

MINUTES OF THE GREAT YARMOUTH CYCLE FORUM
Nelson Room, Town Hall, Great Yarmouth
6.30pm Wednesday 19 May, 2010

Present:

Claire Blamey (CB)	NMAS
Paul Donnachie (PD)	Norfolk County Council
Jo Foden (JF)	Chair, Filby resident & cyclist
John Shaw (JS)	Bradwell Parish Council & cyclist
Stephen Shepherd (SGS)	Vice Chair, GYBC
Graham Smith (GS)	Great Yarmouth resident & cyclist
Stevie Spencer (SS)	Norfolk County Council
Michael Taylor (MT)	GYBC Councillor and cyclist
Margaret Ward (MW)	Gorleston resident & cyclist
David Wardale (DW)	Norfolk County Council
Anthony Wright (AW)	Sustrans Area Manager

Apologies for Absence

Tom Andrews
Barbara Brett
Penny Bailey
Dean Foden
Steve Levan
Nigel Seago
Neil Turner

Minutes from the Great Yarmouth Cycle Forum held on 19 February 2010

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

Outer Harbour Improved Walking and Cycling Links

PD reminded members that the original scheme was to provide a shared use facility from South Beach Parade to the Outer Harbour. He, and the Cycle Forum, had not been happy about this, especially with the section near the Pleasure Beach. Therefore, the scheme had been revisited, with the objective of providing mandatory cycle lanes wherever possible. The new scheme achieved this, apart from at junctions with side roads, where advisory cycle lanes had to be provided. However, because of insufficient road width on the very southern section of the scheme and on Hartmann Road, there were 3 options available:

- Mandatory cycle lane with removed parking
- Advisory cycle lane
- Off-road shared use

There was some discussion about cars parking on advisory cycle lanes, the amount of foot traffic expected once the Outer Harbour was fully operational and how the proposed casino/cinema development south of the Pleasure Beach would effect the proposal. SGS explained the Borough Council would not like to see the loss of any car parking and, therefore, preferred to see a shared use facility in this area. JF and JS felt strongly about this and wanted to see an on-road provision, but AW was not happy with a potential sub-standard advisory cycle lane therefore preferred to see a

shared use facility. There was concern as to how the proposed casino/cinema development would affect the proposed cycle lane, but DW felt that the road layout would probably have to change for the development and the cycle lane would have to be considered at that time. PD felt that from a design point of view the off-road shared facility would offer better provision given the constraints of the highway and he felt this was the best compromise. There was a poll of members present, but, unfortunately no definite outcome.

Action: JF to write to Mott MacDonald explaining the Forum decided to leave the final decision for these two sections with Mott MacDonald and other consultees.

Scheme Updates

Warren Road Cycle Link

PD explained that work on this scheme was supposed to have started in the first week in May, but that an objector had parked a vehicle at the southern end of the route, outside Cliff Cottages, obstructing access so work couldn't begin. The vehicle was parked on a 30 metre section of road that was not adopted, and therefore effectively private. The rural section of the route from Cliff Cottages to the south of the residential area had been adopted by Norfolk County Council (NCC) so that the surface could be improved to a maintainable standard. However, the section the vehicle had been parked on had not been adopted because there was no need to improve the surface, therefore, NCC found itself with a private car parked on private land obstructing the route. Running in parallel with this was also a stage 2 complaint on the legal process that NCC are pursuing. NCC's legal team have decided to take a fresh approach and are looking to adopt the section on the southern part using section 205 of the Highways Act, which would diffuse this ongoing complaint. PD was hopeful that by taking this new legal approach the scheme could be reactivated and completed before the end of the year, but at the moment there was a temporary halt on the scheme. He confirmed that the delay would add to the cost of the project, which would come out of the public purse. JF added that if there was not enough money in the cycle provision budget to complete the scheme that it may be worth losing some of the minor projects to fund it. PD said they had not discussed the additional legal costs, but emphasised that they were committed to delivering this scheme. JF asked if there was anything that the Forum could do to help, such as writing to the papers or getting the schools involved. PD thought it best just to go through the legal process. However, he added they were looking to contact the schools to find out how many kids, who don't already cycle, would bike to school once the scheme is completed. AW added that once the legal side of things had been sorted out there was the potential of a Safe Route to School grant of 40 – 50% of the total cost of the scheme. SS explained that as well as doing Smarter Travel Choices she had also recently picked up Emma Harrison's schools work and was now the schools' Travel Plan Officer for this area. She offered to look into the potential number of new cyclists commuting to school once the scheme is completed. MT suggested that someone should reply to the letters recently published in the Yarmouth Mercury. PD said that their press officer keeps a watching brief on all the local press and they will respond if they feel it is appropriate.

