

Isle of Wight Cycle Forum Minutes

22 February 2016 @ 6pm

Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service HQ, Newport.

Present:

Will Ainslie (WA)	Cyclist
Sue Bailey (SB)	Re-Cycle Bikes to Africa /Cyclist
Alec Broome (AB)	Isle of Wight Council Sports Unit
Kevin Burton (KB)	Island Roads
Dizz Dyer (DD)	IW Inst Advanced Motorists /Cyclist
Alex Lawson (AL)	Cyclewight & Wayfarers
Val Lawson (VGL)	Cyclewight & Wayfarers
John Lee (JL)	Road cyclist
Sandie Norris (SN)	Wight Wanders
Aaron Orman (AO)	Visit IoW Travel Ambassador
Tom Ransom (TR)	Sustrans
Malcolm Ross (MR)	Cyclewight
Gareth Shilton (GS)	GP Sports / Mountain Bike Centre
Megan Streb (MS)	Smarter Choices Coordinator, South Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Sustrans
Tim Thorne (TT)	Cyclewight Chairman
Simon Wells (SW)	Powerbike World
Matthew Whitaker (MW)	Cyclewight
Mari-Louise White (MLW)	Isle of Wight Council Events
George Wilks (GW)	Cyclist

0. Introduction

Apologies were received from Jamie Kelly, Jennine Gardiner, Dave Kitching, Ian Jenkins, Nick Farthing, Martin Gibson, Claire Compton.

1. Safety: including Southern Vectis safety promotion & 20mph residential limits

Dizz Dyer said the safety promotion with graphics & slogans such as "Please go Wider for the Rider" was expected to go ahead, although the money will soon no longer be available. The graphics show cyclist & horse rider and the aim is to encourage motorists to give more room to vulnerable users.

20mph zones in residential areas were sought by Cyclewight. TT said that Portsmouth have introduced 20mph zones successfully. Alec Broome said the Sports Unit have reached out to schools to promote cycling. All say that parents are reluctant for their children to cycle due to the danger from traffic. Will Ainslie said there was now widespread adoption of 20mph schemes across the country. Evidence is mixed of success. The actual reduction in speed is slight.

KB said that a forthcoming change in traffic regs will require fewer signs, making it easier to introduced these schemes. Also lighting of such signs will no longer be required which is ongoing cost saving.

Island Roads are evaluating high risk areas where pedestrian/motorist conflict arises - e.g. Godshill.

He also mentioned that IR talk to their opposite numbers in Portsmouth on the situation with their 20mph zones: Recorded speed reduction (not a lot), complaints by public (more as they expect lower speed) and police enforcement (well yes but there are many laws to be enforced).

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WA said CycleWight should ascertain criteria for introduction.

KB said any local authority should consult Chief Constable (implies we need to contact police and the Council).

2. Sustainable Transport current project updates: Aaron Orman re. Travel Ambassadors & Red Squirrel Electric Bikes.

Aaron said Travel Ambassadors had been to the Outdoor Show along with Mari-Louise White, and next week would be at the Caravan Show at Birmingham, in order to encourage visitors to come to the Island. Statistics from last summer showed an increase from 1% to 2% of those using bicycles as their main means of travel while on holiday, but not so good in September possibly due to bus use instead. There had been a positive feature in Cycling Weekly on the Island. He added that cycle training is on offer to businesses. This is part of the promotion program funded by the LSTF. Ongoing funding is hoped for from applications for Transition Funding.

TT said that Cyclewight had bid successfully for LSTF funds for the Round the Island Cycle Route map. He added that the Chalk Ridge Extreme route was enthusiastically reviewed by a visitor from New Zealand who hired a bike for 2 days.

WA asked if route waymarks had been provided? AB said this was contracted to be done. TT said he had seen the signs in several places.

AO described the scheme to hire electric bikes. The official launch is in March. There are 25 bikes now available based in Newport. Initial funding of £7000 has been received with more in April. There is also the Twizy, electric car hire scheme.

Hire outposts will be at Ryde Canoe Lake TIP, in Cowes and at Wight Cycle Hire. The long term plan is to lease bikes to bike shops and to businesses providing accommodation. It is hoped that the facility will be used by tourists in the summer and by locals in winter. The charging point network is in place with more than 20 locations. SW added that the network was commenced 4 or 5 years ago.

