

Wheelrights Routes Group

Notes of meeting on 8th July 2023

in Ripples Cafe, Foreshore, West Cross..

Present: Bill Gannon (BG), Joe Muldoon (JM), David Naylor (DN), Dareyoush Rassi (DR).

Apologies: John Britton (JB), Caroline Carter (CC), Allyson Evans (AE), David Judd (DJ), Mike Lewis (ML), Nick Guy (NG), John Sayce (JS), Patrick Tribe (PT), Chris Walsh (CW).

DN chaired the meeting.

1. **Matters arising** from 3 June meeting and not on agenda:

(a) Missing link (Item 2). JM reported on the extensive work he has done to get this link constructed. This has involved setting up (in December 2022) an online petition (It is on the Home page of our website.) which already has nearly 1,000 signatures; a Facebook page (in January 2023); and Twitter (in May 2023). He has also organised awareness events in markets in Penclawdd (December 2022 and April 2023) and Llanmorlais (June); and at the June Environment Centre Bike Week event. A poster board had been designed by DJ for the above markets and posters distributed to three schools in Gowerton and to Penclawdd Primary; also to 25 local businesses and to other venues.

Further connections have been made online or by emailing walkers groups (Ramblers), running clubs (Swansea Harriers & 3Ms), cycling clubs (incl. Swansea Wheelers and Gower Riders); and the following local councillors who fully support our campaign: Sue Jones and Dai Jenkins (Gowerton) and Andrew Williams (Penclawdd).

(b) Wheelrights general meeting (Item 6a). Mark Youngman, TfW's train manager will give a talk about taking bikes on trains. Date in September to be arranged. **[Action DR]**

2. **Active Travel Stakeholder's meeting on 21 June.**

CC and DN had attended. DN advised that Jack Palmer's notes of the meeting are now on the Newsletters/Notes page of our website. A key item was the 2023/24 funding. The Council have been awarded £5.4m active travel funding, 80% of their bid. This divides into 'Package' funding (£4.3m) and 'Core allocation' funding (£1.1m). (Figures rounded to nearest £100k.) The latter covers minor works such as barrier replacement. It also covers the missing link (1a above) but we think that this is for preliminary work – legal and design – and not construction. With [] = [Identifier on Wheelrights maps, CSS's route number] the package funding is for the following:

- Swansea Northern Strategic Route comprising all or part of 'Pontarddulais Connect' [GP3, 6] and 'DVLA to Morrision Hospital [MD, 136].
- Swansea Valley Links package comprising 'Morrision North Walking link' [TI, 169?]. DN was not certain about this but thinks it relates to recent work in Tirpenry and TI's extension north to the M4. The package also includes a route linking Clasemont Road (A48) to Morrision. [CD, 136 or TD, -]. Again DN was unclear about this route.
- West Swansea Links package comprising funding to complete the 'Clyne Common' route [GAP, 73]. DN noted that legal loose ends need to be tied up before the central portion of this route across the Common can be constructed. The Council expect this to be completed by the autumn, meanwhile the work is to continue on the rest of the path. It has been completed from Bishopston Comprehensive to near to Northway garage. This funding also covers the Foreshore path widening in Mumbles [MB, -]
- Surfacing and widening of the SUP between Kingsbridge and Grovesend [GP2, -]

3. **Jack Palmers response.**

DN had on 9 June emailed Jack raising various points covered in recent Routes Group meetings. Jack had replied on 27 June. (DN had forwarded this exchange to members on 28 June.) DN summarised Jack's response as follows:

Barriers. DN had drawn his attention to the list on the website Infrastructure page of barriers which did not meet AT guidelines. Jack indicated that core allocation funding would be used to replace them.

Junctions. DN had noted that a document listing junctions across which the priority of the SUPs (according to the new Highway Code) has not been made clear is being prepared. He mentioned the Fairwood Road crossing and the Morfa Road SUP as examples. The essence of Jack's rather long reply was that they were reluctant to use blue surfacing because it didn't last long and it would cost too much to renew. He then suggested that markings would make cyclists less attentive and that this could result in collisions. (Strongly challenged by at least one WR member.)

Blackpill. DN, referring to the article on p.2 of the Summer newsletter, had noted that both Wheelrights members and Mayals residents felt that it would be a misuse of active travel money to spend it on a bridge across Mumbles Road, and that the Toucan crossing served its purpose well. Jack responded that they would consider the feedback and noted that active travel funds are only awarded if there is an approved business case.

The Missing Link Jack advised that AT 'Core Allocation' funding has been awarded to develop proposals for this and that it was helpful to have been able to reference public support.

Gowerton Railway Station. DN had highlighted the need for a Gowerton Station bypass [GS] using the abutments of the old railway bridge. Jack advised that the land to the north of the railway had been sold and developed and that this ruled out the bypass. At our meeting DN noted that there was waste land behind the north bridge abutment (He had visited the site last year.) across which the proposed route could be taken. So it would appear that this land has not yet been developed.

New Carmarthen – London train service. DN had noted that cycle access to a new Parkway station near Felindre would be needed if and when Grand Union Trains' new Carmarthen to London service starts. Jack was aware of this and that a cycle route from the A48 using an existing M4 underpass would be needed.

4. Work in progress.

BG advised that that the Ynysallan Road SUP [YR, 77] is now complete and that it ends at the turn off to the housing estate NW of Heol Las. DN noted that the route across Clyne Common [GAP, 73] was paused. (Item 2, third bullet point, above.) We did not have updates on the other work in progress: Mumbles Foreshore [MB] and Gorseinon Road [PG].

5. Junctions.

DN tabled a 'Junctions' document similar to the 'Barriers' one currently on the Infrastructure page. He would add it to that page. The crossing of Somerset Place at the N. end of the SUP alongside the A4067 was a candidate. Noting Jack Palmer's reluctance to use blue surfacing to highlight path users' priority (Item 3 above.) we discussed the use of white lines to mark the path edges across junctions. BG noted there was a precedent for the use of double broken white lines; however we were uncertain whether Dept of Transport rules would allow this.

6. Bikes on trains.

DN had emailed Grand Union Trains (GUT) making a case for 'sufficient and suitable' cycle provision on their proposed new trains between Carmarthen and London. He had received a prompt but unhelpful reply. They indicated that this would be up to their train supplier – who it seems will be Hitachi, the providers of the trains currently plying between S. Wales and London and which have completely unsuitable cycle storage.

DN had subsequently contacted TfW and he and JB had met Mark Youngman, their train manager. At this meeting we learnt about their plans for new trains on the Welsh lines. We were encouraged as a number of the new trains, yet to come into service, had improved cycle accommodation, ranging from 4 to 9 bikes in three carriage trains. Unfortunately they do not have control over the intercity services provided by GWR and, in the future by GUT. He was very supportive and we look forward to discussing cycle issues further with him when he comes to address us. (Item 1b above.)

8. Next meeting.

10.00 am on Saturday 5 August in Ripple's Café.

Notes prepared by
David Naylor