Action: The current position be noted and PD to keep JF informed of progress. SS to contact schools to find out the potential number of school children who would use the route.

St Georges Chapel

DW informed members that the cycle link past Market Gates, which was discussed at the previous meeting, was currently under construction. CB pointed out that there is presently a problem with pedestrians wandering out in front of cyclists using the bus lane from the bus station towards BHS and felt that the new track will attract the same problem, although acknowledged that there is no easy answer to the problem. AW felt that cyclists would be riding very slowly and attentively through this section. It was accepted that during the peak summer months this route might be difficult to use due to the sheer volume of pedestrians. SS asked when it would be completed and suggested that something could be done to promote it around Bike Week in June. DW asked for feedback on the revised corner near Clark Shoes where the cycle lane had been widened by about 800mm into the pavement. CB and JS said the only problems were pedestrians wandering into the lane as they think it is an extension to the footway.

DW spoke about the second link along Yarmouth Way. There was a question on whether funding was available for this at the last meeting, however, it was felt to be an important link and was originally proposed as part of the 'Green Corridor'. Although, initially, it was planned to take the link down one of the Rows towards South Quay, it will now join up with a new 3 metre wide path running through a community garden being built at the library. This will have raised circular beds and possibly a tree in the middle. DW felt that this section should not be promoted as a shared use path until they can get the next phase connecting with South Quay. CB was happy with the scheme but had concerns about the new crossing at the top of Yarmouth Way which is set back from the junction. DW said there had been a lot of discussion when planning this crossing with visually impaired groups etc., and that it would be checked by a safety audit. He added that work would start next week, but that the conversion order hadn't been done yet so that it may take a little time before there is full signing.

Vauxhall Bridge

DW told the Forum that he had been in discussions with local businessman Spencer McCormack, who has been running the Fix Our Station campaign. The meeting had been to discuss how this campaign fits in with the £300,000 Fair Shares lottery funding to 'pump prime' the area. He is keen to come on board and bring the business community, however it's a case of 'show us the money'. A couple of things came out of the meeting; the first was the need to carry out a detailed structural survey to see what life is left in the bridge, which will help determine what option to go for. He hoped to go for a partnership approach to fund the structural survey, with Fair Shares possibly being prepared to contribute. 1st East also had a representative at the meeting, who was fairly confident that they could contribute as the area around the bridge was one of a couple of areas they were planning to move forward on. DW was waiting to see if these offers were firmed up as pledges, and also see what the business community could bring to the table. The other thing that came from the meeting was the wish to have a stakeholder's workshop in a couple of month's time. DW explained he was hoping to get a free visualisation from Mott MacDonald to help 'sell' the proposals to the business community. JS asked what the plans for the bridge were. DW said this depended on what the structural survey revealed. To restore the bridge might cost more than to build a new one and options like opening up public transport access over it would also add to the cost.

SGS noted the new link from Acle New Road to the station was under construction. DW said work had stopped as they were still awaiting approval from Network Rail and mentioned the landscaping would be carried out in the autumn. JS asked about signing the crossing points 'Beware of Cyclists', however, DW said it often works better if there is some confusion as to who has right of way.

