

# Improvements to Mere Way – start of works

## August-December 2023

### Background

Mere Way is a key part of the vision to provide robust sustainable transport connections from day one to support the development of Waterbeach Barracks, but also provide benefits to the surrounding area. It will deliver a predominantly off-road route for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, which includes a new bridge over the A10, improvements through Landbeach village, connecting to the historic Akeman Street and Mere Way routes.

The improvement works will see refurbishment of the existing route to create a 2-3m wide grass pathway, and a 3m hard surface pathway. There are also areas of the route over 4m at key points, to allow for agricultural access to adjacent fields.

### Consultation process

There has been extensive consultation over the last three years around the development of the plans including walks, talks and webinars, with local landowners, parish councils and key user groups, as well as an online consultation. These discussions have led to changes and improvements in the scheme which respond to the feedback.

The changes to the design are set out overleaf, followed by details on the timing to deliver these works.

We will also be holding an online and in-person session in Landbeach to talk through the plans (see opposite).

## Waterbeach

### Planning process and safety approach

The scheme has been through extensive consultation and planning processes with County and District Council technical teams to secure approvals.

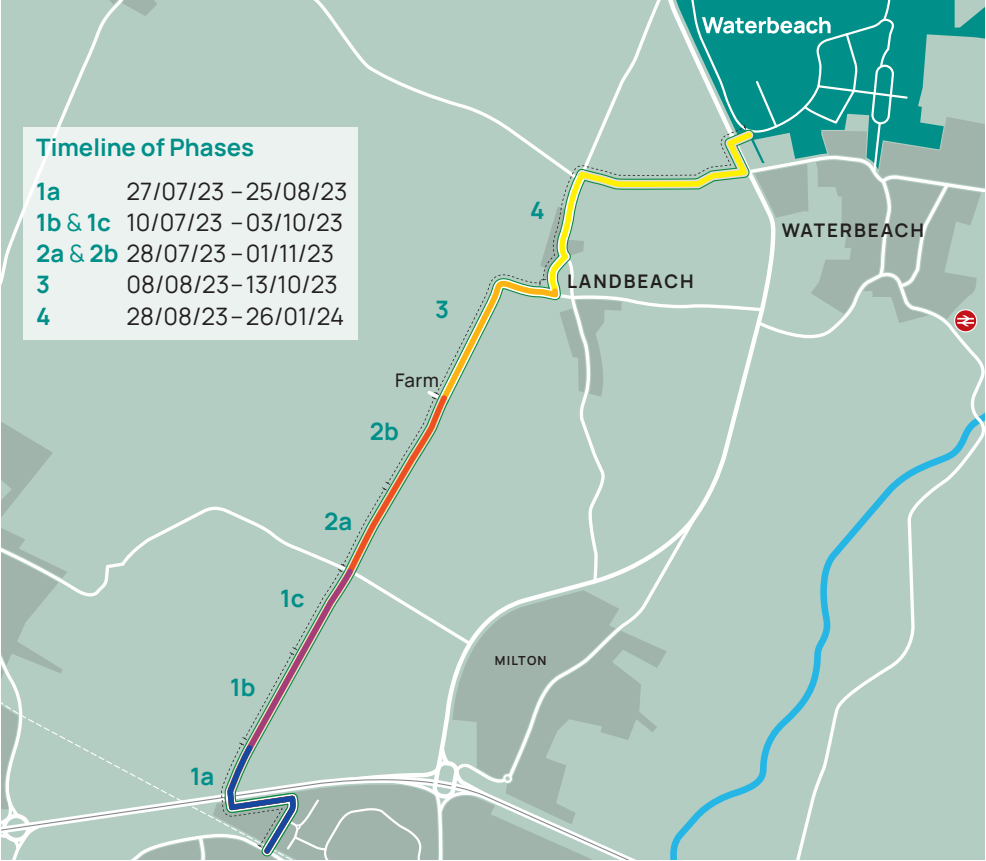
This part of the approval process included the Stage 2 Road Safety Audit. The scheme will have three in total: the first at design stage; this one at technical sign off; and the final one will be carried out after the works have been delivered. This is important to ensure the changes to the route meet the robust safety criteria we all share.



