

WALKING AND CYCLING FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd February 2010
in the Crothall Room, St Mary's Church, Ashford

Present: Jonathan Beare (in the Chair); Emily Neighbour (taking minutes) Central Ashford Community Forum; Jonathan Dance, CACF; Liz Wedgwood, Kent County Council Transport Planner; Christine Green, CACF and Town Centre Partnership; Ted Prangnell, Ashford Cycling Touring Club, Roadpeace, Living Streets; Spencer Morgan, Cycle Trainer; Andrew Macey, Headteacher Beaver Lane Primary School; Adrian Steele, cyclist; John Wellard, Ramblers Association and cyclist; and Colin Finch, KCC Rights of Way Officer.

Apologies: Steven Bourner, Ashford's Future; Greg Williams and Steve Fawkes, Spokes.

Minutes of meeting held on 2nd December 2009: these were approved.

Recruitment: the Chair invited suggestions as to how to increase attendance at meetings in order to ensure the Forum was taken seriously. Ideas included:

Manning stands at bike related events; Posters at station, Civic Centre, Library, Tourist Information Centre;

Links on the Ashford Borough Council , Kent County Council and Ashford Future websites.

Winter Maintenance: concern had been expressed that almost no pavements or cycle paths were gritted during the extreme weather, even though EN had been assured by Kent Highways that major routes adjacent to main roads would be gritted. There did not appear to be 'joined up thinking' with road use being discouraged, but no clearing of walking routes to local facilities. It was agreed to write to Kent Highways pointing out that efforts should be made to treat the major routes for pedestrians and cyclists into town e.g. the Ring Road, the Hythe Road (A20), Canterbury Road (A28), East Hill and the bridge over the railway to Victoria Park. LW suggested it be copied to Simon Allum at KCC. AM asked that concern could also be expressed about the lack of road sweeping of paths and cycle routes on roads following the thaw where debris had built up. This was a matter for Ashford Borough Council. LW reported that on and off-road cycle paths should be regularly swept.

Vegetation overgrowing cycle paths: some paths were still not sufficiently clear to allow for new growth in the spring – LW took note of the worst areas.

M20 underpass: TP reported that the lights in the underpass had almost all failed now. This had already been reported. JB asked LW about providing flood depth markers either side.

Pilgrim's Hospice Ride: LW reported that this was being organised on 9th May 2010 as a fund raiser and to encourage families to cycle. There would be two routes, 8 or 15 miles in the Shadoxhurst area. There would also be a 70 mile route for serious cyclists. LW said that she would use it as an opportunity to launch the Ashford Cycle Strategy. There would be stands, and it was agreed to have one for ACWF. CG volunteered to run a stand - Other volunteers needed.

Steven Bourner had reported that the Tour Series Bike Race event in Ashford would now be planned for 2011 rather than 2010.

Network Improvements

Willesborough Dykes cycle path: the funding of over £1.2 million for this was still being sought. The importance of the route was well recognised.

Learning Link: LW reported that she had extended this proposed route to Henwood to the north and Stanhope to the south.

Cycle & pedestrian bridge over M20: the planning application for this had gone in. There were plans to link it to the schools on either side of the motorway.

Route 18: the improvements to the stretch outside Batchelors and the Blackwall Road sections were still being pursued.

Cheeseman's Green: this new estate would be provided with cycle links to town, including one across the railway which a developer would fund.

Cycle Parking: plans for a big cycle park in town had been stopped.

Links to Stanhope schools: AM requested that the routes to the primary schools in Stanhope be improved. LW was encouraging as funding for this could come from Sustrans.

Cycle Strategy: this had been approved by Ashford Borough Councillors. It would now go out to public consultation. LW explained that it would be sent by e mail to everyone already on the ACWF mailing list, but to let her know if there were any other people who would be interested to comment on it.

Kennington problems: TP explained three problem areas in Kennington – Little Burton Farm Lane, The Ridge and Dudley Road. He agreed to e mail the details to Colin Finch, the Rights of Way officer.

Signage on Route 18: TP pointed out that there was a shortage of helpful signs along this route in the Little Burton Farm area, and some were positively misleading.

By-way in Stanhope: CF asked whether the by-way in Stanhope was worth clearing. It was agreed it would be a very helpful addition to the cycle/walking routes in the area. He asked for the Forum to send him a letter of support for the project.

Footpath to Park & Ride through The Warren: CF also explained he would be investigating improving the existing routes.

North Downs Way/ Pilgrim's Way: CF asked whether the Forum considered this long distance path was worth improving to allow its use by recreational cyclists. On the whole it was considered worthwhile, ~~a~~ Although it would not follow the existing route exactly due to some sections of the path not being suitable and some landowners not being agreeable to the change.

Cycle Path behind Inca House to Coty at Eureka Park: LW ~~was~~ discussing with Coty about getting this path (~~That-which~~ was closed with Coty security fence improvements) linked to Trinity road down the informal muddy path.

Meeting closed: 8.45pm

Next meeting: 3rd March 6.30 for 7pm, same venue, unless notified otherwise nearer the time.