Action: JF to write to Brandon Lewis MP thanking him for his support in his tidying up the station campaign and highlighting how integral the bridge is to the station and the corridor.

Burgh Road

DW informed members that the scheme was 95% complete, with some signing and lining still to be done. AW had cycled the scheme and was impressed by the number of school children using it, but was discouraged by the speed of motorists coming off White Horse Roundabout into Burgh Road, and felt that some sort of signage warning of a cycle crossing should be erected. DW said this could be looked at in the stage 3 safety audit.

JS mentioned the 'End of Cycle Route' signs on the section of Burgh Road, where it comes off the roundabout near the Co-op supermarket. Unfortunately, cyclists are joining the footway from the closed end of Mill Lane, behind the Co-op, and are cycling along the footway. He asked if No Cycling signs could be erected here.

Action: Cycle crossing point on Burgh Road to be looked at as part of stage 3 safety audit, and DW to look at erecting No Cycling signs at the end of Mill Lane.

Funding for Cycle Schemes in Great Yarmouth 2010/11

PD revealed that in 2009/10 there had been £990,000 plus £508,000 other funding for cycle schemes in Norfolk and for 2010/11 it was £850,000 plus £475,000 contributions from Sustrans and other sources. Of this £207,000 was being spent in Great Yarmouth. This broke down to:

Warren Road Scheme	£95k
Boundary Road Footbridge – revised signing	£5k
Outer Harbour Links	£50k
Bridge Road to Victoria Road – signing and lining improvements	£5k
St Georges - King St to Alexandra Rd cycle link	£15k
St Georges – Deneside / Yarmouth Way / Tollhouse St Cycle Link	£35k
Blackbird Close, Bradwell – extension to cycle lane	£2k
<u>Total</u>	<u>£207k</u>

He added that they had been looking for a county-wide allocation of £800,000 for 2011/12 and the same for 2012/13, but were now bracing themselves for cuts of up to 40%. This would mean some hard decisions about whether they start reducing improvements or whether they start reducing road maintenance.

Response from First Bus

SGS explained he had written to First Bus regarding the concerns of a number of members about the standards of some of their drivers, and also inviting them to

attend the Forum. He had received a response from the managing director, who is also a cyclist, assuring members that their drivers receive the best training. He added that if any member witnessed an incident that they should contact First (contactus.fec@firstgroup.com) with the details and the matter would be investigated. MT mentioned he was a member of the East Norfolk Travellers Association, which is a bus / rail user's alliance. He explained that all the bus operators come to their AGM, held in Great Yarmouth, and he felt it would be worth writing to them about the problems experienced and asking if they could use their influence with First Bus.

Action: JF to write to the East Norfolk Travellers Association highlighting problems experienced by some members

Great Yarmouth Cycling Statistics

Figures generated by automatic cycle counts on key routes into Yarmouth and Gorleston were distributed to members. AW said the only problem with fixed counters was that any changes or works to the network could change flows and affect the statistics. He said there should be reviews of where the counters are located, but added the original counters would have to remain in place for continuity. Members were surprised at some of the lower figures on what were perceived to be popular routes, such as Lawn Avenue. DP explained the red figures in the tables meant that there was a reason why the figure had dropped.

Action: PD to forward location details of the counters.

Great Yarmouth Green Travel Map Launch

SS told the Forum the Green Travel Map launch in April had been a great success. They had handed out 500 maps on the day and 183 people had tried out cycling. The map is available on NCC's website <http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Consumption/groups/public/documents/article/ncc078470.pdf> or GYBC's Cycle Forum webpage <http://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/environment-planning/planning/planning-policy/cycle-forum.htm>. CB asked if the distribution issues had been sorted. SS said all the maps had been distributed, and she had received a list detailing the 900 locations where they were available. JS pointed out they weren't available at his local bike shop. SS said she was keeping a record of amendments to make to the map which would be carried out as and when the map is reprinted and to forward any errors to her.

Maintenance Issue and Update

SGS told members that Nigel Seago had asked for any maintenance issues to be forwarded to him.

