

‘Making Swansea more bike friendly’ – Wheelrights workshop

Pier Street Party, Environment Centre

Saturday 14th June 2025

General observations about the event - Pier Street Party

The weather had been poor leading up to the event but improved enough on the day that there could be a number of stalls outside. The hall upstairs was filled with stalls. There were a small number of attendees during the first hour (probably a reaction to the weather) but footfall increased and there was plenty of bustle later on. A number of active Wheelrights members were in attendance (DJ, DN, JM, BL, JB et al), along with friends and supporters.

The Workshop

Thanks to Nick Guy for conceiving of the idea of holding the event and for rounding people up on the day! Nick, Joe Muldoon and John Britton ran the workshop.

13 people attended. A variety of ages and backgrounds, and primarily from outside the ‘active circle’ of Wheelrights members - it was really good to hear the views of members and supporters. New ideas were suggested but also there was reinforcement of existing campaigns too.

Nb. Picture obscured for anonymity.



Perspectives

The workshop was attended by a diverse group of people including people with interests in/links to:

- safe routes to college
- safe routes to shops
- public health (as part of their working background)
- Sustrans

General observations from the workshop

There was a lively discussion which included information sharing about previous Wheelrights successes and ongoing campaigns.

Joe M highlighted the NGAP (the North Gower Access Path, see below) and described opportunity there and talked about ways of working with stakeholders, to take projects forward.

Nick highlighted that Gowerton to Pontardulais had been a long term campaign goal of Wheelrights, and this route was almost now complete. The works had been commenced to open the last 100 yards to Gowerton station. Nick mentioned how Wheelrights was looking to work with other partners to have a celebratory event to mark the opening of the route.

David N suggested described 4 routes that he saw as key campaigning priorities (discussed below) and highlighted how they have been an important part of the Wheelwrights' campaigning and advocacy for some time.

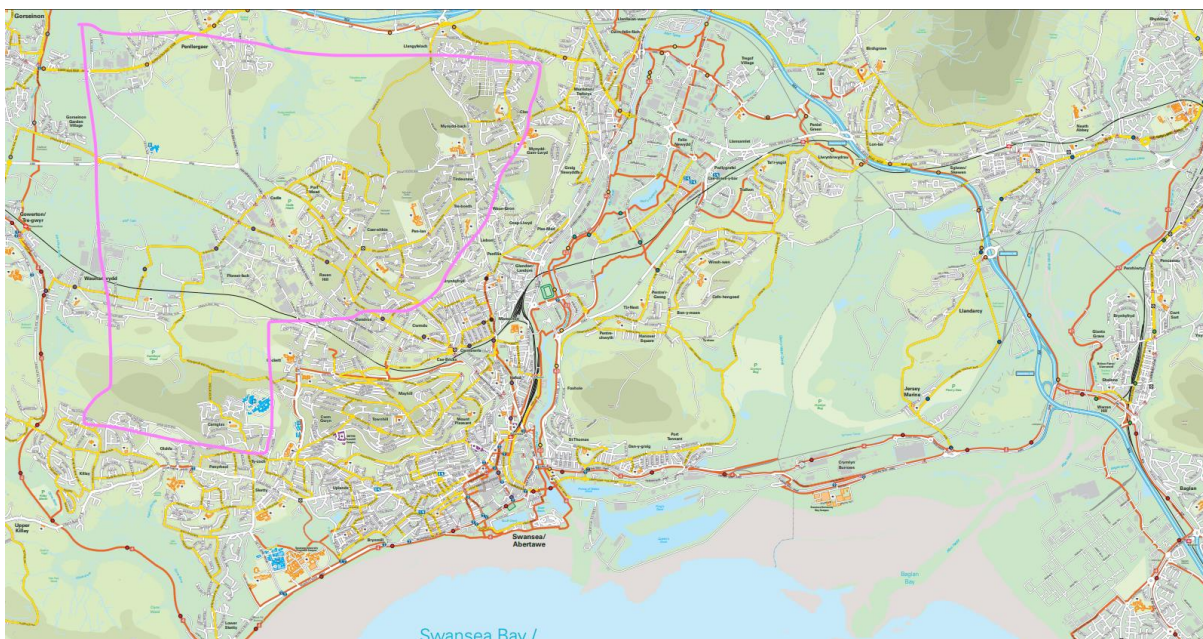
David N highlighted a couple of relevant resources on Wheelwrights' website:

