



# Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay cycle campaign group



**Newsletter No. 57 Autumn 2021**

[www.wheelrights.org.uk](http://www.wheelrights.org.uk)

## Let's go cycling

While *Wheelrights* focus, quite rightly, is on Active Travel, more generally it is simply to get people out of their cars and onto bikes. This means using the bike to get out and about whether that is to get to work, go shopping or simply to get to nice places. The bike is great as, parking not being a problem, it can easily be combined with walking.



The photo is looking north across Rhossili Beach. You can follow that track on a bike (as those of you who came with me on the "Grand Gower Circuit" Gower Cycling Festival rides will remember) round the coast first to Hillend and then across Broughton Bay to Llanmadoc. The ride is bumpy in parts, involves lifting the bike over a couple of gates and across a short stretch of soft sand, but you can cycle nearly all of it on an ordinary bike. This route should form part of a round the Peninsula cycle path, paralleling and in places sharing the Welsh Coast path. This is a route of tourist potential which needs promoting.

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### Copy deadline

Copy for the next issue should be sent to me, David Naylor, by mid Nov. (Email: [david@davidjnaylor.plus.com](mailto:david@davidjnaylor.plus.com))

We start with a note from our Secretary about a Foreshore Path initiative and an update from Leonie on the Mt Pleasant e-bikes; then Chris has a novel idea which suggests action by you. A review of the new Active Travel Guidance by me follows. Then an account of a sunny July Cappuccino ride.

With the days now shortening Bill Gannon's lights article on p.6 is timely. I follow this with the story of Mayals Road. Finally, Ian Williams updates us on *Re-Cycle*.

As usual I am happy to include correspondence on articles or other *Wheelrights* issues.

**David Naylor**

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## Improve the Foreshore path



A few *Wheelrights* members have launched a new campaign calling for better maintenance of the foreshore shared use path as well as making improvements such as more lights and signage. Two major issues are the regular flooding in the wooded area near the bottom of Sketty Lane where several large puddles form after rainfall. (Pictured.) These puddles can persist for days and are a major hazard to both cyclists and walkers. This same area also becomes very dark early and could benefit from lighting similar to that recently installed along the West Cross section of the path. The second problem is the large amounts of sand frequently deposited on the path during stormy weather. If not swept promptly the sand, particularly when dry, can cause cyclists to lose control and/or dismount.

The new campaign got off to a start on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August when several *Wheelrights* members asked passing cyclists and walkers to sign a petition calling for action on the above points. Dozens of signatures were collected and there was universal support from members of the public. The event was attended by several Swansea Councillors who pledged their support. The campaign is expected to run for the foreseeable future with regular attempts to collect signatures at various locations along the path. Volunteers are welcome to join this effort; please contact me ([d.rassi@swan.ac.uk](mailto:d.rassi@swan.ac.uk)) and/or Nick ([nick.guy1951@gmail.com](mailto:nick.guy1951@gmail.com)). The petition can be reached via the Campaigns page of our website <https://www.wheelrights.org.uk/> or directly via <http://chnq.it/S7MLQKjLkM>.

**Dareyoush Rassi**

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## Mount Pleasant e-bikes – update

Those people who've borrowed the Mount Pleasant Community e-bikes and e-trike are unanimous. The experience is liberating. Being able to glide up steep hills and travel further, faster has encouraged an exploration of the Swansea surroundings that was previously restricted to only the fittest. Consequently, people have reported discovering



Right leg amputee Manoah Smiley explores the Marina.

new routes and accessing sites previously unseen. Friends and sponsors from further afield are also borrowing the bikes to establish if an e-bike might be a suitable solution to keep them active as they age or to replace the need for a second car. And the opportunity to test ride the bikes for free remains open to *Wheelwrights* members while the booking system conundrum has yet to be resolved. So if you are technically adept and interested in helping sort advance booking software linked to a smartlock and/or GPS, please contact Leonie at [leonie@geni-us.net](mailto:leonie@geni-us.net). She can also advise on how you can borrow a bike.

**Leonie Ramondt**

## PIPs, NIPs for happier cycling

I use my bike for many purposes, general commuting, work (as a cycling instructor), active travel, social and leisure riding and fitness. Consequently I do a lot of miles on all sorts of roads and have lots of interactions with other road users.

Cycling on today's roads can sometimes be challenging. Some drivers see cyclists as obstacles to be passed as soon as possible thereby increasing the hazard to both themselves and more importantly us by leaving less than the recommended 1.5m.

As a cycling instructor I teach the need to make your intentions clear and unambiguous to other road users. I want to go beyond this by encouraging a utopian vision where we actually care about others on the road and our actions and behaviours reflect this.

