

Roehampton Partnership

Report and proposals from the Transport sub-group

June 2022

Introduction

At the January meeting, pursuant to the transport work stream, KJ, MT, and JR agreed to consider the current state of transport issues in light of the work done since the consultation at Roehampton University last year, and to recommend to the Partnership a focused programme of action aimed at improving transport in, from, and to Roehampton.

Several of the strands of work identified at the Consultation are either moving ahead in discussions with LBW and TfL (e.g. cycling, walking, bike hangars), or it has become clear from the TfL response that our influence is realistically very limited (e.g. smart road charging, extension of ULEZ, Hammersmith bridge). Of the strands remaining, some were related to broadening dialogue with TfL and any developer appointed for the Regeneration.

Of those remaining the group thought that they were relatively marginal (e.g. bikes on buses, car club) and it might not be an efficient use of the Partnership's resources to press for them. The group also thought that there would be some merit in work that would have an impact both on transport to and from Roehampton, and on transport within Roehampton.

After further consideration the group focussed on two areas to commend to the Partnership for further work, which have the potential

- Bus links between Roehampton and the surrounding area, and integrating these with transport within Roehampton
- Interface of walking / cycling links with Roehampton Lane, as well as the general impact of Roehampton Lane on the Roehampton community
- Some improvements to cycle connectivity between the Alton Estate and Putney, building on the above

Buses within and beyond Roehampton

The problems we need to solve are:

- Poor connections between different parts of Roehampton: Alton East and Putney Vale separated from Alton West, with both separated from Priory Lane and the Lennox and Woking Close estates.
- Many residents are a long way from a bus stop. For some parts of the Lennox estate, it's a quarter of a mile. For those near Roehampton Gate, it can be more like half a mile. Not good for those with disabilities or small children.
- Richmond Park is a wonderful resource, but there is no bus access to it except on Wednesdays (when Royal Parks run their own bus 4 times).
- Roehampton is notoriously far from non-bus transport hubs, so connectivity with the rest of London is slow.

The Department for Transport produced a report earlier this year entitled *Bus Back Better*, in which demand-responsive transport was mentioned eighteen times - albeit usually in connection with rural areas. There is government funding for such schemes that can be bid for, but it is not clear whether TfL would be eligible to do so.

We see two possible ways that existing bus routes could be improved to meet the challenges above.

Extending the K3. The K3 currently runs every fifteen minutes, connecting the transport and shopping hub of Kingston with Asda in Kingston Vale. See Map 1. This route could be extended to run down through the Alton Estate and into Priory Lane. This would offer new pick up points, connectivity within the estate, and access from both Alton and Lennox estate to key services elsewhere.

Due consideration would have to be given to question of access between the bottom end of Danebury Avenue and Roehampton Gate. This could be controversial, as the barrier to through traffic is well liked; but rising bollards could be used to restrict access at that point to the K3 only. Subject to a thorough survey of road widths, it would be worth considering different routes for outward and return journeys, to maximise calling points around the estate. This would also make the Alton Activity Centre accessible to people with mobility problems.

Rerouting the 969. At present this service only runs on Tuesdays and Fridays, connecting Richmond, with its retail and transport facilities, and points West, with Kingston Vale – but routing via Sheen and Barnes, and bypassing the heart of Roehampton. It is the only bus to serve the Lennox Estate directly; but it then proceeds down Roehampton Lane and on to the A3. In the other direction, it follows a winding route through Barnes, Mortlake, Richmond and then Whitton. In this section it largely duplicates existing transport links, not least the railway between Richmond and Barnes.

Instead, the 969 should be rerouted through Richmond Park via Richmond Gate and Roehampton Gate (possibly making a diversion as far as Pembroke Lodge. It could then make a call at the Lennox estate, and either pick up its existing route, or even better return via the Alton Estate before continuing on to the A3. This would make for a swift link between Richmond Station and the Lennox and Alton Estates; and it would provide easy access for residents of both Richmond and Roehampton into the interior of Richmond Park.

We think there is a good basis here for a properly resourced study to determine the practicability of these proposals, and to analyse their costs and benefits. They have the potential to address some central problems with bus connectivity in Roehampton.

