

MINUTES OF THE GREAT YARMOUTH CYCLE FORUM
Assembly Room, Town Hall, Great Yarmouth
6.30pm Wednesday 17 February, 2010

Present:

Tom Andrews (TA)	Caister-on-Sea Parish Council
Barbara Brett (BB)	Gorleston cyclist
Paul Donnachie (PD)	Norfolk County Council
Dean Foden (DF)	Filby resident & cyclist
Norman Harlow (NH)	Great Yarmouth Cycling Club
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
Margaret Ward (MW)	Gorleston resident & cyclist
David Wardale (DW)	Norfolk County Council
Anthony Wright (AW)	Sustrans Area Manager

Apologies for Absence

Claire Blamey	NMAS
Jo Foden	Chair, Filby resident & cyclist
David Law	Norfolk Constabulary
Nigel Seago	Norfolk County Council
Neil Turner	Great Yarmouth Cycling Club

Minutes from the Great Yarmouth Cycle Forum held on 18 November 2010

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

Maintenance Issues and Updates

SGS reported that he had contacted Atkins, agents for the Highways Agency, with regards to the poor surface condition of the A12 near to Vauxhall Roundabout. They had replied saying that they would be repairing any identified pot holes, but also added that the section in question was programmed for a patching scheme in late April 2010.

SGS also reported that Nigel Seago had contacted him with regards to issues raised at the last meeting. This included the surface cracking on Lawn Avenue. However it was felt there was insufficient justification for intervention at the moment but it would be monitored as part of the normal highways inspections. It was also added that Lawn Avenue had been identified for surface dressing in 2011, subject to funding. It was agreed that the cycleway markings on Hall Quay need refreshing and this will be done next spring. SGS mentioned that it had been suggested by Norfolk County Council to shorten the length of the cycleway as the railings made it very narrow, but he felt they should be replaced like for like. NS had also confirmed that a 450mm white on blue shared cycleway sign had been erected on the southern end of the cycleway from Malthouse Lane/Beccles Road to Bollard Quay.

SGS also mentioned that Claire Blamey had reported the Shrublands Way / Magdalen Way / Crab Lane junction as the recent repairs were breaking up. John Cotton from NCC had replied that although the repairs were showing signs of failure the carriageway was safe, but they would be looking to add a resurfacing scheme brief to their structural maintenance programme, funding allowing.

Great Yarmouth Cycling Club – visions and plans

SGS explained that Neil Turner couldn't attend the meeting so that this item would be carried over to the next Forum. JS asked NH, Chairman of the Great Yarmouth Cycling Club (GYCC), if they would be interested in running a 10, 25 or 50 mile charity event to attract people to Great Yarmouth and raise money for a local charity. NH said that shouldn't be a problem as they organise similar reliability runs already, with routes around Blundeston and Somerleyton.

Action – JS to contact NH with details.

Great Yarmouth Green Travel Map

SS explained that the Great Yarmouth Cycle Map was now 2½ - 3 years out-of-date. She told members that she had secured funding from the Smarter Choices budget to produce a Green Travel Map which would encompass all of the cycle information plus additional information such as bus stops and text codes, plus pedestrian shortcuts, etc. SS was interested in any comments about the map and wanted to know about any changes to the map base. Various changes and amendments were discussed, for instance cycling along Gorleston Esplanade and the new one-way system round St Georges. Members also marked on cycle routes and corrections, such as cycle shops locations, on the maps provided. SS also wondered if there was anything that could be added to the key/legend that would be of use to cyclists - TA suggested public toilets, which was supported.

The free maps be will printed and distributed throughout schools and 700 sites in and around Great Yarmouth by 1st April.

SS also thought it would be good to celebrate the map by launching it in the town centre, possibly during the Easter Holidays or Cycle Week in June. Depending on funding SS hoped to use The Company of Cyclists to promote the launch, who bring with them 25 – 30 'quirky' bikes, including a seven seater circular bike, recumbents, bikes of all shapes and sizes, and also a pedal powered Scalextric set. The launch could be a whole day event and incorporate things like a ride, and also have people like Dr Bike to fix bikes and Bike It officers, to help raise the profile. DW felt the seafront lent itself to the event, and also St Georges Park. MW felt publicity was required before an event, not just afterwards.

SGS suggested the GYCC, who have an advert in the map, could be involved with the launch of the map. NH suggested incorporating it into one of two runs they proposed to combine with the Tour of Britain, a 50 mile reliability trial or 'sportif', and a more family based run using cycle lanes around Great Yarmouth.

Action: SGS to provide SS with a map showing the location of public toilets in and around Great Yarmouth and Gorleston. SS to forward the amended map to SGS for circulation to members before it is printed.