- Following Swansea Council's success since 2018 in obtaining several million pounds from the Welsh Gov. to construct cycle routes in Swansea *Wheelrights*, Routes Group are keeping an eye on them. This [map](#) provides an overview. More detail is provided on the four maps: [SW Swansea](#), [NW Swansea](#), [SE Swansea](#) and [NE Swansea](#). Colours distinguish between completed routes (green; dark red for the NCN), those currently on the pipeline, ie under construction or planned, (amber) and potential routes (blue). Red is used to show routes which require improvement. Since the Council produced their ATNM (Active Travel Network Map) in late 2022 the Council's route number corresponding to Wheelrights identifier is shown in (). eg "NG (131)" for the North Gower route.
- Aware of the need for barriers on cycle routes to be navigable by tandems, tricycles, bikes with trailers and wheelchair users as well as ordinary bicycles *Wheelrights* have been checking them, and have had some success in getting the Council to remove some. This [Barriers](#) document lists barriers which do not meet the Welsh Active Travel guidelines.

These require a minimum width of 1.5m between bollards, chicane barriers and gates. We have only applied this to staggered bollards noting that there are a some barriers in Swansea on well used routes which comprise a straight row of bollards with only 1.2m clearance between them which do not appear to have caused problems. As with the Missing links document the barriers will be removed from the list when they have been modified to meet the guidelines. This [report](#) written by John Britton, who chairs Wheelrights Routes Group, makes it clear why barriers need to meet the guidelines.

The group also made the following observations:

1. The existing network in Swansea was very well used but contained considerable gaps e.g. the Clyne Valley/Seafront/Swansea Valley U-shape has a chasm in the middle. If you want to go 'cross city' you have to chance it on the roads (see area in pink below).



2. This means that a lot of communities in Swansea are completely excluded from the cycle network. This includes many deprived areas of the city. Areas within the U shaped chasm excluded from the network include:
 - a. Penllergaer
 - b. Ravenhill
 - c. Gendros
 - d. Cockett
 - e. Fforestfach
 - f. Waunarlwydd
 - g. Llangyfelach
 - h. Tirdeunaw
3. Provision for cycling to, and leaving your bike, at hospitals and GP surgeries was often patchy. Although facilities existed these were often hard to find and aimed at regular staff rather than visitors. Wheelrights already has good links with Jane Cornelius

(Sustainability Officer at Swansea University), and this conversation highlighted that we should think about making similar links with local NHS organisations.

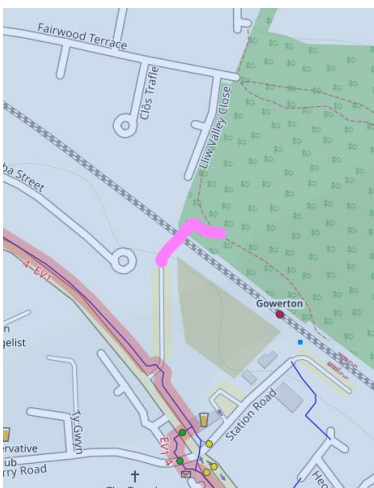
4. There was enthusiasm for being able to put your bike on a rack on a bus - as in many other cities and countries. Historic reasons why this hasn't been adopted were discussed. Again, this was a potential campaign goal for Wheelrights. The positive developments on the Heart of Wales line were noted (carriages with space for 10 bikes), but this was seen as a very small gain compared to the poor state of cycle provision on other public transport in south west Wales which inhibited using public transport in combination with a bike for everyday travel.
5. Theft was highlighted as an ever present concern, along with an absence of safe places to store your bike.

