

# Isle of Wight Cycle Forum Minutes

14 October 2019 @ 6pm

Church on the Roundabout, Coppins Bridge, Newport PO30 2BX.

Present:

Linda Allen (LA)	Brading Town Council
Steve Archer (SAr)	Cyclewight (West Wight)
Steve Ashman (SAn)	Island Roads
Jan Brookes (JB)	Isle Access
Kevin Burton (KB)	Island Roads
Darrel Clarke (DC)	IWC PROW
Ross Edmunds (RE)	Wight Cycle Training
David Evans (DE)	IW Council Executive
Martin Gibson (MGn)	People Powered CIC
Mark Giddens (MGs)	Chessell Pottery Cafe
Chris Gregory (CG)	A-To-There
Robin Lang (RL)	National Trust
Alex Lawson (AL)	Cyclewight & Wayfarers
Val Lawson(VGL)	Cyclewight & Wayfarers
Tricia Merrifield (TM)	IOW Bridleways, BHS, LAF.
Nicky Metcalf (NM)	Wight Cycle Training
Kayleigh Richter (KR)	IWC Active Travel Officer
Tim Thorne (TT)	Cyclewight, Forum Chairman
Matt Townsend (MT)	IoW Mountain Bike Centre
George Wilkes (GW)	Cyclewight
Mick Watts (MW)	Cyclewight & Isle Access

## 0. Introduction

Apologies were received from Lee Matthews (IWC LCWIP), Alec Broome (IWC Sports Unit), Matt Whittaker (Cyclewight).

## 1. Island Roads/IWC - St Mary's junction. Update of work

David Evans drew attention to the public information evening at Medina Theatre on Thursday, October 17 at 7pm for anyone wishing to hear more about the works.

Kevin Burton outlined the various phases of work planned. The work has started and will continue until December 2020. The installation by SSE of a high voltage cable in Forest Road is underway concurrently with road improvement works. Likewise gas main installation is to be carried out concurrent with road works – but this will be done next summer when demand for gas is low. Along with carriageway reconfiguration, excavation will lower the base by 920mm, following which ducting will be installed with the new highway built above. Finally the wearing course will be installed over the entire area of the new scheme. There will be disruption to traffic, and to minimise this there is a Traffic Management Plan which will be presented to the public in the form of a cartoon.

Information is available from websites of Island Roads and IWC :

[http://www.islandroads.com/storage/resources/IRResource\\_1568038779\\_newport\\_st\\_marys](http://www.islandroads.com/storage/resources/IRResource_1568038779_newport_st_marys)

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DE said that he is keen to promote active travel schemes, and welcomes any suggestion to get people off roads and onto bikes. Kayleigh Richter said the Connect2Work promotion, funded by the Access Fund, is working with the IWC and Island Roads to divert motorists onto cycles. DE and KB confirmed this and that they will circulate the Connect2Work offers.

Questioned by SA about access for cyclists KB said routes for cyclists may not join up well during the work as different sections are completed at different times.

TT said the Cowes-Newport cycle track needs to run smoothly throughout, and should be promoted as a beneficial alternative transport mode. MG that as the main carriageway work would be underway next spring then publicity at that time would be good if targeted at Cowes residents living near to the track.

## 2. Island Roads - progress Newport to Sandown

Kevin Burton said the Horryngford to Langbride section of cycle track is closed in order that bridge decks are replaced, in particular at Blackbridge. He added that some work was carried in advance of the closure to minimise the length of closures. The closure is from half term for six weeks and is scheduled to end on 6th Decembr. For updates see: <http://www.islandroads.com/66-current-works.html>

## 3. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Lee Matthews is IWC Strategic Manager with responsibility for the LCWIP. He was unable to attend but sent this update: *The LCWIP is currently being finalised ready for council approval. Approval is planned for November. The plan will be used to influence pending proposals related to the transforming cities application (Ryde). Once the LCWIP is complete the council will be using it to try and secure external grants.*

TT said approval has been delayed and asked if November could be guaranteed? CG said he believed this is the case. He said it is a complex 100 page document. MG said the IW plans are varied and advanced compared to other authorities. DE said he has come recently to his post and to the plan but is keen to take it forward as the IWC has done a good job (compared to other authorities' plans which he has seen). SA asked if our plans are conditional on those of other authorities; he was assured this is not the case. TT added that an updated Cycling Strategy for the Isle of Wight needs to be prepared as soon as the LCWIP is available. MG said plans for Newport and Ryde are designed to be able to be extended to the whole Island at a later date.

