

CHESTER CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 6th April 2022

Present at the meeting: Cathey Harrington (CH) (Chairperson), Roger Hones (RH) (Minutes), Ian Slater (IS), Julia Bennett (JB) Madeleine Moyle (MM), Howard Jennings (HJ), Anna Manning (AM), Ken Thomas (KT), Simon Brown (SB), Andy Evans (AE)

Present via Zoom: John Violet (JV), Arnold Wilkes (AW), John Holliday (JH), Ashley McCraight (AMc) Eileen Morgan (EM), Tom Smith (TS), Paul McCormack (PM)

Apologies: Stephen Perry (SP), Monica Robinson (MR), Nic Siddle (NS), Steve Pemberton (SLP), Craig Steeland (CS), Peter Williams (PW)

CH shared the sad news of Ken Thomas's wife's death whilst on holiday in March. All of those present at the meeting expressed their most heartfelt condolences to Ken

Minutes of the previous meeting held on 2nd March were agreed as an accurate record

1. Matters arising

1.1 Design of portable displays for future events. ACTION: SB and AH. Action remains.

1.2 'Race to the City Centre' - A proposal to arrange a Commuter Challenge by travelling to the City Centre using different modes of travel (Walk/Bike//Bus/Car/Other alternatives) and comparing the results. ACTION: AE to develop a proposal for later in the year. Action remains

1.3 Representation at the Sustainability Forum. CS will contact AH to see if he is still interested. PW is also interested. JV was present at the last meeting of the Sustainability Forum and was minuted as representing CCC. ACTION CS. Action remains.

2. Membership Secretary Report

2.1 IS had circulated his report. Latest membership total is 234 (compared to 231 at the end of February).

2.2 IS updated us via email about cycling-related activities in the last month:

Rail and Ride - Cuddington to Green Bank. IS has ridden the route and believes it is worth sharing the details and photos with Steve Forde of the Mid Cheshire Rail Partnership.

Action: IS to share results of his ride with Steve Forde.

SPACEHIVE PROPOSALS. The Bren Project has an ambition to start a cafe operation by seeking funding for the purchase of a trike with a coffee machine on-board. In supporting Bren in the next funding round CCC could advertise from this mobile and highly-visible platform reaching out to the significant numbers of people who use the Greenway.

CYCLING WITHOUT AGE - Trishaw launch.

IS and RH attended the launch of the CYCLING WITHOUT AGE Trishaw initiative.

Councillor Jill Houlbrook was IS's first passenger. The organiser of this scheme (a

Corporate Member of the Campaign) will come and tell us more at a future meeting.

Our Social media presence was discussed in the context of attracting new members. AM explained that she logs in to Twitter every day and has managed to help to generate a higher profile through her Tweets along with other members who are also active on Twitter.

3. Secretary and CWaC liaison report

3.1 SP had updated us via email on the proposed ATfest 2022, originally planned for 25th September. It has been agreed to delay the event until Spring 2023, to give all parties time to define a working model for the event that everyone feels comfortable with. CH explained more about:

- the Push and Pull elements of the proposed ATfest event
- the type of support hoped for from CCC in the preparation and management of the event
- support in the coming months to promote the event at other planned events in Chester
- the Spacehive funding application that is being submitted to generate funds to support the event, led by CRAG.

JV expressed disappointment in the cancellation of the September event as he had cancelled a Cycling UK event for the same date because the dates clashed. JV suggested that the delayed event could be a larger event with more time now to plan. HJ offered to speak to CWaC Councillors who he knows as members of a political party. It was agreed that he would express support for ATfest and for car free activities, if possible, in the future. HJ requested some direction before he did so. AE reminded us that Active Travel England would be further advanced by Spring 2023 which could prove helpful. It was noted that we can emphasise the role of cycling in reducing cost of living pressures.

The meeting confirmed CCC's commitment to the event and endorsed SP's ongoing involvement.

