

ASHFORD WALKING AND CYCLING FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 22nd June 2010
in the Crothall Room, St Mary's Church, Ashford

Present: Jonathan Beare (in the Chair); Emily Neighbour (taking minutes) Central Ashford Community Forum; Christine Green, CACF and Town Centre Partnership; Greg Williams, Spokes; Spencer Morgan, Cycle Trainer; John Wellard, Ramblers Association and cyclist.

Apologies: Liz Wedgwood, Kent County Council Transport Planner

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 21st April: these were approved.

Winter Maintenance: EN reported that the parishes had been consulted on how satisfied they had been with the management of the salting and gritting of the roads in their areas. She had asked to respond on behalf of the residents of Central Ashford. She was declined in this request. Councillor Tweed was aware of this and said she would be putting forward the views of urban residents as she was aware they were not happy with the clearance work undertaken on footpaths and estate roads. CACF would be pursuing this with her.

Cycle Path from Asda to Park Farm: this had received planning permission but without lights. It was not known for sure whether it would be going ahead owing to the uncertainty over funding. The same was true of the bridge over the M20.

Keeping Ashford Moving: there were to be displays of all the big transport projects planned for Ashford in County Square later in the week. JB would send round an e mail to encourage everyone to attend and make comments.

Pilgrim's Hospice Cycle Ride: the weather had not been kind so attendance in the family section had been quite sparse. It was agreed to keep an eye out for future events of this kind to actively recruit members.

Ashford Cycling Strategy: LW was collating the responses she had received from the consultation process and hoped to present the finalised document to the Joint Transportation Board (KCC and ABC councillors) in September.

Station Improvements: the planning application (10/00554/AS Land adjacent to River Stour East of Ashford International Station, Station Road. Improvements to existing roundabout) to enlarge the roundabout by the Stour River to allow buses to turn around was coming to the ABC Planning Committee the following evening. EN reported that a Trustee of CACF would be speaking against it on the grounds that the new arrangement for buses could cause serious congestion. Also, this was the only planning application that was necessary as the remaining changes could be carried out under permitted development rights. CACF had concerns that the new layout would make access to the station more difficult for everyone, except possibly cyclists. Members of ACWF agreed that the works could not be justified. It was also agreed that ACWF had not been sufficiently consulted on the proposals, despite requesting involvement in the past. EN asked whether this point could be made at the meeting the following evening and it was agreed.

Vegetation overgrowing cycle paths: the new season's growth was already beginning to cause problems. JB was reporting problem areas online. One suggestion was that the condition of the path along the A20 from Junction 10 to the Evegatet turnoff be raised – it was in a dilapidated and

dangerous condition. If properly cleared it could provide a safe alternative to riding along the carriageway.

Future Action: JB asked those present what they thought the Forum could usefully try to achieve. It was suggested that the availability of cycle parking in the town centre could be improved. CG pointed out that LW had chosen a site in Vicarage Lane car park for some new racks. [funding for this was still being sought] It was suggested others could be repaired to make them more functional. There was also a need for improved signage so cyclists knew what was expected of them.

Publicity for the Forum: it was agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting and the date of the next meeting should be published in the Ashford Roundabout column in the Kentish Express. Also, links to the website would be improved www.acwf.org.uk goes straight to the Spokes website which had a page for ACWF with links to further documents. EN would add this to the CACF website instead of posting the minutes there.

Active Cycle Challenge: Spencer Morgan reported that there was now a website for this: www.ashfordcyclechallenge.org.uk He would also add a link to ACWF on that. He proposed that before the next meeting of ACWF he would offer free bicycle maintenance outside to encourage people to attend the meetings. The workshop would start at 5.30pm, with tea and coffee, with the meeting starting at 6.30pm. He pointed out he would only be offering “First Aid” not “Major Surgery”!

Meeting closed: 8.45 pm

Next meetings to be confirmed: Monday 6 September, Tuesday 9 November