

Meeting Minutes of: West Berkshire Cycle Forum
held on: Tuesday 2nd November 2021
(via Zoom conference call)

Chair: Cllr Stephen Ardagh-Walter (SAW) – Member for Thatcham, Colthrop & Crookham

Attendees: Cllr Martha Vickers (MV) – Member for Newbury Central
 Elaine Cox (EC) – WBC Rights Of Way Officer
 Cheryl Evans (CE) - WBC Traffic & Road Safety Officer
 Robert Hill (RH) - Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability Group
 Neil Taylor (NT) - Newbury Road Club
 Angela McMahon (AMc) – SPOKES / SUSTRANS Ranger
 Clive Tombs (CT) – WBC Highways Officer (minutes of meeting)

Apologies: Cllr Andy Moore (AM) – Member for Newbury Central
 Cllr Tony Vickers (TV) – Member for Wash Common
 Rob Coles (RC) – Canal & River Trust Area Operations Manager
 Gordon Oliver (GO) – SPOKES / WBC Policy Officer
 Caroline Lane (CL) – SPOKES
 Josh Kerry (JK) – SPOKES

	<u>Action</u>
<p>1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were recorded, as above.</p> <p>2. Notes of previous meeting & matters arising</p> <p>Notes of previous meeting held 21 September 2021 were agreed.</p> <p>CT and TV had met on site at Wash Common shops, and CT had subsequently sent a short paper to Georgia Croucher (Surveyor representing landlords for the overall Monument Close site) proposing where cycle stands could be sited. Response awaited from them; CT will pursue again with them shortly.</p> <p>CT advised that the enquiry from TV about status on updating of the Highways Asset Management Plan should be directed to Andrew Reynolds, Highways Maintenance Manager; TV has acknowledged.</p> <p>Other matters covered under other items on this meeting’s agenda.</p>	<p>CT</p>

3. Kennet & Avon Canal – Towpath & related Improvements

CT relayed on an update he had received from RC regarding activity being undertaken by Canal and River Trust (C&RT), or which C&RT have an involvement in:

- Aldermaston Wharf to Hissey's Bridge (south of Calcot/east of M4) – design work on path improvements, intended to be delivered as a Sustrans Activation Project, has been delayed due to issues with gradients and surfacing, in context of trying to comply where possible with the new LTN1/20 guidance. Discussions between C&RT and Sustrans/DfT are continuing;
- Ham Bridge to Bull's Lock, east side of Hambridge Road – while WBC have signposted C&RT to a potential external funding source (The Good Exchange, run by Greenham Common Trust), currently C&RT are looking at this scheme being held over to 2022-23. May be scope to bring forward if sufficient funding (circa £360k plus possible £30k from C&RT) from different sources were to become available. In interim, RC is going to task a C&RT team to try and address the worst parts within this section;

RC

SAW again expressed keen interest in expediting remedial works to this section and intends to further explore possible external funding source/s;

- Ham Bridge to Victoria Park, Newbury – following request from Spokes channelled via CT, the C&RT have put up loose chipping signs along this section where spray tar-and-chip was done recently;
- West of Newbury (West Mills to Guyers Lock) – RC's report was that most of the repairs to embayments have been actioned by C&RT and fishing platforms are almost complete. MV observed recurring problems with dogs jumping into the canal and eroding the bank, including either side of some platforms, notwithstanding C&RT having installed boulder protection under and to sides of platforms;
- Gate replacement at Guyers Lock: starting imminently;
- Burghfield Weir: RC reported a large breach of canal bank which has resulted in considerable displacement of water onto adjoining land. Towpath is not affected, however repair works are about to start.

4. Community FUN Cycle Club

CE gave outline of this initiative for primary school students. The Community FUN Cycle Club is designed to coincide with and complement, Bikeability training. It is being funded using DfT Capability funding. The target age group is 8 to 11 year olds, with the

emphasis being on fun but also on core stamina. Taster sessions will take place in January 2022, with full programme of sessions running every other Saturday, from April through September, at Shaw House, Newbury.

The target group of 8-11 years olds will then refresh in January-March of the following year.

CE has targeted the Community FUN Cycle Club at 12 local primary & junior schools and, in response to a question from SAW, envisages there not being any issues with getting parents to volunteer their time to assist with the sessions; CE compared the concept to a family going along and supporting their child or children at a football or rugby match.

Though they will start with one session a day, potential to run for two sessions a day.

5. Widening Participation Fund

CE referred to discussion at last meeting on a potential bid; this bid was submitted by WBC to Bikeability Trust at end October and the outcome is awaited.

