

Virtual pedestrian walkway – current status on 28/10/2020
Cllr Alwyn Pidgen

Actual footpaths are already limited in our village, meaning that at times residents have to take their lives in their own hands when walking along the main road with no physical barrier to separate them from the traffic. A ‘virtual pedestrian walkway’ between Grove Road and The Downs was implemented as part of the S106 agreement for building Preston Grange. This walkway is all some residents can use when trying to reach the shops or the school. To make matters worse the ‘virtual footway’ is in poor condition is poorly marked, and its purpose is not made sufficiently obvious to vehicle drivers.

A discussion took place in June 2020 between Preston Parish Council and KCC regarding making further enhancements to increase pedestrian safety and reduce the likelihood of vehicles crossing the white line into it.

KCC rejected Preston PC’s preferred option of installing bollards in the virtual footway on road safety grounds. The PC expressed its disappointed with KCC’s response but the decision was upheld after further discussion. A second option to apply a coloured surface was raised during a site visit. However, concern was raised by KCC about the cost of on-going maintenance and lack of KCC funds to maintain it. However, it was agreed in principle that if Preston Parish Council sourced the funding it could be a possibility.



KCC acknowledged that some of the virtual footway had been hatched and a question was raised by the PC as to why this had not been continued along the whole length of The Street. It was agreed with the Developer that KCC could support the installation of white line marking (see above) but only in one wide area that looked like a layby rather than a footway. This was deemed by Preston Parish Council not to be a satisfactory solution.

Recently (23/10/2020) I took some photographs along The Street to show the lack of visible markings and the poor quality surface of the walkway. The picture on the left shows a narrow unmarked and unprotected walkway in front of Wayside Cottage and The Olde Post Office.

The picture on the right is taken a little further along The Street, just after a short length of actual pavement. It shows an unmarked slightly wider stretch of virtual walkway, also in poor condition, before it reaches another stretch of actual pavement that leads to the Village Stores.





The final unmarked stretch of walkway starts after the Village stores and finishes opposite The Downs (see photograph). As can be seen, it is narrow, unmarked and part covered by vegetation. This matter requires further discussion with KCC.

The road surface along The Street from Grove Road to Court Lane is generally in very poor condition. White lines have disappeared in many places, especially in the centre of the road. I will ask Preston Parish Council to raise this issue with KCC and aim to establish when this stretch of road was last resurfaced and when it is due to be resurfaced and remarked again.

The cross-hatching of the virtual walkway does not make it at all clear to vehicles that it is an area of the road designated principally for pedestrians. This unsatisfactory situation with the virtual walkway will be raised again at a forthcoming Parish council meeting with a view to initiating further discussions with KCC and the developer.