If we want a positive experience I believe we need a significant change in attitude rather than more rules, laws and guidelines. Sadly most of the press reporting covers the negative interactions with cyclists and inevitably distorts the true picture no doubt putting off many potential cyclists.

Over the last year I've been experimenting to see if I can improve the interaction between cyclists and other road users and with that in mind let me introduce you to the concept of **PIPs: Positive Interaction Points**.

Your objective on every cycle ride is to finish the ride with as many PIPs as possible.

So how do you get a PIP? Very easily, as it turns out all you need to do is to get a positive response from another road or path user who is basically saying 'thank you' for your actions or behaviour. They may give an appreciative honk of their horn, a cheery wave or thumbs up, whatever – bag that as a point!

Some actions that may elicit a response could be as simple as ceding priority, pulling over to allow a queue of traffic pass, indicating to a vehicle behind that it safe to pass. Stopping or slowing down for pedestrians or horses, helping another cyclist in need. Top tip: try to make eye contact as this is more likely to encourage a PIP coming your way.

No doubt there are many other examples and I would love to hear how you get yours!

My record for a ride is 5.



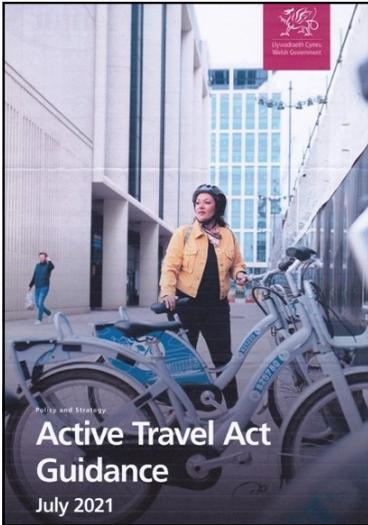
Example of a NIP.

Oh yes I almost forgot.

NIPs, well do you really need me to explain? Suffice to say these subtract from your PIPs. Too many of these and I'd encourage you to take advantage of the free cycle training currently offered by *Bikeability Wales*.

**Chris Walsh**

## The 2021 Active Travel Guidance – a review



The 2014 *Active Travel Design Guidance* has been superseded by the *Active Travel Act Guidance July 2021*. “Design” does not now appear in the title because both delivery and design are covered in the one publication, whereas previously there was a separate delivery document. With 476 pages the new guide is slightly longer than its predecessor.

The original content which has been retained has been extensively reorganized. It is now in two main parts: Part 1 covering delivery and Part 2 design. The content of Part 1 replaces Part A (*General Principles*) in the old. There are 20 chapters and 11 appendices in the new guide compared with 11 chapters and 4 appendices in the old. Part 2 (Chap. 7-20.) is about six times as long as Part 1 (Chap. 1-6). Although the increase in length of the new guide is modest its pdf version is nearly 43 Mb compared with 11 Mb of the old. This may be because there are more figures and photos in the new.

The new guide starts with a Foreword by Lee Waters whereas in the old this was provided by Phil Jones of Phil Jones Associates who edited it. This perhaps explains some significant differences, the new guide being largely written ‘in-house’.

A central feature is the combining of the Existing Route and Integrated Network maps (ERM & INM) into the single Active Travel Network Map (ATNM).

It is difficult to sort out what is new in the new guide because of the reorganization. But there is a lot that is new. Part 2 retains much of the old design guidance but it has been rearranged, new material added and most of the photos and diagrams replaced.

The *Design Elements* are now in Appendix G. (Appendix D in the old guide.) Instead of being numbered sequentially as previously they are now grouped into 6 series: 100, 200 ... 600; ie DE101, etc. There are now 62 DEs; previously there were 55. The 7 new ones are all in the 600 Series “Crossings and Junctions”; of these of particular note is DE625 which covers Dutch style roundabouts. Most of the old ones are unchanged, but one small change I noted was that in DE313 and DE314 the upper limit for a 3.0m wide cycle track has been increased from 150 cyclists/hour to 250, thus making the guide less conservative than before (and less conservative than other codes).

Of particular interest to us with our recent experience of “hybrid” cycle tracks is that they are now called “stepped” cycle tracks, which is the name more widely used. The guidance on them (DE311 and DE312) is unchanged. The advice that the absolute minimum width of 1.5m applies only where there are constrictions, while not spelt out in the DEs is elsewhere (in Table 9.8). This was not made clear in the previous guide. As with other guides there is a lack of guidance about cycle provision on hills.

Time will be the judge of its effectiveness; meanwhile we must be thankful for up-to-date guidance to enable the construction of quality cycle infrastructure.

