

Minutes of a Meeting of: West Berkshire Cycle Forum

held on: 15th January 2020

Present: Cllr Stephen Ardagh-Walter (SAW) - Chair
 Cllr Steve Masters (SM) – Council Member for Speen
 Cllr Andy Moore (AM) – Council member for Newbury Central
 Josh Kerry (JK) - WBC Highways Officer (minutes of meeting)
 Angela McMahon (AMc) – SPOKES / SUSTRANS Ranger
 Caroline Lane (CL) – SPOKES / WBC Cycling Co-ordinator
 Neil Taylor (NT) – Newbury Road Club
 Peter Booroff (PB) – Newbury Road Club

Apologies: Cllr Tony Vickers – Council member for Wash Common
 Elaine Cox – WBC Rights Of Way Officer
 Simon Barnet – BBOWT

	<u>Action</u>
<p>1. Apologies</p>	
<p>2. Welcome, introductions</p>	
<p>3. Notes of previous meeting & matters arising</p> <p>SAW reviewed minutes – which were passed without comment. Depending on progress of the meeting the order of items on the agenda might have to be amended to suit members who have to leave early.</p>	
<p>4. Review of Existing “No Cycling” Footpaths</p> <p>Suggestion that some footpaths around West Berks have outdated byelaws to prevent cycling and could be reviewed. AM to bring up at Planning & Highways Committee potentially as a future piece of work to be carried out by NTC. AMc queried minimum width for cycling to be allowed on footpath; JK to share technical guidance and legal procedure. However each location to be taken on its merits i.e. site-specific as the guidance could be relaxed if the footpath link has strategic importance/ is only for a short length etc.</p>	JK
<p>5. Newbury Town Centre Pedestrianised Zone</p> <p>Discussion about minority of individuals who continue to cycle too fast in pedestrianised areas of Newbury without regard for pedestrians and vulnerable users. Suggestion of additional signage was agreed to only have limited effectiveness.</p>	

Action

SM to speak to PCSO to highlight the issue and see what can be done on enforcement.

SM

6. Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

JK introduced West Berks Council initiative to enlist external consultants, WSP, to deliver a LCWIP which will analyse existing levels of active travel, define network improvements and prioritise investment for a 10 year cycling & walking strategy. WSP have recently written LCWIPs for Reading and Wokingham. The LCWIP is seen as a prerequisite for bringing in future funding for cycling and walking schemes.

CL pointed out that, especially in Thatcham, there is a good network of cyclepaths and cut-throughs but need to raise awareness so that more cyclists know their existence for better route-planning and don't necessarily just cycle the same route they'd drive. SM – this perpetuates the self-fulfilling cycle that leads drivers to believe that cycling is dangerous, as they continue to cycle on the same roads they drive down. Requires better route-planning and awareness!

SM asked whether WBC had plans to update the cycle & walking maps, SAW explained that WBC IT department were to digitalise the routes and currently working on an app for doing so. Whatever changes the LCWIP make for the network also needs to be reflected on google data.

7. Theale Station access improvements

JK explained that WBC is putting together a bid to GWR to supplement changes at Theale Station (new bridge, lift access, ticket office) with wider access improvements. This gives opportunity to look at routes to and from the vicinity and town centre. AMc listed the parking of large heavy goods vehicles on Arlington Road as an issue for cyclists. Also need better signage to the rail station and local destinations. AMc volunteered to email Alok Sharma MP to find out timescale for new bridge.

AMc

JK suggested that the existing width restriction could be improved and asked opinions of Forum Members about a priority working system instead, however it was agreed that the existing road layout was cycle-friendly without cause for improvement.

8. Cycle Investigate – cycle parking or hub in the Kennet Centre Multi-storey Car Park

JK suggested an alternative to a hub inside the car park could be a purpose-built unit to provide secure bicycle parking spaces in the

courtyard area near Debenhams. SM suggested using an empty shopspace in the Kennet Centre, similar to the table-tennis pop-up. Suggestion was takeover the empty unit recently used for Kennet radio for a visible demo space. JK introduced Spokes' proposal for a pop-up "cycle festival" over a weekend with maintenance, information, demos, commercial stands etc. Brainstorming session ensued with ideas for DIY toolkits or social enterprise bike hub staffed for ongoing-maintenance, hire bikes and e-bikes for trial / hire / charging. Another potential location for cycle hub could be the former Bayer car park on Strawberry Hill, or Goldwell Car Park on Northbrook Lane. SM and JK to investigate.

SM /JK

9. Cycle Schemes update (NCN422, Hermitage Railway)

On-carriageway cycle lanes have been installed throughout Thatcham since the last meeting and new road layout to accommodate the 1.75m lanes.

Elsewhere JK says council still pursuing additional land for next sections of the segregated cycle-track but held up over planning and property issues. Road Safety Audit has been ordered for the section outside the Manor Hotel.

AMc requested NCN422 signage to be installed especially in the east of the district to link with the RBC signage.

Construction of the Hermitage Railway Path is well underway and due for completion in Feb 2020. Likely to have a promotional event to open the route but JK suggests this won't be until Spring 2020 for completion of additional volunteer effort and better weather to showcase the path.

No firm plans for extending the route until a feasibility study is conducted. PB said that there is in difficulty following railway alignment in Compton and beyond, but there do currently exist good alternatives i.e. footpaths and Churn Byway. Beeswax Dyson large farm landowner near Compton could present an opportunity?

10. Kennet & Avon Canal update

In the absence of a representative from CRT this agenda item was agreed to be postponed until next meeting.

11. AOB

PB used to be involved in HARBUG (Harwell Bicycle Users Group) before his retirement and introduced exciting new project by HARBUG to provide an alternative cycle route to circumvent the A34 at Chilton. At present there is no alternative other than to either use the dual carriageway or cycle via Compton and Blewbury. Currently at the

<p>feasibility stage with funding sought from Highways England.</p> <p>AMc requested replacement cycle signage in Calcot, Dorking Way and near Carter’s Rise, also for cycle symbols to be refreshed on Holwood Avenue and Dorking Way. JK to sort.</p> <p>Next Meeting:</p> <p>Wednesday 11th March 2020.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Time: 18:00 – 19:30- Place: Market Street, Council Offices, Newbury- Venue: Roger Croft Room	<p><u>Action</u></p> <p>JK</p>
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