

CycleWight Committee, 12 Oct 2023 at Clatterford Rd & Zoom

Present: Pete Dyer (PD), Stephen Elliott (Pedal Aid), Claire Franklin (CF), Malcolm Ross (MR), Tim Thorne (TT), Mick Watts (MickW), Matt Whitaker (MattW), George Wilks (GW), Alex Lawson (AL). Apologies: Helen Jones (HJ), Alan Bennett (AB),

1. Pedal Aid

Pedal Aid is an Isle of Wight Council project to promote sustainable travel. It has been funded by an Active Travel grant which was additional to the normal IWC budget. Stephen Elliott of Llama Digital joined the meeting to explain that this funding was withdrawn last September and other sponsorship was not forthcoming. The project has struggled since at a minimal level, able to keep the phone app going to provide a few prizes and to run a newsletter. The PedalAid smartphone app is currently available: it is able to track rides and to allocate prizes. As well as raising money for charity this encourages healthy cycling and promotes the Red Squirrel Trail.

It is now expected that the project will end in January. However the Living Well and Early Help Service hope to arrange daytime group rides which could start in November and continue after the Pedal Aid project ends. These would be run by Clive Bishop. Tim asked if the riders will bring their own cycles or if these could be provided on loan. He suggested that Route57 could be approached to provide loan bikes if rides were in The Bay area.

SE said an older demographic had participated in Pedal Aid and it had worked. Some have been quite competitive. TT said future events could be promoted in the CycleWight newsletter which reaches our members including councillors.

2. Red Funnel & East Cowes Town Council

Matt Whittaker said the Red Funnel expansion plans for its East Cowes ferry terminal involve changes to the traffic system in the town. Their plans have been updated and publicised in a second consultation and a public meeting, held last Saturday at the town hall.

In addition the LCWIP for East Cowes which was written last July has been adopted by East Cowes town council in the last couple of weeks. Castle Street is key to both plans as the LCWIP advocates a cycle lane from the floating bridge to the esplanade, while the Red Funnel traffic plan is for ferry traffic to turn into Well Road then right along Castle Road into the terminal. Island Roads are responsible for what happens on the roads and we need to ensure they understand the desire of the LCWIP.

Previously for CycleWight Matt & Peter Dyer have made recommendations to Red Funnel, including that they discuss the LCWIP with East Cowes Town Council. Matt met with Red Funnel planners and managers on Saturday and discussed their plans as they affect cyclists using the ferry and the terminal, for example cycle parking and accessing the ferry with a cycle. The Cycle Hub at the Redjet terminal is a model. As cyclists travel on foot passenger tickets Red Funnel does not know how many use the ferry and may not have planned facilities for cyclists. Matt also talked to Councillors Love, Lake and Reardon who were present. They wish to share, via the town clerk, the discussions which we have.

The CycleWight website has links to the LCWIP and to the Red Funnel plans. TT said he has now emailed the Red Funnel manager **to initiate a future meeting. It was agreed this needs to be arranged fairly quickly**. TT asked who validates the LCWIP as part of IWC planning guidelines. TT has asked IWC. Still awaiting answer,

3. Cycle Routes: Brading, Rookley, West Wight

The feasibility study into the CycleWight Proposed Cycle Route Yarbridge to Brading Station has been received from Ken Fry of Mayer Brown. This would upgrade the footpath B69 for multi-use. Some committee members visited the area to consider the way forward. A meeting is to take place on 21 November convened by Darrel Clark. TT has received invoices for the study. South Western Railway Customer and Communities Fund (CCIF) are providing the funding, and Tim noted some funding is still available within the time limit to be met. We do have the feasibility study as a tangible gain so far.

This section from the station to Yarbridge is constrained by the railway boundary and the river. A previous report related to the section from Brading Station to Quay Lane via footpath B1 which is wider and could feasibly be upgraded for multi-use.

CF asked where cyclists can go at present? An upgrade would be of great benefit to cyclists in the Bembridge/St Helens area. AL said a section of the right of way B2 was widened some years ago when Sustrans were involved. This opened the route from Carpenters Road to Quay Lane for multi-use. As stated above B1 is wider and can be cycled without conflict to arrive at the level crossing to the housing estate. However B69 from the station to Yarbridge is too narrow to cycle without conflict. AL noted that these two sections could be linked directly via railway land. This would eliminate double pedestrian and cycle crossings, something which South Western Railways would welcome from a safety point of view.

