

Wednesday 27 June 2012 Carding Mill Valley, Church Stretton

1. Present

Cllr Miles Kenny (Chair)	Eliz-Anne Williams	Paul Wagner
Adrian Penney	James Russell	Peter Carty
Alison Kennedy	Jill Henderson	Philip Pool
Bernard Goodman	Keith Mason	Philip Saltmarsh
Bill Dorrell	Mary Diggory	Sarah Lalieu
Brett Kibble	Nick Holden	Cllr Simon Jones

2. Apologies

Alex Grant	John & Jenny Leese	Peter Lloyd
Beth & Peter Holgate	John Morris	Peter Walden
Chris Pennington	Julie Potter	Reg Potter
David Currant	Kim Williams	Richard Harman
Derek Owen	Mike & Jenny Willmot	Rob Fris
Emma Bullard	Mike Arthur	
Geoff Shinner	Mike Clarke	

3. Previous minutes and matters arising

Correction to previous minutes – Paul Wagner did not make the comment about right turns

Social Cycling Groups

Photos were circulated. Women on Wheels monthly cycle rides in Shrewsbury now include 2 rides; a short morning ride for the less experienced; and a longer afternoon ride for more confident riders. Oswestry Women on Wheels monthly evening rides have also started. To join the Cycling Oswestry Gently (COG) rides, please contact Alison to be forwarded to the mailing list co-ordinator. A COG tip for people starting a new group, was to make sure a pub stop was included! A Cycling for Carers ride is also planned in Shrewsbury and a U3A ladies' cycling group has started, but gentlemen are welcome.

Times Campaign

- Some members found it difficult to log on to the Times website
- Transport Minister has just announced (26th June) £15mill. to improve safety of cyclists at junctions <http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/press-releases/dft-news-20120626b/> .
- Alison has looked at cycle accident records for signalised junctions to see if this indicates some pilot sites for 'trixi' nearside cycle safety mirrors

Canals and Cycling

4. From British Waterways to the Canal and River Trust

Sarah Lalieu, Enterprise Manager at British Waterways, gave an informative presentation about British Waterways and its role in promoting cycling. For a full copy of the slides, please contact Alison. Sarah described how the old organisation would be abolished within a week, to be replaced with a new waterways charity with responsibility for:

- Navigation, recreation and leisure
- Business, commercial
- Listed structures
- New 'stuff' such as the Falkirk Wheel
- Managing historical and ecological environmental 'haven' for people and wildlife

Consultation started in 2011 and funding agreed in 2012 (15 year agreement). Transfer order takes place on 2nd July with a launch in Ellesmere. The new trust only covers England and Wales. Rivers remain the responsibility of the Environment Agency. Organisation includes:

- Commercial Trading Subsidiary (Community Interest Company) to hold valuable properties
- Local Waterway Partnerships (11 in total)
- Funding will be very different. Annual costs are about £20mill.

The North Wales and Borders Local Waterway Partnership covers Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, parts of Powys and includes the Montgomery and Llangollen Canals. It is to be chaired by Jim Forester but other partnership members are being sought. It is hoped that the new partnerships will be more accountable with more people having their say.

There are distinctions between navigable and 'remainder' canals, such as the Montgomery. There is an aspiration to reopen the Montgomery but this will require the provision of additional habitats for rare plants and £4mill to establish the nature reserves. Volunteers play an important part, for example at the Maesbury section.

Other North Wales and Borders projects include:

- Ellesmere Yard, bringing the Forge back into use – an event is planned in September 2012
- Pontcysyllte Aqueduct – extending World Heritage Site, Poachers Pocket to Lion's Quay
- Montgomery restoration
- Whixall Moors access
- Ellesmere to Colemere
- Links to Shropshire Way

Wales seems to be 'awash' with funding. Powys has invested in towpath improvements from Welshpool to Newtown. These have been very well-received and 170 cyclists recently took part in a local triathlon event.:

Members of the Cycle Forum then raised questions about specific issues:

- Mary – Brickwalls and Whitchurch arms of the canal – request for towpath improvements as an alternative to on-road section of National Cycle Network Route 45
- Paul – Redwith Bridge to Wales – this could be a volunteer project. Sarah noted that the Waterway Recovery Group can do towpath improvements as well as canal lining works
- Brett – Sustrans Wales has been looking at ways to find funding to improve Newtown to Abermule and Berriew, and would love to link with Oswestry and Llangollen canal. Link to Newtown and disused railway to Llangurig would be good. He noted that Glyn Evans, Sustrans Area Manager, North Wales, is keen to work with the new canals trust
- Adrian – towpath cycling 'licence' – any changes? Sarah noted that the cycling permit system will remain, although a towpath guidance document has been developed.
- Conflicts between users. There are conflicts with anglers and regular complaints about dog mess but the current idea is to set up user groups to help manage conflict and to reduce potential conflict situations between users. In busier areas such as London, information campaigns have been used e.g. 2tings campaign to get cyclists to ring their bells.

