SPOKES Monthly Meeting

Date: 5 November 2025 **Venue:** The Bacon Arms, Newbury

Present: Rob Borthwick, Ed Cooper, Gordon Oliver, William Pitt, Paul Rumsby, Clive Tombs

Apologies: Josh Kerry

Ref	Item	Action
1.	**Minutes**	
	▪ The minutes were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting.	
2.	**Actions**	
	▪ Gordon to talk to WBC Public Health Team about reprinting the WBC recreational ride leaflets. It was suggested that these should include a link to a GPX file	**GO**
	▪ It was agreed to ask members to nominate sites where overhanging vegetation is an issue in the next newsletter.	**GO**
	▪ Gordon to send mailshot to the wider membership to determine their thoughts on adding extra rides.	**GO**
	▪ William to find out if there are any future first aid courses run by the same people as the course he had attended	**WP**
	▪ Ride leaders to check first aid kits to see if any items have expired.	**WP/GO**
	▪ WP had not received any response from Chris Sperring re cycle counter sites, so will wait for local government review (Ridgway Council).	
	▪ WP confirmed that the winners of the Newbury Show competition had been contacted.	
	▪ WP confirmed that he had sent the Publicity Officer job description to the Volunteer Centre.	
	▪ WP to arrange a meeting to discuss the future of Spokes.	**WP**
3.	**Glow Ride**	
	▪ It was agreed that the event had been successful in attracting participation and media coverage, and feedback had been very positive.	
	▪ Spokes had failed to get branded flags in time.	
	▪ The event had a £200 budget, but only £145 spent. WP to pay and reclaim.	**WP**
	▪ The Committee was supportive of taking part again next year.	

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4.	**A4 Western Avenue / Lower Way Proposal** ▪ CT reported that he had raised the lack of cycle priority across side-roads and accesses on Lower Way with the project engineer, but they were unwilling to make changes. ▪ The Committee were unequivocal that the scheme did not accord with current design guidance. ▪ It was noted that priority had been provided across Lambourn Meadows at the western end of Lower Way, and this was very effective. ▪ It was not understood why priority for cyclists was not provided at the Nature Discovery Centre, especially when it was proposed to bend the cycle route away from the carriageway. ▪ There was discussion as to whether Spokes should have accepted the downgrading of the cycleway to shared use. ▪ It was felt that the Western Avenue proposal would not address safety issues at the Waitrose roundabout. – West-east movements required cyclists to use a parallel crossing to the north of the roundabout – the committee felt that route was not on the desire line and the approach angle to the crossing was too acute, requiring cyclists to look over their shoulder for approaching traffic. – Nothing was proposed to improve north-south movements, with cyclists required to pull out into traffic rather than remaining on the cycleway. – South to east movements were also not well-served, with no way to rejoin the cycleway if cyclists remained on carriageway. ▪ Concern was expressed about having a two-way cycle route on the north side of Western Avenue, since westbound cyclists would have to cross the road to access the route. ▪ It was suggested that the scheme be paused. ▪ It was agreed that Spokes should write to WBC to highlight their concerns. Gordon to draft a response. ▪ It was noted that WBC was also seeking feedback on the A4/Floral Way scheme. This was felt to be less of an issue.	**GO**

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5.	**Couch to 50K** ▪ WP suggested that Spokes should ignore the WBC proposals for a '0-5K' project until it got up and running. ▪ It was suggested that there needed to be a bigger focus on skills and techniques at the start. ▪ More people had been found to help deliver the training. ▪ It was suggested that participants should be asked to pay in order to cover costs of venue hire and ensure commitment from participants – currently the organisers were having to work around participants' availability, which wasn't practical. ▪ There was discussion around a possible name change (e.g. 'Couch to Cycle Confident') ▪ Survey feedback would inform the next tranche, which was due to start in March.	
6.	**WBC Cycle Schemes** ▪ It was noted that the Thatcham 20mph speed limit consultation was about to close. ▪ Consultation was about to start on the A4 Crown Mead scheme and the Andover Road traffic regulation order. ▪ Linkway 6 signs were being installed to Shaw Valley and Donnington Heights. It was suggested that these should be supported with on-carriageway markings. ▪ Linkway 3 signs were also being installed between Thatcham Garden Centre and Trinity School. ▪ Works were about to start on the next element of the Eling Way linking to Yattendon Road, incorporating a new 2.5m shared use path. It was proposed to have loose gravel around trees to protect the roots.	
7.	**British Cycling Social Affiliation** ▪ GO had been offered a year's free social affiliation for Spokes, but WP had already paid. WP to see if Spokes could be refunded.	**WP**
8.	**Walk Wheel Cycle Trust** ▪ WP had been invited to the 30th anniversary celebration. ▪ Sustrans had rebranded to WWCT and had adopted a strapline of 'build it, fix it, grow it, love it, fund it' ▪ WWCT was looking to add another 1,000 miles by 2030, as well as sorting some barriers and surfacing issues on the existing network.	

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	▪ WP to send a link to the webinar.	**WP**
	▪ CT reported that a new programme manager had been appointed for the Reimagining the Kennet and Avon Canal project.	
	▪ Work was underway to look at the section of towpath between Marsh Benham and Kintbury.	
9.	**Branded Items**	
	▪ Samples of water bottles were reviewed. It was agreed to go with the larger one at a cost of £340 for 50. It was agreed that these should carry a strapline. WP to suggest ideas.	
10.	**Comms**	
	▪ WP to talk to JK about renewing the website hosting.	**WP**
	▪ It was noted that Spokes emails were routinely being marked as spam. Gordon to investigate.	**GO**
8.	**AOB**	
	▪ Just 6 people had signed up for the Spokes Xmas meal.	
	▪ It was noted that WBC had requested cycle priority across side-roads as part of the Henwick Park development.	

Next meeting:	**Wednesday, 3 December @7.30pm**
Venue:	**TBC**