

Shropshire Local Access Forum	<u>Item</u>	<u>Paper</u>
30 April 2009	10	F
10.00 am		

MINUTES OF THE SHROPSHIRE CYCLE FORUM

Wednesday 18th March 2009

National Trust Chalet Pavilion, Carding Mill Valley, Church Stretton

1. Present:

Miles Kenny (Chair - SCC)
 Adrian Penney (BCBG)
 Alison Kennedy (SCC)
 Andy Seabourne (BCBG)
 Bill Craig (Shrewsbury)
 Brett Kibble (Sustrans)
 Catherine Murphy (BCBG)
 Chris Symondson (BCBG)
 Dave Tomlinson (BCBG)
 David Currant (Ludlow 21)
 Hannah Lanaway (SCC)
 John Franklin (BCBG)
 John Mackintosh (LCSG CTC)
 John Petty (Shrewsbury)
 John Smyth (BCBG)
 Jon Cooke (Stretton Climate Care)
 Julian Symondson (BCBG)
 Keith Mason (Shrewsbury Cyclist)
 Ken Thorp (CTC)
 Les Lumsdon (Ludlow 21)

Liz Colebrook (BCBG)
 Martin Beardwell (CTC)
 Paul Wagner (CTC)
 Pauline Mackintosh (LCSG CTC)
 Peta Sams (LCSG CTC)
 Peter Carty (NT & BCBG)
 Peter Crofts (CTC)
 Peter Mathison (Shrewsbury)
 Peter Walden (Shrewsbury)
 Phil Sams (Ludlow 21)
 Philip Pool (SFoE)
 Philip Saltmarsh (Rickshaw Phil)
 Sally Ford (LCSG)

2. Apologies

Emma Bullard, John Short, Andrew Baxter, Julie & Malcolm Potter, John Everall, Keith Harris, Reg Potter, Neal Challinor, Pete Bird, Terry Egglestone, Bill Dorrell, Jim Leach, Chris Pennington

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes of the December 2008 meeting were agreed.

Jon Cooke talked about Stretton Climate care and electric bikes. He explained that in 2008 South Shropshire District Council gave a grant for four 'pedal assist' electric bikes based on the idea that a small fleet of electric bikes would encourage people to use them rather than drive through the area in their cars! They are available for local residents too. The project is having an impact on reducing carbon footprint, and leaflets are going to B&Bs, TICs etc. Jon said he would welcome advice on alternative ways of promoting the scheme.

Website: <http://www.strettonclimatecare.org.uk/>

4. Bishop's Castle District Cycling Group – Past and Present

John Smyth described the origins of the Bishop's Castle District Cycling Group and said that when the idea of setting the group up was first proposed, people said the area was "too hilly"!

The origins of the group go back to 2000, with the inaugural meeting being attended by 12 people, and supported by Alison Kennedy. At the time there was little interest from local schools. During the first summer there were various activities including a treasure hunt which was not very well attended. The group has developed and continues to promote cycling as a healthy, convenient low cost mode of transport. Numbers have gradually increased – on one occasion 30 people took part in a ride. Doctor Bike events are held annually.

John believes that the best way to increase numbers and overcome fears about safety is to open up off-road routes in the Onny Valley linking Route 45 (Ironbridge) and Route 81 (Newtown). John gave a presentation to the Cycle Forum in 2004 and raised funds from SCC / SSDC / AONB to investigate the feasibility of reopening the disused railway line between Bishops Castle and Craven Arms. Les Lumsdon prepared a report in 2006 which spelt out the advantages of the route. However, this proposal was not taken further due to issues with local landowners and concerns about the possible disruption that the route might cause. The group then looked at other alignments using disused track beds but the matter has not been taken further for now.

After the 2006 report, the group has stayed together (mainly in the form of regular rides, etc.). The most significant event was the arrival of the Sustrans Route 44 in 2008. There was an excellent turnout for the opening in September 2008 which was supported by SCC. Route 44 is challenging, but has helped to put Bishop's Castle on the cycle map! In future, there is a need to get Bikeability going in local schools and to publicise cycling as key in the battle against climate change. Also, there is a need to promote the benefits of cycling in improving fitness levels.

John then asked the meeting for advice on what else the group should be doing.

Alison noted the popularity of the Bishop's Castle cycle rides leaflet (developed with the help of the group)

Julian added that the healthy benefits of cycling could be promoted.

