SPOKES Monthly Meeting

Date: 12 August 2026 **Venue:** The Weirside

Present: Kevin Bushell, Ed Cooper, Gordon Oliver, Paul Rumsby, Clive Tombs

Apologies: Alan Langley, William Pitt

Ref	Item	Action
1.	**Minutes** ▪ The minutes were approved as a true and correct record of the meeting subject to the following corrections: – Linkway 3 and 6 schemes were underway rather than complete – WBC had offered up to £125K for the Burghfield to Mortimer cycle route, which included physical works to the highway	
2.	**Actions** ▪ Clive had followed up with the Traffic and Road Safety Team Leader re Bikeability funding, who had come back with options. ▪ William to discuss possible article with Penny Post. ▪ Gordon had incorporated all suggested content in the July newsletter. ▪ William had set up a meeting with Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council to discuss the Burghfield to Mortimer cycle route on 20 August. ▪ Gordon had followed up with possible extra person for Couch to 50K, but they were not interested at this time. ▪ William had put together a website form to allow people to suggest 'quick wins'. ▪ William to explore appetite for 10 mile rides. ▪ Everyone confirmed they were happy with the sail flag designs – Gordon to order. ▪ Paul proposed that Spokes buy promotional stickers to put in café windows.	**WP** **WP** **GO** **GO**
3.	**Rural Design Guide for Active Travel** ▪ Clive had read the guide - it was pragmatic about path widths on towpaths and in lightly populated rural areas, but did not settle for mediocre standards. ▪ It contained a good number of useful case studies. ▪ The guide included useful advice for securing land and funding.	

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	▪ A bid had been submitted to National Highways for the Eling Way, but it was felt that this was unlikely to be successful, since they had already contributed to the original scheme.	
	▪ It was felt to be a useful document for engaging with other organisations. South Wessex Downs National Landscape were aware – Clive had talked to them about funding for Ham Bridge to Bull's Lock, but this was outside the NL area. They were more interested in the section around Marsh Benham.	
	▪ It was suggested that Spokes should issue a public statement in relation to the guide.	**WP/KB**
4.	**Planning Applications**	
	▪ Kevin and William attended the Sandleford meeting - development was expected to start in September 2027.	
	▪ There were a number of good things about the proposals, including the segregated cycle route and 20 mph speed limit within the development.	
	▪ However, there were concerns about the Monks Lane junction due to a lack of priority for cyclists, cycle routes deviating off the desire line, and the shared path approaching the access road crossing point at an acute angle – this did not accord with LTN1/20.	
	▪ A tiger crossing had been previously agreed, but it appeared to be missing from the latest drawings.	
	▪ Disappointment was expressed about the attitude of the developer who indicated that they "have to prioritise road users at some point".	
	▪ It was agreed that Spokes should write to Andy Alty to seek clarity about the agreed design.	**WP/KB**
	▪ It was noted that Active Travel England had not raised any objections to the proposals (25/00761/remaj).	**KB**
	▪ Spokes to watch for any future reserved matters planning applications coming forward.	**KB/MB**
5.	**Bikeability**	
	▪ Cheryl Evans had provided proposals for what grants of £1K and £2K could fund, which were focused on L1 places with a small number of 'Balance and Ride' places and a small number of L3 places.	
	▪ Kevin and William preferred more focus on L3 places, since that would result in more competent individuals who could cycle for everyday journeys.	
	▪ The focus of the Bikeability Trust on L2 was felt to be unhelpful, since children may turn up to L2 not able to ride a bike properly.	

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	▪ Funding profiles varied significantly year-on-year – only 400 L1 places were funded this year compared to 1,500 last year.	
	▪ It was noted that holiday courses seemed to a very different mix of levels levels than the term-time courses.	
	▪ It was noted that there were national evaluation reports for different aspects of the Bikeability programme on the Bikeability website.	
	▪ It was felt that Spokes should focus on where the greatest benefit could be delivered.	
	▪ It was suggested that William should have a further conversation with Cheryl Evans regarding stats for children passing through the system from L1 to L2 to L3, take-up and unmet demand at each level, and what the practical barriers were in getting more children to be competent cyclists.	**WP**
6.	**WBC Cycling Schemes**	
	▪ Due to time constraints, it was suggested that the committee refer to the Cycle Forum Minutes for an update on progress in delivering the cycling capital programme.	
	▪ It was noted that trial holes had been ordered to explore the feasibility of the crossing at Ham Bridge, but it was likely that there would be delays due to a change in the WBC Highways Contractor.	
7.	**Eling Way**	
	▪ The first meeting of the working group had taken place, which Ed and Alan attended.	
	▪ They planned to set up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) modelled on that of the Strawberry Line.	
	▪ The CIO would determine future phases of the route, which may include a short extension to Curridge Crossroads, with a potential on-carriageway route and 30 mph speed limit as far as the army barracks, then utilising public rights of way to Fisher's Lane.	
8.	**NCN4**	
	▪ Gordon highlighted issues with overhanging branches towards Marsh Benham and also east of the footbridge at Tesco.	
	▪ It was agreed that Spokes would arrange a working party to start to address the issues before the end of August.	**GO**
9.	**Cycle Parking Surveys**	
	▪ This remained an outstanding action.	
	▪ It was felt that this would be good to do in the summer holidays.	

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	▪ Gordon to liaise with William about designing the survey and collecting baseline data for Newbury town centre.	**GO/WP**
	▪ Liaison was ongoing with Newbury BID and the Council's Economic Development Team to identify sites for secure cycle parking. The Waterside Centre was happy to have some Street Pods (similar to those installed at Newbury Library).	
10.	**Events**	
	▪ Spokes had agreed to attend Greenfest on 24 October at St Bart's School. It was suggested that we should ask people about where people cycled and where they experienced problems.	
	▪ Need to chase Alec Gore about reprinting the Newbury and Thatcham maps.	**WP**
	▪ It was agreed that Spokes would not attend Newbury Show – this was a major commitment that took up a full weekend of volunteers' time.	
	▪ Spokes had been asked to attend Wash Common Community Festival on 26 September. This was not considered a 'must do', but it was an option if members had availability.	
	▪ Spokes was supporting the Glow Ride 2026 in Newbury town centre. The steering group was meeting with WBC to discuss the route and potential road closures.	
	▪ Ed, Gordon and Kevin expressed an interest in being marshals.	
11.	**Comms & Engagement**	
	▪ July newsletter had gone out.	
	▪ William had indicated that he may have found someone to look after the website.	
	▪ Gordon to provide Kevin with access to the Spokes social media accounts.	**GO**
12.	**AOB**	
	▪ Clive reported that the sheet piling works between Bridge Street and Parkway had been confirmed as permitted development, and works were expected to start by late autumn. The route would be closed while works were underway with a diversion via Market Place.	
	▪ Paul reported that there were four new members last month.	

Next meeting:	**Wednesday, 9 September @7.30pm**
Venue:	**The Weirside, West Mills, Newbury, RG14 5HP**