



Shropshire Cycle Forum Minutes of Meeting

Date: 16th October, 2013, Wellington Civic Centre, Telford

In attendance:

Cllr Miles Kenny	(MK)	Chair Shropshire Forum
Peter Mathison	(PM)	CTC Member
Tim Nelson	(TM)	Newport Town Council and Newport cycling club
Geoff Shinner	(GS)	Sustrans/TBUG Deputy Chair
Peter Lloyd	(PL)	CTC Member
Will Baugh	(WB)	Sustrans & Travel Shropshire
Jon Wellman	(JW)	T&W Green Party
Derek Owen	(DO)	Wrekin Riders BMX Club
Keith Mason	(KM)	Shrewsbury Cyclist
Martin Beardwell	(MB)	CTC Shropshire Cyclist
Emma Bullard	(EB)	Shropshire Council
Tina Brasenell	(TB)	T&W Council
Andrew Loveland	(AL)	Shifnal Cycling Society
Jean Breakell	(JB)	CTC member/Community physiotherapist working with adults with learning disability
Trevor Davies	(TD)	T&W Cyclist
Jill Henderson	(JH)	T&W Council, Cycling promotion

Apologies:

Reg Potter	Chair, Telford & Wrekin Bike Users Group (TBUG)
Corrinna Wade	Telford cyclist
Greg Lane	Telford cyclist
Nick Jeggo	Newport Cycling Club
Steve Holloway	Wrekin CTC
Simon Broad	Nova Raiders
Phil Pool	Shrewsbury cyclist and Friends of the Earth
Mike Arthur	Shrewsbury cyclist
John Morris	Shrewsbury cyclist
Eliz- Anne Williams	Ludlow
Alex Grant	Ellesmere
Ian Yarroll	Sustrans volunteer co-ordinator

The minutes of the Shropshire Cycle Forum (19.6.13) were accepted as an accurate record

Matters Arising:

Cycling and Public Health: PM asked if any health initiatives had arisen out of Rod Thompson's presentation. MK said nothing visible or tangible. EB has had meeting with them and will have another on 31st October re. 'Pedal for health'. GS informed us that

Richard Harman has moved on to working on NCN 45. EB confirmed that there is no longer a dedicated cycling engineer. Amy Wilde is the engineer for the south of the county.

Nick Kitchen gave a presentation of the proposed signage for a long distance route avoiding the A442. This was originally mooted for the use of Lands End to John O'Groats cyclists (Lejog). TBUG was concerned about this following a cycling fatality on Queensway.

The route Nick showed (details attached) follows the route originally suggested by GS and approved by Telford & Wrekin Bike Users group (TBUG)

There will be a gateway signs on the A442 at Sutton Maddock in the south and Shawbirch in the north. T&W will erect the primary signing, as indicated, and Sustrans will fill in with route confirmation stickers where necessary. PM said when he was a regional cycling officer there was a move to ban cyclists from the A442 but the alternative route proposed (the Silkin Way) was impractical.

There is an issue for cyclists travelling south accessing the roundabout at Stirchley. A dropped kerb will be installed at the junction with Stirchely Avenue to remedy this. The route through the town centre is an interim one prior to the new Box Road being completed. Then it can take the shorter 2-way route. (Completion scheduled for 2015).

TN agreed that despite the 'psychology of time' being shown, it was better for navigation to show mileage. Nick pointed out that there would be change of direction signs at key points such as the Blue Elephant junction at Ketley using existing stands.

AL queried whether signs were needed at all in these days of g.p.s. GS thought they were worthwhile to point long distant cyclists towards avoiding Queensway. JB asked if there was going to be a recognisable logo for the route (not planned at present).

Nick agreed that this could be a multi-purpose route with local destinations also indicated. TN reminded us that this should be well publicised locally. GA informed Forum that there was £3k funding for this. If the changes are approved at the next TBUG meeting the signage will be in place for spring.

The information will be posted on the T&W website and also all the dedicated Lejog websites, plus it will be circulated to cycling clubs etc. and neighbouring authorities. PM suggested contacting CTC to give a link to the route. (Noted)

Telford & Wrekin Cycling Update:

Adult Coaching: we have been running a campaign to encourage adults to take up cycling this summer, especially during Bike Month in June. Successes included a lady in her 60's who had not cycled before. The bike hub in the Park have been very supportive and for example, opened early in order to hire her a bike and also took off and replaced the pedals as she needed. We have had coaching enquires from about 185 people since March.

Bike Month: A little disappointing this year. Had a very full calendar of events on our website but the take up was rather low despite freely advertising on Facebook and Twitter as well as the usual channels. Next year we are going to spread the advertising and concentrate on participating in Bike Week (14th – 22nd June 2014) rather than having a whole Bike month.

