

West Sussex Cycle Forum
24th August 2005 5pm-7pm
Committee Room 1, Horsham District Council Offices

Those present:

David Gallé	West Sussex CTC District Association
David Hedges	CTC Right to Ride Rep (Crawley)
Steve Hubbard	Sustrans Ranger (East Grinstead area)
Liz Beth	Sustrans Area Manager
Jonathan Heatley	Horsham Cycling Campaign
Gillian Threadingham	Sustrans Ranger and CTC Right to Ride Rep (Chichester area)
Philip King	WSCC Cycling Officer

1. Apologies:

Roy Fairchild

2. Issues or concerns related to cycling that attendees wish to raise:

David Gallé:

Wanted to highlight a number of issues where the safety of cyclists is not always considered on the highway network.

Firstly, this is due to the design process not considering cyclists, for example, at junctions (A283 at Marehill previously reported to WSCC). David felt that more appreciation of the experience a cyclist has while using West Sussex roads would enable designs to include features to further improve the safety of cyclists, rather than hinder it.

Secondly, maintenance of roads for motorists is to the detriment of cyclists. This causes visibility and width concerns where hedges are trimmed flush to the carriageway, pushing cyclists further into the road. As cyclists are higher than car drivers they have different needs. Overhanging vegetation creates a hazard, as cyclists need to swerve into traffic to avoid it, and so on. Maintenance of the road surface can also create a hazard, especially where slippery banding is used, or where stone chippings are deep and can dismount a cyclist as well as hide any potholes in the underlying road surface, which can damage wheels.

Thirdly, David raised concerns about traffic calming schemes in their many forms. Bumps are not large enough to slow cars, and are in the wrong place so hinder cyclists. They push cyclists into the line of traffic. Many do not have a white line near them to warn users: this reduces visibility at night. Examples include a new scheme in Southwater, and road humps installed by a landowner on a bridleway as reported in a recent letter to WSCC, where at least two cyclists have fallen.

Jonathan Heatley:

Could WSCC link more effectively to the health sector, and consider implementing and advertising a number of short exercise or leisure routes around each urban area? This would aid the regular exercise message being advertised by the health sector, and could use quiet roads to reduce the costs to WSCC.

Jonathan expressed concern about the threat of removal of the important cycle route link in East Street, Horsham. If this link were removed the only possible way into the town centre from this direction involves a long detour.

Finally, is there an opportunity to create a new circular cycle route to the south of Horsham using the canal? This route could use Pedlars Way, the Downslink and the canal to encourage cyclists out into Horsham District.

Steve Hubbard:

Surfacing of Worth Way – believes the route requires a hard surface along its length. Steve suggested that the whole route would require resurfacing the next few years anyway, so now is good opportunity to start consideration of this.

Concern over the condition of many of the cycle route signs in Crawley. There are many signs, which are damaged, missing or incorrect. For example, one of the new signs on Fleming Way (National Cycle Route 21) has a badge for National Cycle Route 20 on it. This is obviously incorrect and needs to be changed urgently.

Woolborough Lane to Manor Royal, Crawley. In order to stop vehicles entering the path, a number of concrete blocks have recently been placed at either end of the route. Particularly at the northern end, this is reducing the available width of the cycle route and as the blocks have no reflective tape fitted they are a hazard at night. Can these blocks be moved or removed?

Liz Beth:

Cycle route signing. Echoing comments made in a recent letter to WSCC, Liz stated her concern about the time being taken to design and implement signs for cycle routes. She has been waiting over a year for some routes, and is now becoming increasingly frustrated.

David Hedges:

Maidenbower Lane, Crawley, Similar to Woolborough Lane (above), in order to stop vehicles entering the cycle route, a number of concrete blocks have recently been placed at either end of the route. This seems to be as a reaction to the recent loss of a concrete bollard and some timber fencing. The route is now narrow and hinders access by bicycles. The blocks here also do not have reflective tape fitted and again are causing a hazard at night.

The cycle routes at Haslett Avenue (between the leisure centre and Jubilee Field), and around the Hazelwick Roundabout, both in Crawley, recently appear to have disappeared. Please could WSCC confirm that these routes will be re-instated in full?

Station Hill, Maidenbower. The Maidenbower area website has recently suggested that traffic calming along Station Hill will be removed. This road is part of the National Cycle Network route 21 and there is concern that if the calming is removed cyclists will be at increased risk due to higher speeds. Even if only some of the traffic calming is removed speeds will still increase between the remaining sections.

Sustrans have not been consulted and they would like to provide a formal response before any works take place.

Gillian Threadingham:

Looking for the latest information on WSCC's progress designing and implementing a connection from the end of the new canal route from Chichester to Hunston towards Mundham.

Concerned that the route currently terminates in a bridge made of three wooden planks. A new crossing and the continuation of the route behind a hedge are required as soon as possible. As this is part of the Chichester cycle network can this be part of the current work?

Philip King:

Please can all groups forward copies of notes to Philip following their local meetings if they have included discussion on anything that may be of interest to him.

If members would like Philip to attend and speak at local meetings this may be possible so please do not hesitate to ask.

3. Pedalling Ahead – response to alterations already made

Written comments already received from Roy Fairchild and David Hedges.

1. Introduction

3rd para, 2nd sentence - change 'use' to 'promote'

Include a reference to transport interchanges within this section

2. Aims of the strategy

It was requested that this section is made more precise.

4. Reducing congestion

Make changes to the traffic calming statements.

Additions to Table 1

Mention adult cycle training here as a form of promotion.

5. Delivering Accessibility

Mention transport interchanges in this section

6. Safer Roads

1st para – make changes to the traffic calming statements.

9. Education, Encouragement and Engagement

Mention local cycle forums and project groups with the database of local consultees.

Leaflet – possibility of adding a statement about adult cycle training once this is set up.

4. Current projects

1. WSCC has employed TMS Consultancy to review the entire county cycle network from a user safety perspective. How the network interacts with the surrounding highway network and any instances where aged facilities increase danger for cyclists will be particular questions for them.
2. As part of the wider review of inspection and maintenance standards within WSCC for all facilities, improvements are being made to how cycle routes are included within this process. Specific problems will be linked to the cycle route, rather than the surrounding road or footway for the first time.
3. A cycle routes standards brief is being prepared, linked to current Department for Transport standards, to enable the construction of cycle routes to defined standards – widths, gradients, crossings etc.

5. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting was set as 10th January 2006. Location and time to be determined.

6. Any other business

No other business was raised.