

Welwyn Hatfield Cycling Forum

Minutes of Meeting 12th November 2009

1 Present

Adam Edwards
Bryn Jones
John Shead

Jeremy Payne
Chris Whitehouse
Cathy Wilkins

Ian Gregory
David Burt
George Eivers

2 Apologies for Absence

Roger Moulding

Tom Morley

3 Cycle route developments – discussion with David Burt and George Eivers

Note: The whole meeting was devoted to discussions of the proposed new cycle routes at Broadwater Road, WGC and the Hatfield station to the business park link. These notes are grouped by topic rather than in the order of discussion. Discussion of the minutes of the previous meeting was postponed due to lack of time. All works discussed are subject to consultation and then audits, so the final outcome and final dates may be different.

Broadwater Road

- The originally proposed west side route had been rejected due to problems with trees and conflict with the redevelopment area (new Tesco's etc)
- Holwell Road: The proposed centre island at this junction will be wide enough for a bicycle.
- Suggested that NCN61 should be rerouted away from Woodhall Close/Peartree Court, where it is on road and where residents frequently block the cycle path between the two streets, to the new off road path. **GE to ask if this could be changed.**
- Junction with Moatwood Green (a short cul-de-sac): Sustrans have asked that this be a table (raised surface level with pavement), with cyclists having priority over road users as the road is very quiet.
- Hyde Way: The cycle parking at the end of this road by the station is isolated now Nestle have closed so prone to theft. It is hoped that covered parking will be provided as part of the wider redevelopment of the area.

Black Fan Road

- There are no lights on NCN61 from the Ridgeway to Black Fan Road, so cyclists will illegally use the pavement to avoid this. DB commented that even when lighting is put in, the isolated nature of the paths means that they are still not used. It is hoped that a path on Black Fan Road to avoid this section will be planned in the 2010-11 financial year and constructed in 2011/2012.

Bridge Road, WGC

- The planned cycle route over the bridge from the Bessemer Road path to the town centre is being worked on. The key issue is whether the path should be on or off road, and how much road space may therefore have to be removed.

Cole Green Way (NCN61)

- The subway under the A414 is to be hard surfaced to create a better quality link to the Old Hertford Road, helping cyclists commuting to avoid the A414 to Hertford.

The Campus, WGC

- Noted comments that this is a dangerous gyratory for cyclists and, given the number of facilities such as the library, WHBC offices and the college, it would be much better if paths across the Campus could be converted into shared use paths. The need to improve cycling here is in the WGC Urban Transport Plan, but there is currently no funding for it.

Hatfield station to business park

- This cycle path is funded by section 106 payments from the business park development and its primary aim is to aid commuting from the station to the business park. Comment made that we need to ensure this route is of maximum benefit to all, not just this one group and that it needs to be right first time.

Phase 1: Station to Cranborne Road/French Horn Lane

- At the railway station, First have agreed to loose a parking bay, to get cyclists into the car park at the end of the new path. Agreed there should be a way on and off the cycle path to/from the Great North Road at this point for cyclists continuing north/arriving on road from the south.
- Additional bus stops will be provided on the Great North Road next to the car park, given the freeze on the bigger interchange project. Adam has a copy of the preferred plan for this which he will circulate to members.
- There has been an investigation into continuing the cycle path north up the Great North Road to join NCN61 at the Red Lion junction. This can only be cycle lanes on each side of the road as the pavements are very narrow.
- The subway under the Great North Road to Batterdale, Old Hatfield cannot be part of the cycle route as it is too low. The suggestion that cyclists dismount signs be used has been rejected as the signs will simply be ignored. It was pointed out people will simply cycle through illegally anyway.
- The corner from Great North Road to the subway under the railway will be redesigned with a retaining wall to enable the cycle path to cut the corner, as is currently happening with an informal path.
- West of the subway under the railway, the path will be widened on the non-road side and railings added on the road side where there is a steep slope down.
- There will be a wide island built on French Horn Lane to assist cyclists crossing to Old Rectory Lane and Onslow School.
- Our proposal for the signalled crossing at the end of Cranborne Road to be used as the place the path changes sides will be looked at again, given the comment that this is a new crossing, so may be adaptable from Pelican to Toucan. Older crossings have to be replaced and this would be too expensive.
- Current proposal is that the cycle path going west will be routed to join Cranborne Road, with cyclists then giving way to French Horn Lane as if exiting from Cranborne Road. Cyclists going east will join the cycle path just east of this junction by a ramp up onto the pavement.
- **The intention is to complete these works by 31/3/10.**

