

Luton and Dunstable Cycling Forum
Meeting held 13th January 2016, Travel Choices Hub, Dunstable

Attendance

Robin Cowan (Chair), Adam Bell, John Pratt, Ben Garner, Bob Deeley, Steve Lakin, Gary Morgan, David Woodroffe, Geoff Mercer, Dave Barford

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Terry Colver, Alister Barclay, Siobhan McSwiggan, Roger Pepworth, Rod Black, Sarah Galt, Paul Caruna and Mark McCall

2) Minutes of last meeting and points arising

The minutes of the last meeting were discussed and agreed.

3) Charity Bike Ride

Adam confirmed that he was working on a 20 mile family friendly route similar to last year, and a 45 mile route which would be all on road as it wouldn't be sensible to expect larger numbers of riders to be using shared use paths. John & Ben confirmed they would be able to assist with the event planning. The question as to which charities to support was also flagged although Adam pointed out we still had to run it for Sustrans in order to be covered by their insurance, or else we become affiliated to the CTC in which we could then be covered by their insurance. Robin confirmed he would be looking at obtaining sponsorship from several sources and volunteer help.

Ben mentioned it would be useful to have several riders from the Forum doing the route as a mobile marshal, to help anyone struggling and to see how the riders are doing. It was also agreed to have numbers to go onto the participant's bike.

4) Led rides & other issues

Robin confirmed that the Forum had now run over 50 rides as well as starting non led social rides.

5) Members issues

Adam highlighted that the Luton Taxi Licencing Authority had stated that they didn't intend increasing operators fees, which he felt was an odd anomaly bearing in mind other users of council services were facing increased costs and/or cuts in services. It was felt it wasn't a matter for the Forum to directly comment on.

The heatmap produced by Adam based on data released following the 2011 Census was discussed, which highlighted how few people in central Luton had cars. Steve commented that over 50% of households have at least 1 bike.

6) Busway

The A-frame barriers at either end and on College Drive had now been removed, and most of the finished tarmac now put down. Steve confirmed he should know by the end of January how much money was left over. Robin mentioned that there should be one of the new green barriers at the start on New Bedford Road, in order to prevent cyclists overrunning into the road, although Steve said he would prefer a bollard. On the sections over Telford Way, they would be installing solar studs which would light up at night, and would also flash when icy, although there wouldn't be any funds available for general lighting along the busway (which would in any event have issues for the residents). Steve also confirmed the large gates at Blackburn Road had been removed and would be looking at a wheeling ramp at Bradley Road and improvements for access by the football ground.

7) How to help cyclists locally

Robin mentioned the www.raintoday.co.uk website which he found very useful in showing current weather radar images, in order to see when it might stop or start raining, and suggested building up a list of useful web sites.

The lack of diversion signs around the closed section of NCN6 due to the new Woodside Link road was discussed and Steve confirmed he would be arranging for signs to go up. He also

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mentioned that as the road might not open until the M1-A5 link road is opened, there may be scope for some form of cycle use beforehand.

The fact that cars often park in cycle lanes and shared use paths such as Sundon Road was discussed as well as the example of the badly positioned bus stop along NCN6 on New Bedford Road. Robin asked for other suggestions for where cycling provision could be improved.

8) Central Beds issues

Steve confirmed that with various staffing changes, his role is now more removed from cycling, although Central Beds would be starting work on a new Cycling Strategy. In addition, due to funding cuts, it was unlikely the Hub would remain open to the public from April, and that Ringway James are taking over as the Highways contractor.

Robin asked for suggestions of events where we could have our gazebo, and Adam mentioned the Luton Carnival, Luton Festival of Transport and the Kite Festival. Robin mentioned that Arriva may run their "Swap with Me" event again, and if we weren't able to use the Hub for meetings, we would ask Arriva if we could use premises at their Dunstable Road location.

Ben asked where the information currently obtained from the Hub would be available if the Hub closes, and it was confirmed there would still be the Tourist Information in Priory Gardens, although they had limited space.

Steve confirmed that the walking/cycling map wasn't yet finished.

9) Luton issues

Robin confirmed he had thank Trevor for his assistance over the years, and also confirmed that with Viv leaving, Rod Black was now responsible for cycling in Luton, so Robin would try and meet him.

10) Treasurer's Report

John confirmed there was no change in the Nationwide account. Adam confirmed that ActiveNetwork still held £641.38 but was hopeful this should be transferred to the Lloyds account after 18th January, which currently held £30. It was agreed to reimburse Ben the £48 he had paid to secure the use of Kensworth Village Hall for the Charity Ride.

11) Other issues

Geoff mentioned the cycling link from Luton to Hitchin, and suggested that an option would be to make use of the old railway link, the line of which was still visible.

John mentioned that Luton Football Club are hopeful they will be able to build a new stadium at Power Court and would be looking at any plans to ensure there is cycle parking provision.

At Halfords in the Luton Retail Park near Parkway Station, it was noted that following the store revamp, they finally now have cycle parking.

The next social evening was agreed to be on 10th February at 7:30 pm in the Chequers, Houghton Regis, with the next Forum meeting on 9th March, 6:30 at the Hub.