**David Naylor**

## A memorable Cappuccino ride

What a fabulous day it was. Allyson Evans from *Wheelwrights* led a group of five of us along the Tawe cycle path to Pontardawe Art Centre, via the Clydach Heritage Centre. While everyone was crowding the sea front, this shady, leafy green, often gorgeously scenic route was incredibly tranquil and cooled by river breezes. And wow, it is so much easier learning a route from someone else, than navigating via a map or an app!



Stopping for refreshments at Clydach Heritage Centre (opened specially for us by Gwyn Evans), I learned about the history of the Mond Nickel Works and also found out about attractions in the area including the Canal trust and the council's Parklives paddle boarding initiative.

On the way back, I cheekily asked David Naylor, *Wheelwrights* webmaster and Newsletter editor, if I could accompany him into the city, as I wanted to experience riding with someone confident. What an eye opener. This gentleman, 20 years my senior who commutes frequently from Pennard, sailed through traffic and up the hill from Parc Tawe to the High street, with me arriving at that junction literally red faced and overheated, having had to push the bike for the last stretch up the hill as the traffic stole my nerve.



Thankfully sipping fresh orange juice at Awa, I learned more about cycling in Swansea as David has ridden here for decades (and toured elsewhere with his wife). This experience has renewed my resolve to shift from long-lapsed to currently-cycling because, at a time when we're all living longer, doing that as healthily as possible is definitely key to having a good quality of life.

**Leonie Ramondt**

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## Forthcoming events

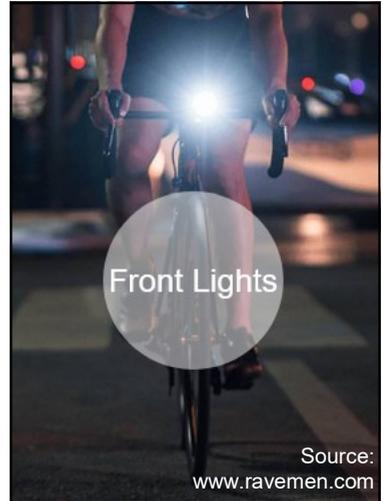
Two key events, dates for which have yet to be decided, are a public meeting, hopefully with Julie James SM as speaker, and our AGM. When available details will be provided on the Events page of our website, as will also the Routes Group meetings and Cappuccino rides. The former normally take place on the second Saturday of the month and the latter fortnightly (usually on a Tuesday or Wednesday) as long as the weather holds.

## Don't dazzle!

I was riding home one night in the dark when an oncoming cyclist blinded me. I was going to shout "I can't see", but then I wondered if I was just as bad. Having not seen myself cycling towards myself, it's rather hard to know!

In order to find out I'd have to find a place that I could prop the bike up vertically with the handlebars straight, but I couldn't think of anywhere. In order to be able to cycle at 12mph, I need to have the spot of my headlight pointed about 5m in front of the bike. Those with a head for maths will know that corresponds to approximately 1 second. [Ed: *and a deceleration of 0.3g.*] Any closer and there's a chance I might cycle into a brick, or a branch, without getting enough warning to avoid it.

Then I realised I could still point the headlight 5m in front of the bike, even though it was propped on the stand, and therefore there *was* a way that I could see what I looked like from a distance. I therefore picked a nice flat section of road, aimed the light at the correct point, and walked 20m away.



Guess what? It turns out that I *am* blinding oncoming cyclists and pedestrians. All I could see was my headlight, and I couldn't see the edges of the road at all. And that was only on my usual medium power setting (150 lumens). On a really wet evening I have to aim the light up slightly higher again because, sadly, in such weather very little of the light I send out comes back.

I don't feel entirely at fault. This happens to be how my light, and nearly every light on the market, is designed [Model: Blackburn Central 300: <https://www.evo.com/outlet/front-lights/blackburn-central-300-bike-light>]. I noticed in the Feb/March issue of *cycle*, the Cycling UK mag. (which I have since recycled) that there was an advert for a bicycle headlight with a 'dipped beam', and it said it was the *only* such light on the market. The only one? If anyone still has their copy lying about, perhaps you could look it up for us? [Ed: *I have; the link is: www.ravemen.com.*]

In the meantime, it looks like I will have to push my headlight down every time a cyclepath user comes the other way, which is to say all the time. Truth be told, no one has ever complained, which is certainly testament to the patience and tolerance exhibited by many cyclepath users. As my wife said: most are just glad you have a light at all.

**Bill Gannon**

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## Mayals Road Saga

With the work on Mayals Road nearly complete it's time to reflect on how this project which has caused such an outcry came about and what can be learnt from it.



