

CYCLEWIGHT Committee, 21 Jul 2021 at Merstone Station

Present: Alex Lawson (AL), Val Lawson (VGL), Malcolm Babymaker Ross (MR), Tim Thorne (TT), Mick Watts (MWa) Apologies: Matt Whittaker MWh

1. Meeting with Councillors

The IWC is now run by the Alliance group of 18 members. TT, MWh, GW have talked to Councillors Joe Lever, Phil Jordan, John Medland and Chris Quirk over the last couple of weeks. They discussed how cycling/walking projects will be planned, funded and delivered, and how the current network is maintained or not as the case may be. Cllr John Medland will lead on cycling and walking for the Alliance Group. He asked for our input on a Cycling Strategy. We have previously provided this to the council and it was submitted to Hants CC for the re-writing of the new Local Transport Plan, which they are going to undertake on behalf of IWC. There is some acceptance that the IWC is short on cycling expertise and is keen to use local people within local groups. Cllr Jordan suggested that the Alliance group believe that IWC do not receive value for money from the PFI contract and are seeking for a more pragmatic approach with more emphasis on the spirit of cooperation and common sense. It was noted that the IWC ROW personnel contribute a lot but are working within limits of funding and remit. IWC, through the expertise of Chris Gregory, has knowledge of how to succeed in budget applications, although current schemes to support cycling are mostly revenue schemes not capital funded projects.

Remedies could include a cycling working party convened by the council, an officer appointed to manage active travel projects. See also item 6 below. *****TT to contact Cllr Phil Jordan to confirm that Route 23 at Blackwater vegetation has not been cut back*****.

2. Jobs within CW.

TT outlined possible roles as follows. 1. Chairman. 2. Secretary 3. Treasurer. 4. Newsletter editor. (Comms) 5. Island Roads lead. 6. Events (e.g. fixing the AGM, planning publicity displays, not so much rides which we did in the past). 7. AIWPC liaison. 8. Campaigns. *****Please add any you can think of.**

It was felt that more clearly defined roles would make us more efficient as a group.

It was noted that local campaigning with local knowledge & contacts is important for improving routes. MR said he has a working party of five members who are looking at how cycling & walking works in Ryde. These people were recruited by contacting the CW membership.

TT thought we could use MemberMojo to identify members with local knowledge, who could possibly be co-opted without attending meetings. We should contact non-Alliance Group county councillors to ask them to give support to improvements in their area. Councillor Suzie Ellis is the Conservative lead on environment. **TT to contact her.**

3. Government Funding

Emergency Active Travel Fund EATF1 was not fully spent. The works carried out were from IWC budget and not from EATF fund. Funds from EATF 1 are to be carried through to be available in EATF2.

£1.75billion has been allocated by the DfT for the local authorities, who can apply for the first tranche by 9th August. An IWC meeting on 20 July took place, on the feasibility of applying for these funds, to which TT was invited. Various officers and Chris Gregory attended. There is a new officer, David Newton in overall charge of Infrastructure &

Regeneration. The meeting considered the viability of a bid because of the complexity of the bid documents and the short time scale. Bid criteria are strict & schemes must be shown to contribute to active travel. The IoW can point to some progress in Newport & Ryde with the LCWIPs. Various proposals had already been prepared and costed. These costs have to include a large element for ongoing maintenance. Some of these schemes were on CycleWight's original list of priorities.

A list of proposals was then suggested for the application if it is to go ahead.

The new leader Cllr Lora Peacey-Wilcox will need to approve the bid. (LPW has since confirmed her support.)

It was felt that if the bid was to go forward and be successful that it will encourage other Councils on the Island to become more engaged with cycling and walking. Cowes for example. There is a need to improve cycling access in Cowes, and a cross Cowes route which is safe and legal for cyclists?

4. Niton/Blackgang?

TT has been contacted by the local parish council to seek our support for a cycling/walking route next to the road from Niton to Blackgang. It is suggested a footpath exists already (?). We agreed that is is a good idea but not a priority. TT pointed out that the Whitwell to Niton section might be a higher priority given increasing traffic volumes. Niton Parish Council have supported the public toilet, one of an endangered species on the Round the Island route.

5. Cycle Strategy

As noted above we have been made aware that the Cycling Strategy put forward by CycleWight has been used by Hampshire local authority, subcontracted to write next LTP. We have just been made aware of this and are disappointed about not being informed.

Once we see the new LTP we will need to consider how to update or revise the CycleWight strategy.

6. Meeting with IWC/IR 17th August

An inspection of the cycle track at Blackwater and on to Herringford by IWC Highways Inspectors which took place on 12 May was joined by Mick Watts & Pete Dyer for CW. Mick prepared a visit report which highlighted the Blackwater section. (Report since circulated to LAF members.) The role of the IWC inspectors is to identify health hazards. We are invited to meet with Stewart Chandler who manages the PFI contract and an Island Roads representative on 17 August at Pedallers. This meeting will be attended by some or all of MWA, MR, GW, This is to help how CW understand the various people's jobs. ****TT to circulate invitation.****

7. Bells

Bells: Ongoing. (AL & VGL have ½ box remaining)..

8. LAF

The next IWC/ROW Local Access Forum, on 2 September at 4pm (on zoom), will be attended by a representative from Island Roads. Jennine Gardner the secretary has asked for questions from LAF members (i.e. AL). At the previous meeting these questions were tabled: *how could better pedestrian connectivity along busy roads be created, access issues faced by disabled persons, concerns about hedge cutting, poor Beryl e-Scooter placement, can Traffic Regulation Orders stop pedestrian access, better coordinated working between utility company's / Island*

Roads in respect of giving advance public notice about closures that impact walkers, cyclists & horse riders.

MR suggested asking if a bike mounted camera can capture footage from a bicycle point of view. NOT SURE ABOUT THIS AS A QUESTION FOR ISLAND ROADS – I CAN PUT IN MY REPORT FROM CW TO LAF

Further questions please if any, from committee who missed the Merstone session, before 30 July. It is possible to attend the LAF as a guest.

9. AOB

VGL asked if there is any feedback from the St Mary's Interchange concerning its use by cyclists and possible accidents. TT will put this question on the CycleWight Facebook page. In fact are cyclists even daring to use the new road scheme? **TT has done this. There were four responses. Two views in favour – two against.**

AL said the cycle route from Newport to Wootton runs alongside Fairlee Road. In particular the section from Mews Lane to the solar panels uses shared footway which is dangerously overhung by branches forcing cyclists to duck. Due to the foliage the footway is very narrow, and high speed traffic is in close proximity. As well as cyclists, pedestrians are expected to use this footway, which interconnects PROW footpaths although it is not itself a footpath. Given the large sums spent by IWC implementing the EATF1 this is abominable. **TT to contact Island Roads**

AL asked if there is news concerning a link from Rookley to the Newport - Sandown track via the existing A37 bridleway which needs to be engineered to make an all-weather track? **TT needs to follow this up.**

The meeting closed with further discussion about the costs of any improvement to cycle track not strictly covered by the PFI monopoly.