

## **WALKING AND CYCLING FORUM**

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2009 at 19:00  
in the Crothall Room, St Mary's Church, Ashford

**Present:** Jonathan Beare (in the Chair), Emily Neighbour (taking minutes), Jonathan Dance, Greg Williams, Steve Fawke, Christine Green, Colin Cresser, David Cowley, Ted Prangnell, Stephen Bourner and Spencer Morgan

**Apologies:** Liz Wedgwood, Viv Kenny, Cllr Elizabeth Tweed, Rob Wood Michael Claughton, Adrian Steele

*[NOTE: The first version of the minutes incorrectly referred to the "Tour of Britain" when it should have been "Tour Series". Apologies for the error. JB]*

**Minutes of meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June:** these were approved with some minor alterations.

### **Matters Arising:**

**Membership list** – JB would be contacting all those who had expressed an interest to confirm that they wished to remain on the mailing list.

**Publicity** – a link to the Spokes website had been added to the Central Ashford Community Forum website. The minutes and meetings would be added in due course. Future meetings should be publicised in the local paper. An article in the Ashford Voice was considered a possibility.

**Meetings** – the next scheduled meeting would be December 2nd again in the Crothall Room at 6.30 for 7pm. A different venue would be sought for the next meeting in 2010.

**A28 bridge over M20** – the changes had narrowed both sides of the bridge; the east side being now only 75cm wide. Stephen Bourner was asked to enquire of Highways why widening the bridge had been deemed to be impractical. It was also pointed out that the Route 18 signs should be amended to "Alternative Route" as the path under the M20 was now open, except when flooded.

**Crossings at Railway Station** – an entrance to the international side was planned, although a crossing on the Romney Marsh Road there was not considered likely. The crossing from the domestic station to International House/ Dover Place was likely to be included in the Ashford's Future works planned for the near future using Growth Area Funding of £2 million. The design would be decided upon after consultation with all users of the station, and the Cycling and Walking Forum.

**Terms of Reference** – these had been amended to incorporate the comments made by members on JB's original draft. It was agreed to adopt them. They would be put on the CACF website too.

**PIPKIN applications** – the name of the process had been changed to Scheme Prioritisation System. Liz Wedgwood had submitted several cycling schemes for this, including most of the C&WF suggestions, omitting the request for a drop kerb on the corner of Mace Lane and East Hill.

- NCR18 - Willesborough Road - this one I have in the pipeline - has been deferred until '10/'11 in the SPS system - reason: Safety of pedestrians and cyclists
- NCR18 - Kennington Road - Up-grade path through narrow bends at Blackwall road north - reason: safety of pedestrians and cyclists, but this also major road traffic issue with lorries getting stuck and the route being blocked for ambulances

- Godington Park - Up-grade of existing tracks to provide link to Green Sands Way and to Orchard heights - reason: safety of pedestrians and cyclists, but also in anticipation of the development of the cycle path onwards along the river
- Learning Link Path -
- Birling Road to Mill Court - Up-grade existing path to shared use, resurface and light - reason: safety, as avoids busy narrow part of Hythe Road
- Church Road, Sevington to Aylesford Green (to link through Nelson Close) - reason: safety, as avoids busy Bad Munstereifel Road and would link to existing cycle path leading over M20 and up to The Street
- Improve link from The Street up into William Harvey Hospital (include lighting on bridge) - reason: safety - requests following face-face questionnaires undertaken at the hospital in autumn 2008
- Connect existing shared path at the Stour Centre to Tannery Lane - reason: to complete the route
- Willesborough Dykes - reason: to provide a strategic link between Park Farm and the town Centre
- Bentley Road to Hythe Road - reason: to provide the missing link between Aylesford Green and Willesborough
- Butterfly Network - reason: to provide wider access to the countryside and leisure routes, but still linking with the town centre facilities/local transport interchanges and to provide a user-friendly colour-coded system of routes unique to Ashford

SB informed the meeting that due to budget cuts it appeared that the Willesborough dykes path project has been scaled back

**Footbridge over M20** – this had been designed and would be going out to consultation soon. It was currently planned to go from Eureka Park to behind Staples, with a link through the Sainsbury's car park to join the existing crossing over Simone Weil Avenue. It was estimated it would cost £6 million.

**Cycling Strategy for Ashford** – SB reported that more work had been done on this and it was now with the PCT and Ashford's Future for comments. LW expected it to go to the KCC and ABC for approval in December. The Butterfly Routes were still being developed and might be included in the strategy. It was agreed that if they joined up with villages around Ashford and could double up as commuter routes they could be useful. Irene Seijo of Ashford's Future was looking at joining them into the open spaces around Ashford.

**Bike Race** – LW had suggested this would be a good way to promote cycling in the Ashford area. There were organised bike rides that take place in the area already, particularly in Bike Week in June. The possibility of **the Tour Series** organised by SweetSpot coming to Ashford in May 2010 was raised by Stephen Bournier and discussed. There was general support from the Forum, but more details needed from LW and SB as plans develop.

**Path Maintenance especially vegetation** – this year the growth of vegetation over cycle/footpaths seemed to have been worse than ever, with poor response to official complaints e.g. Route 18 under the M20 was already being damaged by weed growth which had still not been cleared. LW had said she had reported that but no action had been taken as yet. JB had already raised this with LW.

**AOB** – Ted Prangnell reported a number of problems on cycle path:

- 1) Pedestrian/cycle crossing of Somerset Road and Park Street leaving from the town centre continuing into North Street - cyclists arrive at a non-cycling platform/pavement.
- 2) The cycleway which leaves Orchard Heights exiting directly out into the A20 (Maidstone Road) is very hazardous.
- 3) A20 from Tesco's roundabout, past the Hospice, to Mersham turning – Path in very poor repair, forcing mobility scooters to use the road.
- 4) The bridge crossing the River Stour close to the Civic centre - This has got nasty steps in it at the approaches.
- 5) The car park at the back of the Civic centre, and Stour sports Complex - There is no footway, except for some narrow strip formed by dotted white lines. The road, especially where the dotted strip is, is full of potholes. This route is heavily used by children.
- 6) Trinity road/Faversham Road junction - This is poorly set out, with miss-alignment. Vehicles not infrequently, especially when there is a cyclist present, will overtake around the wrong side of the island refuge.
- 7) Simone Weil Avenue - Crossing into Warren Business Park, cyclists do not know where they should go to (say get to Sainsburys). If they via right they have to cope with the main traffic flow, it is safer (I think) for them to go left, and through to the wide pedestrian through the car-park. There is no signage to suggest that.

There was general agreement from those present with these issues. Whilst the Forum can hold a spreadsheet of faults/improvement ideas, it has not really sorted how to handle this – Perhaps this needs to be a future agenda item.

Christine Green raised the issue of the needs of Rollerbladers. They are covered by our Terms of Reference and the Forum would welcome input from Rollerbladers, but is not aware of any representative organisations.

**End of meeting: 20:35**

**Next Meeting:** 2nd December Crothall Room St Mary's Church Ashford Town Centre. An additional meeting before then may be necessary in order to consider the plans for the Station and to review the Cycling and Walking Strategy.