4. Grosvenor Bridge speed limit

4.1 SP has received a reply from CWaC Transport and Highways to say that they "are committed to having a strong ambition to create the right conditions to develop and grow cycling numbers across our city and borough." And that they are "exploring ways to reduce the speed of traffic entering the city centre using this route and others if possible". Our letter to the Police and Crime Commissioner has been passed to the Chief Constable of Cheshire Police.

JV says that we were consulted about the advisory cycle lanes originally and that the 20mph limit idea came from CWaC so it is surprising that CWaC has now reverted to a

30mph limit without consultation. JV told us that the DfT guidance (LTN 1/20), with the volume of traffic and advisory cycle lanes over the Grosvenor Bridge, would indicate the need for a 20mph speed limit.

Various suggestions were made in the meeting about ways which could improve safety for cyclists travelling across Grosvenor Bridge:

1. Grosvenor Bridge is not wide enough for drivers to overtake a cyclist safely with the 1.5m clearance required in the updated Highway Code. If priority were given to cyclists then 'normal' would be for them to cycle in the middle of the traffic lane rather than be squeezed into an advisory and unsafe cycle lane.
2. 20mph is better for reducing emissions than 30mph.
3. A variable speed limit: 20mph in daytime, 30mph at night, with appropriate signage.
4. Advisory speed limits rather than current speed limit signs.
5. It was suggested that problematic vehicles for cyclists are cars rather than buses and HGVs.
6. CCC could invite Councillors to ride with us across the bridge.

It was felt that SP should respond on behalf of the Campaign to take issue with the reasons given by CWaC Transport and Highways so that a speedy reversal of the decision might be achieved. Action SP

TS suggested that we should wait until our next response from CWaC before writing a News Release about Grosvenor Bridge speed limit. TS would however write April's monthly letter to the local press on the topic. Action TS

It was agreed that all CCC members should be encouraged to write to their own Borough Councillors to ask for the 20mph speed limit to be re-instated asap. Members could also consider emailing CWaC Councillors for the 2 wards which the Grosvenor Bridge spans. Action All members

The Wards are Handbridge Park and Chester City and Garden Quarter. The Councillors for these Wards are:

Ward: Handbridge Park

razia.daniels@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

neil.sullivan@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Ward: Chester City and The Garden Quarter

martyn.delaney@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk (Lord Mayor of Chester)

samantha.dixon@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

bob.rudd@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

5. Service standards for cycle paths and SUPs

5.1 In a meeting with Mark Averill (outgoing Interim Head of Highways, CW&C) in March, SP & NS had discovered that a Service Standard for SUPs does not exist. After some discussion it was felt that CCC should ask CWaC “What is your maintenance regime for pavements, Shared User Paths (SUPs) and cycleways across the Borough?”.

Relevant points were made:

- a) There was an analogy made with the gritting of roads during cold weather and the planning involved in keeping icy roads hazard free
- b) Can cyclists claim for the cost of puncture repairs if a cycle path has not been cleared of debris?
- c) Poor quality of pavements is always high up in public responses to queries about improvements people would like to see in their area.
- d) In the new hierarchy of road users, pedestrians are at the top.

6. Active Travel Social Prescribing Request

6.1 Suggestions made of ways we might help:

- a) Bike Check service
- b) Cycle Buddies
- c) Highlighting bike repair services in Ellesmere Port
- d) Asking Bren Bikes whether they would consider setting up a branch in Ellesmere Port.
- e) EM mentioned that in some cases a prescription of this type only lasts for a period of 6 weeks. We don't yet know whether this applies to this scenario. There would be issues if the patient didn't have access to a well maintained bicycle.
- f) SB volunteered to put his name forward for this. CH will forward SB's details to the person who approached CCC (Post-meeting note: done). Action SP and SB

7. Planning

7.1 Nic's comprehensive Planning report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Meeting agreed that an objection should be sent in regard to a planning application for a LIDL supermarket at Caldby Valley Retail Park. Only seven cycle stands to accommodate 14 bikes in total are planned. Action CH (Post-meeting note: done).

