

Draft

FPW

Position Note on Greenways, to be used at Area Assembly, 3 May 2007

The Friends of the Parkland Walk was founded in 1988 and remained active for many years, but then became dormant. Some previous members and some of those who ran the Golden Jubilee celebrations in 2004 have now revived it. This small group has expanded and as from 16 April we became a fully active organisation.

The aim of the Friends is to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the Parkland walk.

As the group came to life we became aware of the Greenway scheme. It is not our only interest, but at present it is tending to dominate our concerns.

As the Greenway progressed, the Council gradually involved some of us in the consultation process. This has been reported to members and we have attempted to represent their views, including noting a considerable range of opinion.

Overall there is a very strong attachment to the character of the Walk as it now is.

There is general acceptance that some investment is needed as parts of the Walk are in very bad condition and will get worse, and that some amenities are lacking. In particular two categories of improvement are widely supported.

First of all, in certain areas the drainage needs substantial improvement. These areas become practically impassable after rain, and have led to very wide areas being trampled and the vegetation destroyed. These works are essential, and to some people that is all the Parkland Walk needs.

Secondly, whilst noting that some of the accesses to the walk are reasonable, others are in poor condition, with steep and broken steps. Some are almost invisible from outside, difficult to find and unwelcoming to new users. Some are quite impossible for wheelchairs, and difficult for many people with walking difficulties or with small children.

It should be noted that these main types of major improvement do not include the path itself. The amount of improvement needed on the path is generally felt to be relatively small, with most of the Walk remaining as it is in order to protect the character. The path should meander, possibly even more than at present, the width should vary considerably and in general there should be no fixed edge to the path.

Some people would like to leave the surface of the path as rough as it is now, though most would prefer some improvement. The question of the surface

quality is one of those where there is a difficult balance to be made. Although it is generally accepted that cyclists should be able to use the Walk, and most cyclists are reasonably behaved, a significant minority are real nuisances and a danger. Too smooth a surface will encourage more cyclists and higher speeds.

Similarly, although improving the entrances will encourage more use of the Walk, including the disabled for the first time, it could exacerbate the existing problem of joyriding and crime using scooters and motorcycles.