

Meeting Minutes of: West Berkshire Cycle Forum
held on: Wednesday 6th January 2021
(via Zoom conference call)

Chair: Cllr Stephen Ardagh-Walter (SAW) – Council Member for Thatcham

Attendees: Mike Youe (MY) – Canal River Trust Enterprise Manager
Elaine Cox (EC) – WBC Rights Of Way Officer
Cheryl Evans (CE) - WBC Traffic & Road Safety Officer
Caroline Lane (CL) – SPOKES Chair / WBC Cycling Co-ordinator
Cllr Martha Vickers (MV) – Council member for Newbury
Cllr Tony Vickers (TV) – Council member for Wash Common
Robert Hill (RH) - Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability Group
Angela McMahon (AMc) – SPOKES / Sustrans Ranger
Josh Kerry (JK) - WBC Highways Officer (minutes of meeting)
Gordon Oliver (GO) – SPOKES Secretary / WBC Policy Officer
Cllr Andy Moore (AM) – Council Member for Newbury Central
Neil Taylor (NT) – Newbury Road Club

Apologies:

	<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 of the last meeting.</p> <p>Follow up discussion ensued on setting up new Off-Road Recreational Routes. JK to search for “case study” guide rather than write new procedure.</p>	
<p>4. Kennet & Avon Canal Towpath – NCN4 Improvements</p> <p>Request for signage to encourage better behaviour from cyclists using the towpath and reduce conflict between users. New signs to be installed on the resurfaced section of the NCN4 on the towpath between Victoria Park and Hambridge Road in Newbury (MY confirmed this section is unfinished and still waiting for surface dressing programmed for April / May 2021).</p>	

	<u>Action</u>
<p>Types of signs to be similar to those already installed on NCN4 towpath to give notice of pedestrian priority and cyclists to slow down. MY to confirm with CRT Marketing Team design of sign.</p>	MY
<p>Maintenance of the towpath is a recurring issue. EC noted that the river section in Newbury opposite Hogshead pub (now Slug & Lettuce) past agreement provides that the surface and substrate is the responsibility of West Berkshire Council. EC is working with WBC structures team to make it safe and get funding for a structural survey and remedial action.</p>	
<p>Elsewhere the condition of the towpath west of Newbury towards Marsh Benham has been reported case no. 37838 from bridge 63 to Hampstead Lock with numerous safety concerns. CT to email MY with details and MY to request inspection.</p>	CT/MY
<p>MY emphasised that CRT do not own the towpath on the river section under the Monkey Bridge between Red Lock T-junction to West Mills. JK to investigate land ownership to see if council can resurface here.</p>	JK
<p>MY confirmed that plans are underway to work in partnership with WBC to upgrade the surface east of Hambridge Road to Bull's Lock. The section has been surveyed design is being worked on and costed and it looks like 1.8m width can be achieved.</p>	
<p>5. Cycle Forum Terms of Reference: Vice-Chair Nomination</p> <p>SAW proposed a vote to nominate a vice-chair to lead the forum in his absence. Councillor Andy Moore was nominated, seconded and voted as vice chair. Nobody else ran in opposition; the vote was unanimous and AM was appointed. DV to update terms of reference.</p>	DV
<p>6. Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)</p> <p>JK gave an update on the LCWIP and shared screen to show forum members the proposed secondary and recreational routes that make up the proposed cycle network. The LCWIP draft report and network will be consulted on in February as part of the Active Travel Consultation. It will then be approved by Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, Richard Somner, by Individual Decision in April 2021.</p> <p>EC – There is an off-road permissive path parallel to Harts Hill Road which serves residents commuting from Bucklebury and areas to the north east of Thatcham. The path licence is coming up for renewal and could be included in the LCWIP because cycling is permitted. GO suggested that Stoney Lane be on the plan as a quiet lane suitable for cycling. SAW raised the potential link from Lower Way to the towpath in Thatcham as part of a prospective off-road circular route.</p>	

7. Emergency Active Travel Fund (ATF): Covid-19 Response

CE gave a short summary of proposed ATF schemes and consultation activities. School Street in Calcot originally the only scheme to use engagement platform Commonplace for online consultation and feedback but now the licence has been upgraded and all ATF schemes and LCWIP to make use of the platform. CE explained the website url is live now for residents to sign up to keep updated. The QR code will be advertised using banners, posters, petrol nozzles, bike stands etc to reach a wider audience and gather feedback of motorists and all road users not just those interested in walking and cycling. The Commonplace website will display comments on a heatmap to clearly demonstrate the local issues and feedback. CE to send link to Cycle Forum.

CE

TV asked if all the consultation activities were to take place on online and digitally as this may exclude some sections of society. JK confirmed that covid-permitting other consultation activities may take place. DfT have requested that extensive consultation takes place and funding will be contingent on the council being able to prove that it has been comprehensive in engaging and consulting residents and stakeholders.

8. AOB

RH suggested that cycle theft is a barrier to cycling especially take-up of electric bikes hindered by a lack of secure cycle storage at destinations.

CT brought to the forum's attention that the disused railway bridge at Hampstead Norreys is on the Highways England Historical Railway Estate list for infill/ demolition and this might have repercussions for the extension of the Eling Way cycle route. JK to contact to register the aspirations for the cycle route.

JK

Next Meeting:

Wednesday 14th April 2021

DV

- Time: 17:30 – 19:00
- Venue: (Zoom link to follow)