7.2 PW had also updated us via email about ongoing discussions about North Road Ellesmere Port.

“I have contacted WBC Transport Manager for Transport and Infrastructure Julie Barnes as these old railway lines continue into Eastham Wirral.

These old railway lines are still in place but very overgrown, but if converted into an SUP it

would provide a safe route to Rivacre Road very close to Eastham Church.

Julie has contacted Kristy Littler to discuss this, but so far Kristy Littler has not responded.”

8. Feedback from Ashley’s work on CWaC Consultations.

8.1 AMc had continued to keep pressure on CWaC to publish an Air Quality Action Plan for Chester City Centre which is now 2 years overdue. AMc has also highlighted that CWaC had little success in engaging with the residents on Climate Emergency. There were only 30 responses from residents to the Climate Emergency Consultation which suggests that the Consultation was poorly developed. Consultation feedback reports have still not been published on 4 Consultations. AMc says that CCC will need to reflect on written responses from Cabinet he is due to receive about this.

9. Hill Lane, Peckforton

9.1 JV reported a success in getting Cheshire East to agree to modify the status of a footpath near Peckforton to a Restricted Byway. This means that cyclists can legally use the path to access Peckforton. PW had been working on this for 10 years with Cycling UK support. Congratulations to all involved.

10. Campaign meeting technology

10.1 It was agreed that we should inform all members via the next CCC Bulletin that we intend to purchase some additional technology to assist with hybrid meetings for £570. MM has experience of similar systems and agreed to review our proposed purchase. The final approval for the expenditure to be agreed at the next CCC monthly meeting in May once all members had been informed. 2 suggestions were made in relation to sourcing the hardware. 1) JB suggested finding another supplier rather than Amazon who would offer the same no quibble 30 day return policy. 2) If we use Amazon then AE suggested going via Amazon EasyFundraising so that some of the money goes to a chosen cause (such as Cycling UK). SB suggested that a Management Plan was needed in terms of storage and maintenance and that at least 2 or 3 people should be trained in using the new hardware. Action MM, SB and CS

11. Forthcoming Events

11.1 Green Expo (Thurs 16th – Sun 19th June) and Great Big Green Week Festival (Sat 24th September). It was agreed that we would attend both events subject to a maximum fee of £25 per event. If the fees were any more than this the decision would come back to a future meeting.

11.2 IS mentioned that uptake for the next Bike Maintenance sessions at Bren was poor at the moment and asked members to publicise the courses to family and friends. Action: All

12. Review of Constitution and Financial Approvals

12.1 Those members who have already been involved will continue with this work. Next meeting planned at Cathedral Refectory on 26th April

13. Schedule for Chairing and Minuting forthcoming meetings.

13.1 A number of members had responded to SP to volunteer to fill these roles on a rota basis, A schedule would be emailed around so that people could fill in when they were available. CS had volunteered to Chair the May meeting. CH on behalf of SP (Post-meeting note: done)

14. AOB

14.1 Potholes

KT raised the ongoing situation of the deterioration of road surfaces on B roads around the Borough and suggested making a Freedom of Information request in relation to the resurfacing regime of these roads over recent years. JV reminded the meeting that CWaC had had a 22% cut imposed on their Maintenance funding and that with a new Direct Labour Organisation in place of the contractor Ringway the situation should improve and save CWaC some money too. It was felt that we needed an update from the ISTT Road Surfaces Working Group. Action SP

14.2 Politics of Cycling Infrastructure

Peter Cox, who is Professor of Sociology at University of Chester, has donated a copy of his book 'Politics of Cycling Infrastructure' to the CCC Library. Thank you required. Action IS

Meeting closed at 21:37.

Next meeting: Wednesday May 4th at 7:30pm at Bowling Green Court (Members can also join via Zoom)