Events: We have been part of many events this year. Wellington Carnival was amazingly well attended despite the cold, rain and wind, and drew a good response for our adult coaching. Similarly the T party weekend in the park in August was very popular and we had

quite a lot of interest in coaching, maps and top tips for commuters. We attended other smaller local events and also the Senior Citizens' forum in Oakengates. One of their members passed level 3 with flying colours and is now hooked on cycling! We also took part in Capgemini's 'smarter travel week'. Capgemini is one of Telford's largest employers and we will join them again next spring to help launch their 'cycle to work' scheme. Our own Council scheme has attracted nearly 200 participants in the last 2 years.

NCN 55: The section from the A41 to the border has just been completed. This will be part of a direct national cycle network route from Stafford to Telford. Sadly, one 200 km section just over the border in Stafford is still in its original state and there is a prohibitively muddy section here, particularly bad in winter. Meeting had urged Staffordshire to fill this in with 2 tons of hardcore (or whatever). There are further improvements planned from Newport to the Red House pub roundabout on the A518 and beyond, using the old A518 road. The route then runs on quiet roads near Kynnersley until rejoining the 518 at Donnington and from there it will be routed via the very good existing cycle path up to Priorslee and the Town Centre. It has now been decided to postpone the official 'launch' of the NCN until spring, when we hope to stage events in conjunction with Stafford.

Telford & Wrekin Cycle Map: So far have distributed 4750 locally. There will be some amendments and then the latest edition will be released in the spring. TBUG and local walking groups have provided very helpful input into this map.

Bike Road show: As well as bikeability the Bike Road Show is offered to year 7 students. The activities range from 'Who wants to be a millionaire' to our own version of 'egg heads' (a practical demonstration on helmet wearing). All strands of the road show are interactive and the feedback from both teachers and kids is that they really enjoy it.

Telford BMX Report from Derek Owen, Parks and Open Spaces Officer.

- National BMX racing has finished for the 2013 season with Wrekin Riders having increased participants to 12 national riders racing. The club finished with both the highest points scored in over 6 years of racing Nationals and also reached its highest ever club ranking at 32nd (and the only club in the top 50 without a track to train on).
- Two Wrekin Riders have already qualified for the World Championships next year.
- Regional racing has also finished for the 2013 season. The club took nearly 40 regular participants and gained a number of regional champions. Again we are the only club participating without a track to train on.
- 8 club riders qualified for the British Championships with a number doing exceptionally well. The club ranking improved to 31st.
- The new national BMX track in Dawley Telford is aiming to be opened on October 14th. (A snagging list is still being completed). It will be ran by the Wrekin Riders BMX club. They have secured the Midlands Regional Championships for September 2014 which will see hundreds of riders from across the midlands and north areas attend along with a large number of spectators. The club are also looking to put on a regional race as well. The track will be managed by Wrekin Riders and shared with the Phoenix school during curriculum time and some after curricular times. Eventually schools across the borough will have the chance to access the track. The facilities will be open for the public to use at most weekends and Wednesday evenings, but

these times are yet to be confirmed. The use of temporary floodlighting will enable it to operate in the evenings The track will be officially opened later in the year and has to be one of the (if not THE) most picturesque BMX tracks in the country with views across the county. A larger National Race is an ambition in the future. .

The Forum were very interested to hear about the new track at Dawley and Derek invited them to hold the meeting next year 14th October 2014) at Phoenix school, next to the track. This was enthusiastically agreed by members.

- The club has been successful with an application for Sportivate and will put on activities at the new track in the Autumn.
- Local coaching at a variety of local tracks continues to grow with regular increases in numbers. Looking to encourage children to carry on cycling 'exit routes'.
- Numerous schools are receiving BMX coaching and looks set to continue through this and next year (particularly at the Phoenix Academy, their feeder schools and primary schools.
- The club had a successful 3 week long BMX summer school at 3 different BMX tracks around the Telford area with over 300 participants.
- The club organised and put on a successful Mini Race meeting at Malinslee fun day with over 60 participants and organised and put on the Telford Urban Games (including a BMX race meeting) which had several hundred people attend. A number of other events were attended including openings of new facilities in Craven Arms and alongside coaching activities in Broseley.
- The club have expanded into Mountain Biking and are currently renovating the challenging woodland pump track in Arleston, Telford and also working with TCAT to carry out coaching alongside their outdoor education unit.
- Membership is anticipated to triple upon the opening of the new track. Membership is open to all and a particular welcome is given to anyone from Shropshire. Membership is to be very reasonably priced.
- The club are looking forward to the new season which will see the club compete on an equal footing for the first time with the ability to train on an actual competition size race track. The club anticipate a significant increase in participants, an increase in specific rider and club rankings and opportunities for all to develop.
- DO said he was keen to work with British Cycling 'go ride' women, to get more women into sports cycling. He will be looking for additional coaches. TB has already expressed interest in helping.

