

CHESTER CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held on Wednesday 7th October 2020

Present: Stephen Perry (SP) (Chair), Eileen Morgan (EM), Craig Steeland (CS), Monica Robinson (MR)(Minutes), Steve Pemberton (SLP), Arnold Wilkes (AW), John Holiday (JH), Peter Williams (PW), John Violet (JV), Ashley McCraight (AM), Andy Hamill (AH) Simon Brown (SB), Cathey Harrington (CH), Ian Slater (IS).

Apologies: Nic Siddle(NS) Roger Hones (RH)

New member Ian Slater was welcomed to the meeting. All present introduced themselves.

SP reiterated the suggested Meeting Disciplines which were accepted by all.

1. Minutes of March 2020 meeting

The meeting minutes were approved. Any significant matters arising were on the Agenda.

Action: CS to post minutes on website.

2. Active Travel Forum update

SP reported back on what he felt had been a good meeting with more positive input from Sean Traynor(ST) An audio recording of the meeting is available – contact SP for further details.

Key points highlighted:

- CWaC commitment to appoint a Sustainable Travel Officer.
- Still feels like a ‘telling meeting’ which should be a more interactive process.
- A task force meeting will be held in next few weeks to discuss Pavement Parking and changes to the Highway Code. Some progress might be forthcoming with involvement of CCC and other partners.
- SLP felt there is a lot of disquiet over the ‘one way street’, deciding how much to step forward and how much back.
- JV felt it was a good sign that comments on A 550 Welsh Road Improvements were sought from the ATF rather than just decisions made by CWaC.
- SP raised 2 issues on behalf of EM i.e. Cycle hire for adapted cycles and Cycling skills courses.
- CH had hoped for 20mph enforcement to be on Agenda. She felt that our best chance to get results will be to get involved in the sub-groups (task forces).

Action: Anyone wishing to take part in task forces should liaise with SP.

3. Five Parishes report on Active Travel

JV summarised his previously circulated report. The report looked at an idealised network of key routes in and around the 5 Parishes area which was approved by all and will be forwarded to CWaC for possible funding. As there is nothing in the LCWIP for these areas it will be necessary to act fast.

JV highlighted the issue of the SUP along the A41 which stops either side of the bridge over the railway just before the Trooper Inn. He thinks a separate cantilevered footbridge along side the road bridge would be a good solution as the bridge itself is currently too narrow for more than the very limited existing footway. PW mentioned that the canal towpath to Christleton is included in the upgrading plans. IS advised that Huntington PC have gone ahead to draft their own letter to CWaC. CH confirmed she would get a full update from Peter Bulmer (representing the 5 parishes) the next day. She also confirmed that NS has already put a lot of the detailed proposals on the interactive map he is developing.

AM felt this was a good piece of work and the meeting expressed congratulations to all concerned.

4. Chester Sustainability Forum

CH reported back on the last meeting. The meeting focused on the sad passing of Colin Watson and Chris Matheson MP gave a heartfelt tribute to the significant impact Colin had made on the work of the CSF, and wider sustainability issues.

Steve Hughes who has taken over as Chair is well trusted by the Council. His hopes for the future are to keep the forum relevant and updated. Open to all groups with hopefully a good website and making sure it is action based and interactive and meeting 5 or 6 times a year. There is £300,000 capital funding from CWaC of which £60,000 for community projects is available for bids. See CH's written report with a link to a report entitled 'Path to Net Zero'. SP explained that CCC has a few members on the Forum – SS represents the Campaign, CH for 20s Plenty and SB for other matters.

IS was pleased that Sean Traynor agreed to take action after he reported a CWaC contractor's vehicle had been left with the engine running while stationary.

5. Planning Application reviews and update

NS had submitted a very full and comprehensive report of the activity in this area over the last few months. It highlighted the tremendous amount of work put in largely by NS and with support from RH and others. Comments from those present included:

- SB was bowled over by the details put into the reports endorsing everything achieved.
- JV confirmed CCC need to keep the pressure up re the new hotel development in the Chester City Gateway area to ensure the permissive cycle route is maintained and formalised through Charterhall Drive from the station to Westminster Rd.
- The planning application for the proposed Retirement Village (near the hamburger roundabout in Gt Boughton) includes a bike hub among other communal facilities. NS and EM have both been in direct contact with the developer to try and develop more sustainable access routes for vulnerable road users. IS felt this may prove difficult to achieve.
- EM confirmed that some adapted bikes are expensive and would require high cost and secure storage options.
- SP had been sent a plan of the Northgate development still showing the original (and not acceptable) location of cycle parking on the fringes of the site. We need to be sure to follow this up as we had been assured previously this was not set in stone. SP offered to send out a copy of Northgate plan for information.

All thanked NS for the significant work he has put in on a wide range of Planning issues.

6. PR and letters to the Editor

Both letters and press releases are on target for this year so far.

SB raised the issue of local groups on Facebook, and other social media, where negative comments largely about CWaC's attempts at addressing sustainable transport are concerned. It was felt that maybe CCC members should venture into these forums to counteract such comments.

IS was encouraged to forward a recent letter sent to CyclingUK about cyclists' behaviour, to the local press in Chester.

AW commented on the good experience he had shopping in Faulkner St where planters have replaced parking spaces outside about 5 shops.