Specific observations relating to the Swansea cycle network

1. DN highlighted the following 4 routes which he saw as a priority. The latter 2 have seen considerable investment of time and effort by Wheelrights members to push the projects further along:
 - a. The need for a better route along the Fabian Way corridor between Swansea university's campus and the town centre. This could perhaps utilise Langdon Rd.



- b. Gowerton station bypass using the abutments of the old railway bridge (marked in pink).



- c. the North Gower Access Path, a project focused on improving access and safety for cyclists and pedestrians between Gowerton and Penclawdd, specifically along the B4295 road in Gower. It aims to create a safer route for non-motorised traffic, addressing the current lack of a safe route between the two communities.



- d. The GAP (Gower Access Path) proposed shared use path across Clyne Common¹.
2. The B4295 Cwmbach Rd emerged as a very important potential new campaign objective. It helps to close one of the gaps in the U-shaped network across the city but would also be an important route to link people in Cockett and Townhill with educational and employment opportunities in Gowerton and Gorseinon. This would provide an important cycle link in an area that is a ‘cycling desert’ - heavily trafficked and with lots of fast roads. There are a number of schools, training providers and further education college sites within close reach of this road. Gower College Swansea was praised for the quality cycle provision within its own site but as soon as you leave the site the immediate area around the Gorseinon site (Belgrave Rd) is hostile for cyclists. One respondent highlighted that almost no one cycles to GCS Gorseinon, which exacerbates parking overspill and traffic in the area. There is a really important point to be made about the Council ensuring that young people have choices about how they travel, and that the views and requirements of young people are not neglected.



¹ See <https://www.wheelrights.org.uk/GAPsvy.pdf> and <https://nation.cymru/news/council-misses-out-on-active-travel-funding/>

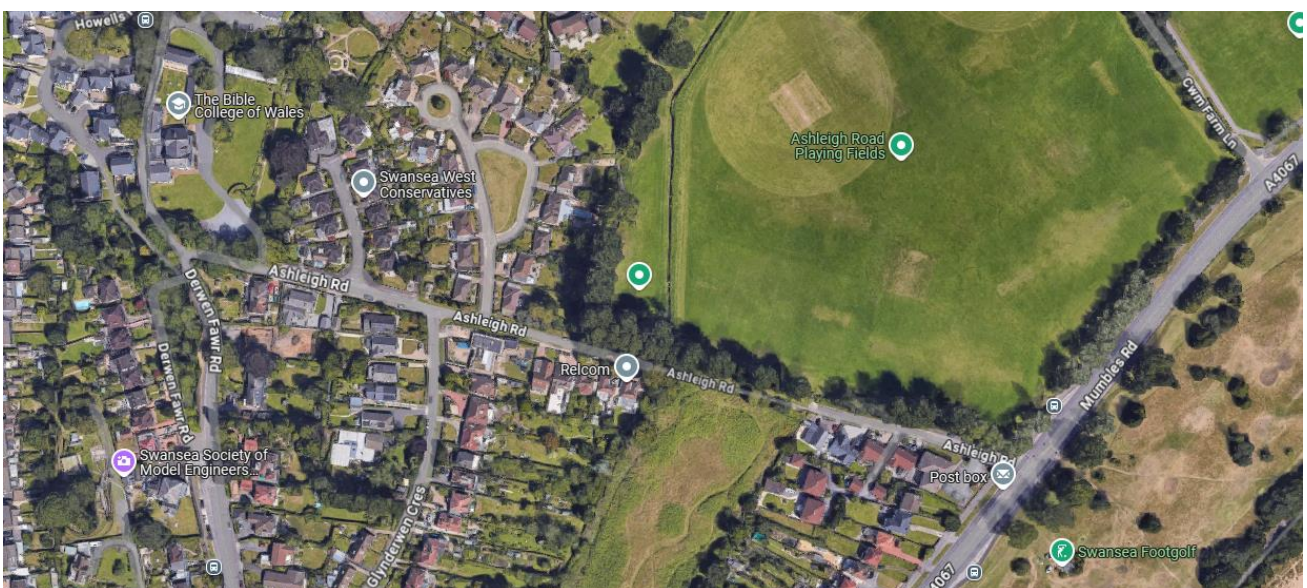
3. Barrier between Dunvant Rd and Gower Rd - it is where yellow meets orange in the picture below. See general concerns about barriers above. This one is already on our campaign list 👍

