

**Meeting Minutes of: West Berkshire Cycle Forum**  
**held on: Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021**  
**(via Zoom conference call)**

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

**Attendees:** Rob Coles (RC) – Canal River Trust Area Operations Manager  
 Elaine Cox (EC) – WBC Rights Of Way Officer  
 Cheryl Evans (CE) - WBC Traffic & Road Safety Officer  
 Caroline Lane (CL) – SPOKES Chair  
 Clive Tombs (CT) – SPOKES Secretary / WBC Highways Officer  
 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:** Cllr Martha Vickers (MV) – Council member for Newbury

	<u>Action</u>
<p><b>1. Apologies</b></p> <p><b>2. Welcome, introductions</b></p> <p><b>3. Notes of previous meeting &amp; matters arising</b></p> <p>SAW reviewed minutes of the last meeting.</p> <p>Follow up discussion on the new cycle forum terms of reference; these have been updated but not circulated to all members. To be sent out to the mailing list along with minutes of the meeting.</p> <p><b>4. Kennet &amp; Avon Canal – Towpath Improvements</b></p> <p>RC summarised the Canal River Trust’s priorities and works within West Berkshire, these included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u>East of Hambridge Road to Bull’s Lock</u>: surveying towpath and looking at fundraising options for wider towpath construction. There could be a potential for some of this to be carried out by volunteers</li> </ul>	<p><b>DV</b></p>

- to reduce the cost. GO suggested SPOKES might be able to provide volunteers and assistance with fundraising.
- West of Hambridge Road to A339 & Victoria Park: still awaiting surface dressing (works estimated to take place in May) and additional signage. Investigation ongoing regarding drowning fatality at weir and further safety measures may be installed.
  - Newbury Town Centre: no immediate danger but WBC structures team are to investigate extent of work required on the towpath section between Victoria Park and Costa Coffee, Northbrook St. The block paving failure appears to be caused by water ingress behind the sheet piling washing out the sub-base. WBC responsibility to repair.
  - West of Lipscombe Close to Bonemill Lane, Newbury: CRT plan to repair embayments in next couple of months.
  - Bridge 66 to Milkhouse Lane, Marsh Benham: Shuttering under bridge 66 now repaired. Suggestion that this section could be targeted by volunteer effort (towpath narrow and rutted) to be facilitated by SPOKES.

## 5. Cycle Training

Caroline Lane has left her role of Cycling-Coordinator at West Berkshire Council since last meeting. CE is covering the training until a replacement is recruited. WBC has 1200 places for bikeability level 1 & 2 and 100 places for level 3. Also there are 200 places for family training (family = one household of up to six ppl). WBC is currently looking to recruit bikeability instructors. If any forum members are interested, or know anyone interested, please contact Cheryl via email [Cheryl.evans@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:Cheryl.evans@westberks.gov.uk) for more information on how to apply.

**All**

CE to undertake investigation on previous cycle training; what has been effective and how best to change behaviour to encourage takeup.

**DV**

## 6. Behavioural Change Initiatives

CE announced new £88k revenue stream called the "Capability Fund" for behavioural change initiatives to accompany the spending on new ATF cycling and walking infrastructure. For example the schemes it could fund are Safer Schools, community cycling hubs, more training etc to discover the barriers to cycling (i.e. 30% of residents want to cycle but average across West Berks is 1%). CL pointed to an increase in school-aged cyclists in the cycle count figures and suggested that having parent(s) who regularly cycle is a major contributory factor. CE explained that the new £88k funding will go towards investigating the best way to change behaviour and what barriers are then initiatives to tackle them.

## 7. LCWIP - Update

JK gave an update on the LCWIP consultation results which closed on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2021. Of all the responses there were 50% positive, 36% negative and 14% neutral. There was a lot of constructive feedback so JK working through the responses to evaluate suggestions and, where possible make amendments to the proposed network (providing that the suggestion comply with LTN1/20 and LCWIP route selection guidance).

A high proportion of the negative comments said that the network did not provide for rural communities. The LCWIP is a live document and will be expanded and adapted through time and this can include extending the geographical scope. At present it is driven by DfT guidance which suggests that we will have a higher chance in funding applications if we can demonstrate the schemes/ routes affect a high number of cyclists and so the first iteration of the LCWIP concentrates on urban areas.

Once the report has been amended the next step is for the Transport Advisory Group (TAG) to approve its recommendations and adopt it as WBC Policy. Once the TAG have approved it then it is to be approved by Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, Richard Somner, by Individual Decision at the end of May 2021. The report will then be referenced in the new Local Transport Plan which is to be reviewed this year.

West Berks are looking to recruit external resources to design and cost pipeline schemes so they will be ready for any future funding opportunities.

TV asked about the relevance of the LCWIP in stipulating LTN1/20 standards for new housing developments, specifically Sandleford, where the active travel infrastructure appeal case is ongoing. SAW asked what forum members could do to ensure the Sandleford proposals meet LTN1/20 and TV suggested emailing the planning inspectorate, or attending the appeal to highlight the issue. Planning Application Reference: 20/01238/OUTMAJ and Planning Inspectorate Reference: APP/W0340/W/20/3265460. Alternatively it was suggested either the Developer or colleagues from WBC Development Control could be invited to attend the next cycle forum meeting to hear our concerns.

**All****DV**

## 8. Active Travel Fund - Update

## Action

JK gave an update on the ATF consultation results which closed on 9<sup>th</sup> April. Lawrences Lane and Deadman's Lane, Calcot School Streets, and the various Parking Amendments are to remain open until 23<sup>rd</sup> April and the Active Travel Heatmap remains open for comments until 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021. There has been a good level of engagement across all schemes to date (over 4,000 visits to the site).

Western Avenue received feedback that was 51% positive, 38% negative and 11% neutral. The majority of negative comments focused on increased congestion and said the scheme would make it harder to get to their home / business. Most received comments in support of the scheme said it would make it easier to cross and safer as a cyclist and/or pedestrian.

Crown Mead received more representations against than in support for the scheme. Of the feedback received 60% was negative, 32% positive and 8% neutral. The main reasons against were that it would make it harder to cross, increase congestion, worsen the parking situation, and make people feel less safe as a pedestrian / cyclist.

It is suggested that to listen to the feedback from Crown Mead we can arrange for trials to take place that would mimic the effect of the scheme on traffic flow through Thatcham using temporary traffic management. Journey times could be monitored and surveys undertaken to see the extent of congestion that might arise.

### **9. AOB**

**JK**

AMc requested that additional wayfinding signage is installed on the traffic lights at Dorking Way to point cyclists in the direction of NCN422 and local attractions and destinations. JK to look into it.

**All**

EC informed the meeting that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) is currently out to consultation until end of May 2021. Please visit the consultation page here to have your say:

<https://info.westberks.gov.uk/wbrowip>

CE let the group know that close pass initiative was taking place in Newbury on 28/04/2021 by Thames Valley Police and they will be conducting the operation on Hambridge Road.

Next Meeting:

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**

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

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**Action**