We recommend the Partnership seek the co-operation of the Council in funding a study to establish, if possible, a proper evidence base for developing and implementing these proposals in detail.

Roehampton Lane Calming

This is a topic that has not been explicitly part of the transport focus of the Partnership hitherto. However it is implicated in a number of the transport strands. It also has broad impact across different themes. Beyond this, the group took the view that one of the biggest transport-related issues for Roehampton is the impact the transport of those who

do not live here has on those who do. As it seems possible that the long-awaited Regeneration may now go ahead, with the heart of the area of intervention being on or close to Roehampton Lane, it seemed timely to put these issues on the Partnership's agenda.

The key issue is the speed and density of traffic on Roehampton Lane, which

- makes East / West travel in Roehampton hazardous and daunting;
- repels pedestrians and outdoor activity general in the centre of Roehampton
- creates specific hazards for Roehampton residents who are forced to cross it

The group noted that this is one of the very few fast moving dual carriageways in the Borough, and the only one that runs through a residential area in such a way as to divide an existing community in two.

An interesting comparison is with the Upper Richmond Road where it passes through Sheen. The 2020 average annual daily flow (a measure of the number of motor vehicles passing a count point in either direction in an average day) was 19,294 for the southern section of Roehampton Lane¹ and 25,310 for the Upper Richmond Road as it passes through Sheen². So Sheen gets more vehicles per hour. But it is still a thriving retail and social space. The hypothesis is that one (though of course not the only) key difference between Roehampton and Sheen is that traffic moves much more slowly in Sheen. This is an inconvenience for those passing through, but it permits a flourishing life for those who live there.

The key dynamic at work appears to be that traffic on Roehampton Lane is going to or from the A3, which is almost a motorway. Thus motorists transiting Roehampton have the mindset of people getting from one place to another through an essentially empty space. In order for the centre of Roehampton to become liveable again, it will be necessary to structure the half kilometre at the Southern end of Roehampton Lane in such a way as to change this mindset, so that vehicular traffic does not disrupt the life of the community through which it passes.

This can probably be accomplished without seriously increasing journey times between the A3 and the South Circular. In reality traffic does have to move quite slowly anyway, as there is considerable congestion in the approach to Clarence Lane. The aim is simply to move the point at which it slows about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a km further South. This would accomplish two things: it would make the centre of Roehampton more liveable and contribute to the development of social and commercial activity; and it would make East / West travel, particular by foot and bicycle, much easier.

The measures proposed for exploration are:

1. A 20mph speed limit on the whole of Roehampton Lane, in line with policy on LBW operated roads.
2. Remove the median divider in the Southern section of Roehampton Lane, and widen the pavements
3. Consider extending the bus lane that currently operates between Clarence Lane and the Roehampton Club at least as far South as the Alton Road

¹ <https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/local-authorities/107> accessed 16/2/22 - data for collection point 36928

² <https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/local-authorities/175> accessed 16/2/22 - data for collection point 16744

4. Introduce a pedestrian and cycle crossing 150m North of the junction with the A3 (at the point where there is already pedestrian access through the historic retaining wall that forms the Easter boundary of the Alton Estate) which would connect up the Southern part of the estate with Putney Heath, allowing easier access for recreation, and creating an excellent, largely traffic free, cycle way to the top of Putney Hill, following the old Portsmouth Road. This could helpfully be combined with some modest infrastructural improvements to cycle access to the old Portsmouth Road from the East side of Roehampton Lane
5. Introduce a roundabout at the junction with Wanborough Drive, 230m North of the A3, to allow easier access to Roehampton Lane for the Southern end of the Alton Estate, and further calm traffic.
6. Increase the pedestrian phases at the crossings by Alton Rd and St Joseph's Church; phase the Alton Rd crossing so that pedestrians can cross without waiting in the middle.
7. Introduce a CYCLOPS roundabout at the junction with Danebury Ave / Roehampton High St with priority for pedestrians and cycles.

Cycle paths

Finally, establishing these crossing points over Roehampton Lane would also make realistic three cycle lane proposals that have been discussed in detail in an earlier phase of this work. Each one provides access to East Putney station and environs from a different point on the Alton Estate.