Moving on to bridleway A37 from Rookley to the Newport Sandown cycle track at Birchmore Lane, the IWC Right of Way department has been in touch with the landowner. TT said there is agreement in principle for the route to be widened and provided with a surface for all weather cycling and for horse riding. CycleWight are ready to commission a detailed survey and specification document along with an estimate for this work involved. TT will approach Ken Fry to quote to take this on. CycleWight will need to seek funding and it was decided to write to the Arreton & Rookley Parish Councils, and to approach the Bridleways Group.

The Fort Victoria coastal path, as was mentioned at the AGM, has been signed by Right of Way as a "Share with Care" multi-use path. However some users on foot have complained of bad experiences due to inconsiderate cyclists who pass at excessive speed. This has resulted in emails to Rights of Way seeking to stop use by cyclists, something that the IWC as landowner has the power to do. It is noted that the Monks Lane end is a dog leg path which is not IWC owned land. For this section to be updated on the definitive map as bridleway would require that evidence statements are taken from cyclists who have used the route for 20 years plus. Should CycleWight do this? Agreed to pursue this and to contact PROW to say this. We have active members and organisations in West Wight who we can involve. At present there is no LCWIP for the West Wight Area.

4. Meeting with Member of Parliament

The surface of the cycle track at Blackwater Hollow is dreadful. Mick Watts has written in a personal capacity to Isle of Wight Council to seek to understand the IWC contract with Island Roads and to bring about an improvement. The promised reply to this letter has been much delayed, perhaps in consequence of issues between the IWC and Island Roads. Mick copied the letter to Bob Seely MP, and a meeting was arranged last week. Mr Seely undertook to contact the IWC CEO to follow up Mick's letter and complaint.

With Tim also in attendance he stressed the need to improve the strategic network on the island Bob Seely undertook to look into funding sources. He also welcomed the news of the upgraded surface to F74 and F75 at Afton. This has been delivered by Natural Enterprise with support from Rights of Way staff and IWC funding. This will form part of the West Wight Greenway. Unfortunately Mr Seely subsequently described the scheme as a CycleWight initiative and caused upset. **It was agreed that committee future agenda will include the wider issues of the cycling network on the island.**

5. AGM

TT asked for thoughts and reflections on the AGM which was at a new venue and time of year and with a new format where we invited as many local organisations as possible. Membership during the year has fallen slightly to below 200 which represents lower income. The hall cost £125 including the bar.

Mick said the meeting was very good & the venue was excellent. The screen image was small: could we make use next time of their ceiling projector? PD said that 10-15 left at half time: would an agenda have kept them if they knew what was coming? Helen said the Question and Answer session was excellent but do we need to make more of this? We should track this better so we know who asked what. AL said the meeting & venue were excellent but a number of apologies were received and some regular past attendees were not present. If the date was in October next year would more attend? TT suggested a Doodle Poll.

Many who attended were not members but we had not persuaded any to join at the meeting. HJ had suggested we contact the non-members and ask for views & invite them to join. PD said we need a recruitment drive if there are less than 200 members but 600 on IW cycling Facebook. It was agreed to wait till December to see if there is an improvement. In fact 2 new members joined at the "Together for Mission Zero" meeting held soon after the AGM and addressed by TT & GW. **Post meeting** One of the people who did attend the AGM has now joined.

TT also said the meal held beforehand threw up some very good discussion. Should we start looking for a speaker for the AGM next year? Should we bring back the Cycle Forum which brings together cycling groups on the island? **Future Agenda Item: AGM 2025.**

6. AOB

East Cowes BMX track. This is long disused but could possibly be re-instated. Local residents have asked East Cowes Town Council for support and they have asked us in turn. We agreed to write in support and to advertise the project.

Tyre recycling. There is a national initiative but nowhere on the island which will receive tyres for recycling. We would like to follow this up. Contact IWC waste services? **Keep on agenda:**

Tyre recycling. <https://velorim.co.uk/> TT has contacted the member who raised this to seek his support in looking at the viability of the scheme.

Think Bike signs. PD has heard from Lewis Campbell that 8 new locations are approved. They want to increase the size so a new quotation is needed and renewed Red Funnel approval. Two signs are at Binfield corner.

Malcolm has found paths in his area overgrown and thinks that there will be lots more across the island. Can we have a path clearing expedition?

Post-meeting note: Land ownership at St Helens old railway raised at AGM. Keep on agenda. Check that CF (had zoom issues) is in touch with MS & RS who were at AGM.

Post-meeting note: IWC Rights of Way Local Access Forum is is now:

Thursday 16th November 2023 at 4pm in the Island Community Club, Park Road, Cowes

Next Meeting : November date TBA.