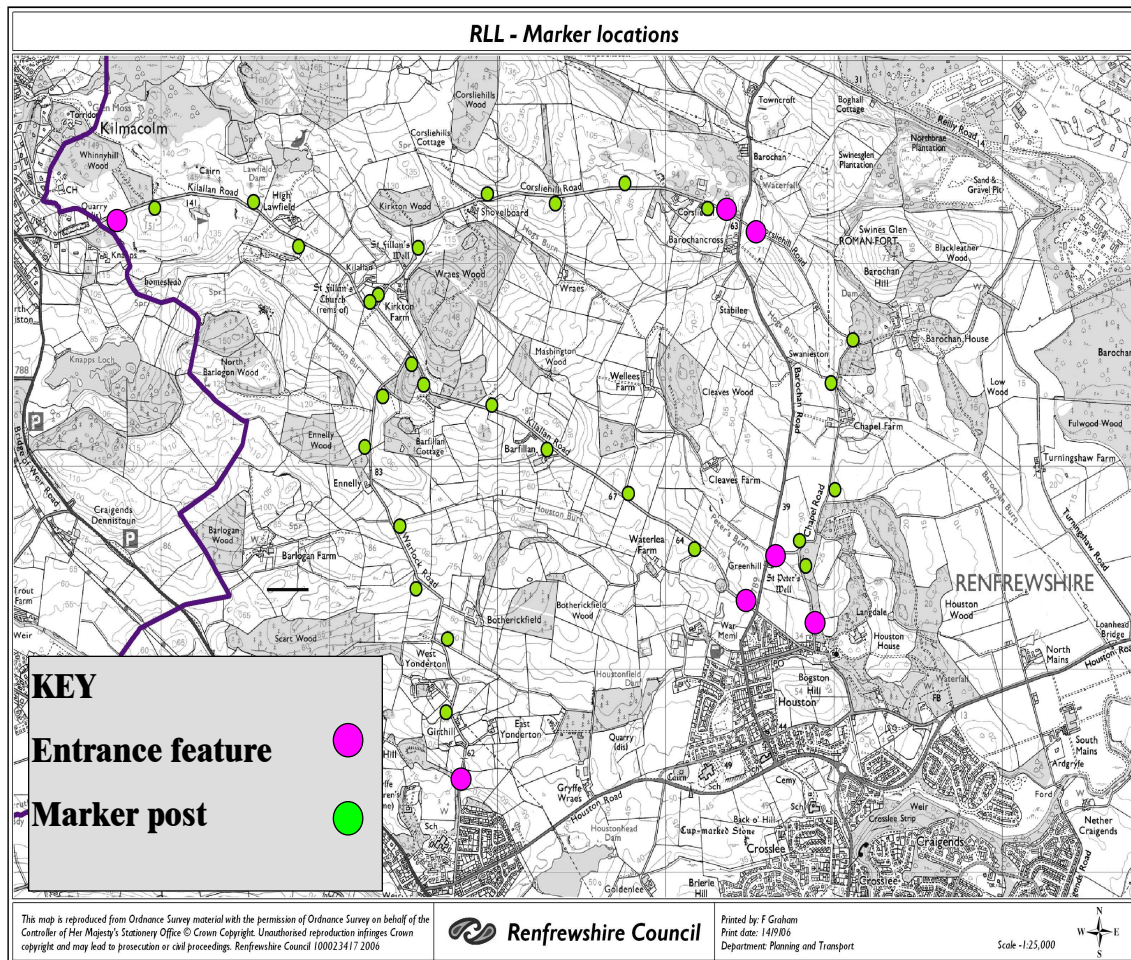


It was also decided that gateway features would be introduced at the entrances to the leisure lane area. The gateways further narrowed the road width to 3 metres and ensured that anyone entering the area were made well aware that this area was for multi-user activities.

The pilot area chosen for introduction of the Leisure Lanes Initiative was covered by marker posts and entrance features at locations as shown in the figure below.



# LEISURE LANES PILOT





## MARKETING

It was considered essential that the marketing campaign complement the launch of the leisure lanes initiative. This was carried out in four ways:

- Develop branding – leisure lanes logo
- Marketing through magazines, newspapers, posters at bus stops, libraries and health centres, press releases, tourism offices, web site and advertising in Glasgow airport.
- Booklet of walks / Booklet of cycle routes to encourage cycling and walking as a leisure pursuit in the first instance.

