

## MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE CYCLE FORUM

### MAKING CYCLING MAINSTREAM



Tuesday 11 February 2014, The Gateway, Shrewsbury

#### 1. Present

Cllr Miles Kenny (Chair)  
James Owens  
Mary Diggory  
Jean Breakell  
Michael Willmot  
Derek Owen  
John Nowell  
Helen Gilmour

Alex Grant  
Jenny Willmot  
Ken Thorpe  
Gill Wood  
Ian Gordon  
Will Baugh  
Keith Mason  
Ray Hughes

Peter Walden  
Peter Mathison  
Brett Kibble  
Phil Pool  
John Morris  
Emma Bullard

#### Apologies

Peter Crofts  
Geoff Shinner

Eliz-Anne Williams  
Jill Henderson

Bill Dorrell  
Martin Beardwell

#### 2. Previous minutes and matters arising

There were no amendments to the minutes of the October meeting.

PM reminded members that Martin Beardwell had asked for Shropshire Council's highway maintenance schedule. MK said that we had received a response from Tim Sneddon with general information though not a detailed schedule. RH had received a response from the Highways Agency. **Post-meeting note:** MB reports (12.04.14) that the HA's contractors have done a good job along the A5 and he has written to the HA and local MP to express his appreciation.

#### 3. Making Cycling Mainstream – Miles Kenny

A discussion paper had previously been circulated and MK introduced the topic.

There have been many improvements to cycle routes and parking since 1996 when the Forum was set up; and a big increase in cycling, especially in Shrewsbury. There is still huge potential to get more people cycling.

The context now is one of large-scale council cuts to staff numbers and services; and it is hard for members to argue the case for money to be spent on cycling when eg day centres are being closed. But there should also be some new opportunities eg to work with public health and voluntary organisations. There may be other groups who could help with the regular maintenance; such as Sustrans volunteers or offenders on "community payback".

Cycling should not just be seen as being for eccentrics or sporty types; we need to work harder to get this message across especially in view of the high profile of cycle sports. Getting more people cycling can help Shropshire Council to meet its targets for carbon reduction and can add to tourism revenues.

A discussion followed on topics including:

- JM: there is no cycle parking where he works, and there are often thorns or broken glass on cycle tracks. He supports using community payback to work on this. Also stresses the need to challenge the 2015 General Election candidates on the importance of cycling's contribution to carbon reduction – get a spending commitment from them. We also need safer lorries and Highway Code changes.
- Shropshire Council has not applied for European funding for highway maintenance.
- MD: she finds that car drivers seem to be getting less patient and still don't seem to expect to see people cycling. London Road is still difficult even though it has been resurfaced. It's important to encourage confident cycling so that drivers expect to see cyclists in traffic.

- JB: The “exercise on referral” model might be useful. Staff on these schemes have to assess the individual’s need – this might include cycling in the gym, and that person could then be recommended to move on to a real bicycle. RH said Public Health colleagues were happy to signpost to cycling services but did not wish to include cycling as an option in the exercise on referral scheme.

#### 4. “Mainstreaming Smarter Travel” – LSTF conference December 2013.

Ray Hughes had attended this conference and gave a presentation on some of the highlights including projects in Liverpool, Derby, Leicestershire and New York City. Bicycle ownership is growing (3.6 million bikes and 2 million cars were sold in the UK in 2012). All experience shows that you need a long-term vision – “What sort of place do you want your grandchildren to live in?” – to work towards; particularly as funding pots are short term.

From March 2015 when the current LSTF grant ends, capital funding for sustainable transport initiatives will come from the Local Growth Fund administered by Local Enterprise Partnerships. The Marches LEP covers Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford <http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/> and is chaired by Telford businessman Graham Wynn. It has published its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) with information about what infrastructure projects it would like to support – the list includes the Shrewsbury North West “Relief” Road. There is support for improving conditions for walking and cycling in town centres but no specific schemes are mentioned.

At present it's unclear what amounts of money might be available for sustainable transport from the LEP; no amounts are ring-fenced either to a particular county or budget area.

In addition, local authorities can bid for further LSTF revenue for 2015-6 and the bid must be supported by the LEP. **Post-meeting note:** Shropshire Council has submitted a bid and should hear in July whether it has been successful.