## 4. Access Fund

CG said the Access Fund for Sustainable Transport projects in the three year period ending in 2020 amounting to £1.3 million DfT money. One example was the Wight Cycle Training which RE & NM delivered to Isle of Wight Schools.

CG explained about a project carried out by cycle hire providers. There has been a survey of s 700 cycle hires. This is to look at the link between recreational cycling on holiday and how it links to behaviour once home. He highlighted that the Isle of Wight was a test bed to measure success of schemes to get more people cycling, and is the only area nationally to provide this. He hopes to attract interest from this piece of research. The government Department of Culture Media and Sport is interested.

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The DfT may offer grants for sustainable transport for 2020-21. It was noted that the current Access Funding is for revenue projects but DE confirmed that the council will seek funding for capital projects wherever available.

## 5. Isle Access - Wheels for All

Jan Brookes thanked Island Roads for their company's donation, which enabled IsleAccess to purchase suitable bikes. These were taken to Wonderfest for people to try. Storage is a problem as they are currently in her garage, and they are looking for a container to use. Funding for transport of the cycles is also needed, as are more volunteers to help with cycling sessions. In other areas people do use bikes as mobility aids. They are organising a sponsored ride in February to raise funds.

There has been a meeting with the council about obstruction to the larger machines due to various barriers on the track. AL & VGL said there has been an issue about motor bikes and learner drivers using the cycle track at Cowes, and a gate provides a message that this is not appropriate. However Steve Ashman said wheelchair users may not be able to access a gate to open it.

## 6. IW Mountain Bike Centre

Matt Townsend said the IW Mountain Bike Centre had a successful season, with lots more visiting from the mainland including professional riders.. They have 2500 followers on Instagram. There are plans to grow the centre in 2020, and they have applied for a grant from British Cycling, who paid a visit to see their progress. A new jump will be built and current facilities maintained. They hope to create a longer cross-country route and to operate that all year round. They have good relations with the owner of the adjacent Bowcombe estate. SA asked about young people who come to the centre. MT said they can become overwhelming when parents leave their children there without supervision. When they crash this becomes a problem. Safety issues include unsuitable bikes. They have 154 holders of season passes, and have made £6-7000 income from day parties. It is difficult to know how many of these are from the mainland.

JB said she would like to see wheelchair racing off-road if it could be arranged.

Alec Broome has been helpful. Secondary children are most difficult to reach, but the Duke of Edinburgh organisation would make a good mix. RE said he talks to school assemblies, and it would be great to promote the centre to schoolchildren.

<https://www.isleofwightmountainbikecentre.com/shop>

## 7. Cargo Bike Scheme

Council Consultant Chris Gregory described progress with the cargo bike project, with mainland operators of electric bikes interested. There was a lower volume of applications for grants than anticipated, but there was one applicant under consideration and it is hoped to make an announcement in the next two weeks.

Council Active Travel Officer Kayleigh Richter explained the promotion of sustainable transport and commuting which reaches out to employers and employees as well as to apprentices and jobseekers to offer bus discounts, Dr Bike discount vouchers and accessory vouchers. The Cowes and Newport cycle hubs enable secure storage of cycles.

<https://www.connect2work.info/> and @connect2workiow provide more information.

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## 8. Brading Station

An aspiration of Cyclewright, is a direct route from Yarbridge to Carpenters Road via B69, B1, B2, and recently bridleway B75 plus new alignment east of the rail line at Brading Station. The Public Rights of Way, Local Access Forum and Brading Council are supportive of this. It would depend on agreement of South Western Railways to changes at Brading Station.