### What happens next? Timing and phasing of delivery

Urban&Civic's contractor – Walkers – started work along the Mere Way section of the route in July. Most of the work to the route north of Butt Lane can be carried out without the need to close the route, and signage is in place to provide guidance for those using it. Some closures will be required at later stages of the works south of Butt Lane, and these will be advised in advance through signage, on our website and through social media channels.

Work through Landbeach village has been designed to minimise disruption, and we will be holding an online meeting and an in-person meeting to talk through the detailed plans as set out on the plan below.

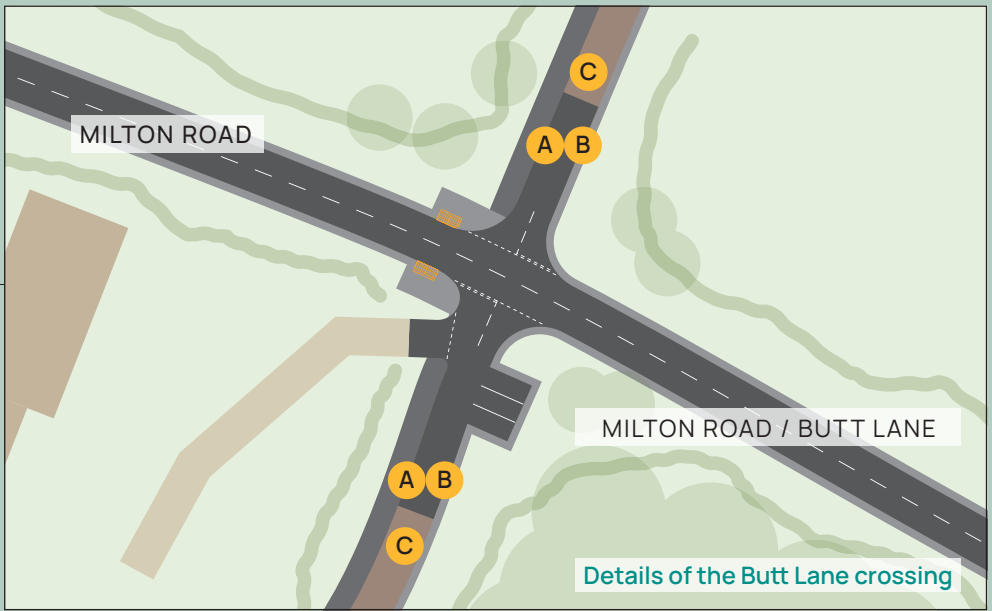
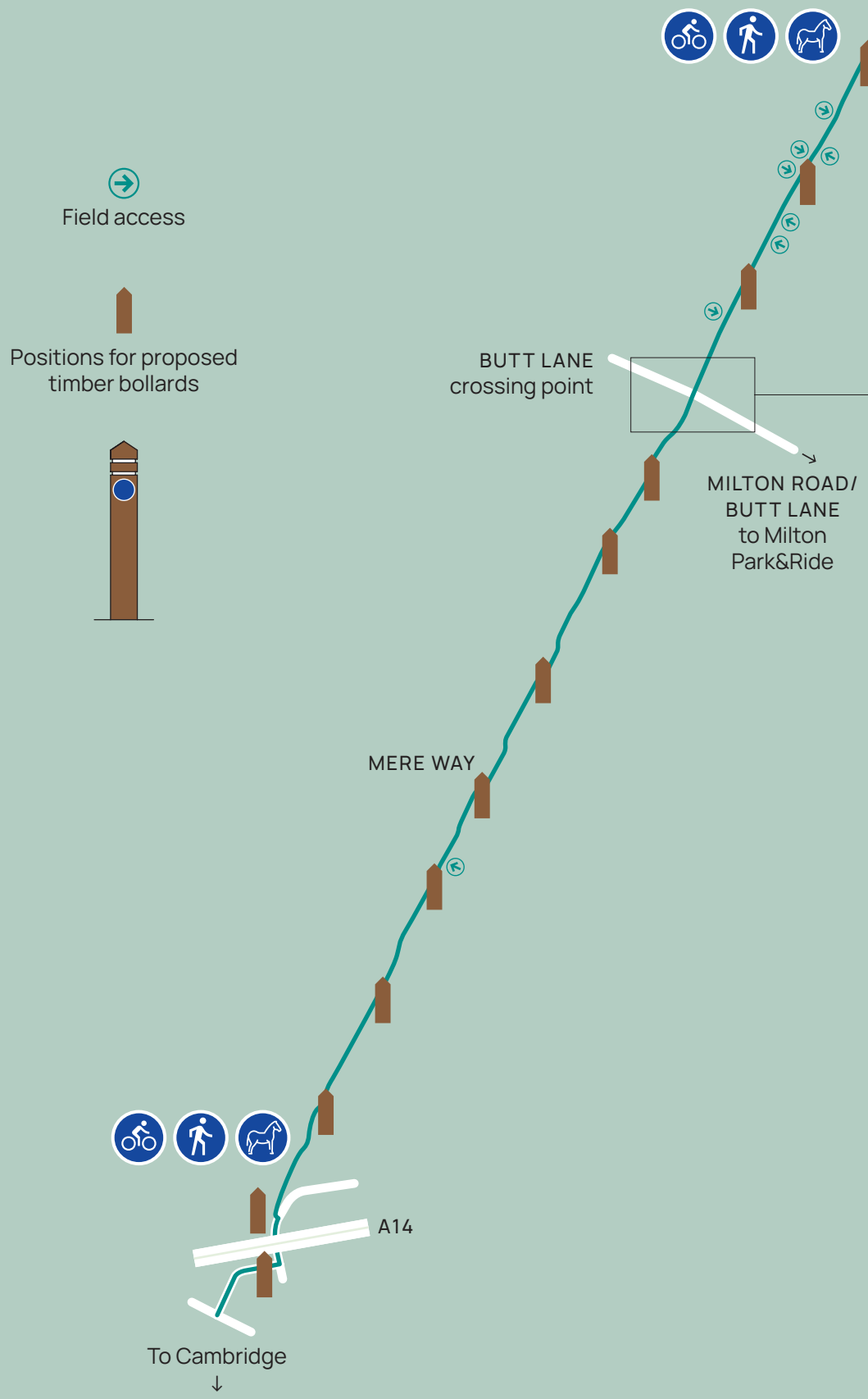
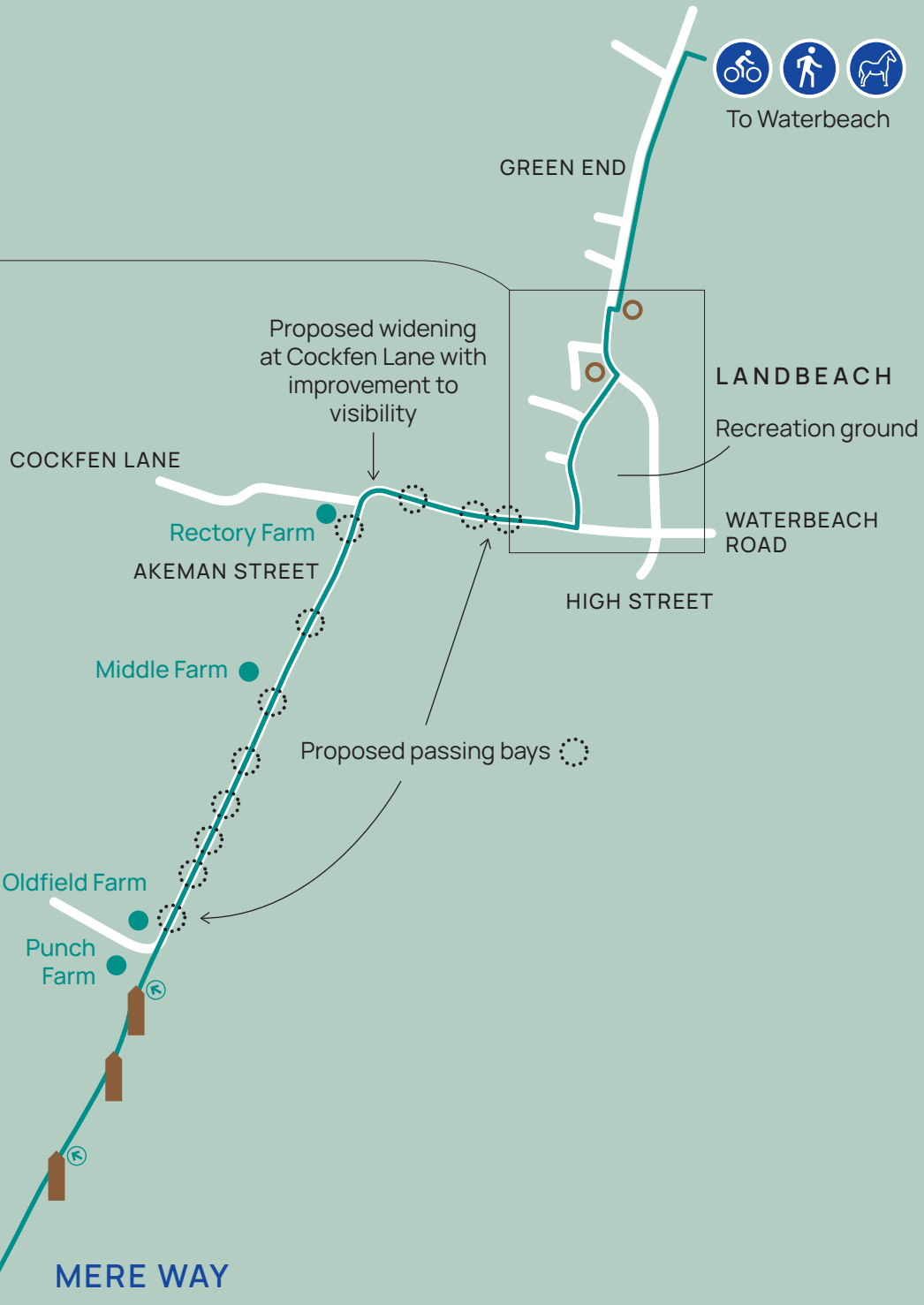
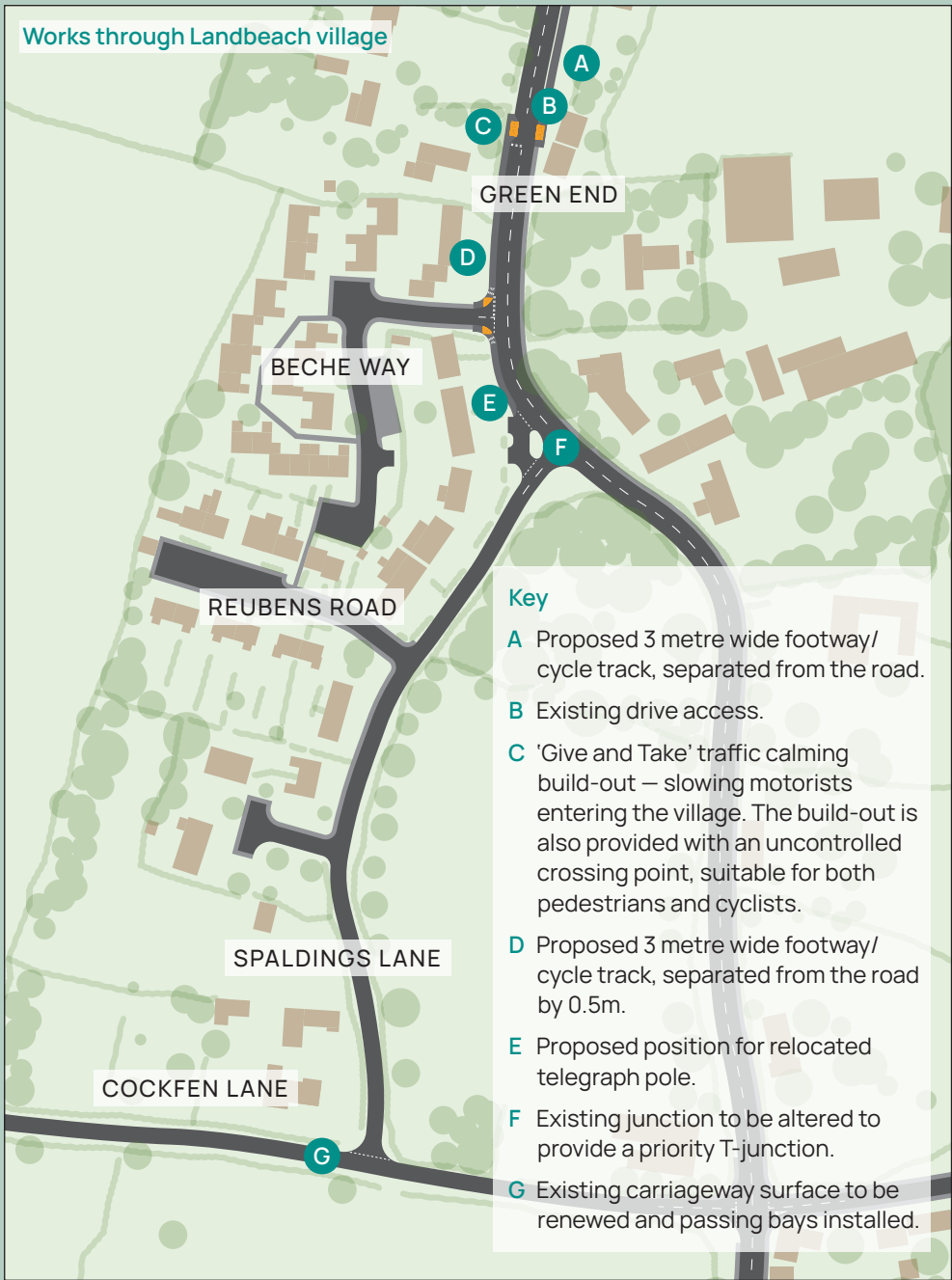