They make use mostly of existing infrastructure and could be brought into use by little more than the addition of some signage, if the measures above were brought in. The only significant change required to complete the first two is an adaptation of the central divider and traffic lights on Putney Hill at the junction with St John's Avenue, to allow cycles to cross Putney Hill at that point.

The proposed routes are:

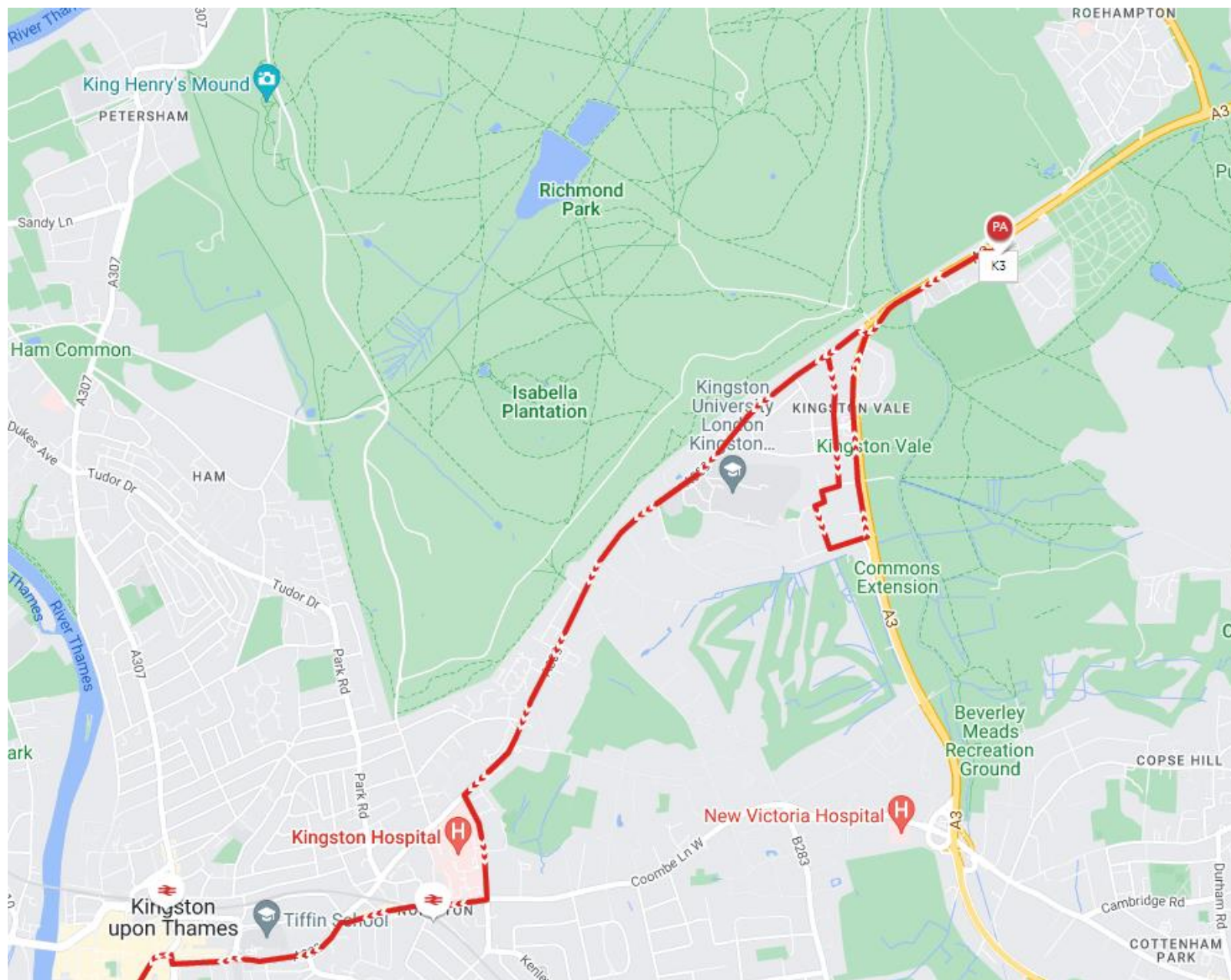
- Highcliffe Drive Route (Map 3): through Queen Mary's Hospital and back streets to St John's Avenue and East Putney. Requires improvement to gates and kerb access between Putney Park Lane and Westleigh Ave. Consider negotiating with Queen Mary's Hospital for 24 hr access through the gate at the East end of QMH campus onto Crestway; that gate also gives onto pavement which is not ideal and some widening and segregation of pedestrians and cycles at that point would be helpful.
- Danebury Avenue Route (Map 4): up Roehampton High St and along Putney Heath, through back streets and off road to St John's Avenue and East Putney. Requires shared use of the path between Putney Heath just East of the junction with Telegraph Road, and Innes Gardens, with some dropped curb / road markings. Similar permissions and modest infrastructure improvements would allow cyclists to access Whitnell Way from Westleigh Ave at the point 115m East of the junction with Genoa Ave, where there is a break in the fence.
- Wanborough Drive Route (Map 5): through the gap in the retaining wall, across Roehampton, and across Putney Heath via the old Portsmouth Road, then parallel to Putney Hill down to East Putney. No infrastructure needs beyond dropping curbs to integrate with proposed crossing of Roehampton Lane. Consider proposing to the Commons Conservators some discreet improvements to the off road path between the

