

Southampton Cycling Campaign

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 12th October 2015

Those Present: David Cooper (Chair), Stephen Edwards, Lindsi Bluemel, David Pemberton, John Heath, Jim Probert, Eleanor van der Hoest, John Heath, John Bingham, Tim Wakely, Dr. Sue White, Dr. Hugh Davis, Jon Chant, Tina Davis, Pete Davis (Note Taker), [new lady member?],

Guest observer: Simon Hill of Highfield Residents Association.

Apologies: Eleanor van der Hoest, Eric Reed, Liz and Grant Holmes, Andre Ventress

Guest Speakers: Dale Bostock Active Travel Officer of Southampton City Council and
Stuart Williams Southampton City Council “Bike It” Officer.

Notes on Guest Speakers talks and discussions:

1. Stuart Williams gave a talk outlining his role as the 'Bike It' officer working for Sustrans within the City Council. His work involved promoting and supporting cycling education in 25 schools in the city, mainly primary, in the 4 to 11 years age group. He spoke at assemblies, in lessons and held sessions with parents which he felt were very valuable. All schools were offered cycling lessons under the Bike-Ability scheme but not all took it up. Other services provided are visits by Dr Bike, information on safe routes and healthy eating. He always referred problems with local infrastructure in accessing schools to those responsible in the council. He asked the Campaign for its views on how to encourage cycling to schools and also called for volunteers to join him in this work. Whilst there were recognised barriers to this, such as the number of parents driving to school and their attitude toward the safety of cycling there were notable successes such as Mansell School in Millbrook which achieved 95% access by “active travel” options.

2. Dale Bostock gave an update on the list of schemes presented to the recent Southampton Cycling Forum:

(1) Kingsbridge Lane: this is the footpath from Marlands Rd (Civic Centre) to West Park Road linking onto the Central Station. Whilst there was no funding at present it was proposed as a “public realm” improvement in conjunction with that now completed on the north side of the station. He outlined three options, one as a footway only, the other two allowing cycles, one segregated and the other shared use. The meeting saw no benefit at all in spending money on this route to allow cyclists to use it when it was not needed. There was good alternative access to the station on the north side but what was really needed was proper safe access for cyclists to the south side.

(2) Central Station Bridge: This project was at feasibility stage and he showed plans to provide a route across between Shirley Road (Four Post Hill) and Mountbatten Way. The route linking Millbrook Station footbridge to the Central Station on the south side is to be closed in due to Network Rails' proposals to add an extra track for freight traffic. The only route available would be via Millbrook Road East and C Stn Bridge. A shared use path system could be created on the existing bridge. However, the carriageway and footpaths were already both very narrow. A better solution was a new bridge built next to the existing with a 4 metre wide cycle and footway. Whilst this would be very expensive it would be the best solution. Dale pointed out that N/R had only recently resurrected this project and he would now inaugurate the consultations and meetings on it as previously promised. DC responded that the Campaign would now look at this at a later meeting.

(3) Pound Tree Road/ Palmerston Rd Junction: This project would introduce innovative combined cycle and pedestrian crossings at this cross roads to South Front. These signalised crossings would be arranged so that cycles would cross on a separate but parallel path next to that used by pedestrians. Access would be from the widened shared use pavements on each corner linked to the park paths. However, this development depended on the results of a survey to be carried out by City engineers of pedestrian and cycle flows. LB noted that it appeared to be a system which could be used to advantage at many other locations in the city. TD felt that action should not depend on survey results but on making a desirable route safer. SE suggested that the Campaign could do such surveys as it had done on the Saltmarsh Lane junction on west end of Itchen Bridge recently.

Dale Bostock also responded to questions on other issues:

1. **Avenue Routes** : DB pointed out that the main benefit would be a new shared use path on the east side from Westwood Road to Lodge Road and then on south via a cycle path on the little used inner lane of the Inner Avenue down to the YMCA. Members pointed out that the recently published Traffic Regulation Order on this was flawed with four factual errors in the wording of the description. Whilst a corrected version had been put out PD felt that this rendered it void and that it should be republished and re-advertised again with a new later date for responses. DB said he would take this up with those responsible in the City's transport and legal departments. DC pointed out that the campaign objected to the change on the west side from a segregated cycle path to a shared use path which would make a bad situation worse in front the shops and businesses, particularly outside Dominoes Pizza. SH hoped that the poor condition of the surfacing and the problems at every junction and property entrance would be improved here.