### Changes to the plans from consultation/discussion

A number of key amendments have been made which respond as far as possible to the discussions and feedback. These are listed below:

Feedback	Agreed amendment to plans
The original use of a route down the High Street was amended to use Spaldings Lane and Cockfen Lane	Early discussions with the Parish Council highlighted the perceived dangerous corners along the High Street, with a preference for using this quieter 'back door' route. The proposed design features for this part of the route has enhanced road safety as set out in the plans and included as points below.
Passing bays	To provide passing points for normal traffic and agricultural vehicles along Cockfen Lane. Passing bays approved in agreed locations.
Keeping a grass route along the full length of the route	In the discussions, many wanted a hard surface, other users wanted grass. The current design has a grass strip running along the full length of the route, alongside the hard surface. This should enable walkers, cyclists and equestrians to use the surface they prefer, as well as ensuring greater accessibility for pushchairs and wheelchairs. The grass route is 3m wide across most of the route, mirroring the hard surface wherever possible.
Width and specification of route to manage agricultural uses	Changes have been made to the width and specification to accommodate agricultural vehicle width and weight along sections of Akeman Street and Mere Way. This is specific to sections used for these purposes and applies the specification set out by the County Council for agricultural vehicles.
Heritage surface course	Concerns have been raised about urbanising the countryside, through use of dark asphalt material. This challenge remains as the route needs to work as an accessible cycle commuting route, as well as a main leisure route, and its surface must be to an adoptable standard for the County Council to take on long term maintenance. The surface has now been finalised in line with the County Council specification and cycle/equestrian guidance, as a dark tarmac with aggregate stone size (10mm) which improves the amount of grip for horses.
Maintaining widths of paths	A concrete flush edging kerb has been added to the specification to ensure the edge of the path is secured, and to reduce encroachment from vegetation, with some localised areas around field accesses being provided with a dropped kerb. The path is, and remains, adopted public highway, subject to the Highway Authority's maintenance regime.
Cockfen Lane corner	The corner has been widened to allow for greater ease for road users to pass. Some removal of vegetation will be carried out to ensure greater visibility.
Working with the trees and hedges	With the desire to widen the route, there was a detailed review of the design to ensure it worked around existing hedgerows and vegetation wherever possible. This creates a more meandering route, to protect the greatest number of important trees and vegetation, which also has benefits for controlling the speed of some cyclists – which was raised as another concern by walkers and equestrians.
Green End crossing	The location of the crossing has been moved further south to ensure this is out of the national speed limit section. The speed limit in this area will be reviewed to explore the opportunity to reduce it as part of the entrance to the village.