Phase 2: Queensway roundabout and Wellfield Road

- Because of our concerns, more work is being done on the roundabout. George showed us a copy of *Cyclists at roundabouts: continental design geometry*, Department for Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet 9/97, October 1997. He is working on changes to the roundabout to make it smaller, with single lanes at entry/exit to/from the roundabout, the idea being that cyclists then join the normal flow of traffic and the sharper curves to slow traffic down.
- Comments were made that:
 - this is still an on road solution, with all the negative impact that has for children and less confident cyclists,
 - that cars will attempt to squeeze past cyclists who will be seen as in the way on the narrowed section of road.
- Comment that if the change to the design meant the roundabout carriageway took up much less space, then there might be room round the sides of the roundabout for a shared use cycle path and pavement. This would be politically popular as it would enable

pedestrians to avoid the disliked subways. It would also meet our wish to see an off road solution.

- The meeting wished George the best in finding a solution that would work and meet WHCF concerns.
- All agreed the other Queensway roundabouts with paint on the road surface were not a good model to follow.
- WHBC have been contacted about our proposed route and they are not prepared to agree to any route which would effect the town centre plans. Indeed leaseholders have complained about cyclists in the town centre and want them kept out. A comment was made that our proposed alternative route would be simple paint on existing surfaces so very easy to remove/change, so would not compromise any plans.
- Wellfield Road: The plan has been revised and is now to bring the cycle path up to opposite Coronation Gardens, on the south side of the road, rather than ending at the Common. A wide island in the road will enable eastbound cyclists to cross on to the east bound side of the road at this point.
- Wellfield Road junction with Comet Way: George reported that the junction would be remodelled to slow cars leaving the roundabout and thus making crossing for cyclists and pedestrians safer, as currently exit speeds are too high. Noted that there is a section of cycle path in West View on the island, but this is blocked with parked cars on working days (and has bumps due to tree routes). Rumble strips exist at the end of the island and on the east side of West View at its junction with Birchwood Avenue, as if the cycle path is expected to continue beyond this point.
- ***Given the roundabout issue, the intention now is for completion by 31/3/11.***

Stanborough Park – missing section of cycle path

- Construction of the contra flow cycle path and widening of the access road to accommodate it is scheduled to start on 4/1/10.

Other issues

- Cathy had received an email question asking if there were any plans for a Brookmans Park to Welham Green path. No such plans exist. Two ways forward could be for the person to lobby for this to be added to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan or for it to be included in the forthcoming Potters Bar Urban Transport Plan.
- The county online map showing cycle routes and other highways infrastructure should go live before Christmas and will be publicly available. **DB will let us know when it is live.**
- Hertfordshire Highways are meeting soon to discuss a strategy for marketing what they do.
- Leaves on routes: These need reporting to Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.
- Peartree Lane: Question raised about the islands in the road designed to control car speed and the obstacles these create for cyclists. DB reported that there is a School Travel Plan for Peartree School which will unlock funding for alterations to the road and cycling provision outside the school. This will include a pedestrian crossing.
- Homes and Communities Agency: A member had seen a sign claiming ownership of land by this organisation and wanted to know who they are. **CW to forward details.**

Useful contacts

- David Andrews is the county cycling champion
- Nigel Brigham is the local Sustrans contact for route development

4 Dates of Future Meetings

2009: 14 Oct, 11 Nov, 16 Dec.

2010: 13 Jan, 10 Feb, 10 Mar, 14 Apr, 12 May, 16 Jun (AGM), 14 Jul, 11 Aug (ride to pub?), 15 Sep, 13 Oct, 10 Nov, 15 Dec.