



In our previous document of 2013, the Cycle Lane provision on the A229 southern approach to Maidstone, was identified as fragmented and inadequate. It is notable that the MBC Blue/Green consultation document on Sustainable Movement (Map 7 & Page 37) failed to list any cycle route provision at all in this sector!

Loose Parish Council and SMART previously outlined a potential route which apparently broadly mirrored MBC thinking on this matter. After consultation and discussion with interested parties, some minor alterations to the original route (marked in green) have been suggested.

a) North of the new Hayle Stud Farm estate, a route following Gleneagles Drive and the footpath link to Caernarvon Drive might be preferable to the previously suggested Forest Hill.

b) Notwithstanding proposals for development both beside the new estate and at Orchard Place at Cripple Street, the existing path from Hayle to Cripple Street is not entirely suitable for cycle traffic as it stands. In the short term, using a route via Richmond Way and Regent Drive, with lighting and other infrastructure already in place, seems an easier option.

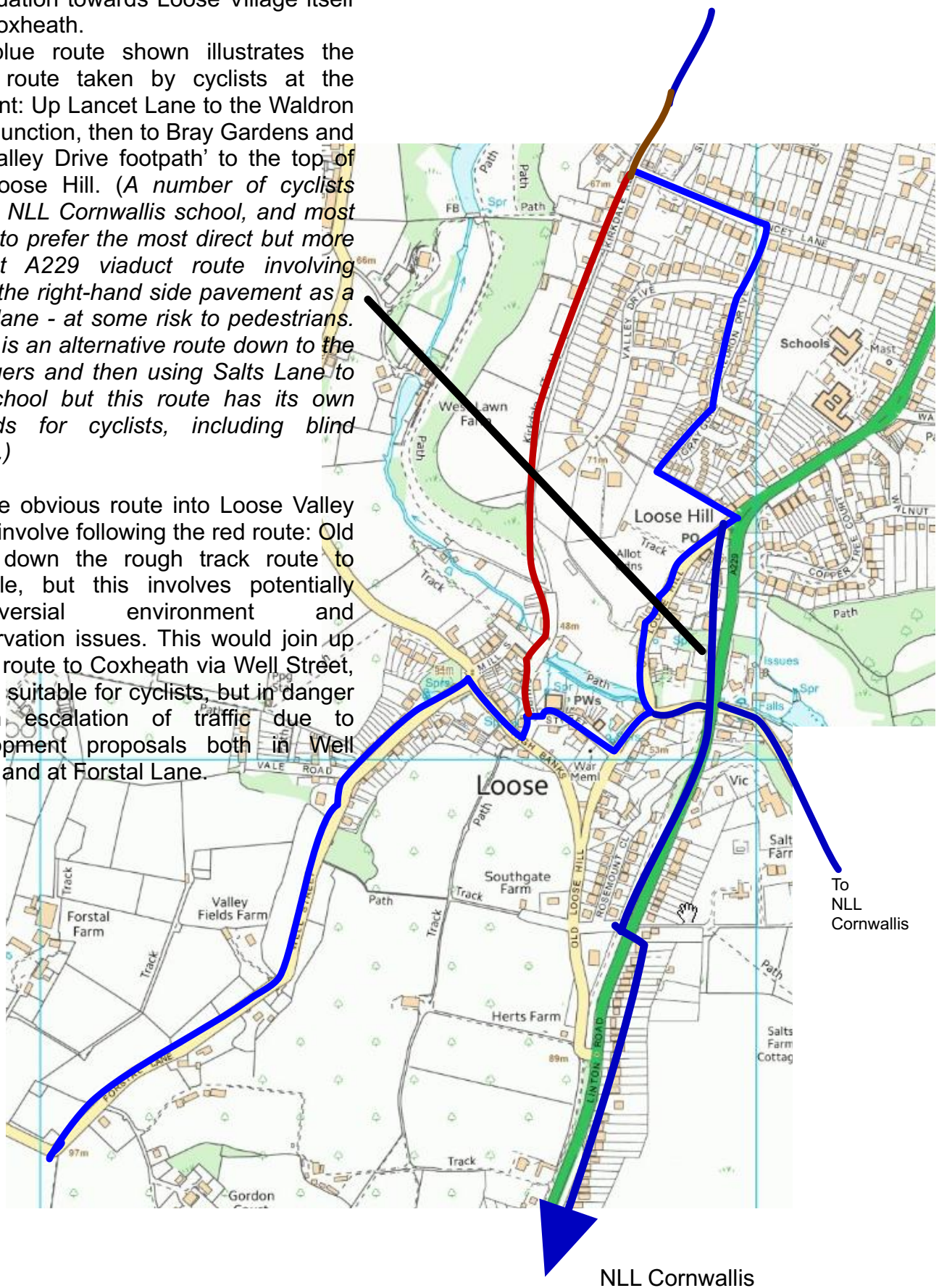
c) Cripple Street to Old Drive, Loose, is already becoming a popular pedestrian and cycle route. There are some issues on the surface puddling and collecting mud, and encroaching vegetation is a problem suffered by many footpaths and routes in the area. Despite the need for some lighting if the route is more formally adopted, the upgrade of this path has worked well.