East side of Roehampton Lane and where the paved highway recommences at Portsmouth road.

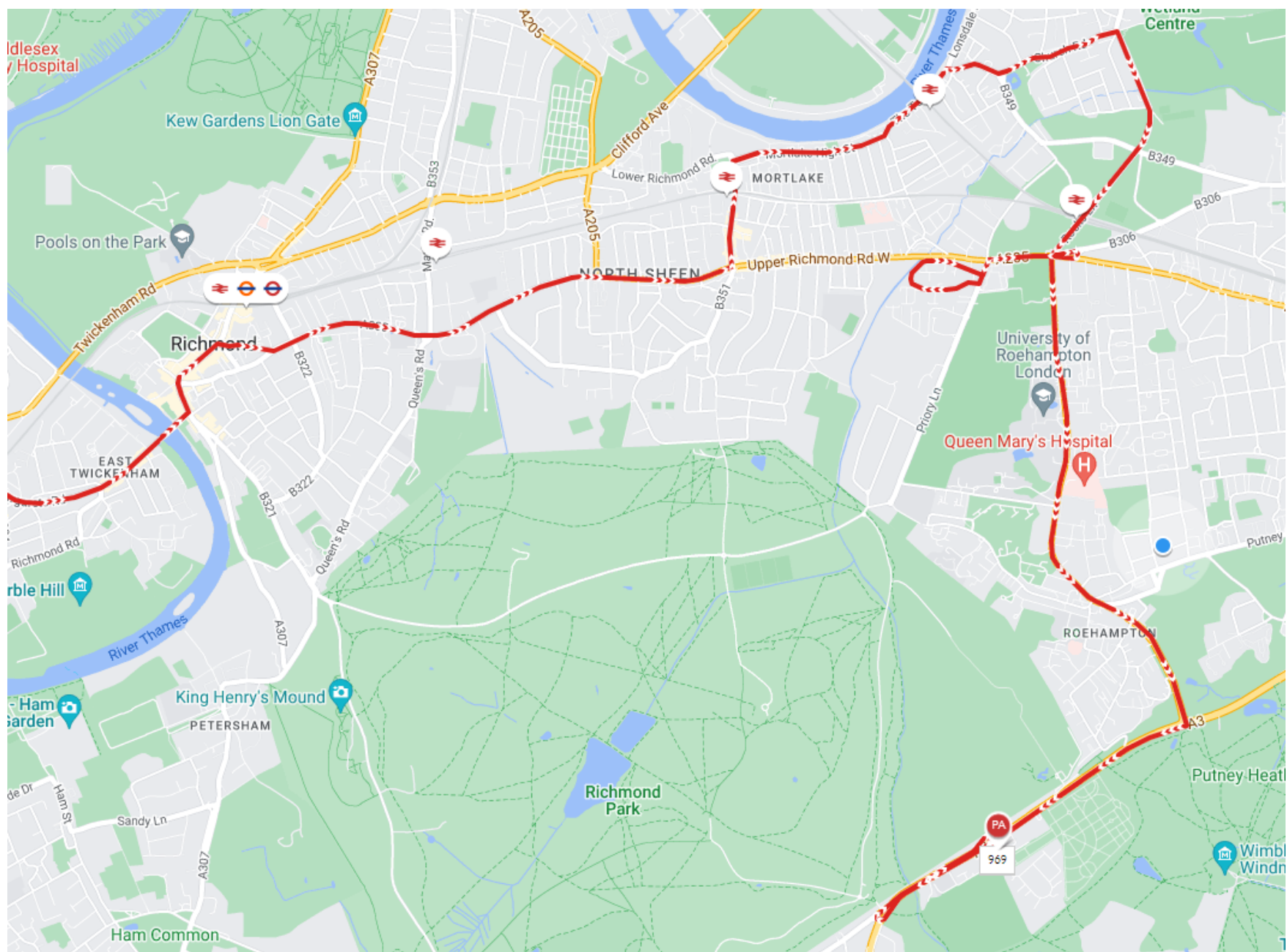
Summary of Proposals

1. Develop more detailed costed and evidenced proposals for rerouting 969 and K3 (increasing the frequency of the former) to improve transport within the Alton Estate, as well as connectivity with transport hubs and local green space.
2. Take a number of small measures to reduce the overall pace and of Roehampton Lane to that suitable to a road through the heart of a residential district.
3. Use signage and minor infrastructure to establish three new cycle routes giving access to Putney from different parts of the Alton.

