

# Minutes of a Meeting of: West Berkshire Cycle Forum

## held on: 6 March 2018

- Present:** Cllr Stephen Ardagh-Walter (SAW) - Chair  
Cllr Jeanette Clifford (JC) - WBC Executive Member for Transport  
Josh Kerry (JK) - WBC Highways (Capital Projects) Officer  
Dr Tony Vickers (TV) - SPOKES Highways Officer  
Mark Evans (ME) – Canal & River Trust  
Adam Lewthwaite (AL) - Sustrans Partnership Manager  
Representative from Berks Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust  
Gordon Oliver (GO) – SPOKES  
Matthew Stagg (MS) - Externiture Ltd (Thatcham resident and local cyclist)  
Clive Tombs (CT) –SPOKES (minutes of meeting)
- Apologies:** Caroline Lane – SPOKES Chair and WBC Cycling Co-ordinator  
Angela McMahon – SPOKES  
Elaine Cox - WBC Rights Of Way Officer

	<u>Action</u>
<p>1. <b>CANAL TOWPATH AND NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK ROUTE 4</b></p> <p>Cllr Stephen Ardagh-Walter (SAW) referenced discussion at the last meeting which had culminated in a local survey undertaken by Gordon Oliver (GO), Josh Kerry (JK), SAW and Clive Tombs (CT), to identify (a) locations where condition of the cycleway/towpath and/or canal bank had deteriorated so as to pose a potential safety hazard to cyclists (b) sections of towpath in the Newbury/Thatcham area warranting upgrade led by Canal &amp; River Trust in partnership with WBC and other local stakeholders in the short term with available funding and (c) further sections of towpath warranting upgrade as part of a medium-to-longer term plan.</p> <p>Objective of doing this local survey was to inform decision-making on priorities for investment and to augment the findings of C &amp; RT's recent wider-ranging survey of towpath condition across their estate.</p> <p>Mark Evans (ME) referenced the £330k section 106 funding available from the Racecourse housing development. JK advised that under the terms of the s.106 agreement this money can be spent on towpath works in the Newbury-Thatcham area. The spend was originally envisaged as being from Bulls Lock (parallel with the eastern end of Hambridge Lane) inwards to the A339 dual-carriageway bridge at Victoria Park, Newbury, however this was notwithstanding increases in cost over time.</p>	

Discussion ensued about sections to prioritise given the distances and the costs involved.

In response to SAW's question, JK, GO and CT referenced their prior comments that:

- (a) The section of towpath warranting particular attention by C&RT is in the rural area to the west of Newbury, lying between Bridge 66 and the weir to the east of Marsh Benham, a distance of approx. 500 metres. After this immediate priority, the survey had identified several short sections west of Newbury, in between Guyers Lock and the Monkey Bridge, where holes have appeared in the bank and path surface and/or the towpath has become canted, warranting remedial works;
- (b) In terms of enhancement to a bound surface, using the Racecourse s.106 money, the section along the north side of the canal from Newbury Football Club immediately east of the A339 overbridge through to the Tesco store on London Road, Newbury would likely see a high level of use by cyclists and pedestrians, given the urban location of this stretch and the origin and destination points that it links;
- (c) If funding allows, then to continue by upgrading to a bound surface the section of towpath along the south side of the canal, from the wooden bridge level with Tesco London Road to the B3421 Ham Bridge (Hambridge Road overbridge).

JK advised the distances and costs for the specific sections discussed with ME were as follows, noting that the costs cited do not include bank stabilisation works.