The Loose Extension

The original route in the 2013 SMART report stopped at Old Drive, Loose, but obviously there has been interest in the continuation towards Loose Village itself and Coxheath.

The blue route shown illustrates the usual route taken by cyclists at the moment: Up Lancet Lane to the Waldron Road junction, then to Bray Gardens and the 'Valley Drive footpath' to the top of Old Loose Hill. (A number of cyclists attend NLL Cornwallis school, and most seem to prefer the most direct but more fraught A229 viaduct route involving using the right-hand side pavement as a cycle lane - at some risk to pedestrians. There is an alternative route down to the Chequers and then using Salts Lane to the school but this route has its own hazards for cyclists, including blind bends.)

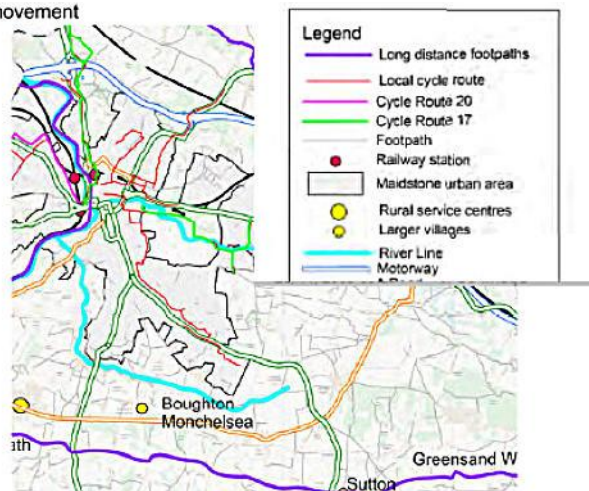
A more obvious route into Loose Valley might involve following the red route: Old Drive down the rough track route to Kirkdale, but this involves potentially controversial environment and conservation issues. This would join up with a route to Coxheath via Well Street, a road suitable for cyclists, but in danger of an escalation of traffic due to development proposals both in Well Street and at Forstal Lane.



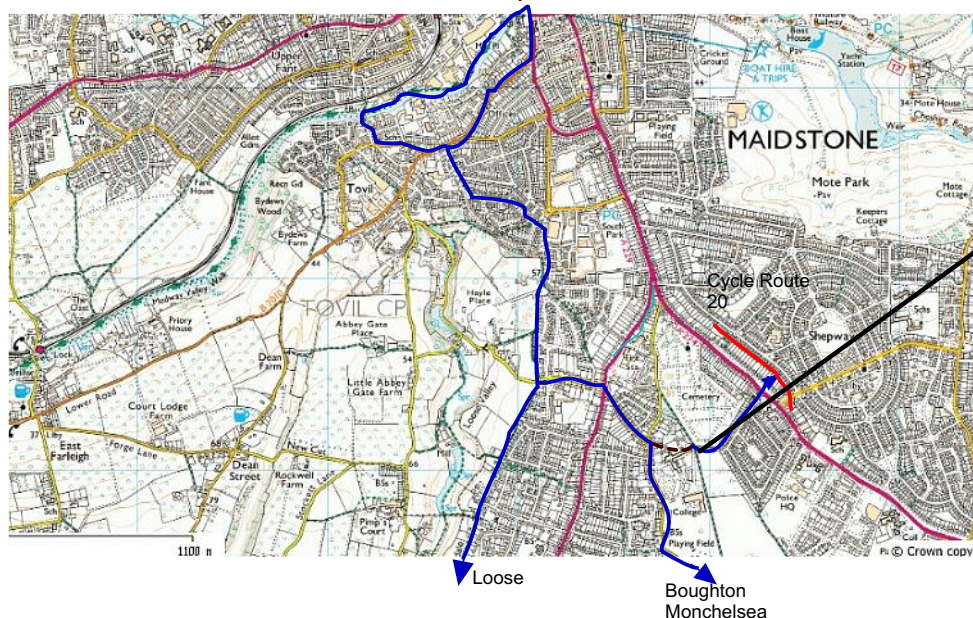
As noted, the MBC Green/Blue Draft Plan document made no reference to provision in the South Maidstone area. (Map 7, shown right)

Proposed links from the potential route detailed on previous pages and the existing Maidstone Cycle Routes are outlined below.

Sustainable movement links - Detail from Map 7



Cycle Route 17/Town Centre



Link via Cripple St. and Boughton Lane to existing route 20 relies on access through the NLL Oldborough site from Boughton Lane to Mangravit and on to Sutton Road