SGS had highlighted the issue of the outstanding cycle lane relining outside RBS and Barclays Bank on Hall Quay, and NS said he had reminded the contractor.

CB reported on a number of issues:

- A missing barrier at Gapton Hall roundabout that had been removed during recent works on the roundabout - SGS to forward details to the Highways Agency.

- Relining works on Suffolk Road cycle lane, opposite Simpson's garage, not as per original scheme with solid white line removed.
- Dropped kerbs on the Gapton Hall Road shared use path not flush with the carriageway, plus overhanging vegetation narrowing the width of the path.
- Surface condition of Shrublands Way heading down to Beccles Road very rough. It was felt that the cycleway inspections should be carried out by someone actually on a bicycle.

Reference was made to the last meeting and the request for a cyclist priority crossing at the entrance / exit to Gapton Hall Retail Park. PD explained that the Safety Audit Team had made a few points regarding the request. The first was that the existing pedestrian refuge was not large enough to accommodate a bike, and that cyclist Give Way signs would have to be erected. It was also felt that cars having to give way immediately on entering the retail park would be vulnerable to rear end collisions. JS and CB believed that all that was needed were broken white lines to show the alignment of the route.

It was suggested that links to websites which can be used to report road maintenance issues and defects were printed in the minutes:

- Norfolk County Council <https://online.norfolk.gov.uk/HighwayProblemReport>
- CTC <http://www.fillthathole.org.uk/>
- Any defects on trunk roads (A11 and A47) should be reported to the Highways Agency by calling 0300 123 5000 or email ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk

AOB and Items for the Next Great Yarmouth Cycle Forum

SGS handed out a press release from the GY Cycle Club (GYCC) who were holding a Bike-It Day at Yarmouth Stadium on the 19 June 2010. They were asking for assistance from the Forum by the way of sponsoring a trophy or prize for an inter-school cycle grand prix. Unfortunately, the Forum does not have a budget and, therefore, would be unable to assist. SGS said he may be able to help with publicising the event on the council's website. The GYCC were also after any innovative ideas on how to raise interest in cycling. SS explained this was the first time she had heard of this event, although she was meeting with Bike-It Officer Kevin House later in the week, who was also a member of the club. Unfortunately, SS was already involved with a Bike Week event in Norwich on that day. However, she would see if she could put an information pack together for them to hand out. She pointed out the problem with national events like Bike Week is that everyone wants to hold an event on the same day. PD asked if any thought had been given to setting up a Norfolk-wide website to publicise cycling events such as these. SS said that there had been a proposal to set up a sustainable travel website, separate to the County Council, funded by European money but, unfortunately, it had not received approval. However, the Bike Week website listed all the events happening throughout the country during the week. SS added Bike Week could be a good opportunity to publicise the hard engineering schemes discussed earlier in the meeting, if they were finished in time.

SGS also mentioned Neil Turner's (GYCC's Club Development Officer) disappointment at the perceived lack of enthusiasm from Great Yarmouth Borough Council to arrange cycling events around the forthcoming Tour of Britain and to capitalise on the race finishing a stage in the town. SGS felt this was probably to do

with budgetary constraints. SGS to contact key officers in the Borough Council to see if any events are being planned in Great Yarmouth.

SGS mentioned the recent article in the Yarmouth Mercury about conflict with pedestrians and cyclists using the shared use path adjacent to the bus stop outside Matalan. It was felt that the white line painted to segregate the path at the bus stop gave people waiting for the bus too small an area to stand. SGS mentioned that some cyclists, having just come over the bridge, ride quite fast through this section and wondered if 'Slow' road markings would help.

Action: PD to investigate

Date of Next Meeting

SGS mentioned that Penny Bailey, members of the GY Cycle Club and Bike-It Officer Kevin House cannot make Wednesdays and asked if it was possible to move the meeting day. Unfortunately, this was the best day for other members.

It was confirmed that the date of the next meeting would be 18 August 2010.