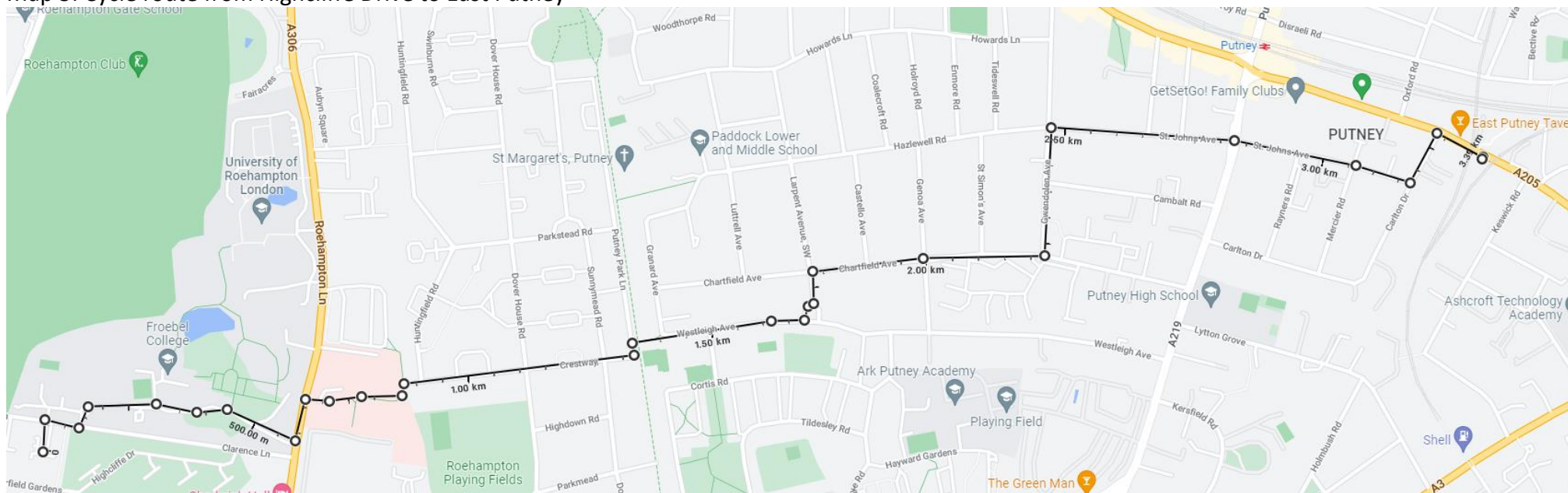
Map 1: existing route of the K3



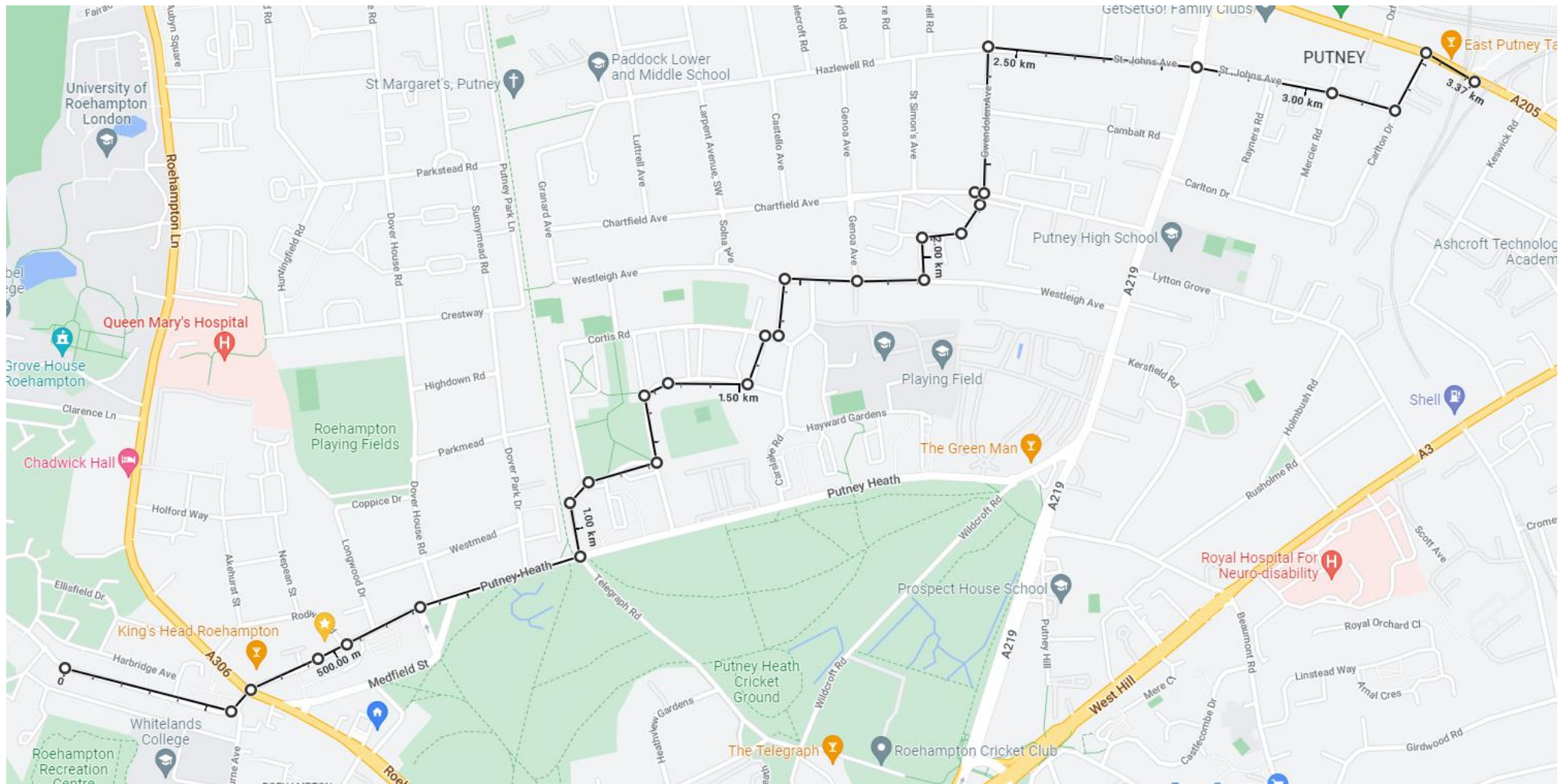
Map 2: current route of the 969



Map 3: Cycle route from Highcliffe Drive to East Putney



Map 4: Cycle route from Danebury Avenue to East Putney



Map 5: Cycle route from Wanborough Drive to East Putney

