

**Meeting Minutes of: West Berkshire Cycle Forum**  
**held on: Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022**  
**(via Zoom conference call)**

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

**Attendees:** Cllr Andy Moore (AM) – Member for Newbury Central  
Elaine Cox (EC) – WBC Rights Of Way Officer  
Robert Hill (RH) - Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability Group  
Neil Taylor (NT) - Newbury Road Club  
Angela McMahon (AMc) – SPOKES / Sustrans Ranger  
Alan Langley (AL) – SPOKES  
Clive Tombs (CT) – WBC Highways Officer (minutes of meeting)

**Apologies:** Cllr Tony Vickers (TV) – Member for Wash Common  
Josh Kerry (JK) – SPOKES

	<u>Action</u>
<p><b>1. Welcome, Introductions &amp; Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies were recorded, as above.</p>	
<p><b>2. Notes of previous meeting &amp; matters arising</b></p> <p>Notes of previous meeting held 02 November 2021 were agreed.</p> <p>CT had exchanged further emails with TV following their site meeting at Monument Close/Wash Common shops. TV had been liaising with landlord and agent. However, given that the landlord had forced the NuMee café to close, this had undermined the proposal to provide cycle stand/s at this location, so will not be pursued further at present.</p> <p>Other matters covered under other items on this meeting's agenda.</p>	
<p><b>3. Kennet &amp; Avon Canal – Towpath &amp; related improvements</b></p> <p>AMc commented that the section between Garston Lock and the M4 motorway bridge is in very bad state, cut up due to vehicle movements. CT will raise this with Rob Coles and Mike Youe of Canal and River Trust (C&amp;RT), to check that they are aware.</p> <p>CT referred to the Sustrans-backed, C&amp;RT-planned work on the Activation project section (Aldermaston Wharf to Hissey's Bridge)</p>	<b>CT / C&amp;RT</b>

which part covers this area mentioned by AMc, and which C&RT have outlined at previous Forum sessions.

Ham Bridge to Bull's Lock: CT noted that as of 12 December, C&RT had been looking to submit an application to Greenham Common Trust's The Good Exchange funding scheme, for match funding. On basis of £30k in kind/staff & design time from C&RT, £80k identified by WBC and £2k from Spokes, a potential match of £112k from Greenham Common Trust would then take the potential funding pot to £224k vs a project cost identified by C&RT of £390k.

CT will follow up again with Rob Coles and Mike Youe to ask status of their match funding application.

CT /  
C&RT

West of Newbury (Monkey Bridge to Guyers Lock): in response to question from AM, CT commented that from recent observation, C&RT still have some work to do to complete some of the fishing platforms where the embayments were located – at least one platform requires its footboards and another has only had footings installed.

C&RT

#### 4. Community FUN Cycle Club and Cycle Training update

To be discussed at next meeting.

#### 5. LCWIP and major schemes update

CT updated the forum:

- **A4 London Road/new Lidl, Newbury**  
Works started 8<sup>th</sup> November and progressing well, although a challenging site. Installation of culvert took place on the night of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> November 2021, under an overnight closure of the section of London Road. Issues with multiple utilities close to surface and presence of Thames Water rising main have required design alterations, leading to construction of wide (4+ metres) shared use section, which is compliant with latest LTN1/20 guidance given volume of cycle and pedestrian use. CT showed photos of the site as of last weekend; widening of path to front of new store has had to be delayed while London Road Ltd.'s contractor works to complete the superstore frontage. Scheme completion anticipated in February 2022, before store opens.

CT is intending to ask C&RT about potential to have direction sign array close to canal where the new footway alongside the Lidl store meets the canal towpath NCN4. CT is conscious of desire for holistic approach to signing, and has started preparing a Cycle Signing Strategy, building on previous work including by Spokes.

