

CHESTER CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held on Wednesday 3rd March 2021

Present (for some or all of the time): Craig Steeland (CS) (Chair), Simon Brown (SB) (Minutes) , Andy Evans (AE), Arnold Wilkes (AW) , Andrew Hamill (AH), Cathey Harrington (CH), Eileen Morgan (EM), Steve Pemberton (SLP), Monica Robinson (MR), Nic Siddle (NS), Ian Slater (IS), Ken Thomas (KT), John Violet (JV), Peter Williams (PW), Morgan Jones (MJ), Barry Johnstone (BJ), Angus King (AK), Tom Smith (TS) , John Holiday (JH)

Apologies: Caroline Gerrard (CG), Stephen Perry (SP),

1. Minutes of the last meeting, held on 6th January. The meeting minutes were approved.

Action: CS to post on website.

2. Matters Arising:

Greenway Flooding - SP had written to Sustrans – ‘official’ response was that neighbouring land changes was not the cause of the flooding – just exceptional weather. KT disputed this assessment in view of the ditching work carried out on neighbouring property meant increased water flows onto the Greenway that could not drain away fast enough.

3. Campaign Membership. (IS)

IS is the newly appointed Membership Secretary and reported that there had been a small increase in Membership since AGM, with Angus King joining very recently. A targeted effort to increase membership is being planned by IS to raise awareness of the Campaign and highlight the benefits of membership. CS is writing Letter of Month for March and will draw attention to free bike checks being offered to members by the Campaign (utilising the ‘checking volunteers’). Social Media to be used specifically to raise awareness of Campaign and recruit new members.

AK offered to assist with planning how to utilise Social Media more effectively since he was able to offer a certain amount of volunteer time through his employment.

ACTION: SB to contact AK & TS to discuss use of Social Media..

4. Active Travel Forum.

Next meeting due on 04/03/21. SP reported that the ATF seemed to be more of a reporting mechanism than an action group – others in Campaign concurred.

It was felt by the meeting that that the Working Groups from the Forum seem to be the way forward to progress action given their useful links to CWaC key officers and Councillors.

SP was the ATF Rep on the Sustainable Travel Task Force which had established various offshoot pilot working groups including looking at the detail of the shared use Boughton Bus/cycle Lanes, Central Chester mobility pilot, SE Chester cycling masterplan and Upton.

5. Sustainable Travel Task Force – Pilot Groups

SE Chester Plan – JV & CH reported that the group was tasked with planning how the Sn106 moneys could best be spent in the area to enhance mobility, building on the work already carried out by the 5 Parishes in the area – (Public Transport , Cycling and Walking). It was reported that Parish Councils in the area are very energetic and enthusiastic participants in the group and that beneficial outcomes are likely.

Experimental Active Travel Lanes Working Group – This group was looking at the ‘paused bus/cycle lane in Boughton to look at alternatives that might have less opposition. AE is on the group and reported that a fundamental difficulty is the party politicisation of the issue and the loudly expressed views of some PATL members to take away the special lanes and reinstate the highway to its previous state.

Smart Mobility Pilot – Central Chester – SB was represented on this group which had its first meeting on 02/03/21. He was very hopeful that it would be able to have a positive influence on proposals to improve active travel options in the City Centre given its representation. It included reps from C&W Local Enterprise Partnership, ‘Marketing Cheshire’, CH1 BID, a rep from the Youth Senate, Friends of the Earth, Chester Residents Associations Group, Chester Business Club and Nexus Planning Consultants .

6. Bike Week Activity. (May 30th to June 5th) (SB)

Following on from the objective agreed at the AGM to take part in some form during National Bike Week there was some discussion as to what could be planned in view of the uncertainty of Covid19 restrictions

Amongst suggestions which could be organised take place were:

- *Launching of ‘Bike Buddy’ Scheme*; Offer chance for a person to cycle with a ‘bike buddy’ to find and experience best cycle route to work/shops/destination. Possible even if full Covid restrictions in place. (EM, CH, AE, MJ offered to be bike buddies)
- *Arranging PCSO’s or Police on bikes to sample road conditions or junctions*; Possible even if full Covid restrictions in place.
- *Online Bike Maintenance sessions*; Simple bike maintenance/repair via live zoom – e.g. puncture repair, brake adjustment, safety checking. Possible even if full Covid restrictions in place. (CS, IS, AH, SB all offered to be bike checkers)
- *Critical Mass*; Only possible if no or little Covid Restrictions in place. Promotion only – ‘not badged’ as Campaign event.
- *Commuter Challenge*; Cyclist, P&R user, Runner, Car user to compete to reach Cross/Town Hall - possible with some Covid restrictions in place.
- *5-mile challenge*; Only possible if no or little Covid Restrictions in place. Issues of numbers appropriate and registered leaders/ for CycleUK Insurance. (Max group size with 1 leader is 8).

Action: Everyone to consider best options regarding activities during Bike Week and to finalise who would coordinate which agreed activity

7. Campaign Electronic Newsletter Circulation (CS)

Some issues have become apparent with the circulation of the electronic newsletter with people not receiving. CS had checked on various issues reported and hopefully fixed them. Detailed reporting of recipients is only available via a Premium Mailpoet Account (Cost €149 p.a) which might help to identify who opens, who receives and which links included in messages are followed.

CS suggested that in future if anyone reports they do not receive the electronic newsletter that they a) Check their spam/quarantine folder since newsletters often contain links b) set the emailer address as a ‘safe’ address’. CS added also that some email servers exclude messages at the server, so never pass them on to account for downloading.

