

Wheelrights Routes Group

Notes of meeting on 13th November 2023

On line by Teams.

Present: John Britton (JB), Bill Gannon (BG), David Judd (DJ), David Naylor (DN), Dareyoush Rassi (DR), John Sayce (JS).

Apologies: Caroline Carter (CC), Allyson Evans (AE), Patrick Tribe (PT), Chris Walsh.

JB chaired the meeting. DN thanked him for taking this on and setting it up on Teams.

1. **Matters arising** from 5 August meeting and not on agenda:

- (a) Junctions (Item 1b). JS had met Simon Le Good and plans to attend a meeting with TFW on 23 November. He noted that there was agreement that cyclists and walkers have priority on paths crossing junctions. He hopes to discuss this with Chloe. **[Action: JS]**
- (b) 20mph default (Item 2). JS noted that the Council had overruled objections. There was a general feeling that the default was not being properly implemented. DN questioned why Mayals Road had not been made an exception as there was an off-road alternative, which would have made it acceptable to Wheelrights. NG had had an article printed in the S. Wales Evening Post.
- (c) Jack Palmer Ride (Item 4). DN and DR had taken part. They looked at a possible link from the existing cycle path on the west side of and parallel to the bus lane and railway between New Cut Road and Maliphant Street to Cwm Road. They found that this could be achieved via Vernon Road by breaking through the wall at its east end. As Vernon Road is a few metres higher than the cycle path a ramp would be needed. There was space to provide this. Jack accepted that this was doable but questioned if there would be sufficient demand to justify it. JS (at the present meeting) emphasised that it was a key link from the city centre and Railway Station to Cwm road and the north, so there was a potential demand. We agreed that we should push for it.

2. **Solar Farm near Gowerton.**

DN emphasised that we need to get the Council to accept that Route GF, straddled by the proposed solar farm and currently a footpath, needs to be for cyclists as well as walkers. (See Item 3 of 5 Aug. notes.) It was noted that this was a key west-east active travel link between Gowerton and Fforestfach with connections at its east end to the north and south.

3. **Fabian Way corridor.**

We highlighted the need for route SB, south of Fabian Way. This would provide additional capacity to cope with, in particular, increased active travel between the two campuses. It would complement NCR 4 which is unsatisfactory in various respects: a crossing on Wern Road; lack of a verge where it follows Fabian Way; and the need to either cross Fabian Way or use the hazardous Baldwins Bridge underpass to access the Bay Campus.

We discussed and noted that a good way to get it implemented would be on the back of new developments in the area. It would need to be a planning requirement.

NB: we failed to pick up under Matters Arising that an action (Item 3 of Notes of last meeting) was for NG and DR to contact Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff Cycle groups to solicit their support for Route BB, ie a continuation of SB eastward south of Fabian Way to join NCR 4 where it goes under Fabian Way. **[Action: NG, DR]**

4. **Eaton Road.**

JS had, earlier in the day, attended a meeting with the Council to see how this road could be upgraded for Active Travel. Various options are being considered: advisory, mandatory, or stepped cycle tracks; or a separate cycle track. A problem with on-road cycle tracks is that they get blocked by parked vehicles. JS noted that ideally pedestrians, cyclists and motor traffic would be separated. DN noted that something more than a white line is needed to keep vehicles from parking on cycle lanes. JS also noted that there was a problem at crossings, highlighting the crossing of Robert Street.

5. Penclawdd-Gowerton Missing Link.

DJ, DN and JS had that afternoon attended a Teams Stakeholders Workshop on the Missing Link. It was convened by Luke Tizzard (LT) of Mott MacDonald. The approx. dozen attendees included Gowerton councillors Dai Jenkins and Susan Jones, Swansea Council officers Stephen Hughes and Simon Jones, and Roger Dutton of Sustrans.

The purpose of the meeting was to get feedback on how best to provide a safe active travel route across the [1.1km] Missing Link. LT, after giving an introduction, noted that a key issue was how to get past the 'Halfway House' located in the middle of the section. Following comments from those present he went on to list the following options for the location of a shared use path (SUP):

1. on N. side of B4295;
2. on S. side of B4295;
3. on N. side but clear of the road, ie across the Marsh;
4. to the south but well clear of the road;
5. minimum.

There was a consensus that the route should be on the north side, either option 1 or 3, option 1 receiving the most support.

In an exchange of views DJ, DN and JS all supported option 1. Regarding the sharing of the route between cyclists and walkers DJ noted that he did not favour segregation. DN did not comment on segregation but noted that a minimum requirement was a $\geq 3\text{m}$ wide path. Subsequently (at our meeting) DN suggested that separate pedestrian and cycle lanes on SUPs should be provided when usage was high, in which case the SUP should be $\geq 4\text{m}$ wide. This was the case on the Swansea Foreshore between Blackpill and Sketty Lane, and he thought that worked well. JS expressed his opinion that, in anticipation of a large future increase in active travel, pedestrians, cyclist and cars should all be separated. He also suggested that to provide space for option 1 the carriageway be narrowed to 6m (as was done on Mayals Road).

LT advised that the plans would have to meet the guidance (regulations?) prescribed in *WELtag* (This apparently is a regulatory document. One questions how does it relate to the Welsh Active Travel Guidance?)

What stood out about this workshop was that the Council appear to have ignored all the work that was done some 20 years ago and were acting as if it had only recently been brought to their attention. DJ, who knows more about this than most, mentioned it at the workshop.

6. GAP.

We briefly discussed the findings of the inspector's report, noting that the grounds for rejection were flimsy and did not adequately weight the benefits. Regarding this, DR questioned if the inspector had considered the effects (counter benefits) of *not* providing the path. PT advised that cllr Lyndon Jones will be contacting the Commoners, following which he (PT) plans to set up a meeting to decide where we go next with the path across the Common. **[Action PT]**

7. AOB.

DJ drew attention to the public walk/ride between Gowerton and Penclawdd on Saturday 25 November. It both marks the first rugby derby of the season and publicises the Missing Link issue. Details on the Events page of Wheelrights website.

8. Next meeting.

7.00pm on Monday 4 December by Teams. JB will again set this up. We agreed to continue with on-line evening meetings during the winter and then revert to physical meeting/rides in the spring when the weather is conducive to cycling.

Notes prepared by
David Naylor