Having secured active travel funding the Council set out to make Mayals Road safer for all cyclists. They sought to do this by providing light segregation in the form of hybrid (more commonly called “stepped”) cycle tracks on both sides of the road. These tracks separate cyclists from both pedestrians and motorists. They have also narrowed the carriageway to 6.0m. This is considered good practice as the road is now less than the *critical width*, which should make it safer for road cyclists as they can then only be overtaken when there is no oncoming traffic. This narrowing also provided space for the hybrid tracks but even with it there was not sufficient width to provide tracks which meet the guidelines. They are only 1.5m wide and lack a verge (verge). The Welsh Active Travel Guidance, as do other codes, recommend a minimum width of 2.0m plus a buffer between the track and the road of at least 0.5m.

The focus of the outcry has been the hybrid tracks. Both cyclists and local residents were unanimous in their opposition to them, principally on the grounds of safety. Experienced cyclists would continue to use the road and their suitability for less confident cyclists was questioned. One particular concern was the lack of a verge. This together with the narrowing of the carriageway means that a large vehicle could hit a cyclist on the track. There were other concerns about the plans but the hybrid tracks was the main one.

*Wheelrights* involvement really began in October, 2019, when I, aware of the need for a cycle friendly easterly link to the proposed path across Clyne Common, had a meeting with Cllr Linda Taylor-Lloyd. She was looking for support for a crossing near Clyne Drive and was sympathetic to my proposal for an upgrading of the footpath on the south side of Mayals Road to shared use together with a cycle link from her proposed crossing to the Toucan crossing at Blackpill. This would go through a corner of Clyne Gardens and through Roman Court. I learnt from her that the Council had prepared drawings which we subsequently obtained. This was the first we knew about the plan. Most recently (in August) an incident on the lower SUP has led to renewed interest in the Roman Court link.

In early 2020 *Wheelrights* Routes Group, which I chair, got to grips with the issue. In a series of meetings in the late summer and autumn we tried to find a way to get the plans changed. Unfortunately – and I guess this reflects on my shortcomings as chair – my efforts to get a consensus failed. At a meeting in September with the Council's designer, Alan Ferris, we learnt that the funding was tied to the plans which had been approved by the Welsh Gov. This meant that only minor changes could be made.

While we were agreed that the hybrid tracks were unacceptable and were happy with certain other aspects of the plan, including the upper and lower SUPs (unwisely it would appear in retrospect for the lower ) and the raised platforms across minor junctions (We were neutral about the carriageway narrowing.), we could not agree on the solution.

To me it was obvious – I have been active traveling up and down the Mayals Road for nearly 50 years – that what was needed was for the north side of the carriageway to be made safer for cycling (Free wheeling down it at up to 30 mph they serve the useful purpose of keeping drivers within the speed limit.) and for off-road provision on the south (uphill) side so that traffic is not held up by slow moving cyclists. While not providing a downhill off-road alternative this would have made the road safer and more cycle friendly.

Providing for the inexperienced weighed heavily and, agreement not having been reached by the Routes Group, *Wheelrights* officers submitted a proposal to the Council in November. It involved extending the north side SUP westward and moving the upper crossing (just east of Fairwood Road) further down the hill. The intention was to provide off-road provision for all cyclists. Their proposal had three versions, details of which can be found in [www.wheelrights.org.uk/infrastrarch.htm](http://www.wheelrights.org.uk/infrastrarch.htm) (Click *Wheelrights alternatives* in the Mayals Road section). This proposal was turned down. I then proposed a solution which was essentially what I had discussed with Linda Tyler-Lloyd but without mentioning the link to the Blackpill crossing. I had support for it from *Cycling UK*, whose Swansea rep. I am. It would leave the north side of the road untouched and use the width freed up to provide off road provision on the south side. This would be either a hybrid track of adequate width (ie 2.5m including a verge) or an SUP, similar to that recently been provided on Cockett Road. My email was not even answered.

Clearly in future, consultation at an early stage is necessary so that the experience and judgment of cyclists and local residents can be incorporated in the plans.

**David Naylor**

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## **Re-Cycle – update**

*Re-Cycle Swansea* has increased its turnover by 300% over the last year as the popularity of cycling has grown. Thanks to the generosity of hundreds of bike donors we have kept pace with demand, unlike many mainstream bikeshops where stocks remain low.

We still give 1 in 5 of donated bikes to volunteers, who complete a training course while supporting the project.



In July we launched an evening class in cycle maintenance. The hands-on course is aimed at fixing punctures, tuning gears and brakes, and a full bicycle safety check.

More advanced courses can be catered to individual needs.

Contact [recycleswansea@gmail.com](mailto:recycleswansea@gmail.com) for dates. The evening class will be £30 with a 20% discount for *Wheelrights* members.

The picture shows Carlos (on the pedals) who coordinates the training programme, Luke (passenger) is our mechanic and trainer; and Diego, a volunteer who rides a bike he built himself at Re-Cycle.

**Ian Williams**