Miles asked if the fear of being run over is perception or fact, and John Smyth replied that perception is a big factor. **Liz** added that visibility is important including on arms for signalling. Should also have flashing lights (cars can see you're moving). **Les** advised the meeting that one in four people in the country will not contemplate cycling but that evidence shows that people who are inexperienced need infrastructure to help them get back into cycling

Chris said that flat routes to railway stations are desirable.

Bill mentioned disused railways as a possible way forward – a lot of NCN routes are too hilly.

Chris added that leaflets for hilly routes should advise that low gears are needed.

Brett added that in respect of landowners, one or two might hold out for a ransom strip. He said that it can be long process but don't give up! **Alison**

commented that in Ironbridge a compromise had been reached with landowners to allow a route to be closed on shooting days. **Peter Carty** commented that he is involved with trying to get the railway line open from Bishop's Castle to Much Wenlock as the National Trust owns lots of this

Jon asked if there are plans to develop a cycle group in Church Stretton.

5. Cycling Websites – Bishop's Castle; Cycle Shrewsbury

Julian Symondson gave a demonstration of the Bishops Castle website and explained that the idea behind it was to help members of Bishop's Castle group to communicate and interact with each other. Members need a password.

Martin commented that there are places that are not cyclist friendly and asked whether it is possible to share this sort of information? Julian replied that perhaps there could be a Shropshire website with comments regarding best routes, recommendations for places to have lunch, etc.

Chris suggested that perhaps there could be a discussion forum of good places to go. Julian replied that CTC used to do this.

Alison advised that when SCC did research for the NCN leaflets - cafes and accommodation providers were asked questions about cycle parking, etc. This information is listed on the back of each leaflet – see

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/cycling.nsf/open/C81DC7AA1CFA36F080257539003EF4EE>

Alison also advised the meeting – on behalf of Emma Bullard – that permission has been received to set up an additional website for Cycle Shrewsbury, upon which it is hoped to place a journey planner. DfT will use Shrewsbury as a demonstration. It allows people to choose the quickest/quietest/ greenest route. The web address will be: <http://www.cycleshrewsbury.co.uk>

6. Ludlow Cycling Support Group

John Mackintosh posed the question “How can changes be made to make cyclists feel more comfortable about cycling on B roads?”. He commented that visibility on B roads is often quite restricted and that it would be nice if there were lower speed limits, especially for motor bikes. He also highlighted the problem of overtaking on blind bends where there no white lines.

Martin asked if there have been reductions in speeds on “Quiet Lanes” (20 mph). **ACTION: Alison will find out for the next meeting.** **Les** commented that initial studies on quiet lanes showed significant speed reduction although a lack of follow up studies means we don't know if this has been sustained.

Bill said that if the issue is about feeling comfortable then the main thing is confidence – the best way is to take more road space so cars can't overtake. Bikeability training is giving more people confidence to move out from the kerb.

Phil Saltmarsh also commented that visibility is the key.

Julian suggested that cyclists could look slightly 'incompetent' i.e. wobble, so that drivers give them a wide berth. **Peta** said that although experienced cyclists have 'keep-safe' strategies, how do we improve the situation for visitors? Should there be double white lines in the centre?

7. Ludlow Cycling Support Group – Recognising Cyclists at Traffic Lights

Peta Sams identified the issue of loops at signalised junctions not identifying cyclists in Ludlow. She said that we want cycling to become a form of transport, it needs to be seen as traffic – but clearly lights need to recognise them! Some temporary traffic lights do not give time for cyclists either.

ACTION: Alison said she was happy to take note of locations.

Peter M. added that one issue is that modern bikes, with little ferrous content, don't trigger loops. **Peter Crofts** advised that there was a great example in Shrewsbury on Abbey Foregate which is triggered by bikes.

8. Telford & Wrekin Cycling Projects

Keith Harris sent his apologies but provided the following update:-
NCN signing 45 and 55 – Term consultants have been asked to look at direction signing for the two routes. TBUG is being consulted over drawings

NCN 45 Coalport Road - The ramp to avoid the steps is now in place.

Access Ramp from Perry Way to Haybridge Roundabout - scheme to provide a new footway / cycleway linking local cycle routes in the Haybridge area with the Perry Way.

Silkin Way – Central rail station to Central Park. – This project introduced lighting, widened surface and signing. Completed at the end of October 2008.

Silkin Way - Central rail station to Stafford Park. – The project has delivered lighting to the new footway/cycleway to improve the security of the route

Comprehensive improvements to the cycling and walking environment in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, in order to improve sustainable access to the museum sites, the Ironbridge, Mawes Craft Centre, pubs and hotels and other attractions and employment centres in the gorge. The new measures will include new signs, markings, dropped kerbs and additional lengths of footway/cycleway as appropriate. Completed at the end of December 2008.