Objective to make Bikeability more accessible to SEND students and increase participation in cycle training.

Castle School, Brookfields School and Mary Hare School, plus SEND students attending mainstream schools and potentially others being home-schooled, are the focus for WBC's proposals.

Recognition that some of the SEND students need training on a 1-to-1 basis.

WBC has applied for £75k total, split £20k for each of the three specialist schools above and £15k for SEND students in mainstream schools, with full monitoring of outcomes to inform the evidence base.

6. LCWIP and major schemes update

CT updated the forum:

- **A4 London Road/new Lidl, Newbury**
Works start 8th November to prepare for installation of a pre-cast culvert section that will in turn enable construction of a kerb-segregated section of cycle track, with separate footway behind, along the front of the new store building which will be occupied by Lidl. Installation of the culvert using a crane is scheduled for the

night of 18th-19th November 2021, under an overnight closure of the section of London Road past the BP fuel station. Overall scheme completion scheduled for January 2022.

- **A4 Western Avenue (Brummell Road to Waitrose roundabout), Newbury/Speen**

Scheme overall has been revised, as discussed at last meeting.

Need for alterations to splitter island opposite Waitrose freight access/Benedict Court/Microfocus car park exit has been overcome and designed out, to minimise disruption.

Main issue will be with replacement of signalled crossing on Western Avenue east of Old Bath Road junction. Waiting to firm programme dates with contractor. Drawing will shortly be posted on Commonplace portal for information, with the page for this having been created in readiness, and information letters have been sent to frontagers.

7. Active Travel Fund

CT updated on the following schemes:

- **A4/Crown Mead, Thatcham**

Design being refined prior to Stage 2 Road Safety Audit; including to the footways in High Street on either side of the Whybrow Court junction to address drainage and access issues, taking account of recent stakeholder input. Drawing will shortly be posted on Commonplace portal for information, and information letters sent to frontagers.

- **Andover Road (Wendan Road to St Johns Post Office), Newbury**

CT has adjusted design further, taking into account comments from AM and TV. CT has approached NTC regarding land transfer and received an informal response. In discussions about how this scheme might possibly be tied in with possible resurfacing. Once complete, intention is to post on Commonplace portal and write to frontagers.

- **Lawrences Lane, Thatcham**

CT advised this involves a point closure to create a quiet lane and is being progressed by consultants working under instruction to WBC Traffic team – planned for this financial year;

- **Deadmans Lane, Theale**

Situation and timescale same as for Lawrence's Lane

8. AOB

- **Opening of Newbury Station Cycle Hub:** CT advised the second Cycle Hub (on the north/town side of Newbury Station between the new car park and the western end of Platform 2), had opened on 7th October, providing 176 spaces.

This complements the larger hub (with its total of 230 cycle spaces, comprising 180 spaces under cover and 50 spaces externally) opened in March on the south/Station Road side of the station, giving over 300 cycle spaces in total.

SAW asked for more details about the hub on the south/Station Road side. The south side hub is detailed and shown in this article: <https://gwr-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/new-bike-hub-for-newbury-station-customers>

- **Potential extensions to the Eling Way:** CT advised the Forum that Sustrans had prepared two feasibility studies, assessing scope for potential extensions of the existing Eling Way multi-user path, which already connects Hermitage with Hampstead Norreys over the former railway alignment.

The feasibility studies built on earlier valuable work by West Berkshire Spokes and have looked at options for southward extensions from Hermitage towards Newbury and, separately, at the potential for a northward extension from Hampstead Norreys to Compton. The study reports and recommendations are currently being reviewed by WBC's Network Manager.

- **E-scooters:** CE noted interim report released by Parliamentary Advisory Council For Transport Safety (PACTS) in relation to safety issues surrounding e-scooters. CE forwarded this and associated material to CT and SAW, for DV to circulate.

CE also referenced the Festival of Road Safety, links are: [2021 Programme: Week one – Festival of Road Safety \(roadsafetygb.org.uk\)](https://roadsafetygb.org.uk) - session on Bikeability

[2021 Programme: Week two – Festival of Road Safety \(roadsafetygb.org.uk\)](https://roadsafetygb.org.uk) - session on e-scooters

[2021 Programme: Week four – Festival of Road Safety \(roadsafetygb.org.uk\)](https://roadsafetygb.org.uk) - session on CycleRAP / CycleSmart

Next Meeting:

Tuesday 18th January 2022

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

CT/DV