

Minutes of a Meeting of: West Berkshire Cycle Forum

held on: 10 September 2019

Present: Cllr Stephen Ardagh-Walter (SAW) - Chair
 Cllr Adrian Abbs (AA) – Council Member for Wash Common
 Cllr Steve Masters (SM) – Council Member for Speen
 Cllr Tony Vickers (TV) – Council member for Wash Common
 Cllr Andy Moore (AM) – Council member for Newbury Central
 Josh Kerry (JK) - WBC Highways Officer (minutes of meeting)
 Angela McMahon (AMc) – SPOKES
 Matt Stagg (MS) - SPOKES
 Ed Cooper (EC) – SPOKES
 Simon Kirby (SK) – Canal River Trust
 Neil Taylor (NT) – Newbury Road Club

Apologies: Sgt Simon White – Thames Valley Police
 Elaine Cox – WBC Rights Of Way Officer
 Caroline Lane – WBC Cycling Co-ordinator
 Gordon Oliver – SPOKES
 Clive Tombs – SPOKES

	<u>Action</u>
<p>1. Welcome, introductions</p>	
<p>2. Notes of previous meeting & matters arising</p> <p>SAW reviewed minutes – action for Cycle Forum to send letter to Sustrans enquiring about the K&A towpath funding. CT confirmed he sent letter on 19.08.19 but as yet without reply. NT enquired about the progress of the contra flow cycle schemes. JK to progress.</p> <p>NB: Order of items on agenda to be amended to suit members who have to leave early.</p>	JK
<p>3. NCN422</p> <p>New lining imminent through Thatcham for the new cycle lanes and to be protected with no parking restrictions. AA enquired whether cycle improvements are aimed at commuters or pleasure. Consensus was that focus overwhelmingly on commuting. AA put it that the new segregated cycle track on the A4 London Road</p>	

saw little use and was no improvement. TV explained that it wasn't finished yet and EC said that cycle counts to be carried out once finished and compared to baseline data. JK confirmed WBC have undertaken surveys prior to construction of the cycleway and will monitor use once completed. Currently held up waiting for planning application on the Narrowboat PH site.

4. K&A Towpath

SK introduced schemes upcoming on the K&A towpath / NCN4:

- 1) East of Colthrop –
Poor condition towpath to be resurfaced near to Woolhampton. Funded by SPOKES, Sustrans, WBC, Greenham Common Trust.
- 2) West of Thatcham Road Bridge (nr Station) –
Not entire new surface but patching, bank repairs and tree roots. Delivered by volunteers on behalf of CRT.
- 3) Victoria Park to Ham Bridge –
S106 Racecourse funded bound surface "Tar Spray & Chip"
Kier appointed contractor and start date in November 2019.

Discussion ensued about the interaction of cyclists and other towpath users. AA complained of a lack of respect from cyclists on the towpath. Examples given of Bradford-on-Avon and London, with anecdotal evidence of both good and bad behaviour respectively. EC questioned what the ecological objection was to a bound surface instead of unbound; only difference is more surface water runoff? But more of a landscaping issue than ecological. TV put it that the type of bank protection used west of Newbury has erosion caused by dogs swimming and boats mooring pins. SK explained that this type of bank protection was preferred as it helped protect habitat of water voles.

AMc asked about the towpath closure between Woolhampton and Froud's Bridge Marina, which has overrun and information signs out of date. SK apologised on behalf of CRT for inadequate information and how the closure and diversion has been managed. Revised date to reopen towpath in October and website / signage on site to be updated.

Enquiry from AM regarding the section of towpath between Monkey Bridge and West Mills; this is a well-used route to the west of Newbury town centre and surface has deteriorated. SK explained that it is unfortunately a matter of funding – CRT has limited funds.

EC showed photographs of defects on towpath between Newbury and

	<u>Action</u>
<p>Marsh Benham and despite dialogue with CRT there has been no action. Especially under bridge 66 exposed metal shutter, large hole in bank and towpath reduced to narrow rutted path all dangerous for cyclists. SK requested photos be resent and will look into.</p>	SK
<p>SM suggested recycled material could provide a greener, more cost-effective, durable replacement for bitumen. JK to look into specs.</p>	JK
<p>5. Sandleford</p>	
<p>JK introduced cycle improvements currently on the table for the Sandleford development. Namely creation of a new east-west cycle route adjacent to the existing footpath; new road layout on the A339 “Swan” roundabout; crossing island opposite St. Gabriel’s and new right hand turn lane and widen the A339 southbound footway to make appropriate for shared use. There will also be improved cycle routes into Newbury from the development (wayfinding signage and minor civils).</p> <p>AA confirmed that all plans were unapproved so currently just proposals, no details available as yet. AMc suggested that attention be paid to cycle routes within the site – to also be explored.</p>	
<p>6. Hermitage to Hampstead Norreys Railway Path</p>	
<p>Construction has begun on Phase 2 to the north of the M4 with Phase 1 at Furze Hill (south of M4) nearing completion.</p> <p>Ecologist present and checking daily during vegetation clearance as condition of Dormouse Licence. Area to be cleared reduced from 8m corridor to 4m and then to have assistance from volunteers in carrying out 5yr Woodland Management Plan.</p> <p>EC – who developed the initial feasibility study – described the challenges of building the next section from Hermitage to Newbury. A more likely proposal is for a track to be constructed adjacent to the B4009 similar to the Aldermaston Village cycleway on Wasing Estate. SM attended Shaw Parish Council meetings and Long Lane has a history of speeding complaints so there might be an opportunity to combine the scheme with traffic calming.</p>	
<p>To the north of Hampstead Norreys EC explained that although cuttings have been filled and there is still issue of private land ownership (and a couple of properties) but there are solutions either by way of existing network of bridleways, low trafficked roads or wider highway verges.</p>	
<p>7. Cycle Wayfinding (GWR CCIF Bid)</p>	
<p>West Berks have submitted a bid to GWR for wayfinding project in Newbury to follow on from the new totems and fingerposts in the town</p>	

Action

centre. Intention is to sign primary and secondary routes (as identified by the 2016 Working Group Audit) to increase awareness of local links and encourage cycling on quieter, safe routes. SPOKES conducted a study into existing wayfinding signage within Newbury and found layers of old signage (Sustrans, WBC, etc) which is not necessarily connected, has lots of inconsistencies and is old, tired and in some places incorrect. Discussion ensued as to how to better use existing sources for digital maps and interact with data from OSM, Google etc. Cycle forum to write letter of support for the bid.

SAW

SAW read email from WBC public rights of way requesting photos of existing recreational routes for an interactive map project being put together by Stuart Powling in the GIS team. JK to circulate more info about exact routes and places to capture.

JK

8. AOB.

AM introduced three topics of conversation from NTC:

- 1) Review of existing "No Cycling" footpaths to see if cycling can be permitted or otherwise to iron out any inconsistencies.
- 2) Newbury town centre pedestrianised zone – request for additional signage.
- 3) Investigate possibility for cycle parking or cycle hub in the Kennet Centre multi-storey car park.

To be added to agenda for next cycle forum meeting.

SK mentioned the Sustrans scheme on the K& A at Fobney Lock, Reading, where barriers to prevent motorcycle access were to be removed as they are unfriendly for cyclists. This constitutes something of a pilot scheme and if motorcycle use becomes a problem then Sustrans have agreed with CRT to replace them. However if not then could have implications for WBC.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 11th December 2019.

- Time: 18:00 – 19:30
- Place: Market Street, Council Offices, Newbury
- Venue: Roger Croft Committee Room