CT

- **A4 Western Avenue (Brummell Road to Waitrose roundabout), Newbury/Speen**  
CT posted link to Commonplace page for this scheme in the Zoom Chat: <https://westernavenuecyclewaysphase2.commonplace.is/>

This is also linked from the Consultation and Engagement Hub at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

This is for information only, given that work on site is programmed to start on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> January. Expected duration is 12 weeks. Scheme overall has been revised, as discussed at last two meetings. Portfolio, Ward, Parish, Town representatives have been kept apprised and nearby residents have received letter drop with link to above site.

Scheme will be disruptive owing to its nature, with splitter island still requiring removal after all, due to requirements for safe working area and materials deliveries.

## 6. Active Travel Fund

CT updated on the following schemes:

- **A4/Crown Mead, Thatcham**  
CT posted link to Commonplace page for this scheme in the Zoom Chat: <https://crownmeadcyclewaysphase2.commonplace.is/>

Scheme design adapted and refined by Stuart Michael Associates and stakeholders have been kept apprised. Letters on a 'for information' basis will be going out next week to frontagers. At this stage anticipating an April start, subject to factors including completion of the preceding schemes.

- **Andover Road (Wendan Road to St Johns Post Office), Newbury**  
CT posted link to Commonplace page for this scheme in the Zoom Chat: <https://westberksatroutes.commonplace.is/>

Letters being posted to frontagers on 19/01/22; scope for feedback via the Commonplace portal by 18/02/22. Current thinking, subject to feedback on the proposals, Town Council consent for access to land, utilities and resource situation, is to construct prior to resurfacing on Andover Road in summer 2022.

- **Lawrences Lane, Thatcham and Deadman's Lane, Theale**  
CT advised these smaller schemes are being progressed by consultant working under instruction to WBC Traffic team

- **Calcot School Streets**

AMc has some observations – to be discussed at next Forum.

AMc

## 7. Extension/s to the Eling Way

SAW welcomed AL to the Cycle Forum, given AL's key role, with Spokes, in initiating the proposals for a Newbury-Didcot cycle- and sustainable travel route in the early 2000s, and in working with Josh Kerry and a raft of stakeholders to see the Hermitage-Hampstead Norreys section through construction.

CT gave the backdrop to the Feasibility Studies carried out by sustainable transport charity Sustrans, which had been circulated (as time-limited Dropbox links) to Forum members by Deborah Vince on 11/01/2022.

Viewed holistically as a Newbury-Didcot link connecting large villages in West Berkshire including Hermitage and Compton, there is enormous potential to build upon the considerable effort put in by AL, JK and others to create the initial section of route connecting Hermitage and Hampstead Norreys. CT commented that this section is which is already well-used and, judging by reaction at the GreenFest events in 2019 and 2020, is highly-regarded,

There's a real opportunity here to build on the momentum that the completion of the initial section of route has generated, coupled with the highlighting of this 'missing link' in the prospectus for transport projects prepared recently by the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

With that potential in mind, the Council commissioned Feasibility Studies from Sustrans, to complement and validate the detailed work done previously - and recently updated – by AL and JK from Spokes.

AL agreed on importance to capitalise on momentum of initial section, though unfortunate that due to Covid that it had not been given an official opening.

AL is of the view that the costs cited by Sustrans are on the low side and feels more contingency is required.

Key findings:

### **Hermitage to Newbury**

- Sustrans assessed four possible route options, A through D
- Routes A, B and D spurring from Pear Tree Lane in the Shaw area of Newbury and broadly following the former railway alignment, east of