## COSTS

Physical features for the pilot project area in Renfrewshire amounted to under £10,000 for physical features and around £1500 for leaflets. The breakdown of costs are as follows:

28 marker posts	£5,090
7 gateway features	£4,800
	<b>£9,890</b>
 User leaflets (10,000)	 £840
Land management leaflets (1000)	£625
	<b>£1465</b>

## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

### Surfacing

To retain the natural rural character of the area chosen to be developed as a Leisure Lane, it was agreed that the road surfaces should not be upgraded or treated to remove potholes, scree or to



remove potential flooding. This decision was based on the fact that the road surfacing on the routes was a major factor in deterring drivers from speeding. Thus, in the interests of road safety the surfaces were retained without improvements.

Areas of potential flooding were located throughout the network and it was agreed that in order not to alter the character and rural nature of the area that no additional works would be undertaken to alter the routes.

### Approved signage

In order to avoid problems of obtaining permission for sign development which is lengthy and time consuming, it was agreed that signage for the Leisure Lanes had to be developed in such a way as not to replicate any road sign. However, warning road signs were required by standards where the road was narrowed thus on gateways, traditional signage also had to be applied.

Thermoplastic was designed into a false cattlegrid layout to be added to the road surface at gateway locations. The idea behind the feature was to give the impression that the road was narrowed considerably and the cattle grid layout would remind users that they were in a rural area.

Mixed views were received on our aspiration to encourage increased numbers of visitors to the rural areas for leisure purposes.

### MONITORING

Monitoring usage on the Leisure Lanes network is proving to be more difficult than first anticipated due to the sporadic nature of usage of these types of routes. Surveys will be undertaken throughout summer 2007 to establish numbers of cyclists, walkers and horse-riders.

An essential part of any project is monitoring, evaluation and review. The group have agreed that monitoring will be undertaken through three different types of surveys; site counts, attitude surveys and awareness surveys. Information from each will allow detailed consideration of the impact and effect of the pilot project and will guide what

further works or changes will be carried out if the Leisure Lanes project is to be carried forward to other rural areas in Renfrewshire either in its present or modified format.

Surveys will be carried out for Leisure Lanes as follows:

#### Site counts

To establish the levels of use before and after implementation of the pilot study. The site counts notes the numbers of vehicles, cyclists, walkers and horse riders using the routes prior to implementation of the pilot. Counts will be undertaken in May to establish level of use with the pilot in place.

#### Attitude surveys

50 user groups in Renfrewshire were consulted on their existing level of use of countryside roads and paths. This was essential to establish what were the particular problems experienced by each of the user groups and provided some ideas for potential solutions. Indeed, it was through this consultation that the idea of leisure lanes was borne.

#### Awareness surveys

Awareness surveys will be carried out in summer 2007 to establish to what extent the public have been made aware of the leisure lanes project. Surveys will be carried out through questions in our citizens' panel and will ask if they have heard the term leisure lane or have ever noticed the branding?

For those answering yes, further questions will be asked on what they understood from the symbol etc and if they had been attracted to use the leisure lane.

### PARTNERSHIP WORKING

For a project of this nature to be successful it is essential that public and private groups work together to complement work. The concept of leisure lanes arose out of discussions with groups who highlighted particular problems and wanted to increase awareness, particularly of drivers, to their needs when using the routes for leisure.

Funding for leisure lanes was achieved through contributions from partners working together to promote sustainability, use of the natural environment, tourism, health and connectivity.

Essential to the success of this project was the personnel working together with an approach that allowed development of a new idea not constrained by the guidelines and regulations in place within the council or other Authority. The key to the development of Leisure Lanes was in permitting features to be implemented that reduced road widths to an absolute minimum and apply signing that did not in any way replicate a traditional road sign.

## CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

It is considered that route maps could be a useful addition to compliment and enhance the marketing of the Leisure Lanes concept. Consideration will be given to developing maps that could be incorporated into the leaflets.

Markers incorporating distance and or estimated average time to travel between the various points is also an idea being considered for development of the Leisure Lanes concept. This could also be incorporated onto the map in order to assist in route planning and could be a tool used to encourage those who would usually not walk between points to consider walking as it would only take eg 15 minutes.

The Leisure Lanes initiative is in its infancy however initial reactions from groups using the network are positive. There is particular praise for providing the Code of Conduct leaflets to make users aware that the routes are used by horse-riders, cyclists, walkers and motorists who all have equal rights to be using the network. It will be interesting to establish if the introduction of Leisure Lanes features and branding have had any impact on the number of people using the routes and on the behaviour of those using the routes.



