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Will you help to make things better?

Two important documents have been released in the last few months which are vital tools in improving the provision of cycling. There is a need for them both to be adopted by the various authorities on the Island eg IoW Council, Primary Care Trust etc. The CTC's 'New Vision For Cycling' sets out the future for cycling via 6 themes, which need to be addressed. Some of the themes are; Cycle friendly planning and design, safe drivers and vehicles and better provision for combining cycling and public transport. I am sure for most of the members that these ideas are ones which we all feel strongly about and do feel that they are not always at the forefront of the minds of people who make the decisions linked to these areas on the Island.

The second is from the Department of Transport which is a document is called, 'Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance'. The significance of this is that it calls for all planners and engineers to start from the premise of reducing traffic and its speed. – the two factors that reduce people cycling. Another feature is that it suggests that Councils adopt the hierarchy of provision principle – which means any specification begins with pedestrians, then to cyclists, to cars etc. In other words to mix metaphors sail before steam! This is important and is standard practice in many countries. It would be fair to say that the CTC has some reservations about this document: the biggest one is to get people who are involved in designing cycling and pedestrian facilities to refer to this document at all.

We are asking people to be ready to become involved by helping us the make sure that these policy documents become part of Council policy. After the local elections we would like all our members to write to their new councillor to ask them what are their views on cycling and are they willing to support a more sustainable approach to transport on the Island. You should draw their attention to these two documents and ask them to support their adoption by the Council. A document with suggestions on what to write and a link to the list of new Councillors will be on our web site.

Congratulations

It has been wonderful to see the improvements made to the Cowes to Sandown route over the last few months. The improvement in the tracks damaged by animals near Newport is great. It is even good to see some animal tracks in the concrete to give it that natural look. The boardwalk at Herringford appears to have met the approval of the most hardened campaigner, so well done the Council. These projects have taken a great deal of tenacity to deliver. It must also be recognised that as well as the large amount of money it cost, in some cases the finance could have actually gone to other areas of Council expenditure.

Cycle Racks.

The council has 40 racks ready to put up around the Island. They have a list prepared with the help of CycleWight members. There are a few which are still to be placed. If there is anywhere you think they could be placed please let us know. The council is willing to place them on private property eg Pub, shop front if the owner is willing to accommodate the racks. This is a great way to make a statement.

New for this year

The budget has been outlined for this year and some of the proposals include:

More resurfacing of the Sandown to Newport

Work on the flooding at Dodnor Lane

Work on the path at Halberry Lane

Key Lane, Brading

Blackhouse Quay to Little London

Improvement to signage in Newport and Seaview.

It will also now be legal to turn right from Newport High Street in St James Square.

Great News

This year's randonee was a record breaker on its 25th anniversary 2156 cyclists took part this year, up from 1644 in 2008 which was great to see. Of the 2156 riders, 1851 took part in the 100km ride and 305 in the 55km ride. This is all done by word of mouth.

It does raise the questions how much money does this bring to the Island? Is it not time that Red Funnel and Wightlink made some contribution towards the day? At over £11 a ticket and not including the cost of a cup of tea and sticky bun they must love the day.

Local elections.

Please make sure if you are approached by a potential candidate for the local elections ask them for their views on provision for cycling and pedestrians. Emphasise to them that sustainable transport provides the solution to transport issues on the island – not more cars. Following on from that, please read on.

Can we develop a vision of “Cycle Wight”?

By John Medland

How do we develop an integrated alternative transport system as a part of the Eco Island strategy? I am standing in the forthcoming Council elections and my main strategy I call “Cycle Wight” a plan to link up and improve our byways into an accessible well sign-posted and publicised non-motor traffic network. We see this in the Netherlands, Denmark and other continental countries. I imagine Newport at the centre of a hub linked by trunk routes on the former railways to an improved coastal and rural network linking up schools and our principle tourist sites. This is not a completely cycle friendly idea as it needs to include other non-motor travellers. However I see a safe and attractive cycling network as central to the strategy

If it could happen we could more easily achieve reductions in CO2 emissions and reduce road congestion and accidents by increasing fair-weather bike commuting. With safe and attractive routes more people would walk and cycle, improving Island health. By opening up beautiful new areas of the Island to easy access away from the dangerous and noisy roads we could create an extraordinary new tourist product. We could attract tourists for most of the year complementing and not competing with the current tourist industries. New tourist businesses could be created, offering accommodation refreshments and services; e.g. rural pubs.

I'm sure many of you agree, but can you help me to define this strategy? As a non-cyclist bus-user I lack your specialist knowledge. I am looking to get your advice and ideas that could go into the cooking pot. Who should I be talking to? What routes should be joined and where? How should certain country lanes be shared with motor traffic? How could safety for cyclists be improved? How could cycling services be developed? If you have anything to contribute please write to me at jcmedland@turboweb.org or 8 Golden Ridge, Freshwater, PO40 9LE.

Our Patron

Marvellous news that our patron, Celia Imrie, has mentioned CycleWight. In an interview she has done for one of the tourism magazines. Celia talks of the highlights of cycling on the Island.

Cycling Festival 2009

The dates for this year's IW Cycling Festival are 19 - 27th September 2009. It has been moved back a week because it clashes with the Bestival and to get the reduced ferry prices it had to be on different dates. The festival will include something for all levels of cyclist including the 70mile Cycle the Wight, Hills Killer mountain bike challenge, Triathlons, the crazy Sink or Swim race, British Cycling events and many more guided rides. CycleWight will be in St James Square on 20th June promoting the event.

For further details please contact the IW Council Events Team on 01983 823070 or email claire.critchison@iow.gov.uk. or the official web site <http://www.sunseaandcycling.com>

It is now official

The latest figures continue to show that the number people injured from cycling are falling on the Island and nationally. One of the interesting things is that the figures appear to show a link to the actual number of people cycling. In London for instance cycling has increased by 91% in the last 8 years but corresponding casualties has fallen by 33% The same goes for Leicester, cycling up by 43% and 11% fall in cycle casualties. This once again shows how important it is for cycling to be encouraged on the Island. The other gain from more people cycling is less pressure on the health service as people become more fit.

Connected to the to the idea of encouraging people to cycle more we have been in touch with the Police after there being an article in the CP about people feeling intimidated by bad driving. The reply said, “You can report any person for driving dangerously anywhere on the Island and at any time of the day or night, this should be done through Hampshire Constabulary's telephone number 08450454545”

Final thought: The average distance cycled by the British population each year is 60 km. On this basis there would be one fatality every half a million years. (Last fact from the CTC)

Membership

In the square by this item there is a box, which if ticked highlights your membership is now due. Please re-join as we rely on your small membership fee to keep us going.

£5.00 Per. Household. £3.00 Unwaged.

Please make all cheques payable to CycleWight. Mr D Jackson, Toad Hall, Church Rd Havenstreet, PO33 4DW