Connecting Norfolk – 3rd Local Transport Plan

PD told the Forum that the 3rd Local Transport Plan (LTP) is called Connecting Norfolk, and is a new type of LTP and will cover a 20 year period from 2011 to 2031, with a 3 year implementation plan for schemes. There are five different goals / themes:

- Tackling climate change
- Supporting growth and regeneration
- Promoting quality of opportunity
- Contributing to safety and security
- Improving the quality of life and health

PD explained that there had been a consultation period running, with workshops involving stakeholders and district councils. Questionnaires had been forwarded to councillors, parish councils and also the Forum. SGS explained that Jo had completed the questionnaire on behalf of the Forum, and that although no-one from the Forum had attended a recent stakeholders meeting the Planning Policy Manager (former vice-chair of the Forum) had reported back to SGS. The meeting had been very high level with no detail of any schemes discussed. PD said looking at the five themes they would discuss policy options to resolve issues and these would be fed into the LTP. Unfortunately, all this may have to be tempered because in the current economic climate the County Council was bracing itself for funding cuts. This could have an effect on the number of improvement schemes, but this wouldn't be known until Government figures are set later on in the year. SGS reported that he had heard a figure of a 40% cut in capital funding – PD confirmed this was possible. PD added the LTP should be submitted to Government by March 2011. GS asked how the recent decision to make Norwich a unitary authority and Rackheath becoming an eco-town effected future planning – PD said it made it very difficult but that the Norwich unitary was far from certain yet, with NCC making a legal challenge. DF asked if the LTP included any schemes – PD explained it will be a strategy with a series of policies underneath, and then an implementation plan which will eventually contain the schemes. He added that they still have to maintain the highway network, that there were certain statutory obligations they had to meet with regards to air quality and disability access such as bus stops, along with performance targets they have to achieve. This would leave less money for projects and more limited schemes than in the past. However, cycling would still feature prominently in all the policies and themes as NCC were trying to encourage a modal shift towards greener forms of travel. DF pointed out that cycle improvements don't necessarily mean cycle specific schemes, like the adoption of 20mph zones. PD agreed saying that they could become creative without spending huge amounts of money.

St Georges Chapel – additional cycle links

DW presented the Forum with two proposals for links from the St Georges Chapel scheme. The first was a cycle track from Theatre Plain / Deneside through the bus station / Regent Boulevard to link up with the Toucan crossing on Alexandra Road and the existing St Georges Park / Alexandra Road cycle track. Because of the high volume of traffic this would be a 1.5 metre wide cycle track running alongside the carriage way but separated from the footway by a 50mm step down. The cycle track itself would be one way heading towards the seafront, separated from the carriageway by a 25mm kerb. There would be a two way short 2.0 metre wide link in a contrasting colour to link to the Alexandra Road crossing. SGS questioned whether this was wide enough, but DW didn't think it could be made any wider and that it was

really to alert pedestrians that there were cyclists in the vicinity. TA mentioned that Albion Road was an obvious link to the seafront.

DW explained the second proposal was a link from the St Georges scheme; upgrading the existing footway along Yarmouth Way to a shared surface, crossing Tolhouse Street and creating a direct link to the library. DF and AW both had concerns about the proposed Tolhouse Street crossing, with AW wanting to see a raised table crossing. DW said it was a matter of what was affordable, but AW argued about how much an accident costs. DW didn't believe the scheme would be affordable at the current time, but could get costs for the job incorporating a raised table. AW argued the crossing could be at grade, but that painted 'dragons teeth' give the impression that the table is higher than it is. DF felt that any crossing point, raised or not, would act as a road calming measure. PD added that speed humps and tables have an ongoing maintenance issue. DW said it was planned to use an imprinted material in a contrasting colour, rather than use blocks.

DW asked the Forum if there was a priority in either scheme, as he felt it might have to be a case of one or the other. The Forum said they felt the link from Deneside to Alexandra Road was very important and the Yarmouth Way / library link desirable.

Scheme Updates

- **Outer Harbour Improved Walking and Cycling Links**

PD explained that the original proposed scheme was to provide an off-road shared use facility from the end of the *inte*GREAT scheme/Kings Road to Hartmann Road and the Outer Harbour. He had agreed with the Forum's objections that the scheme didn't conform with the DfT's Local Transport Note, so he had asked Motts to take a fresh look at providing, potentially, advisory but preferably mandatory cycle lanes, with a buffer zone to get cyclists past the parking areas. PD had been advised that the revised scheme layout should be available in 2 weeks time.

- **Warren Road Cycle Link**

PD reminded the Forum that at the last meeting NCC had received several objections to the proposed Gorleston – Hopton cycle link, and there had been a 'war of words' between supporters and objectors in the Yarmouth Mercury. NCC had thought it prudent to advertise its intention to adopt the southern 'rural' section and then proceed with the scheme. NCC had put up a notice advertising its intentions, for which the period for objections expired at the beginning of February. They had received two objections, which they were currently trying to resolve, regarding access and maintenance issues. However, PD said the key issue was that 2/3rds of the frontages had to object to the proposal for it not to proceed and that was not the case. Unfortunately, there had been a formal complaint made regarding legal issues, which PD couldn't go into any detail about as the Local Government Ombudsman was now involved. NCC were confident of their position after taking internal legal advice, and it was hoped that after responding to the complainant that a public statement would be issued updating people of what was happening with the scheme. PD said they were still confident that the scheme would be constructed this year, but he couldn't give any more details until the complaint had been resolved.

