

The Isle of Wight Council

Cycle Forum meeting 01/03

Seaclose Offices, Newport, 28th August 2003

Minutes

Attending:

George Wilks - Sustrans

Martin Tigg – Sustrans

Tim Thorne – on behalf of Valerie Lawson, Cyclewright

Simon Richardson - Hants Police

Malcolm Ross – Cyclewright

Tim Slade – IWC Highways department

Peter Krstenic.

Jeff Smith - The Bike Shed

Alex Russell – IWC Highways department

Salli Bice – Wight Leisure IWC

Lee Skinner - IWC Highways department

Steve Chapman – Offshore Sports

Welcome

Lee Skinner from the IWC welcomed the members of the forum. Formalities of the meeting were pointed out. It was explained that the forum had not met for a reasonable time, due to workload and resources. The forum as now being run by the Rights of Way department and would get back into a regular timetable of meetings.

Update on Cycling Schemes for this year

Tim Slade from the IWC discussed the schemes that are planned for 2003. Completed schemes were:

The recent opening of National Cycle Network Route 23 on 21st June 2003. This route was near to completion with only some signs, gates and items arising from the safety audit to be done. The route was proving to be very popular and the IWC would conduct further monitoring of use.

- Other possible schemes for the year include:

Wootton High Street bypass. The IWC have the budget for this route taking riders off of the main road. This is also important as it is part of the 'Round the island Randonee'.

Yarmouth to freshwater Cycleway. Surfacing is needed from the Causeway to Afton Road, Freshwater.

The cycleway connection between Fishbourne Lane to Binstead Church.

It was explained that beyond 2003 there was a new budgeting plan in place. Departments will now have to bid for budgeting in 3 year plans. Rights of Way have bid for £250K per year for 3 years, for cycling schemes.

Alex Russell from the IWC discussed the last items on the Route 23 cycleway. These items should be in place within 3 months. The next major works planned is a sweep of all the loose gravel.

The signage through the towns was queried by MT. AR and LS explained that signage is being planned through the towns and would be ordered very soon.

2003 Cycling Festival

Salli Bice from Wight Leisure discussed the 2003 Cycling Festival, which will run from 20th September to 5th October 2003. She explained that the usual organiser, Ruth Jones, is on maternity leave, and that the task had been passed to her with short notice. The lack of time and resources would not allow a large event as there was in 2002.

The different events in the festival are:

Road Race including some of the top UK teams and possibly teams from Ireland and Holland. SP Systems are sponsoring this event to be held on the first weekend of the festival. 160+ riders were expected.

There will be an open day being held on 27th September at St Thomas's Square, Newport. This event will include displays and guests to give the public a broad picture of the cycle links available on the island and beyond. Salli invited anyone who would like to be included on this day to contact her.

The last weekend of the festival will hold the seven hills killer challenge cycling event. After this event there would be a final party held at Sandown Airport, which the forum were extended an invitation.

Salli explained that she would like to make a small directory of all things connected to cycling to be sent and given out for the festival. Entries were invited to be sent to Salli at Wight Leisure.

The website address for the festival is www.sunseaandcycling.com

The timescale and events were discussed and some sponsors were queried and suggested.

2003 Seven Hills Killer Challenge

Jeff Smith from The Bike Shed discussed the 7 & 14 hills killer challenge off road cycling event. The 'awareness', benefits and tourism aspects of island cycling events was explained and how Jeff became involved with the killer challenge.

The event is not a race, but more of a personal challenge. Most riders set out in small teams at different times.

The sponsors for this year include Watson, Bull & Porter, Wight Leisure, Wight Crystal, Lloyds Bank and The Bike Shed. Water bottles from the Bike Shed would be presented to each finishing rider.

JS discussed the national magazine advertising that had been placed and how it could benefit the island. With the right organisation the 7 & 14 hills killer challenge could become a large regular event for the island.

MR asked if the event was aimed at the hardcore mountain biker

JS answered that this was not the case and anyone with a bike and a cycling helmet could join in. They are aiming to provide a smaller '3 hills challenge' for children or the less active rider.

Potential Development of the new Route 23 Cycleway and new links

George Wilks discussed some aspects of the new cycleway. He explained that many of his questions had already been answered by previous discussion in the meeting.

GW and Mike Marlow had conducted a survey of users on the cycle track at the weekend. 110 cyclists in 90 minutes passed them at East Lane. They tried to talk with all of the riders, but found it impossible with then numbers passing. Comments made by the users were favourable and asking when the next ones are opening. Some of the criticism was about the loose gravel (already planned to be swept soon) and the uneven surface in some areas.

Further discussion covered available budgets for future works on the route 23 cycleway, possible new routes bypassing Dodnor and cutting back and clearing side growth of existing sections.

GW asked about the Medham link.

TS answered that this link is on hold while they negotiate with the landowner. The landowner at present is not co-operating, so there may be a possible compulsory purchase order soon. This order does have a significant cost and risk, so there needs to be careful consideration.

GW asked if the Route 23 Cycleway will get a name, in a similar fashion to the Cuckoo Trial & others.

Signage and costs were discussed and it was suggested that the idea may be put to the council for a decision. In the meantime it was asked if suggestions could be made. It was agreed that suggestions can be made to the Rights of Way Office.

Cycle Hire, tourism and the effect of Route 23 to the Bike Shed

Jeff Smith from the bike shed discussed various points about the Bike Shed. JS introduced Peter, who is employed to take care of the administration of the Bike Shed and deals with the bike hire service.

Customers for bike hire have increased significantly since the Route 23 cycleway was opened. The number of cyclists visiting the bike shed has increased leading to advice being given and more ranges of people cycling in the area.

A satisfaction survey was conducted from the bike hire customers and good feedback was received about the cycleway. The only criticism again was the surface.

TT agreed and informed the group that the Cyclewight website had received many more hits recently.

Free Question Period

MR asked about whether someone could set up a refreshments service at Merstone Station.

AR said it would not be too difficult.

SR asked if there any plans to have 'feeder' links to surrounding areas.

TS answered that this was not planned as the numbers of users was not expected. If this was to be done it would involve negotiation of land.

GW expressed his concern that he did not feel that the traffic section was interested in the needs of cyclists

TS agreed that cyclists may not be at the forefront of their minds as with the recent corridor schemes. The feedback from today's meeting will be mentioned at the section heads meeting.

AR mentioned that not thinking of the cyclists in the corridor schemes may have been an error as they are very understaffed.

TS agreed this could be the case and stated that the purpose of the cycle forum is to make people aware of the needs and wants of the cycling groups

TT asked about safe routes to schools and the next schools to be in the scheme.

TS did not know this information, but would find out for the next meeting

GW asked if the new Wootton to Ryde link would use Spencer Road

TS answered that the link would use Spencer Road. This road would be less of a problem than Ladies Walk, which is a footpath.

MR asked that if we were successful in getting the cycling schemes budget, do we have plans in mind

TS answered that we have several schemes that could be taken 'off the shelf'

The meeting closed at 16:00

End.