

## Status Report

October 2020

### 1. Preamble

Cycle Winchester (CW) was formed in November 2017 with funding from WinACC, City of Winchester Trust, Bespoke Biking, Cycling UK/CTC and Friends of the Earth. It developed from an earlier incarnation known as Winchester Cycle Forum. It is a community action group working towards 'Making Winchester Better By Bike'.

Almost three years later this short report aims both to summarise the activities and achievements of the group to date and to layout some plans for the future with the hope of attracting additional funding to underpin those initiatives.

### 2. Activities

There have been two main strands to the work of CW: public engagement and direct campaigning. The two are mutually supportive and in any case not always that distinct from each other.

#### 2.1. Public engagement

CW aims to represent everyone in and around Winchester who rides a bike, or who would ride a bike if conditions were improved. It aims to promote the benefit of cycling to those who don't currently ride. It wants to create a community of cyclists that can work together towards a common aim. It wants cyclists to be a visible presence and for them to be seen as an important and sizeable demographic.

##### 2.1.1. Taking Cycling Seriously workshop

On 9th November 2017 about 100 people attended a workshop at the launch of CW out of which many of the activities and initiatives below were born.

##### 2.1.2. Social media

CW has created its own website and begun to develop an important on-line presence in social media through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. The growing importance of this has been demonstrated recently both with the ability to organise and run **Not the Mass Ride** (see 2.1.5.) during COVID-19 restrictions but also to engage supporters in the **7 Days of Action** campaign.

##### 2.1.3. '7 Days of Action'

As part of a public consultation on suitable projects for COVID-19 funding, HCC launched an on-line map where individuals could indicate problem areas for walking and cycling. This was in relation to the requirement to maintain social distancing and the need to make streets safer as many people were newly opting to cycle as a way of getting around. CW identified seven key schemes that would be most beneficial to cyclists, all easy to implement and reasonably low-cost. Each day for a week one scheme was highlighted on Facebook with a direct link to the online map and instructions on how to vote. Highlighted schemes typically gained 60–70 votes as against the average of 10 and this had an important steer in the selection of Phase 2, COVID-19 projects chosen for implementation.

##### 2.1.4. Interactive Cycle Winchester Big Map

To support WCC and HCC in designing developments that best meet the needs of cyclists CW has created an online interactive map on which individual cyclists can log hazards and areas of difficulty and indicate potential strategic link routes for cyclists. It is an important tool for:

- a) gathering the widest possible input into the needs of people who actually ride bikes;
- b) visualising those issues and;
- c) planning and prioritising schemes.

Other maps are or have been in operation eg Hants COVID-19 map but CW has no control over their long-term use or availability.

### **2.1.5. Winchester Mass Ride**

CW has organised a total of four Mass Rides. Despite some poor weather conditions the average turn out has been 175 riders and the largest gathering was approximately 300. The Mass Rides have helped to create a growing community of cyclists in Winchester. They have raised awareness of CW and given it a body of supporters. The Mass Rides continue to demonstrate the large numbers of cyclists in the city and show that people who ride bikes are a significant and 'mobilised' demographic. The rides also encourage new, young or wary cyclists to get on their bike and find fun and safety in numbers.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions a fifth Mass Ride was converted into a ***Not the Mass Ride*** (NtMR) wherein individual cyclists posted selfies of themselves beside a logo decorated bike at King Alfred's Statue during Bike Week. In the end around 100 riders posted selfies (not all on CW social media!) and more took part – out of which momentum was built for the successful ***7 Days of Action*** campaign (see 2.1.3.).

### **2.2. Campaigning**

CW has responded to or actively engaged with all major consultations and planning discussions concerning Winchester and its environs.

CW also uses its links with supporters to encourage them to engage as individuals with

all cycle-related planning issues, wherever possible.

CW was invited to participate as a stakeholder in the Winchester Movement Strategy and the Workshop for Non-Motorized Users organised by Highways England with regard to the new Junction 9. In all other cases, although CW has a growing profile, most input has been in 'response-mode'.

#### **2.2.1. Junction 9**

CW welcomed plans to include a better cycle path linking Winnall with the country lanes to Easton and the Itchen Valley. We asked Highways England for their commitment that they will build this to the 'preferred' government standards (not the 'minimum' standards), so there is space for increased numbers of cyclists to pass safely. We lobbied for a traffic-free cycle path branching off from the junction to run alongside the A34/A33 to Kings Worthy – plans only included this as a footpath.

#### **2.2.2. Winchester Movement Strategy**

CW provided a list of priorities that would make the biggest difference for Winchester's cyclists. We encouraged our supporters to take part in the second consultation that was finalising the strategy plans before they were signed off by both councils early in 2019.

#### **2.2.3. New Sports and Leisure Park at Bar End**

CW took part in several meetings where the plans were discussed in public. We discussed the urgent need to link the new leisure centre with cycle routes that would encourage people to cycle to and from the centre. We passed on a map with suggestions to improve cycle links and asked cyclists to voice their views in the public consultation.