HarperAdamsCollege- design in hand for Toucan crossing outside the college. This is being introduced as part of a Safe Routes to Work initiative and will compliment the existing cycle route from Newport.

Martin queried whether there was a good case for changing the alignment of Route 81 now that the sugar beet factory has gone. **Paul** advised that he had been there three weeks ago and there are still lots of HGVs.

9. Shropshire Cycling Projects including Eastern Oswestry Cycle Routes

Alison Kennedy explained that the Council is introducing paths and lighting on green wedges in Eastern Oswestry. The Council has also bought a stretch of disused railway line in Oswestry for which the long term plan is a walking and cycling route along the disused line. The idea is to lease some sections back to heritage railway groups.

Peter Crofts asked if there was any solution to crossing the A5 for railway?

Alison replied that heritage railway groups will have to talk to Highways Agency.

Dave asked if the railway would be fenced off from the cycle track. **Alison** confirmed that it would.

Brett described a possible cycle path along the canal near Newtown and development of links to Llanidloes

10. Cycle Shrewsbury and Connect 2

Alison Kennedy updated the meeting as follows:-

Telford Way project is complete but minor improvements are being made.

Intend taking down some "Cyclists Dismount" signs and guardrails.

Looking to improve cycle routes in Bayston Hill

Working at improving crossings at various points. Looking at numbers and delay.

Cycle Shrewsbury campaign will be launched in May and will be tied into the website. Will have information on routes / leisure / Bikeability, etc.

There will be a new Schools Bikelt Officer,

Neal Challinor is the workplace 'Bikelt' Officer, promoting cycling to businesses.

Have installed cycle parking and shelters in schools.

Have installed new solar power cycle counters on traffic free routes

A question was asked if there was any news on intersections of cycle routes with side roads. Alison replied that this will be looked into next year, and added that we are also looking at introducing a partial road closure on Crowmeole Lane.

Peter M asked for a closure to be considered on Nobold Lane/ Mousecroft Lane.

Miles asked for people to provide evidence of cycling/ walking between Underdale Road and Corinthian Drive and Robertson Way

Les appealed for funding for cycling to be maintained after Cycle Shrewsbury ends as model shift relies on staff.

Alison said she would be happy to arrange a special briefing for cycle groups on the West End/Connect 2 consultation. All information can be found at:

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/traveltransport.nsf/open/6E8B710F76B95D3B80257575004B4E94>

11. Bike Week Events and Other Dates for 2009

Tour de Presteigne (electric bike event) 9/10 May 2009

<http://www.tourdepresteigne.co.uk/>

Film Night (BC) Flying Scotsman)	tbc
Dr Bike, Bishops Castle	Wednesday 10 June
Yurt to Yurt and Saddlebag Sale, BC	Saturday 13 June
Shrewsbury Bike Fest	Saturday 13 June
Dr Bike, Ludlow	Saturday 13 June
Film Night (Ludlow) Jour de Fete	Sunday 14 June
Off-road ride, Bishops Castle	Tuesday 16 June
Women's ride, Bishops Castle	Wednesday 17 June
Tour de Ludlow	Thursday 18 June
Crown at Newcastle Pub Ride	Saturday 20 June
Shropshire Highland Challenge (to 7,000ft)	Sunday 21 June
Tandem Triathlon, Bishops Castle	Saturday 4 July 2009

TBUG and Telford and Wrekin Council are also preparing another bumper **MONTH** of rides, events and publicity material. Leaflet out soon.

12. Any Other Business

Paul - Need 1m strip of tarmac on cobbles under the railway bridge on Route 81.
ACTION: Alison is aware.

Sally asked if there was any progress on Ludlow cycle racks. **ACTION:** Alison said they should be in place by Bike Week.

Jon asked if Church Stretton Town Council had ever asked for cycle stands.
ACTION: Alison suggested Town Councillors contact Hannah Lanaway.

John S. asked what was happening regarding access to Bishop's Castle Primary School. **ACTION:** Alison replied that it's been passed to Education but that the School Travel Plan adviser will be following it up.

Dave noted that Route 44 in Craven Arms still needs to be signed. **ACTION:** Alison hopes to sort this out soon with the Highways Agency.

13. Date of Next Meetings

Wednesday 10 June 2009	Shirehall, Shrewsbury
Wednesday 16 September 2009	Shirehall, Shrewsbury
Wednesday 2 December 2009	Shirehall, Shrewsbury