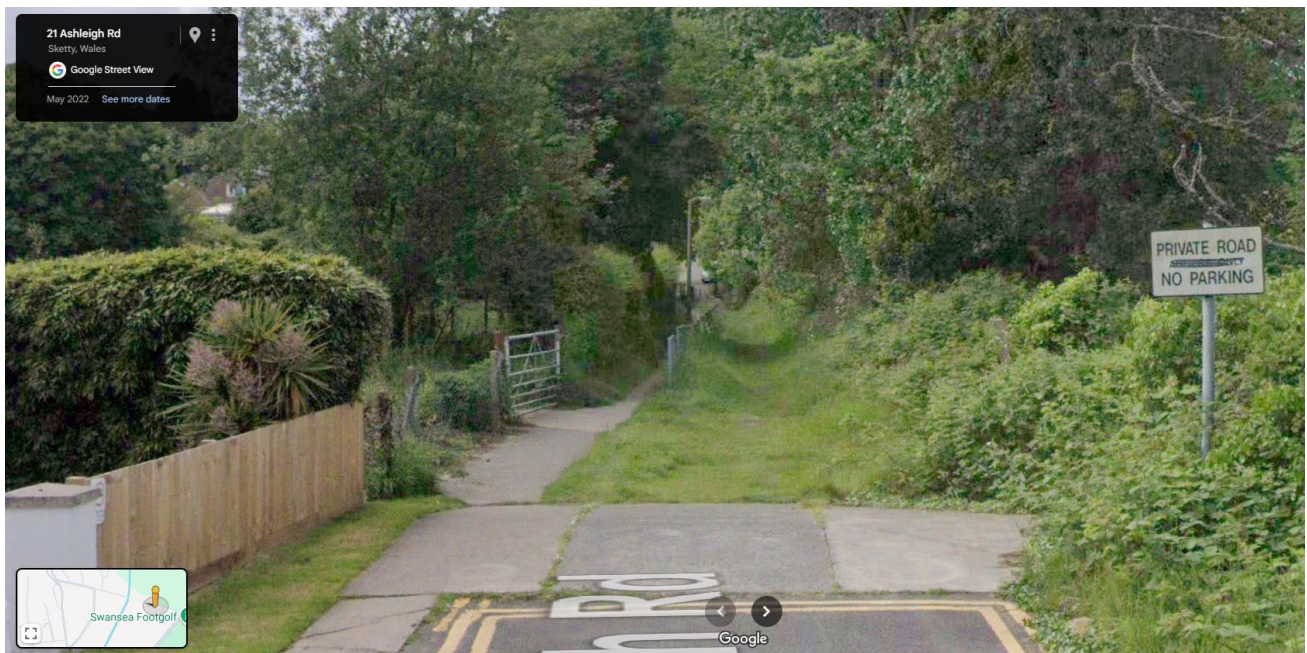


4. Cycle path/SUP over the Clyne river at blackpill. This is currently too narrow and so not safe for the volume of pedestrian and cycle traffic using it.



5. Ashleigh Rd Sketty - convert the cut through session that is inaccessible to cars to a shared pedestrian and cycle route. It's only 200 metres so would be fairly easy to do and would create a route that is a lot safer for people with buggies wheelchairs mobility scooters etc.





Thanks

Thanks to everyone who participated. We will be discussing these outcomes at our next Routes Group on 21st June 2025. You have given us a lot of food for thought and it has been really helpful to hear from the wider cycling community in Swansea.

Routes Group Chair

John Britton

14 June 2025