

Wheelrights Routes Group

Notes of meeting on 1st August 2020

in Ripples Café, West Cross

Present: Allyson Evans (AE), Gordon Gibson (GG), Nick Guy (GG), David Judd (DJ), Mike Lewis (ML), David Naylor (DN), Darius Rassi (DR), John Sayce (JS), Patrick Tribe (PT), Chris Walsh (CW).

DN chaired the meeting. He opened it by welcoming DR and thanking him for coordinating the views of local residents to provide a response to the Council's Mayals Road plans. He has now joined Wheelrights.

1. **Matters arising** from last two meetings (7 March and 18 April).
This was deferred until the next meeting.

2. **Mayals Road.**

Two days before this meeting Cabinet had met. While considering the separate letters sent by local residents and by DJ, which expressed our shared concerns about their plans for Mayals Road cycle infrastructure and asked Council to reconsider them, they rejected these requests and decided to go ahead with the plans. This set the scene for the meeting.

It was clear that they were going to go ahead with the Mayals Road work (which had already started at the bottom end) so a clear purpose of this meeting was to find a way of getting them to modify their plans to meet Active Travel Guidance; in particular to abandon their proposed *hybrid cycleways* which we all agree are a safety issue.

DN started by outlining what he thought was needed (Most of which is contained in the report "Mayals Road: a proposal for cycling provision" which he had prepared on behalf of Wheelrights: <https://www.wheelrights.org.uk/MayalsCRwr.pdf>) and sought the views of those present with a view to coming up with an agreed plan of action. He made the following points:

1. Support acceptable parts of the plan. He suggested that these were:
 - Their proposed 3m wide shared use paths (SUP) at west and east ends.
 - The proposed raised platforms across junctions.
 - The proposed narrowing of the carriageway to 6m. He felt that we should support this because it would take it out of the 'critical range' making it safer for cyclists as it would discourage dangerous overtaking. Also narrowing would be necessary to provide space for the SUPs, at least at the pinch points near the top and bottom of the road. He further noted that by locating this narrowed carriageway to the south of the available space (Assuming no hybrid cycleways.) visibility for drivers emerging from properties on the north side of the road would be improved, thus making it safer for downhill traffic (especially cyclists).
2. Strongly oppose the hybrid cycleways. There are two reasons for this: as shown on the drawing they violate Active Travel guidelines and that they are unsafe. They violate the guidelines in that the proposed width of 1.5m is less than the recommended minimum of 2.0m. [Post meeting correction: the 2.5m width stated at the meeting and ref. to 150 veh./hour were in error as in the AT guidelines it is 150 cyclists not vehicles/hour.], and the upstand of 25mm is less than the 50mm recommended. They are unsafe because cyclists forced off the cycle lane when it is blocked will not be able to safely rejoin it.
3. Shared Use. DN felt that for prolonged hills as on Mayals and Fairwood Roads downhill SUPs were not acceptable – pedestrians would be endangered by speeding cyclists. A shared lane with motor vehicles however makes sense as the speed difference is not great. Conversely, cyclists are not a hazard to pedestrians on uphill SUPs, hence the proposed alternative to a south side hybrid cycleway in the aforementioned report.
4. Fairwood Road. We are all agreed that this is a relatively cycle friendly route. DN felt that this should be promoted as an *alternative* but not a *replacement* for Mayals Road. It is undoubtedly a preferred route for destinations to the south such as Mumbles or West Cross. It adds half a mile to the journey to town which is why many cyclists (such as DN and PT) will choose Mayals Road at least for the inward journey.

5. Clyne Gardens – Roman Court shortcut. This is described in the Mayals Road report. DN accepted that this should not be a priority but felt that it should be kept on the agenda. He noted that our proposals for Mayals Road would cost less than the Council's so that the surplus could be spent on this.

Following this introduction DN invited comment. All participated.

- NG underlined that key issues to get the Council to change their plans were safety and their failure to meet Active Travel guidelines. He expected support from Ryland Jones of Sustrans, who, as do we, favoured parallel crossings rather Toucans for the Mayals Road crossings. He expects to have a virtual meeting with cllr Mark Thomas this Tuesday, 4 Aug. JS noted that it was important that he was not alone, and PT volunteered also to attend. **[Action: NG, PT]**
- DR noted the need for a cyclist's alternative to Mayals Road, eg across Clyne Common. He offered to get local support for a letter to the Council (tentatively to cllr Mark Thomas).
- GG noted that an alternative approach might be needed: pedestrian crossing places at junctions and access points to the park, refuges and perhaps other measures to slow drivers and downhill cyclists, no cutting of trees and no digging up road for new kerbs at great expense. Surplus funds achieved by omitting new kerbs, etc, should be used for the GAP (ie the path across the Common) or other measures to be agreed. That would be a reasonable compromise.
- PT noted the need for the Gower Access Path (GAP) to go ahead. He has reservations about the proposal to narrow the carriageway to 6m.
- CW supported GG in that he also felt that time was needed for CCS to review the plans.
- DJ felt that without an option to use Fairwood Road the proposed SUPs were the least bad option. He thought that experienced cyclists were unlikely to use either them or the hybrid cycleways. He would prefer the scheme to be delayed for a proper evaluation. He noted the need to preserve trees and for a Safety Audit and Risk Assessment.
- JS noted that CCS are not going to return the funds so the Mayals Road work will go ahead. He also noted that their proposals did not meet AT guidelines, nor were safe.

While bringing out some important points on how to proceed, the exchanges failed to provide clear guidance on whether or not the proposals put forward by DN represented Wheelrights position. DN noted that a draft of his report, which his comments above complemented, had been circulated before it was finalised, so he had presumed that members were broadly in agreement with its content. DJ however was not in 'broad agreement' with the report. While hoping that Wheelrights will develop a meaningful dialogue with CCS he wanted the work stopped and re-evaluated to meet Active Travel and safety requirements and to encourage everyday cycling.

Post meeting note: Further comments and advice on tactics should be emailed to Wheelrights officers and those directly involved. While we cannot compromise on the safety and quality issues we need to find some way of getting the support of those responsible for the design.

3. **Pontarddulais link.**

NG reported that the B4296 (Pentre Road) was to be narrowed to single lane across the bridge over the railway line to provide width for a cycle lane.

The ride

ML, DN, DR, JS, PT and CW cycled to and walked/cycled up Mayals Road. They noted that the controlled crossing of Mumbles Road is now complete with lights for cyclists and pedestrians. There is no cycle link to the foreshore path on the sea side of this crossing. The E-W crossing at the bottom of Mayals Road is for pedestrians only.

4. **Next meeting.**

10.00 am on 5 September in Ripple's Café.

Notes prepared by
David Naylor