Ray's conclusions were

1. There is still revenue funding for LAs for promoting cycling; but in competition with each other.
2. LEPs will receive capital – unsure how this will look post 2015
3. We need to build a new working relationship with LEPs
4. Can we sustain our activities with background of cuts and staffing losses?
5. Need for Champions to work together across all sectors

#### 5. Examples of Shropshire projects – EB

Agreed with the need to work with other organisations to get cycling as everyday transport embedded in people’s thinking so that it becomes normal. The sustainable transport team is always looking for ways to do this:

- South Shropshire Housing Association – has sent a number of workers on ride leader training courses and now runs cycling projects for tenants in supported housing. One of the most enthusiastic workers had not been on a bicycle for 30+ years before attending the ride leader training – illustrating the importance of influencing the relevant professionals in health, housing, education etc in order to reach the people they work with.
- Tourism and Leisure – the LSTF team is organising led rides with the National Trust and the Meres and Mosses project in May. [www.themeressandmosses.co.uk](http://www.themeressandmosses.co.uk)
- Planning – cycling facilities are often included in new developments but not linked further to the town centre and other facilities, making them more or less useless. (Shrewsbury Business Park is a prime example). There is a need to get high-quality, continuous cycling networks designed as part of the major developments planned for Shrewsbury and elsewhere in Shropshire. See <http://new.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/site-allocations-and-management-of-development-samdev-plan/> for information about this process.

## 6. Latest cycle data for Shrewsbury.

Graphs were displayed showing data for 2009-13 from some of the locations in Shrewsbury where there are electronic counters. Telford Way where there were no cycle facilities before December 2008 has shown the most dramatic increase. Castle Walk which is one of the oldest and most popular traffic-free routes has sadly shown a decline, probably due in part to the fact that postal workers no longer cycle on their delivery rounds. All the routes clearly showed the impact of weather conditions especially the severe winter of 2010-11.

## 7. Update on cycling in Telford

See report from Jill Henderson attached.

DO gave an update on the new BMX track in Dawley. **Post meeting note** see Shropshire Star article of 10 March

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/editors-picks/2014/03/10/bmx-fans-are-riding-high-at-new-telford-track/>

## 8. Shropshire events and update

- Alex Grant is leading monthly rides in Ellesmere on the third Sunday of the month. Details will be posted on the Travel Shropshire website  
<http://www.travelshropshire.co.uk/cycle/events/ellesmere-cycling-group-ride.aspx>
- The Bikeability contract is out to tender. RH confirmed that adult training is included. PM suggested we ask the Director of Public Health to encourage schools to take up the training. **Post meeting note:** the contract has been awarded to Cycle Experience who started delivering Bikeability in schools at the beginning of the summer term. There is no charge to the schools or children.
- BikeFest: Shrewsbury Sat 7 June 12.00-4.00pm; Oswestry Sat 5 July 11.00am-3.00pm. All information on the Travel Shropshire website.
- Shrewsbury Grand Prix Sunday 25 May; including family rides and activities  
<http://www.travelshropshire.co.uk/cycle/events/grand-prix-family.aspx>
- Sustrans Big Pedal competition: this took place in March. **Post meeting note:** Shropshire schools won both categories in the West Midlands – Oxon Primary was the winning large primary school and Worthen Primary the winning small primary school. Many congratulations to all the children, staff and parents.

## 9. AOB

(i) JB gave an update on efforts to provide more opportunities for “inclusive cycling” using the adapted bicycles and the track at Shrewsbury sports village. Points to note:

- The CTC has funding to help promote inclusive cycling. Shropshire comes under their north-west region for this project and Jayne Rodgers is the co-ordinator
- A group of interested people has been meeting in Shrewsbury since October 2013 to try to bring together the necessary expertise and resources. EB chairs this group although the LSTF team will not be directly involved in running new sessions.
- Taster or try-out sessions that have been arranged have shown that there is a demand for opportunities to cycle.
- RH is running “Pedal for Health” sessions every month at the sports village. These were originally aimed at members of the public who might need to take more exercise and not be

confident to cycle. There has been little support from GP surgeries to promote these and much of the early take-up was by groups from day centres or others with special needs.

**Post-meeting note:** These sessions are growing in popularity and will continue through the summer

<http://www.travelshropshire.co.uk/cycle/regular-cycle-events/pedal-for-health-taster-days.aspx>

ii) AG reported that sections of NCN route 455 (previously 31) are in a bad state after the winter. He was advised to contact Cllr. Ann Hartley (member for Ellesmere) or Cllr. Claire Wild (transport portfolio holder)

iii) BK distributed flyers about the new section of NCN 81 from Welshpool- Newtown along the Montgomery canal. RH said this is a lovely traffic-free ride. Sustrans have plans for the Welshpool-Llanymynech section.

iv) There is a 20s Plenty campaign in Oswestry and Rod King the founder of 20s Plenty will be speaking in the town on 31 March. For more information go to <http://peacecycling.blogspot.co.uk/>

#### 10. Next meetings

**Tuesday 17 June at the Ludlow Brewery,** <http://www.theludlowbrewingcompany.co.uk/> starting at 7pm. Contact Ray Hughes with any agenda items [ray.hughes@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:ray.hughes@shropshire.gov.uk)

**Tuesday 14 October** hosted by Telford. DO has offered the opportunity to try the BMX track at 6pm followed by the meeting at 7pm

Emma Bullard  
2 May 2014