3. Sustainable Transport future projects & funding: Megan Streb, Smarter Choices Co-ordinator Hampshire & Isle of Wight.

Sustrans have worked with 47 out of the 49 schools to provide services including skills training. This covers 10000 students. They even had a "glow ride" at night time with everyone very well lit up. The next phase of funding is sought: the IWC is preparing proposals to be sent by 4 March deadline. As some infrastructure funding is included, these will fulfil a slightly different role from that of the LSTF. Sustrans help schools to find the best use of funds in their circumstances, e.g. do they need cycle shelters or other facility. They hope to employ 4 part-time officers as two full time equivalent posts.

The so-called Transition Fund of the DfT will become the "Access Fund", which targets access to skills and employment. This is for next year, 2017-18. It is to support a mix of towns and rural areas.

The current local authority applications will have a very fast response from DfT, with 80 authorities applications and replies by mid-April. This means that authorities need to be ready by the beginning of May. MS noted that DfT emphasise the role of the Local Enterprise Partnership including the Solent LEP.

TT commented that we really want capital projects not revenue.

AB noted the emphasis on education for employment skills. The IWC is hoping to benefit from the funds, and is a separate entity from Sustrans. He asked for ideas to be sent to him.

WA asked if the people currently being funded will be supported? MS said the government money will be spread widely with matched funding sought. There will be some capital allocation.

4. Cycle Festival: Mari-Louise White

IWC Events team have been at the London Outdoor & Bike Show promoting the Walking & Cycling festivals on the Island. Funding for the Cycling Festival is not yet secured & they will know next month.

There is a workplace Cycling Challenge along with a Walking Challenge, which they arrange with support from Public Health. The aim is to get people to increase the mileage each day with the first week as baseline. The challenge runs for 6 weeks from March into April and 40 people have signed up already. See www.sunseaandcycling.com/ and Facebook & Twitter.

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5. Cycle Track Access: Joint use paths & lanes, East Cowes, Whitwell-Niton Parish Council.

TT said Cyclewright has prepared a list of inexpensive ways to improve cycling on the Island. This includes a suggested joint use paths at Quarr Hill, and advisory cycle lanes such as Whippingham Road.

Niton & Whitwell Parish Council plan to improve the Allotment Road to Ashknowle Lane bridleway, by laying an all-weather surface usable by walkers and cyclists. This is to be carried out in late spring or summer this year funded by external grants.

6. Island Roads

Kevin Burton said Island Roads has established the Isle of Wight Foundation, a charitable trust which will fund schemes to tackle social exclusion by supporting schemes which provide access to employment & build better communities. The company also grants 2 paid days per year to its employees so that they can be physically involved.

Island Roads maintain a Safety and Accessibility Register to track issues on the road network. Contact Antony Cooke to add to this.

Commencing on 29 February for 4 weeks the Wootton Bridge area will be resurfaced and marked as a joint car and cycle route, connecting with the Ashlake to Quarr cycle route. This work draws on LSTF capital.

Also work is commencing on improvements at Coppins Bridge, Fairlee Road and the Racecourse. AL asked if it was possible to provide a cycle route on the verge connecting the Island Harbour entrance road to the traffic islands at the summit of the hill. KB replied the verge was too narrow to do this easily, but the Pop festival company own this land so something may be possible.

WA asked if it was cheaper to identify cycle routes with paint on the ground rather than signage. KB said that road markings are relatively cheap but one cyclist symbol on the ground is expensive and may have to be renewed after 3 years. A sign may last for 15 years.

Sue Bailey asked if other new road schemes in the next year can be discussed with Cyclewright? KB said the programme is announced in November for the following year. He agreed to notify to Cyclewright for publishing on the website. This year is the peak of Island Roads programme: there are 130 km of new road between now and the end of summer compared to 105 km last year.