2. **Lordshill Cycleways** DB Admitted that these routes were missed off the new Southampton Cycle Map. They were also little known about, little used and not maintained or signed well. Where there was a maintenance issue he encouraged members to report it on "Action Line". As these were potentially useful paths these will be looked at in their Strategic Network Review. Members had little faith in "reporting" things to "Action Line" as this rarely resulted in any action being taken.

3. **No Right Turns Except Cycles signs** He had compiled a list of locations which was to be put forward for feasibility studies and safety audits on a selected few. He requested our feedback on this list with our list of priorities as soon as possible. (By next meeting).

4. **Platform Road/Dock Gate 4:** Members were very disappointed that all of the dual carriageway works had been complete for some time but the new cycle path through Volkes Park was far from complete. Members felt this put cyclists at risk without this facility.

5. **Infrastructure Generally** DB noted that they were looking at Strategic Routes across the city and particularly trying to improve connectivity into the city centre in conjunction with Sustrans. This had been raised at the recent Cycling Strategy Workshop. They were looking at these and other schemes so as to have plans ready to submit with bids for funding when the opportunity arose. SW and JB felt that when money was spent it often seemed not to result in the best outcomes such as the junction at Saltmarsh Lane. DB responded that prioritising work was always a difficult juggling act for the City between needs and limited resources.

6. **Saltmarsh Lane Junction** This was being looked on favourably by Transport For London with a view to their introducing such junctions there. They had examined it in great detail and published a very good animated video of how it is supposed to work.

DC pointed out that the preliminary results of our recent survey showed this junction to be dangerous for cyclists with high risk of “left hook” collisions and it needed urgent changes. It also showed many cyclists felt it necessary to avoid turning right on the road by using pavements or underpasses.

7. **Second Avenue.** Extra funding had been made available and the latest scheme comprising a segregated cycle track on the north side of the road will be going ahead now.

8. **Other routes.** DB reported that they had money from the Vospers site developers for improvements to Woolston's Victoria Road shopping street. It was a particular disappointment to members that the once promised cycle contra-flow lane had been omitted from the now completed scheme altogether. JB asked just where cycling came on the council's agenda. DB felt it was high; contrary to other views. He acknowledged our differences over this and wished the Campaign could adopt a more forward looking and positive approach. He would talk to Development Control over getting more, and better targeted funding from developers for cycling infrastructure. He looked forward to closely cooperating with us over the “No Right Turn” proposals [- as (3) above].

Whilst acknowledging that things had gone wrong in the past SE wished to see us to adopt a more positive and pragmatic approach to new proposals and our relationship with the City Council in the future. Asked who the main decision makers were within the council over transport issues DB pointed out that the head Officer was Paul Walker and that Councillor Jackie Rayment was the elected Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport. He pointed out that the Highways Budget was around £10m , 11% of which was allocated to Sustainable Transport.

In thanking DB and SW, DC concluded that the Campaign obviously had lots to consider and lots to do. But fundamentally, the Campaign's experience was that much had been done and had happened without consultation; with many mistakes made and disappointment with outcomes of many schemes where promised cycle facilities were either poor or just not put in at all.

Other Normal Business

LB had received a Questionnaire/ Survey from the City Council on improving access to Guildhall Square which was to be returned by 30th October. It was understood that this square was to be “open access” for both pedestrians and cyclists. Also DB's predecessors lead us to believe that West Marlands Road would be two-way for cyclists so this should be another “one way except cycles” provision. Problems were also created by excessive bus speeds across it on Above Bar Street on the east side. There should also be many more bike stands installed. LB would make a submission on behalf of the Campaign and individuals who wanted to could also respond directly themselves.

Date of next Meeting 7:30pm Monday 9th November 2015