Feedback	Agreed amendment to plans
Quiet Lane status for Spaldings Lane	Views were shared that larger agricultural vehicles use the route, and it needed to ensure the safety of all users. Usage has been monitored and is generally low, but the lane will acquire 'Quiet Lane' status and a 20mph speed limit to keep traffic moving slowly and ensure appropriate warnings and priority for walkers and cyclists. This has been reviewed through the Road Safety Audit process.
Safety of crossing points between the fields of the fruit farm	A detailed walkover went through the active crossing points used by vehicles and approaches were agreed for designing measures, signage and vegetation management for visibility which addressed these points. Surface specification and managing existing drainage approaches were also factored into the plans.
Green End/Spaldings Lane junction – parking spaces	This area has been revisited a number of times, to retain the informal parking areas used by households and narrow the width of the junction. The informal visitor parking on the other side of the road is being reviewed, with three alternative locations undergoing an additional review, including road safety, after discussions with the Parish Council.
Bridge changes	Changes to the bridge design will ensure it accommodates equestrian riders, alongside pedestrians and cyclists. The bridge now has rubber block paved surfacing, higher parapets, solid infill across the A10 carriageway and mounting blocks either side.
Butt Lane junction	The Road Safety Audit process looked at speeds and traffic flows to finalise the approach to the junction. This now includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Street lighting on the crossing area.</li><li>● Controlled access on the cycle approach.</li><li>● Give Way signage and markings on the cycle approach.</li><li>● Uncontrolled crossing with motorist priority.</li><li>● Speed limit reduction to 50mph. NB. This is already in place.</li><li>● Leisure parking spaces retained but more clearly defined.</li><li>● Form of crossing to remain under review as use increases.</li></ul>
Green End priority system (build out)	The chicane has been amended to ensure it gives priority to those leaving the village and slows down those entering it from Green End.
Putting in additional signage, junctions and interventions along the route to support agricultural users	Along this route, there will be the need for shared use with agriculture. This has been taken into consideration for the design evolution and with the Road Safety Audits. The final scheme ensures a safety-first approach, with appropriate design features and warnings in place, and this will be further reviewed at the final Road Safety Audit, which follows completion of the route.
Lighting	Street lighting options were discussed at length, with many differing views: some seeking safety and support for riders using this route, especially at night, others concerned by urbanising a rural route and impacting on nature. Ultimately it was agreed that key locations – such as where the route meets Butt Lane and crosses the road – street lighting was needed. It has been ruled out across the wider route because of the significant impacts on ecology. However, reflective stud lighting has been added along the full length of the route to light the way ahead of cyclists.



- Key**
- A** Proposed U-shaped post and rail fencing as per British Horse Society detail.
  - B** Existing gate to be removed, replaced with heavy-duty, box steel gates with 1.5m gap in the middle.
  - C** Reflecting studs to be spaced 6m apart on alternating sides of the route.

Timings reflect the current plans, but are subject to change due to weather or working conditions. A detailed breakdown of the timings of work through the village will be shared in the information sessions, and please do keep checking the Mere Way web page for the latest information:

[www.waterbeachwb.co.uk/mere-way](http://www.waterbeachwb.co.uk/mere-way)