AW informed members that he and Grahame Bygrave had attended a meeting with Atkins, agents for the Highways Agency (HA) Area 6 - which includes the section of A12 between Gorleston and Lowestoft. The HA were looking at upgrading the cycle facilities from the stopped up section of the old A12 at Hopton. He said they made

them aware of the Warren Road scheme and also the fact that Sustrans own land between Hopton and Corton. He said HA were happy to review their plans and may possibly fund a link, as it was cheaper than them providing a link along the A12 to Lowestoft. There was no guarantee of this happening, but he was very hopeful.

MW enquired about adding Warren Road to the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way. PD said the status of the route was the issue of the formal complaint, but that NCC felt there was sufficient historic evidence for Restricted Byway status, and no-one disputed the fact that cyclists currently use it. He said it was possible that the route could go on the Definitive Map in the future.

- **Vauxhall Bridge**

DW explained that he and AW had met with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to discuss a pre-bid application for an ambitious proposal to restore and strengthen Vauxhall Bridge to reintroduce two carriageways across it – primarily a cycle and pedestrian route and possibly one for public transport and taxis. Although they thought the scheme was laudable, they felt it was outside the scope of HLF, especially the public transport aspect, and there was also a question regarding the ownership of the bridge. The other requirement was to be able to demonstrate heritage learning. DW said they had had a rethink and strengthened the heritage learning element of the project, including the history of the area with the railway and trams; they also involved the arts organisation Seachange, who were interested in linking it in with one of their street arts project. They took it back to HLF, who liked the heritage learning side but felt it was divorced from the bridge. DW admitted this was a setback, but they would be looking at different funders. However, he said that it had highlighted the fact that they need a structural report on the bridge to determine how much it will cost to repair, as the bridge was rusting from the inside out. He felt this was important as you didn't want to start work on the bridge and then discover additional problems. He said they would continue working with Seachange and the heritage learning aspect, and that the HLF had pointed them towards English Heritage as the bridge was grade II listed. They would also be pursuing European Interregional Funds.

TA mentioned that he had contacted local firms about caulking the bridge deck, but that articles in the local press about the uncertainty of its future and the unknown scope of the job had put off companies quoting for the job. AW said it was presently a health and safety issue and that the extent of caulking would extend to just the pedestrian and cycle deck. He pointed out the bridge was built in 1850 and that Sustrans / Railway Paths had only owned the bridge 10 years and that its poor state was a result of the railway companies failing to maintain it over the years. The bridge could, potentially, cause a great financial loss to Railway Paths and Sustrans's engineers estimate it has only a 25 year life left. DW reminded members that the Fair Shares £300,000 was only available until June, and he was also looking at £250,000 funding from Natural England for the Runham Vauxhall area, which could possibly be used towards the structural survey.

Action – DW to update members at the next meeting. TA to obtain quotes for caulking the pedestrian / cycle deck and liaise with AW.

- **Burgh Road Scheme Phase 2**

DW reported that the issue with the narrow width of the route in places, highlighted at the last meeting, had been resolved and the scheme was currently under construction. AW added that there would be anti-skid treatment at the junctions. He noted the feeling amongst members that the scheme should have been on-road.

However, he felt that with Bike It operating in the area, and Bikeability level 2 being taught within the school it was appropriate for it to be off-road as a way of encouraging unaccompanied children to cycle to school safely.

Any Other Business and Items for the next Great Yarmouth Cycle Forum

SGS reported that Claire Blamey had suggested inviting bus operator First to the Forum after a recent incident with one of their drivers. Many members had had bad experiences with buses, but it was accepted that bus drivers have a difficult job around Great Yarmouth. DW mentioned works to widen the carriageway by 800mm near Clarkes to assist cyclists on the Regent Street contraflow.

Action – SGS to write to First about their driver training policies and invite a representative from First to attend the next Forum.

SGS mentioned that Bradwell Parish Council had contacted NCC with regards to altering the off-road facility on Blackbird Close. Currently the facility starts/ends at the junction with Mill Lane. PD explained that the parish council and Forum had decided on the rather unorthodox solution to extend the facility beyond the junction onto Mill Lane. He believed these works would be carried out early next financial year.

JS mentioned an issue with the crossing to the entrance to Gapton Hall Retail Park. Cyclists have to negotiate two lanes exiting the retail park to reach a traffic island before then crossing the entrance road, if they are to keep to the line of the cycleway. He asked if broken lines could be painted across the entrance to give cyclists some type of priority.

Action – PD to look at the junction

JS informed the Forum that the Institute of Advanced Motorists has recently recruited 2500 people to instruct cyclists how to ride properly. AW pointed out that they would have to be trained to Bikeability standards.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 19 May 2010