7. A56 Corridor Mott MacDonald project

Details of this plan (slide presentation) were circulated to activists before the meeting. It identifies an ambitious plan to improve the approach route in to Chester from the A56 (especially addressing the least attractive area around the Hoole Rd bridge) and including

the approach from the railway station. The scheme has been running parallel to the LCWIP project.

Sean Traynor asked for an example of the work CCC have done. SP, NS and JV presented the information on a Google map which was forwarded to Mott MacDonald(MM) the CWaC consultants with extensive experience in this field. They have since met with MM and it was a fruitful meeting. It was good to be asked to share knowledge and ideas. JV noted that this large scale, high fees, project should have a good chance of proceeding.

SB thanked all those involved and noted it is very encouraging that we are being recognised by senior officers (in the past dialogue tended to be with officers at lower levels) due in large part to the diplomatic way SP approaches the subject. SP felt this was a Team effort by all concerned.

8. A51 Update

RH report was detailed and very clear. Thanks were extended RH in his absence.

Two issues were highlighted – Sean Traynor had indicated he was amenable to the new cycle/pedestrian crossing by Hare Lane being put in at an early stage in the works. Secondly JV has been pressing for the 50mph limit from near the Golf Course on A51 to be reduced to 40mph along the whole stretch of the road to the Bridge Trafford junction. 40mph will make the junctions easier to cross.

9. Inclusive Cycling Update

EM outlined some of the many activities she has been involved with over the past few months, highlighting that many people have struggled to get out and about during Lockdown.

- Loan a Trike videos on how wheels can change peoples' lives. EM hopes to try a mountain wheelchair to help venture further.
- Has joined CH for Nordic Walking - using a chair operated by hands not feet and which enables more physical exertion in contrast to an electric scooter.
- EM detailed some of the drawbacks of the Bikeability Offer in Chester. Most people who might have benefited said they had not been on a bike for years, but you can't do the course unless you have a bike. EM was interviewed by the course manager who was interested and recognised they need to take on board her comments – looking into hiring and linking with Live New Scene.
- Plans to take groups down the Greenway for example would only be possible with insurance in place. SP suggested CyclingUK could be a source of help and advice re insurance. JV and IS felt that Vision Support might also offer advice on insurance. EM is sure there would be lots of people who would benefit from such an initiative, and is looking into having a cycling UK affiliated group for 'Chester Wheelers'.
- AW mentioned that the Countess Country Park have a similar set up already taking place. Andy Scargill and the rangers have met with EM and hopefully this can be taken forward.
- IS encouraged contact with Paul Beaudoin at Live New Scene. Eileen has had a number of meetings with Paul but unfortunately due to Covid-19 no further progress has been possible since March 2020. EM intends to meet with Paul again soon.

EM was thanked for her report.

10. Greenpeace Presentation 14th October

CS monitors queries that are posted on the website including the new member benefit from Cycle Hub, which has now been added to the Membership section. Greenpeace requested a speaker from CCC to take part in their public meeting on 14th Oct about a Green Recovery. CS agreed to amend a previous presentation for this event and members present thanked

him and agreed it would be useful as outreach on behalf of the Campaign. AM wondered what benefit would be gleaned –CS suggested potential new members. SB offered to locate suitable images if needed but it was not felt necessary as only 10 minutes long. It was however thought that good images, as seen on the Warrington Cycle Campaign website of ‘Crap Cycle Lanes’ for example, could be placed on our website – SB and CS to liaise.

11. AOB

- SB will draft a Bulletin highlighting key issues, including plans for future meetings to be on Zoom, and CH confirmed she was planning an electronic version of Cycling Matters for an Autumn issue.
- CS highlighted a major problem on the Greenway east of Chester near the M53 bridge where quite extensive flooding appears to have been caused by outflow from a new development nearby. James Yeoman from Sustrans will meet CS and SS on Friday 9th Sept to try and work out what action might be possible to resolve this issue.
- SLP wondered what CWaC put in their bid for the emergency Covid funding. Although SP had raised this at the ATF he had not received an answer. CH reported that the DfT has recommended that local authorities should publish summary versions of their tranche two proformas on their own websites eg East Sussex, York.
- TJ had advised SP that there are sufficient funds available for a subscription to Zoom if it was decided to go ahead and hold regular meetings virtually. It was agreed that this would be reviewed at a future meeting. Molly has kindly confirmed that her account can be used for the time being.
- SP referred to a press release about the proposed Clockwise traffic system for the inner ring road. He felt that it is important to consider the impact of this on cyclists. In the light of Clockwise SP suggested that it would be great if we could persuade the ATF to set up a task force to review all routes in to the city centre, 2 way cycling in all streets, and possibly a full one way system on the ring road including trialling cycle lanes alongside. (Post meeting note: this request has been made but no response received yet)
- New temporary trial Cycle Lanes – all present were urged to use the new cycle lanes and assess their effectiveness in say a month’s time.
- **All agreed to a return to monthly meetings from November 4th which would be open to all members. To join the meeting an email must be sent to SB who will set up the meeting using the waiting room option.**

Meeting closed just before 10pm.

Date of next Meeting is 4th November 2020 via Zoom – please email Simon at simonwbrown@phonecoop.coop if wishing to attend.