

Wheelrights Meeting

Notes of meeting on 10th February 2021

Online by zoom.

Present: Phil Brophy (PB), John Cardy (JC), Cllr Mark Child (MC), Allyson Evans (AE), Eifion Francis (EF), Jeff Green (JG), Nick Guy (NG), David Naylor (DN), Hamish Osborn (HO), Dareyoush Rassi (DR), John Sayce (JS), Chris Walsh (CW), Martyn Williams (MW), Victoria Williams (VW).

JS chaired the meeting.

1. Introduction:

JS apologised that our planned speaker, Tim John (of Sustrans), could no longer join us. It was planned that he would speak about the new INM process. JS will re-arrange this hopefully for our next meeting.

Meanwhile it was agreed to proceed with a shorter business meeting.

2. CAP Postponed to 25th Feb

JS proposed we discuss various route issues for WR officers to raise at the next CAP:

2.1 Walter Rd. JS reported that plans for a new route through Uplands to Sketty, (devised by Arcadis) may be going to next cabinet meeting. Cllr Mark Child thought that Council planned a wider consultation, but didn't have timescales. **[Action: JS to raise at CAP.]**

2.2 Barriers on Bike routes. DN has compiled a list of 10 barriers (See appendix.) He talked through his paper which prioritised the chicanes, which make cyclists dismount. JS reported a new campaign by CUK to abolish most barriers. EF mentioned a campaign by Sustrans to remove barriers from NCN routes and highlighted the needs of tandem users. **[Action: DN to raise at CAP.]**

2.3 Other obstacles on routes. AE has e-mailed Lee Waters about obstructions/closures on NCN in SA1, esp. where NCR 4 is closed and diversions obstructed, eg near Tesco's and the Premier Inn. JS raised problems caused by car parking on SUPs esp. along Gors Ave. JS highlighted a success on the Morfa Rd SUP where a recurring problem, which he had reported to the Parking Enforcement team, appears to have been quickly resolved. MC felt it better to leaflet local residents – education before enforcement. **[Action: JS will take issue of parking on Gors Ave to next CAP.]**

2.4 Issues re SSSI near Pluck Lake. HO raised problems with quad and motor bikes near Pluck lake which needs watching.

2.5 Bridge on Pentre Rd, near Pontarddulais (Bont). NG reported excellent progress with the new Kingsbridge to Gowerton route (but lack of consultation on new short section south of Gowerton station – first raised by AE). Pentre road bridge (over live railway line) is being repaired by Network Rail giving CCS opportunity to create a new section of the Gowerton – Pontarddulais bike route. This would include replacing a traffic lane with a two way SUP and lights for alternating one way road use. However Cllr Kevin Griffiths is organising a petition against this, mainly on grounds of delaying traffic. NG had contacted Pontarddulais Town Council who planned to debate the issue on 4th March. NG told Cllr Kevin Griffiths that WR was supporting this plan, which reallocates road space from cars to cyclists and walkers. NG highlighted issues of Safety (eg buffer between traffic and walkers/cyclists, plus lack of consultation.) He was still involved with Bont community engagement contacts who support this new route.

EF highlighted the Welsh Comp. school buses who could be delayed by the one way system. JG said a one service bus crossed the bridge once an hour, and questioned the traffic light control system. NG highlighted the issue of the bridge parapets, which would need raising. **[Action: Someone (JS?) to raise this at CAP esp. to ask for plans and press need for improved consultation.]**

2.6 Active Travel applications for 2021/22. JS reported that Welsh Gov. had allocated £30m for new bike routes in 2020/21 and £50m for 2021/22! Swansea hoped to receive £1.2m for design issues and consultations. WR had submitted a priority list with top priority to be given to north west Swansea, where 40,000 people had no bike routes

(Other parts of Swansea had many routes). DN reported that the Routes Group had also prioritised routes (See notes of 9 Jan. meeting. These included JS's suggestions).

[Action: JS to find out which bids were successful and report back to Routes Group.]

- 2.7 Mayals Rd progress:** DR, noting that he lived on Mayals Rd., reported lots of disquiet by local residents over the Council's plans, and their feelings that they had been kept in the dark by the Council. The residents held a public meeting recently where they agreed to send a letter to the Council stressing their liability for future accidents which they anticipate the new infrastructure will cause. Residents' main concern centred on the hazard of the proposed narrow hybrid tracks, (with no buffer between the 5 inch kerb and the traffic.) Also that CCS had not conducted a survey into potential use.

NG added that WR was also opposed to the hybrid section on safety grounds; they were also concerned about the lack of proper consultation, which also applies to several other new routes. DN drew attention to the Mayals Road section on the Infrastructure page in WR's website which summarises the history and issues. It ends with the Open letter referred to above which the residents had sent to the Council. EF asked what the term 'hybrid tracks' meant. DN explained that they provided "light segregation", in between on-road 'cycle lanes' and completely segregated cycle paths. Cars cannot use them except to cross them at eg driveways where cyclists would have priority. Unlike SUPs they are not intended for use by pedestrians. They are more commonly known as "Stepped cycle tracks". He also noted that CUK supported our opposition to the proposed hybrid tracks, favoured the omission of the downhill one and supported his proposal for uphill provision (either in the form of a hybrid of adequate width or an SUP). DN noted that precedents for hybrids were on flat roads; he had however found one in Bradford which was on an uphill similar to Mayals Rd but met requirements.

NG reported an e-mail from Ryland Jones advising that if the hybrids were created then the role of Sustrans should be to monitor them and raise the need for improvements. NG suggested that WR support this.