## Appendix A

### Leisure Lanes Leaflet – Code of Conduct

Renfrewshire has an extensive network of quieter country roads that make good routes for walkers, horse riders and cyclists to enjoy our countryside as well as being used by motorised vehicles.

Everyone - vehicle drivers, pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists and land managers can act responsibly to ensure that these routes are safer for everyone to use.

This leaflet highlights the ways that YOU can make using these routes safer and more enjoyable for everyone.

## TRAVELLING SAFELY TOGETHER ON COUNTRY ROADS

### MOTORISED VEHICLE DRIVERS



- Be courteous to other road users - it costs nothing and goes a long way!
- Avoid excessive speeds, slow down in narrow country lanes as you are likely to meet other road users.
- Take particular care approaching bends - THINK - who might be around the corner.
- Slow down when passing pedestrians, horses or cyclists.
- Pass all horses 'wide and slow'.
- Give other road users plenty of room.
- Be prepared to stop.
- Do not scare horses by revving your engine or sounding your horn.
- Do not overtake horses when there are oncoming vehicles.
- Do not drive too closely to the back of a horse!
- Avoid driving on the verge as other road users may need these to avoid you.
- Be aware - there may be a reason why two horses are riding abreast - the inside horse may be young, or nervous or its rider a novice.
- Be vigilant - horse riders and cyclists use hand signals.
- Horse riders may not move into the centre of the road when turning right, watch for hand signals.
- Treat all other road users as a potential hazard.
- Expect the unexpected.
- Be patient.

### PEDESTRIANS



- Be courteous to other road users - it costs nothing and goes a long way!
- Walk on the right hand side of the road.
- Avoid walking more than two abreast.
- Watch out for the approach of other road users from front or rear.
- Use the verge to allow other road users to pass.
- Horses may be frightened of you - speak but avoid unpredictable movements.
- Remember horses do not like umbrellas.
- Wear suitable footwear for walking in the countryside.
- Be visible - wear light, bright or reflective clothing.
- Take care when crossing field entrances and at junctions.
- Respect land management operations such as hedge or verge cutting, animal herding or tractors using the road.

### HORSE RIDERS



- Be courteous to other road users - it costs nothing and goes a long way!
- Ride on the left hand side of the road.
- Ride no more than two abreast.
- On very narrow roads ride single file.
- Where there is overtaking or oncoming traffic ride single file.
- If you are on a young horse tuck in behind a more experienced horse.
- Remember to thank all those that slow down when passing you.
- Know the highway code.
- Give clear and accurate hand signals.
- Take special care to look around you before manoeuvring - check again.
- Be visible - both you and your horse - wear reflective accessories at all times.
- Wear the correct protective head gear.
- Ride with both hands on reins unless signalling.
- When leading another horse whether mounted or dismounted keep yourself between the led horse and the traffic.
- Check your tack before you set off.
- If you have to take an inexperienced horse out ensure that you have a steady horse present.
- Avoid riding on roads in foggy conditions or after dark.
- Do not trot on slippery surfaces.
- Remember other road users may be frightened of horses.

drive walk ride

### Further reading

The Highway Code  
• [www.highwaycode.gov.uk](http://www.highwaycode.gov.uk)

Scottish Road Safety Campaign - "Safer Horse riding on the Road"  
• [www.src.org.uk](http://www.src.org.uk)

British Horse Society Riding and Road Safety manual  
• [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)

Scottish Outdoor Access Code  
• [www.outdooraccess-scotland.com](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com)

Renfrewshire Outdoor Access Strategy  
Contact Renfrewshire Council at the address below.

### Useful addresses

**Renfrewshire Council**  
Department of Planning and Transport  
Renfrewshire Council HQ  
Cotton Street  
Paisley PA1 1LL  
[www.renfrewshire.gov.uk](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk)

**British Horse Society**  
Stoneleigh Deer Park  
Kenilworth  
Warwickshire  
CV8 2XZ  
[www.bhsscotland.org.uk](http://www.bhsscotland.org.uk)

**Sustrans Scotland**  
16a Randolph Crescent  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7TT  
[www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

  
Renfrewshire Council

## TRAVELLING SAFELY TOGETHER ON COUNTRY ROADS



riding  
walking  
cycling  
shaping

  
RENFREWSHIRE LEISURE LANES