

Meeting Minutes of: West Berkshire Cycle Forum
held on: Tuesday 22 March 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
Robert Hill (RH) - Pangbourne & Whitchurch Sustainability (PAWS)
Kevin Hurley (KH) - President, Newbury VELO
Angela McMahon (AMc) – West Berkshire SPOKES & Sustrans Ranger
Cheryl Evans (CE) - WBC Senior Road Safety Officer
Elaine Cox (EC) – WBC Rights Of Way Officer
Clive Tombs (CT) – WBC Highways Officer (minutes of meeting)

Apologies: Cllr Tony Vickers (TV) – Member for Wash Common
Alan Langley (AL) – West Berkshire SPOKES
Gordon Oliver (GO) – West Berkshire SPOKES
Neil Taylor (NT) - Newbury Road Club
Luke Dawson (LD) – Network Development Manager, Sustrans
Rob Coles (RC) – Area Operations Manager, Canal & River Trust

	<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 18 January 2022 were agreed.</p> <p>CT contacted Canal & River Trust (C&RT) on 20 January about the <u>towpath issues between Garston Lock and M4 Motorway Bridge</u>, but was advised 16 March this is not land that C&RT are responsible for.</p> <p>Although this section is identified by Sustrans as a scheme in the pipeline for improvement under their Activation Project, CT will ask Sustrans if there is any scope for interim repair, if Sustrans have contact with landowner.</p> <p><u>Ham Bridge to Bull's Lock, Newbury - proposed upgrade of towpath section</u>: CT confirmed that WBC has put C&RT in contact with The Good Exchange (funding arm of Greenham Common Trust) and also</p>	CT

signposted to possible alternative sources, to complement the significant contributions already offered to C&RT by WBC and by SPOKES. C&RT are understood to have an issue with the direct debit arrangement required by The Good Exchange; C&RT's Mike Youe is trying to unlock this at C&RT Director level. CT and SA-W are remaining in contact with him and have re-iterated WBC's and Cycle Forum's desire to see the improvements to this section delivered.

C&RT

West of Newbury (Monkey Bridge to Guyers Lock): AM advised that himself and fellow Councillors Tony and Martha Vickers had met with C&RT to discuss the outstanding works. C&RT are proposing to create access points for dogs, in addition to the fishing platforms, to reduce the risk of additional embayments forming in the towpath bank.

Direction sign array canalside close to new Lidl store: C&RT are supportive of this idea. CT to discuss further with Planning and draft design.

CT

Other matters covered under other items on this meeting's agenda.

3. Kennet & Avon Canal – Towpath & related Improvements

In addition to the updates above, CT noted that C&RT and Sustrans representatives were participating in a concurrent scrutiny session at WBC, where issues associated with upgrading of and, crucially, ongoing maintenance of the towpath as a whole were on the agenda.

AM asked EC about the proposed upgrade of the section of towpath between Mallard Court (West Mills) and the Monkey Bridge. EC confirmed she has secured £70k for an upgrade, with a view to providing a bound surface to improve access for all, including buggy and wheelchair users. EC is going to liaise with Highways for assistance on design. EC will also liaise with Paul Hendry on a rumoured funding-related request to Newbury Town Council.

EC

4. Cycle Training update

CE updated the Forum on:

Community Fun Cycle Club: using revenue funding awarded to WBC by DfT, CE has set up this initiative, starting Saturday 09 April and running every other Saturday from April through July, plus September. CE has 12 riders signed up so far. Taster sessions being run, bolstered by advertising at Shaw House;

Bikeability: CE reported 2,707 young people will be trained by 31 March, at Bikeability level 1, 2 or 3.

DfT have increased funding to £119k. There are 8 current instructors,

with 2 being newly-trained.

65 courses run compared with 36 pre-Covid, so WBC are well-ahead on cycle training. WBC is extending support to Level 3 to link in with objective of increasing cycling to school. Potential to tie in with P.E. sessions, but discussions about that are ongoing.

Dr Bike (advice and assistance on bike maintenance): has gone to 10 schools.