- 2.8 Olchfa Link:** PB asked if the Olchfa link was still going ahead. JS reported that CCS seemed to be working on the Sketty Park SUP first.

3. AOB:

- 3.1 Common Mapping exercise for new INM.** [Action: leave that for another meeting.] DN, referring to the commonplace website, noted that Swansea had not yet activated their section but that NPT and Cardiff had. Those interested are invited to give their email address and they will be contacted when the site is active. [Action: All interested.]

- 3.2 Mumbles Sea Wall:** MC reported that a paper was going to cabinet, proposing a new vertical sea wall, which would create a wider bike path. JS welcomed this as that section of bike path is heavily congested.

- 3.3 Wales Transport Strategy:** JS noted that WR operated at three levels:

- Identifying and rectifying cyclists needs; eg removing barriers.
- Swansea and NPT Councils – negotiating/monitoring improved infrastructure.
- Welsh Govt initiatives and strategies – at a national level.

He has responded on behalf of WR to the invitation to consult on The new Wales Transport Strategy as it falls in the third category. (His response is on the Campaigns page of WR's website.) Our view is that the Strategy is high on aspiration but low on targets or specific commitments. JS highlighted that transport now comprises 17% of all emissions, and that this proportion was not decreasing. Yesterday JS heard from Lee Waters that he intended beefing up the Strategy. There was specific discussion about the need to take space away from traffic and reallocate it for buses, walkers and cyclists.

- 3.4 Clean Air White Paper:** The issues raised include a possible road charging scheme. JS said this White paper seemed a lot stronger, and asked for other WR members to help him compile a response (needed by April 2021)? HO suggested this also be raised at the Swansea Environment Forum. This was agreed. [Action: JS to co-ordinate a response with HO, NG and EF.]

- 3.4 Senedd Election Manifesto:** JS asked: should WR be involved in this opportunity to press WG candidates to take positive positions on improving cycling? Sustrans, CUK and Living Streets were all compiling manifestos. JC and HO supported WR this. [Action: JS, JC and HO.]
- 3.5 Social Media:** PB reported that WR had two Facebook presences: a group (for members) and a Facebook page (a public voice). CW, GG, and PB have been doing most of the posting. However it's not used or accessed very much. PB said Carmarthenshire Cycle Forum used Facebook effectively, with Phil Snaith doing a lot of posting and promotion. PB raised the possibility of a members section on our website and wondered if one should be created. DN noted that this would probably require a separate website as he thought it might be difficult to implement on the present one. CW asked more people to send posts for the existing Facebook pages. [Action: all.] JS reported that he had found a not-for-profit organisation (MAD) which could advise on how to improve the design of websites. [Action: JS, DR and CW to meet with MAD.]
- 3.6 New members:** MW said he had enjoyed participating in several Gower Cycling Festivals and would like to know of any future plans. He intended to return to cycle in the Swansea area. VW asked about the Routes group, and DN said she would be welcome to attend. He noted that the next Routes Group would be on Sat. 6th March at 10am by Zoom.
- 3.7 Foreshore Path:** MC asked for feedback on the new lights (which he and a colleague funded). Our feedback was positive as they improve visibility and safety. AE noted that she was concerned about the dark section at the bottom of Sketty Lane and NG mentioned that WR had been contacted by a woman cyclist requesting lighting here. DR supported this. [ACTION: JS will raise at next CAP]
- 3.8 NRW Website:** JG had a recent meeting with NRW and advised that the NRW website had good information about future plans.

Notes prepared by
Nick Guy

APPENDIX

Barriers on cycle routes

This document lists barriers in the Swansea area which require cyclists to dismount. This is a Wheelrights initiative the purpose of which is to get them changed. The list is ordered roughly from west to east. Barriers in Swansea County are listed first, then those in NPT.

Swansea County

Lliw Valley path (N. end at Station Road: GR 593009.)

Kissing gate style barrier.



Morrison Hosp. - Tircanol link (Railway crossing: GR 672992.)

Narrow footbridge over railway and three sets of staggered chicanes on north side. Photo 1 shows one.



Link to NCR 43 S. of Cross Valley Link (GR 664945)

Staggered chicanes by Pentre-chwyth Road (A4217) where link crosses a bridge to join NCR 43. (Photo 2.)

Upper Bank Route to Phoenix Way link (GR 780968.)

Staggered chicanes at each end of this short link. (Photos 3 & 4.)



Clarion Close (Cycle path crossing: GR 680980.)

Staggered barriers on both sides of road and no dropped kerb. (Photo 5.)



Trallwyn link (W. end on Jersey Road: GR 682966.)

Two concrete blocks. (Photo 6.)



Gwernllwyngwith Road. (Where it joins J44 slip Road: GR 697979.)

Staggered chicanes. Note: This is a borderline case as there is a reasonable gap between the chicanes. (Photo 7.)



Neath Port Talbot

Pontardawe (Swansea Canal; N. of Arthur Ter: GR 725041.)

Chicane gate.

Pontardawe (Swansea Canal; minor road off Brecon Road: GR 728046.)

Chicane gate.

NCR 43 S. of Ystalyfera (Just S. of R. Tawe crossing: GR 766079.)

Restriction beside gate.

NCR 43 by Pontardawe (GR 714030 to GR 729044.)

This is the section from N. of Trebanos where the path transfers from the canal to the riverside to north of Pontardawe where the path crosses the river. The path over this section has been upgraded and the difficult-to-get-through A type barriers replaced by bollards. There are six sets of these. Photo 8 shows the one at the north end. (Just before the bridge.) The others are similar.



David Naylor, Wheelrights Routes Group,
February 2021