With reference to the list of cycle related issues raised at the last meeting,

- The trees roots between Langbridge and Alverstone: some of these are not their responsibility.
- Shide and Blackwater cycle track surface. As part of the contract it will be maintained to the standard it was when IR took it over. Only remedial action will be taken. No high quality surface will be applied.
- Hurstake Road, Newport - renewal of surface. Is there a date? It is scheduled for this year. WA pointed out it was planned for last year. It is an important part of the Red Squirrel Trail.
- The surfaces of the bridge at Stag Lane and the board-walk at Horryngford. Sorted – drain holes now stop puddles and gritting is carried out at Stag Lane.
- The closure of the Shide to Blackwater track in the summer period. IR recognised this was a poor situation. The work carried out was by the Environment Agency. KB suggested from now IR will carry the work out themselves if needed and bill the EA.
- The state of Brocks Copse Road. This is due to be resurfaced but not this year. There was general agreement that this was disappointing as it is such a busy and dangerous piece of road.

KB said their system allocates improvements fairly across the island based on measurements carried out on skid resistance and other factors. They can perform work very quickly when they are able to work straight through.

JL asked if Island Roads can assess hazards for cyclists such as potholes. KB said they look for defects that would affect any road user, not specifically cyclists. However they have staff who cycle to work and

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are consequently aware of the issues.

7. Isle of Wight Mountain Bike Centre: Gareth Shilton

Gareth said that GP Sports are arranging events at Cheverton Farm "Chevy Chase". They have been asked by Andrew Hodgson the farmer to do this. The aim is to encourage more use and to develop the routes. They hope in the future to provide better toilets and cafe facilities. There are also holiday cottages on the site.

Membership fees are needed to fund what they do. £2.50 per day or £25 pa is charged. A source of investment would be good – the farmer applied unsuccessfully for LSTF funding. AB said that Sport England can provide funds to clubs but this makes it difficult for the mountain bike centre to receive funds.

WA asked if Gavin could be involved. TT said Gavin is no longer involved in running a club. Faye Faber is running a cycle speedway at Smallbrook Stadium for children & for adults.

AL said that Forestry Commission ranger Jamie Kelly had sent advice to the Cycle Forum regarding Brighstone Forest which is near to Cheverton Farm. While contractors are harvesting timber it is unsafe to use the unofficial trails there which will be closed. However Forestry Commission recognise the demand from mountain bikers and JK plans to get together those parties interested.

8. Powerbike World: Simon Wells

Simon is establishing this business which was formerly Blackman Power Bikes. He became involved 2 ½ years ago. There have been problems with electric bikes which gave them a bad reputation. However real engineering has been applied to ebikes, which has led to their serious use. The ability to get from A to B efficiently & sustainably has transformed towns and countryside across Europe.

He is based at Lake, (opposite Morrisons) and will open fully in early March. He sells various brands with motors by Bosch who provide good after sales support for the electronics. The price bracket £2,000 to £2,500 is high so he is looking into leasing options. The batteries have 2 year guarantees.

His rear wheel drive bikes have motors which drive through gearing, which is advantageous on the Island hills. Those whose introduction to electric bikes comes from front wheel drive on the Island may be disappointed.

9. Wight Wanders: Sandie Norris

Wight Wanders make arrangements for walking & cycling trips to the Island, often self-led but with routes and accommodation planned. Sandie expressed interest in electric bikes – many of their clients are accustomed to cycling but would enjoy the fun of electric bikes. She is also interested in providing tandems. They ask all their clients to provide feedback. The view of the Island is very positive although sometimes the accommodation gives problems. Many have been to the Island as children. Two thirds bring their own bikes.

10. AOB

It was noted that June 2013 is the last time the police attended the Isle of Wight Cycle Forum.

Simon Wells is working on a one-off magazine to cover cycling, walking, and getting round on the Island. It is aimed at a local readership rather than at tourists. It will be available next month & will be 10,000 copies. He is looking for suggestions & ideas – send to powerbikeworld@gmail.com.

Tom Ransom said that Sustrans are able to provide cycle training to adults & parents as well as to children who are trained as part of their work with schools. MS said the more cyclist there are the better as a tipping point will be reached.

AB said the Bicycle Island provide free cycling & bike maintenance training based on Medina Leisure Centre on Saturdays: see <https://www.urgecycles.co.uk/bicycle-island>

Date of next meeting

..... June 2016, 1800,

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