5. Waterway projects around Shropshire

Alison gave a quick update on other projects

- Groundwork Trust – surveying canal towpaths in Midlands and North Wales. Information is logged and mapped electronically but has been delayed for technical reasons....
- Shrewsbury and Newport Canals Trust – supports reopening of disused sections and path improvements. Volunteers are restoring Wappenshall Wharf near Wellington
- Flax Mill, Shrewsbury – has passed the first stage of a bid for £12mill Heritage Lottery Fund and plans include waterside buildings based on the old canal basin
- Meres and Mosses Landscape Partnership project (2012-2017) is being co-ordinated by Shropshire Wildlife

Cycling updates

6. Telford and Wrekin – events and latest infrastructure projects

Jill announced that Bike Month had been revived in Telford, and Forum members were impressed by the array of activities organised:

- Launch event – around 200 people attended on a cold Jubilee weekend in Telford Town Park. Sustrans volunteers helped with signs
- Ride through History – disappointing turnout – will learn from this
- 5,000 leaflets distributed
- Bike to Work Day – 40 people
- Secondary school bike road shows (Yr7). Very successful. Difficult to get dates at schools
- Not all feedback in from events such as the Bike Hub events
- Breeze training for women took place – 6 women interested in a Women on Wheels group
- 'Push and pedal' at 2 primary schools: **Wrockwardine** 70-90 bikes and scooters, School Crossing Patrol said it was much calmer on the road outside school, school now looking at additional cycle and scooter storage; **Church Heston** usually no bikes, numbers up
- Travel Plan Co-ordinator appointed, already working with local companies
- Infrastructure – comprehensive surveys to be undertaken of cycle route network, with assistance from Sustrans Rangers and TBUG
- BMX Urban Games event planned for July, Malinslee

7. Shropshire – events and latest infrastructure projects

Oswestry

- Infrastructure programme includes path improvements on Shelf Bank linking through to Wilfred Owen Green, plus start of design work for Cambrian railway line path
- Joanne Morison has started as the new Sustrans Bike It officer
- Oswestry BikeFest planned for July

Ludlow

- Sheet Road crossings should be completed in July, Dark Lane and other projects under review
- Tour de Ludlow 30th June, organised by Ludlow Cycling Support Group
- Local to Ludlow Food Chain cycle ride 29th July

Shrewsbury

- Northern Gateway (Connect2) – Simon noted that it was good to have Network Rail co-ordinating bridge work, but this could extend the programme by a further 8 weeks on site
- London Road – following consultation, the shared use cycle track proposal has been dropped but resurfacing and improvements at Column island are still planned. Improved access to the Business park was requested including dropped kerbs in the bus lay-by
- Water Lane – investigations into collapse of path are ongoing, closure remains
- Porthill footbridge – reopening slightly earlier than planned
- Asda – poor quality parking has been raised with manager. No response.
- Advertising bikes – still a problem in town centre.
- Summer Bike It activities for families – every Wednesday in August

Shrewsbury – Smithfield Road

As many Forum members were aware, Shropshire Council is planning to remove the crossing refuge on Smithfield Road, near Roushill, in Shrewsbury. This decision is being considered at Scrutiny Committee in July. Comments made included:

- it's mad to remove the refuge and sends all the wrong signals to pedestrians and cyclists
- if it was installed to help reduce speeds, and it is helping with this, it should be retained
- it's wonderful
- more and more people seem to be using the refuge

- people use it already – don't they matter?
- it's more convenient to cross at the refuge than wait for pedestrian crossing phases at the signals at Welsh Bridge or Raven Meadows
- it seems very short-sighted to take it out, given that a £10mill. hotel is now going in. It's very poor for visitors. Can't another survey be taken, after the hotel is completed?

Councillor Simon Jones mentioned some of the reasons behind the decision:

- recent surveys show only about 150 people (including 10 cyclists) use the crossing each day, compared to thousands at Welsh Bridge or Raven Meadows
- people don't need to cross at this point
- it exacerbates congestion in the town centre
- Shrewsbury Town Council and the Police have raised concerns.

He also noted that the installation of the refuge was funded by Cycle Shrewsbury and Shropshire Council funds and not by the Sustrans/ Big Lottery Connect2 grant (Connect2 facilities have to remain in place for at least 40 years). The cost of removing the refuge would not be paid from highways budgets.

Action: Members of the Forum asked for their views to be passed onto the Scrutiny Committee.

National Cycle Network issues

- Route 45 Upton Magna black and white signs – extra stickers are being organised by Sustrans
- R45 Coalport to Bridgnorth - maintenance of the disused railway is the responsibility of the landowners. Sustrans rangers have planned some litter picking for August.
- R45 Bridgnorth sports field – footpath diversion order, statutory objection period ends 2nd July
- Route 81 Uffington sign still damaged **Action: AK to chase**

New website www.travelshropshire.co.uk hoping to go live in July

8. Any other business

- Emma Bullard completed the London Night Ride – thanks to everyone who sponsored her
- Cultural Olympics – Alison identified an opportunity to join with All the Bells on 27th July
- Shropshire community car clubs – survey responses show that there is sufficient interest in Ludlow and Shrewsbury, and these are being progressed. In Shrewsbury there may be sufficient interest for 5 vehicles. In Bishops Castle, the project seemed less viable but there may be different conditions as local people asked for donated rather than new, leased cars.

National Trust update

- Wenlock Quarry – National Trust is negotiating the purchase of the quarry (£750,000)
- New bridleway at Benthall Hall near Ironbridge
- Mountain biking event raised £500 towards National Trust
- Long Mynd user group meetings have come up with positive solutions e.g. horse riders, mountain bikers and walkers have agreed to identify 'passing places'

Reaven update

- Reaven Cyclefest planned 12th August - cycle ride from Pontesbury Railway Station, treasure hunt to Minsterley, smoothie bike, refreshments, prizes
- Shrewsbury to Minsterley railway route – good dialogue with two landowners (Pontesbury/ Malehurst area) – hopeful of organising a summer site visit to look at NCN R45 Coalport to Bridgnorth disused railway. Discussion took place re Shorthill to Lea Cross section. Landscape Partnership also involved in railway project.

9. Content, dates and venues for meetings in 2012

- Tuesday 25th September, Shirehall, Shrewsbury – to discuss schools and cycling: Bike It in Shropshire and Secondary School road shows in Telford
- Wednesday 5th December, Shirehall, Shrewsbury