NCN552 and NCN 455: GS reported that Sustrans are re-numbering all regional routes, relating them via the first 2 digits to the main NCN route that they feed into. Thus e.g. NCN 55 has regional route NCN552 from Newport to Whitchurch. These routes are currently being re labelled. Ian Yarroll says the intention is to renumber R31 this weekend , weather permitting. Sustrans volunteers will stick the new number 455 on to the existing signs.

(The old Sustrans system numbers were duplicated and could therefore be confusing).

Shropshire Update/Love your Bike month: Presented by EB

- Connect 2 portrait bench was installed on Smithfield Road, Shrewsbury in June <http://www.travelshropshire.co.uk/bench>
- Shrewsbury and Oswestry both held successful family BikeFests in June
- The programme of led rides continues and there were family activities in the school holidays including a number of very popular “Learn to Ride “ sessions – where children progress to riding without stabilisers - run by the Bike It officers
- 20's Plenty for Oswestry. Oswestry Town Council have voted to support this but have not yet put it forward to Shropshire Council as one of their road safety priorities.
- October is Love Your Bike month, the main aim being to encourage people to carry on cycling safely though the winter months. As part of this we give away lights and hi-vis vests
<http://www.travelshropshire.co.uk/love-your-bike>

Special Needs Cycling in Shropshire/T&W: JB said that she was inspired by the Forum meeting at Craven Arms to find out about improving facilities that enable people with disabilities to cycle. She felt that the facilities at the Sports Village are little used and not promoted. There is an open meeting next week about this. Shropshire Council/public health/Taking Part <http://www.takingpart.co.uk/> have started an all ability group (including visually impaired) on a Saturday.

Wrexham are achieving a lot working out of a portabocabin – JB feels that this should be happening in Shropshire.

JB has been working with SERCO who operate the sports village to make more day activities available to disabled people, and that they can be used by a wider range of people, such as those with injuries who could use an adaptive bike. MK agreed that there was a lot of potential.

JH told forum about activities in T&W. The all ability bikes at the Town Park are used every day. This follows a referral process from the Adults team. (arranged by Susan Gibson from social services – susan.gibso@telford.gov.uk) There are a lot of biking activities for children as part of the ‘I can 2’ activities, including a the Draisin, a new front loader that takes wheelchairs. Natalie Bevan (natalie.beban@telford.gov.uk) is a great source of information on this and has already been contacted by Harry Cade, the short breaks co-ordinator for Shropshire. There is an ICAN2 newsletter 4 times a year. Jill mentioned that the NCN 55 is a really good level surface that should lend itself to adapted bikes. Need to check access along the route via Sustrans Rangers. The new section gives level access from the A41 (by the old Focus store, Newport). MK agreed that there is a lot of potential.

Future Meeting Dates:

Tuesday 11th February : Shirehall or Sports Village

Wednesday 17th June : location tbc, south Shropshire

Tuesday 14th October : BMX Track at Lawley

Also:

Church Stretton festival of cycling, Saturday 7th June – Sunday 15th June. Includes a hill climb with road closures, Family events (14th) at carding Mill Valley and Breeze rides for women. Organised by National Trust and Church Stretton Bike shop.

Any Other Business: PM said that he sees cycle path facilities deteriorating throughout county – no one seems to take responsibility. Many are overgrown and not rideable during the summer. The highways agency don't do anything (e.g. Mountford Bridge/Feltham Butler has still mostly not been done.) Can the council please advise on the maintenance programmes for these paths? MK admitted that the local member had not been helpful but reminded that at the same meeting the closure of Day Centres was under discussion. If the council are doing 'hedge to hedge' maintenance then they cannot attend to emergency pot holes/cracks etc.

JW said you should complain to Shropshire if hedge cutting debris is left in the road – a huge problem. Understand not enough staff for this. EB confirmed that highways had lost 4 members of staff in the last year.

GS Route 45 Bridgnorth still has a gap in the area of the playing fields. MK informed that Shropshire Council is the applicant for this and is still waiting for the funding.

GS also said that when there is hedge trimming on the Silkin Way, if rangers know in advance then they are happy to work alongside. He also informed the meeting that Ian Yarroll is the new Sustrans Co-ordinator for South Shropshire.

MK contacted Tim Sneddon, Service Manager Environmental Maintenance (Tel 01743 254904) asking for a copy of the maintenance schedule. Tim replied:

"In general terms cycle ways are inspected at the same time that the adjacent road is inspected. For the most heavily used A and B roads this is monthly, this includes roads such as Bage Way and Robertson Way. Roads used by fewer vehicles might have quarterly inspections, these are those on estate roads such as Springfield Road. Other specific routes such as Route 81 out to Uffington is inspected every 6 months. If there are specific routes you want information on please let me know and I will supply it to you. I hope this provides the information you require, please do not hesitate to call if you wish to discuss this further."