8. Zoom Account (SB)

SB suggested that the Campaign takes out a subscription to the Zoom platform to facilitate future meetings or working groups within the Campaign. CS confirmed that special forwarding email addresses can easily be set up from the Campaign domain which could be used if a Zoom account was set up.

The meeting agreed in principle to this, dependant on cost. To be confirmed at next meeting following research.

Action: SB to establish cost and how Zoom subscriptions are set up and whether the Campaign bank account can be used for payments. CS to investigate if Campaign Paypal account can be used for payments if required.

9. Cycling UK mini website for Campaign.

As part of the Cycling UK Affiliate membership the campaign has a possibility of uploading content onto a mini website on the main Cycling UK website. CS has text that was used in previous CTC website and will update and upload as necessary. IS has contact within Cycling UK who can enable website mini-page.

Action: CS and IS to liaise and arrange for uploading of content on new Cycling UK website.

10. Planning Applications Update (NS)

NS outlined his quandary over writing a letter from the Campaign to CWaC to establish a pedestrian r.o.w to form a potential pedestrian link that could be established from Capenhurst to the Station and thus facilitate a connection between a new housing development to Capenhurst Railway Station. Apparently local MP Justin Madders was supportive.

After much discussion it was agreed that it wasn't appropriate for the Campaign to be seen to be behind opening a pedestrian r.o.w in view of likely response of immediate local residents, despite the fact it could provide a useful pre-cursor to a shared use path in the future. However, Nic was encouraged to establish contact with local residents as an interested walker to gauge any likely support from the limited number of houses that are on the track leading to the start of the proposed path.

It was, however, suggested that contacting the local Parish Council might be useful either via a local Parish Councillor or via the Clerk, since Parish Councils have been requested by CWaC to develop cycling and walking plans for their area. An approach could be made on behalf of the Campaign to establish such a contact which could also be an avenue to explore the proposed link. PW stated that there is a group as part of the Active Travel Forum looking at the Frodsham and Ellesmere Port areas.

Action: NS to approach the appropriate Parish Council on behalf of the Campaign to explore potential input to their local Walking and Cycling Plan. NS was to consider an individual approach to immediately local residents to the proposed route explore likely support.

11. Inclusive Cycling Report (EM)

EM had prepared comprehensive reports on access of two Northern Rail stations that could possibly benefit from funding for improving accessibility. This was circulated via the 'activists' email list. These were sent to Northern Rail for their response. EM has contacted the Bike Hire Co. in Delamere Forest with regard to making available adapted cycles. They seemed interested, although they said it would take a while to put in place,

EM is now doing an investigation on cycle lockers provided by CWaC regarding their potential use for adapted cycles. She has identified that no lockers provided by CWaC can be used for adapted cycles, although she has discovered the supplier that provided the original lockers does offer an option that allows more room for storage that might be suitable.

EM has contacted Jim Gayes who has been working on 360° Google mapping about recording accessible places for adapted bikes that could be looked at online for those who wanted to check out a journey. This might also include electric charging points for bicycles or mobility scooters.

James Yeoman (previously with Sustrans and liaising with EM about access to Sustrans Routes) has now been appointed Co-ordinator for Wheels for All , cycling projects, Liverpool. Jim will be based at Springfield park and working with Alder Hey hospital and other disability partner organisations to deliver inclusive cycling sessions for all abilities. EM hopes to visit when Covid restrictions allow.

EM was pleased to hear that since January 2021, other pilot inclusive cycling projects have begun in London and West Midlands including hire of adapted cycles 'Out on your loan' and inclusive cycle skills training schemes. Despite encouraging early signs following meetings in October 2020 and discussions about these type of initiatives with Ian Tierney Director of Cycling projects and Michael Corden , Head of training 'Be confident group' There is no news of Chester being included in any of the Pilots; EM has had a further meeting with Ian Tierney and is hoping Chester will be considered for similar support from Cycling Projects.

JH suggested to contact providers of Bikeability instruction to find out which schools are more (or less) actively engaged.

SLP reported back that engagement with the PTA at Helsby High provided very useful support but it took time and effort to achieve an adequate level of engagement.

12. Northgate Development (SP).

SP reported that he had been invited by Clare Huber in CWaC (who has a role in overseeing the progress and implementation of Phase 1 of the scheme) to comment on and help develop proposals for cycle parking via an online meeting. This was due to take place on 09/03/21 SP had invited others in the Campaign to take part. SB offered to take part.

Action: SB to 'attend' virtual meeting with Clare Huber, along with SP

13. One City Plan Updated consultation

SP encouraged members of the Campaign to take part in the updated 'One City Plan' consultation as individuals – he has responded on behalf of the Campaign. Closing date for comments 05/03/21.

14. Online workshop on Campaign Facebook and Twitter Channels

SB is to organise two separate online 'familiarisation workshops' for those who have been authorised to post on Social Media on behalf of the Campaign. The objective is to improve the Campaign's engagement and profile of its Facebook and Twitter accounts. AE and TS offered to take part and contribute from their experience. SB to circulate a doodle poll to identify best dates and times for separate meetings for use of Twitter and Facebook then set up Zoom meetings accordingly.

ACTION: SB to organise online workshops for those who have access to the Twitter and Facebook accounts for the Campaign .

15. Date of Next Meeting.

Wednesday 7th April – Online.

Meeting closed at 21:50