A past meeting of the LAF was held at Brading Station, attended by Brading Town Councillors, RSPB officers, and Network Rail, then track owner and operator. This led to recent discussions with South Western Railways who are now train and track franchisees. Having been allocated government funding to upgrade the line, SWR will restore twin track at Brading station, allowing a half-hourly service to integrate with the ferry at Ryde. AL on behalf of Cyclewright entered an application to the SWR Customer & Communities Improvement Fund in order to demonstrate the interest of Cyclewright.

Linda Allen, Brading Town Clerk, said the council are very keen to have a through connection on the east side of line. She confirmed that the track will be doubled at Brading to achieve half hourly service between Shanklin to Ryde and integrated times with ferry. However the opposite platform is currently not accessible to disabled passengers, and even the bridge has restrictions to be used by one person at a time. Brading Town Council hope that there can be improved level crossing access to the south of the station. This would tie in with a through route on the east side of the line.

Note that the route to Carpenters Road, B75, was dedicated by the IW Council as a bridleway Using a sustainable transport grant, land was acquired and a wall was rebuilt to widen the footpath from Quay Lane to B75. Note also that the footpath B69 running alongside the track would need to be widened in some places and the connection via steps to the highway at Yarbridge could be expensive to improve or bypass. Darrel Clarke added that his department was happy to help in future discussions, although he raised concerns about the upgrade to B69.

TT queried if bikes will be catered for on new carriages to be acquired by South Western Railways? DE to check.

## 9. Chessell Pottery IW Cycle day

Mark Giddens talked about the Isle of Wight Bike day held on 31 August at Chessell Pottery Cafe. He took over the cafe in May and held the event to support the cycling community as well as Wight Mountain Bike centre & West Wight Sports Centre. Cycling businesses and organisations were present, and the last of a series of hill climbing time trials over the summer was held on the day.

CG noted that 35-40 children were participating, as well as 100 other cyclists. SA commented that the rides were on forest trails rather than on roads. TT said well done for the initiative and asked if it would be repeated. MG confirmed that he hoped it would take place again, about the same time in 2020.

Chessell Pottery Cafe link <http://chessellpotterycafe.co.uk/>

## 10. National Trust

# Robin Lang said the National Trust has agreed to upgrade footpath T24, on the north side of Tennyson Down, to permitted bridleway, in consultation with the British Horse Society and the IW Council Public Rights of Way department (TM & DC being present). This will provide a much safer alternative to the Moons Hill highway. Work is due to start in November on the section east of the Highdown Lane car park. It will be made wider, less

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steep and suitable for shared use. Apart from this no special re-surfacing is necessary as heavy use is not expected. A permitted horse path on the edge of the downs will complete a circular route.

# Also planned are bridleways and new links in the Compton Bay area. The National Trust prepared a Vision for Compton Bay and Downs to direct the future management of this wildlife rich area of beaches, downland and former farmland, which is also subject to coastal erosion. John Brownscombe is Project Officer for the trust, and has taken into account suggestions put forward by the Paths for All CIC.

# In the area of Borthwood Copse unofficial mountain bike jumps have reluctantly been removed. The National Trust tolerated these for a long time but had to act due to ongoing additions to the structure and increasing damage to trees in the area which is an ancient woodland. The structure will now be removed as and when rebuilt. TT said the same sort of thing had taken place on Forestry England land. There is also an issue about landowner's public liability.

## **11. Reports & AOB**

# Darrel Clarke provided an update for Public Rights of Way. Gunville Greenway is still waiting for the last section to gain consent from Sport England, but it will definitely go ahead. A planning application for a swimming amenity at Tapnell Farm in West Wight is to be granted subject to their agreement to upgrade certain footpaths to bridleways. A project at Alverstone to upgrade footpaths to bridleways will be delayed (due to funding priorities?) but he hopes it will proceed in 2020.

**Date of next meeting**

**February 2020.**

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