Capability study – focussed on behavioural change and addressing barriers to active travel. CE advised this will complete at end June 2022. Schools involved include St Pauls, The Willows and Springfield.

RH asked if it is up to the school to respond to offers of training. CE confirmed yes, this is the case/ WBC is doing quarterly reporting on which schools (only a small number) are not taking up the offers of training.

CE commented that there has to be an acceptance some schools are located in deep rural areas, making realistic training (e.g. on how to deal with cycling alongside or on busier roads) more challenging.

CE advised that charging (at £10 per student) is about to start. Reading Borough Council and other Berkshire Unitaries have charged for several years. The funding generated will be reinvested in cycle training. Discussion ensued. CE noted that the £10 that WBC will be charging compares well with the £20 per pupil due to be levied by Wokingham Borough Council.

5. LCWIP and major schemes update

CT updated the forum:

- **A4 London Road/new Lidl, Newbury**
CT's understanding is works are substantially complete, barring relocation of telecoms pole and cables by Openscape (revised date still being chased with Openscape), final surfacing and signing.
- **A4 Western Avenue (Brummell Road to Waitrose roundabout), Newbury/Speen**
CT advised works are in Phase 3, with crew working on north side of road approaching the Waitrose roundabout. Phase 4 due to start 28 March, in section east of Brummell Road junction. Scheme is challenging, including with utilities being encountered at shallower depth and additional tree works.

KH asked if there are future plans to extend the cycleway and footway further east. CT said that subject to further assessment, funding and design work, the intention is to improve the facilities

extending eastwards from the Waitrose roundabout in a future financial year.

6. Active Travel Fund schemes

Updates were provided on the following schemes:

- **Calcot School Streets**

CE advised an ID Report has been completed following the review of the scheme 6 months after implementation. Local residents are happy with the scheme, although could do with more active engagement from the local community. Some evidence of displacement of pick-ups/drop-offs to other streets. CE noted junior school to be relocated to north side of school site, with a zebra crossing facility. 25 Penalty Charge Notices issued at £50 each. Ongoing monitoring being undertaken in conjunction with Thames Valley Police. Enforcement against moving traffic offences will be subject to the installation of suitable camera equipment.

AMc asked about camera feed monitoring. CE advised that if cameras are installed, monitoring would be done by WBC's Parking team.

AMc also asked about installation of dropped kerbs at access. CE has made Traffic colleagues aware of that request.

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

CT advised Wayleave has been sent to Newbury Town Council for approval, to enable access to the land, and utility investigation. WBC Projects team are carrying this investigation forward, with input from Traffic team on the proposed Traffic Regulation Order.

- **Crown Mead, Thatcham**

Elements of scheme and phasing being reviewed. Delivery has been impacted by work on the Western Avenue scheme. Stakeholders will be updated again shortly.

- **Lawrence's Lane, Thatcham and Deadman's Lane, Theale**

CT has been advised Traffic Regulation Orders are being drafted for these two proposed point closures on quiet lanes. These are due to go to WBC Legal Services for review by end March.

7. Extension/s to the Eling Way

Further to discussion at last meeting, CT advised the two Feasibility Studies have been circulated to Ward Members and Parish Councils, including Newbury Town Council whose boundary abuts the proposed

route. Response to date has been very positive, while acknowledging the challenges and multiple landowners involved.

In addition, engagement with other stakeholders has started and funding opportunities are being explored.

8. AOB

- **PAWS – Sulham Estate and Pangbourne-Purley:**

RH confirmed that, following the meeting between PAWS and Henry Scutt, owner of Sulham Estate, PAWS had approached WBC's Jon Winstanley to highlight scope for Pangbourne-Purley link to be created via Sulham Estate land on north side of A329, and to ask for this to be investigated.

PAWS are also enquiring within Pangbourne about scope to site additional cycle stands near to Costa Coffee store.

RH also mentioned that a new Bike Hub is to be created in West Street, Reading, in part of the premises occupied by Primark (former Co-Op store).

- **Calcot signs:**

CT confirmed to AMc that these signs have been designed. CT will remind the Project Engineer responsible to progress their installation.

CT

Next Meeting:

Tuesday 31 May 2022 at 18:00

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