

WALKING AND CYCLING FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 20th March 2009 Charter House, Ashford

Present: Jonathan Beare (in the Chair), Emily Neighbour (taking minutes), Jonathan Dance, Christine Knight, Michael Claughton, Stephen Bourner, David Cowley, Ted Prangnell, Michtild Prangnell, Greg Williams.

Apologies: Kim Harlow, Liz Wedgewood (KCC), Steve Fawkes (Spokes East Kent), David Young (Sustrans), Sam Webb (Spokes East Kent).

The meeting started with introductions of all those present:

JB: cyclist, commutes to work from Kennington to Givaudan, Sustrans Ranger

CK: walker, organises health walks from New Hayesbank Surgery, 20-30 participants weekly

MC: Borough Councillor for Bockhanger Ward, Ashford, cyclist, Ashford Access member

DC: one of four leaders of Health Walks from New Hayesbank Surgery, also cyclist, on and off road

SB: Ashford's Future Sustainable Transport Officer, transport Rep. for Ashford Access, Chair of Ashford Derailleurs (new cycling club for young people)

EN: Secretary of Central Ashford Community Forum (CACF), leisure cyclist, walker, town centre resident, husband cycles to station daily

TP: member of Ashford Cycling Touring Club, Roadpeace, Living Streets

MP: cyclist for commuting, shopping and leisure, Kennington resident

JD: Chairman of CACF, keen leisure cyclist for 20 years in Ashford, also walker, and wife cycles to Norton Knatchbull school daily

GW: Webmaster and Rides Co-ordinator for Spokes East Kent, also producing maps for all towns in East Kent including Ashford

Minutes of last meeting: these were approved by those who had been present with two amendments: the addition of EN to those present, and the addition of the sentence under Cycle Parking "It was generally agreed by those present that contrary to the implication in the Cycling Strategy, the Sheffield Stand when properly installed in the correct location is the most functional bike stand, and certainly the most cost-effective."

Background to the Cycling & Walking Forum: SB explained that the group had originally been proposed to provide public consultation for the Cycling and Walking Strategy but it was hoped it would evolve into a permanent group in its own right. It was agreed that to be effective the group would require a constitution, and it was hoped a model could be obtained to be adopted at the next meeting. It was agreed that the Forum should be for both cyclists and walkers, and also users of push-chairs, roller bladders and scooters.

SB described two schemes which would be submitted for Growth Area Funding money:

Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge over M20: there were two options each of either a Warren Girder or Cable Bridge design, which could either bridge the M20 from Eureka Park to Sainsbury's or both the M20 and Simone Weil Avenue. It was expected to cost in the region of £6 million. It was needed as the improvements to Junction 9 would remove the dangerous pedestrian crossings there;

Cycling Route across Willesborough Dykes: this was planned to go south from the Asda roundabout parallel with the railway line, under Bad Munstereifel Road and across the A2070 and Sheepfold Lane via pedestrian crossings to Park Farm.

Ashford Cycling and Walking Strategy: the document had been read by most of those present and it was agreed that it was not the ideal format. Copies of the Thanet Cycling Strategy were given out by SB. It was agreed that was a more useful format, although it did not cover walkers.

Butterfly Routes: the Strategy included proposed “Butterfly routes” based on four loops (wings) leading out from the body (Cycle Route 18). It was agreed that this proposal was not very useful and that direct “spokes” would be better for commuters from the urban villages, and to get direct access out of town, which could then link with leisure routes to more rural villages. It was agreed that a good aim would be to have a cycle/walking route running through the “Green necklace” to the south of Ashford described in the Green and Blue Grid Strategy, but also to link to destinations to the north of the town, for example Godinton House.

PIPKIN: this is the method by which Kent Highway Services prioritises its road safety improvements on an annual basis. LW was hoping to submit some new schemes to improve the existing cycling network in the Ashford area. It was agreed to meet as soon as possible to discuss the most useful improvements that could be made.

Next Meetings: an extra meeting was proposed to take place the following week, on - **Wednesday 25th March from 6pm in Charter House** to decide which improvements could be made relatively easily and cheaply which could provide the most benefit to the existing users of the cycle network in Ashford. This would be the **only** purpose of this meeting. The next meeting of the Cycling and Walking Forum which would discuss all matters of relevance to the Forum would be on - **Friday 24th April at Charter House, 6.30pm** start, with tea and biscuits available from 6pm.

Meeting closed 8.20pm