B4009, but with variations in Long Lane hamlet and Curridge

- Route C to the west of the B4009
- Sustrans are recommending Route B (6.2km length, shown on page 18 of the report), following the former railway north from Pear Tree Lane, passing behind Lyfame Kennels and along the western edge of Mousefield Farm, then to cross the B4009 within Long Lane hamlet to use the overgrown strip on the west side through Long Lane, re-crossing back at its northern end and regaining the old railway north to Curridge hamlet, north of Red Shute Hill. Route would travel roadside verge from Curridge to southern end of Hermitage, then link in with the development sites and snickets within them to get through to Marlston Road, from where there is an existing footpath and quiet/traffic-calmed roads that could provide connection through to meet the existing path by Hermitage village hall
- Advantages: relatively direct, making use of old railway alignment, fewer gradient changes, better connectivity for Curridge residents,
- Sustrans agreed there was scope to deliver in stages, but were not willing to 'score' the options or potential stages, taking the view that there were too many unknowns including availability of capital funding and stakeholder views to take into account.
- At an informal level they felt that the section within Hermitage and potentially extending down to Curridge could be useful starting point, given the links to existing and potential development sites in vicinity of the new CoOp

Sustrans' estimated costs for entire route Hermitage-Newbury: High cost option: £3.4million of which almost £2.9m would be construction costs

### **Hampstead Norreys to Compton**

- This appears less clear cut
- After pressing, Sustrans assessed four possible route options, A through D (shown on page 16 of the report)
- Effectively Alignments A, B and C spur from the White Hart pub in Hampstead Norreys and run east of the River Pang, to re-join railway alignment near to Coombe Road, in the countryside midway between Hampstead Norreys and Compton
- Alignment D runs via Water Street out of Hampstead Norreys, then parallel to the unnamed Hampstead Norreys-Compton road, potentially using the wide verge up to The Downs School and the west part of Compton village. It is more undulating and would require flood mitigation.
- For Sustrans it was between Alignments B and D, which were equally direct (around 3.7km each) but with Alignment D not making use of the former railway alignment and making for a more difficult connection at the Compton end for potentially going further northwards towards Didcot
- Sustrans acknowledge there are potential issues with taking a non-

road side route out of Hampstead Norreys, and they acknowledge there are potential permutations such as a Y-shape with connection towards the east side of Compton and on to Didcot via the former railway alignment to the north of Coombe Road

Sustrans' estimated Costs for entire route Hampstead Norreys-Compton assuming Option B which is away from the road: high cost option: £1.67million of which over £1.4m would be construction costs.

AL and CT are of the view that next steps on further stakeholder engagement should be agreed imminently, and funding sources actively explored.

To be kept on the agenda and discussed further at next meeting.

## 8. AOB

- **PAWS – contact with Sulham Estate:**

RH advised PAWS had met with Henry Scutt, owner of Sulham Estate. Mr Scutt allows use of the Estate land by walkers and cyclists, but wants to encourage fewer people to travel there by car. RH said it was a positive meeting, with apparent will to consider making available some land for a cycle- / pedestrian path on the north side of the A329, which could potentially tie in with the medium- to long-term aspiration identified in the LCWIP and Active Travel Programme for cycle and pedestrian improvements along this corridor.

CT noted he had advised Barbara from PAWS, in response to her further email, to make contact with the Service Director – Environment, with regard to her request for a meeting with WBC about this matter.

- **West Mills to Monkey Bridge:** EC advised that she had had her capital bid for funding to improve the towpath in this section approved, so EC will contact the Principal Engineer in Network Management Team to explore if resource can be made available to assist with design work.

- **Photos for cycle maps:** EC has secured some funding so that the Communications team can complete this work.

- **Orcas, A4 westbound, Colthrop:**

CT canvassed Forum views on these following several incidents and near misses, including one of severe damage, in the westbound cycle lane past Colthrop. LTN1/20 cites light segregation as not suited to this specific road type. SAW and Forum Members took view that Orcas in the urban area 30mph/40mph are of very worthwhile, and are aware discussions

are taking place with manufacturer on potential to improve these features in this urban section.

CT is awaiting some further data and will then discuss further the issues with relevant parties.

Next Meeting:

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 at 18:00**

- Time: 18:00-19:30
- Venue: (Zoom link to follow)