Section	Priority	Spec	length (m)	width (m)	area (m2)	cost	bank repair required?
Denham bridge (no. 66) and weir before Marsh Benham	High	unbound (£70per sq m)	500	1.5	750	£ 52,500.00	No
A339 Victoria Park to Dry Dock	Med	resin bound (£140per sq m)	601	2.5	1503	£ 210,350.00	No
Dry Dock to Tesco	Med	resin bound (£140per sq m)	316	2	632	£ 88,480.00	Minor (approx 70m)
Tesco to Hambridge Rd	High	resin bound (£140per sq m)	733	2	1466	£ 205,240.00	Major (approx 300m)
Hambridge Rd to Bulls Lock	Low	unbound (£70per sq m)	940	1.5	1410	£ 98,700.00	No

After discussion **the Cycle Forum agreed that:**

- The priority for repair should be the section from Bridge 66 to the weir east of Marsh Benham, and to ask ME if C&RT can

**Action**

prioritise this;

- Regarding enhancement to a bound surface (if possible resin-bound, depending on costs), to focus on the stretch on the north side of the canal from Newbury Football Club (just east of the A339 overbridge at Victoria Park) through to Tesco London Road. This would cost approx. £300,000 before bank protection work for a distance of approx. 70 metres in the vicinity of the dry dock was taken into account;
- To seek to lever in external funding to enable not only completion of the above section but also with a view to upgrading the path on the south side of the canal from Tesco London Road through to B3421 Hambridge Road. This latter stretch would however require a significant section of bank protection work (approx. 300 metres).

ME said he would seek to assign a C&RT Project Manager internally, who could then carry the remedial and enhancement schemes forward in discussion with the Forum and at a technical level with JK.

**ME**

Discussion followed about possible sources of external funding.

Adam Lewthwaite advised he was not aware of anything from a Sustrans perspective.

GO suggested approaching Greenham Common Trust for contribution.

Cllr Jeanette Clifford (JC) commented that GCT are willing to support Cycle to Work day. It was agreed that SAW will discuss with Chris Boulton and team at GCT about scope for contribution.

**SAW**

Dr Tony Vickers (TV) suggested pursuing Landfill Communities Funding. ME advised that the EN Trust ( [www.entrust.org.uk](http://www.entrust.org.uk) ) look after this and he will task his Project Manager, once appointed, to explore this.

**ME**

**2. NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK 422 UPDATE**

JK advised construction will be starting on 19 March at A4 Benham Hill on the Thatcham/Newbury borders.

Trial holes have found that gas mains are not deep enough to allow for a 1.5m wide cycleway at carriageway level in lieu of pavement.

JK showed the scheme from Headington in Oxford, now in final stages of construction, which involves a clearly delineated cycleway

**Action**

running behind a shallow kerb upstand and separated out from the footway behind. All present agreed that this arrangement would be acceptable for those sections where utility depths were insufficient to allow widening of the carriageway at full carriageway level.

Construction of the NCN422 section along London Road east of Newport Road and west of Hambridge Road will then follow on.

The pinch point at London Road immediately east of Newport Road was discussed. It was agreed that again, the semi-segregated slightly-raised 'hybrid' eastbound lane on path was an acceptable solution.

SAW asked about warning signage and was advised that NEW ROAD LAYOUT AHEAD signs would be provided where relevant.

JK advised Thatcham Phase 2 consultation starts in April 2018.

Statutory consultation in relation to line markings and signage on entire stretch to follow, starting in September 2018.

Discussion resumed about advisory vs mandatory cycle lanes. JC agreed that this should be looked at again by officers.

TV expressed view that the priority is to get the cycle lanes installed, with parking lining and signing to follow on.

**JK**

**3. INTERACTIVE MAPS / SIGNAGE**

SAW advised WBC's Elaine Cox had spoken with GIS team leader Stuart Powling about updating the 5 mini guides to make them mobile friendly. To be discussed further at next meeting.

**All**

JK advised capital programme may include provision for cycle signage, subject to Member consideration, building on GO and MS's initial survey work. To be discussed further at next meeting.

**All**

**4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

JC referred to offer from police to attend future meeting in context of safe passing.

AL referenced the decision going against the Government on Air Quality – may open up additional funding options..

AL to send over the link to the new Air Quality Tool developed by Sustrans.

**AL**

	<u>Action</u>
<p>5.     <b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>  18:00, Tuesday 22nd May 2018 at West Berkshire Council  offices, Committee Room.  (Deborah Vince to book a room)</p>	<p><b>Deborah Vince</b></p>