#### **2.2.4. Station Approach**

CW lobbied for more cycle facilities in plans for the Carfax site and the wider development of this area. It also argued for safe cycle routes in all directions to link with Andover Road, Romsey Road, Stockbridge Road, towards Kings Worthy and into the city centre. Contraflow in one-way roads should be allowed for cyclists. There should be no car parks included in the Carfax building as there are bus and train links available already. More car parking facilities will cause more traffic and emissions that will not encourage cycling. These suggestions were acknowledged partly by reducing the number of new car parking places and allowing bi-directional cycling on Station Road and Station Hill. (Scheme now abandoned.)

#### **2.2.5. St Maurice Covert**

CW led a campaign to oppose the removal of cycle parking in St Maurice Covert.

#### **2.2.6. Badger Farm Road**

CW supported a petition to make Badger Farm Road junctions more accessible for all.

#### **2.2.7. COVID-19 funding for temporary/permanent measures**

CW took a 3-minute slot in a recent WCC Council Meeting to make a presentation urging adoption of the schemes highlighted in *7 Days of Action* (see 2.1.3.).

### **3 Looking forward**

Now is an important opportunity to change transport habits and embed cycling more widely into people's lives.

There is funding from Central Government, a perceived political will for change and recent publications on designing provision for cyclists (eg *Gear Change*; DoT, July 2020) that

finally aim to meet their needs, not just tick boxes. CW is determined to capitalise on this in the months and years ahead.

The last few years have not seen major successes in influencing the powers that be although through persistence and hard work there have certainly been one or two significant interventions. However CW is currently engaged in promising talks with HCC which we hope will create a more constructive and collaborative way of working together on projects – and from an earlier stage – to ensure better outcomes for cycling in Winchester in the future.

CW aims to represent all bike users. Many of its supporters are affiliated to other bike organisations (CTC, VC Venta, Breeze etc) but many are not. CW sees the representation of unaffiliated riders as an important part of its remit and wants to broaden its reach into this group as well as encouraging new cyclists onto the roads through activities like the Mass Ride and through an increased social media presence.

As well as campaigning directly for cycling infrastructure and developments that make Winchester a better place to cycle CW is looking to tackle some of the barriers that prevent politicians signing off on projects we'd like to see.

#### **Areas being looked at include:**

- countering the idea that cyclists are a 'special interest' group;
- building a broader pro-cycling consensus than currently exists;
- trying to find the common ground between pro-cycling groups and developing solutions that meet the competing needs of different types of cyclist.

## 4. Finances

CW has been heavily dependent on its start-up funding. This has been supplemented by collections at the Mass Rides, some personal donations for specific purposes and small out-of-pocket expenses not claimed back.

Typical outgoings include:

- annual membership of Cycling UK, mainly for the associated event insurance;
- printing costs for advertising;
- miscellaneous costs eg materials to create the NtMR bike;
- small gratuities, eg use of Friends Meeting House kitchen.

Looking ahead CW anticipates similar or increased ongoing costs if it is to continue working effectively on behalf of cyclists in Winchester and if it wishes to properly implement the plans it has for the future.

CW has discussed raising additional funds by other means eg running a membership scheme but thus far has not found a satisfactory model.

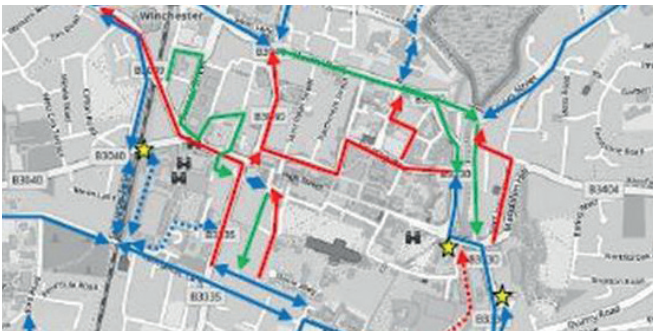
## 5. Summary

Cycle Winchester has had some impact within the city over the last three years and has used its small funds to good use. It has a coherent plan for the future designed to increase its effectiveness, to change entrenched views about cycling and cyclists and to become a more influential player in all cycling-related planning decisions.

To that end CW would welcome any new funding support.

## 6. Appendix: images

Mass Ride (summer); Taking Cycling Seriously Workshop; Interactive Big Map; St Maurice Covert bike rack campaign; Mass Ride (winter); NotTheMassRide decorated bike; Facebook/7 days of Action.



### Videos

See All



Cycle Winchester

July 30 at 5:22 PM · 🌐

Busy, and hopeful, times with a raft of announcements from cen and local government in recent days. Lots to absorb, but let's sta with the Highway Code. Cycling UK has consulted with governm on changes to the Highway Code and asks us to support these t changes. Click the link, choose two changes that are most impor you, and send a personalised email of support.

<https://action.cyclinguk.org/page/64572/action/1?ea.tracking.id=DE&ea.url.id=4837290>