

Operating Report

January 2022

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 out of an earlier incarnation known as Winchester Cycle Working Group.

CW has recently changed from an ad-hoc campaign group into an unincorporated association with a formal constitution. The reasons for this are:

- clarity about who we are, particularly when dealing with other organisations;
- the ability to have a bank account and manage our own finances;
- the opportunity to build a committed membership thereby ensuring a revenue stream to support on-going activities.

The elected officers are John Arthur (Chair), Rob Jordan (Secretary) and Mike Caldwell (Treasurer).

This first annual Operating Report updates the activities of Cycle Winchester since a Status Report published in September 2020.

2. Activities

The overarching banner for our activities is “Campaigning to make Winchester better by bike”. It has evolved from ‘Making Winchester better by bike’ which is snappier but slightly less truthful. In general, we are persuading *others* to make things so, lacking the power to effect change ourselves.

CW wants to see a time when many more people cycle, and far more often – the visible proof that Winchester has indeed become better by bike.

We promote cycling and extol its virtues to all and sundry but currently this can only be done slightly apologetically and with an inherent ‘safety warning’ – as things stand, too much of our city presents a forbidding arena in which to get around by bike.

Our primary focus therefore is to make the case to the appropriate organisations – those with the authority and/or the money – for decisions and spending that makes cycling safer, easier and more attractive.

Time and effort within the CW core group is split between what might be called *direct campaigning*: involvement in public consultations, meetings with officers/ councillors, site meetings, acting as stakeholders for cycling interests in a variety of projects and pilot schemes; and *indirect campaigning*: improving the visibility of cyclists in the city, changing the perception and conversation around cycling, building a community of cyclists that is a more united, informed and effective voice.

2.1. Direct Campaigning

CW has attended and contributed to numerous consultations over the past fifteen months and has pro-actively campaigned on many other cycling-related issues. These range from rapid small-scale interventions such as challenging the presence of cycle barriers at Barton Meadows to continuing the fight for positive cycling outcomes in major, long-running projects such as Junction 9 of the M3. A brief overview is given below, in no particular order.

2.1.1. M3, Junction 9

For many years, from long before the inception of CW, members of our group have been at the forefront of lobbying for cycling improvements at Junction 9 of the M3. The wish is to see the NCN23 link under the M3 formalised and upgraded to meet current LTN 1/20 specifications. Additionally, there has been a push to see a new cycleway created from Kings Worthy to Winnall alongside the A33/A34. That campaign continues now within CW, more recently joining forces with the Ramblers, The South Downs National Park Authority and the British Horse Society to try and ensure that Highways England (now National Highways) don't backtrack on commitments won from them during an earlier phase of the consultation.

CW responded to the most recent public consultation, published a review article (cyclewinchester.org.uk/updates/m3-junction-9-highways-england-u-turns-on-cycleways/) and gave guidance to cyclists who wished to respond to the consultation as individuals.

We are now involved in stakeholder meetings with National Highways consultants and the organisations mentioned above in a bid to unlock the current impasse.

2.1.2. Winchester Movement Strategy/Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

CW attended an online workshop called the 'Movement and Place Plan'. CW has had stakeholder meetings with officers and councillors related to the WMS/LCWIP. CW gained access to the full LCWIP ahead of the consultation, something that had previously been denied to us. We compiled a pre-emptive critique of the LCWIP ahead of the formal consultation period, noting serious limitations and calling for major amendments.

This was widely circulated to relevant officers and councillors at city and county level and has generally been favourably received. Again, discussions are on-going.

In the meantime, CW responded to the formal consultation process and published guidance for supporters to make it easier for them to respond.

2.1.3. New Sports and Leisure Park at Bar End

CW is about to publish a post-mortem on our four years of campaigning for decent cycling provision to the new Sports and Leisure Park. Not a happy read but small gains include changes to the ramp and a wider turning area on Barfield Close.

2.1.4. Emergency Active Travel Fund

CW had a confidential preview of proposed EATF schemes and were able to make some recommendations that were partially accepted.

CW later responded to the formal consultation process and published guidance for CW supporters on how they might respond. The guidance took care not to be prescriptive particularly around the closure of Hyde Street which was a nuanced issue. It was a rare occasion when CW used paid Facebook promotion to extend our reach. Despite the council's own survey showing majority support it was decided not to continue with some major elements. CW made an unsuccessful deputation at the July decision day meeting, failing to halt the scrapping of the North Walls and Upper High Street ATF schemes.

We have since had meetings with the officers and councillors behind the decision and those discussions continue with the aim of ensuring that Winchester makes full and

proper use of any further active travel funding opportunities.

2.1.5. Contributions to Other Consultations, Workshops, Conferences and Working Groups

Local Transport Plan 4

CW submitted a group response to the consultation and provided guidance on completing the process for CW supporters.

'20splentyhants' campaign

CW wrote a letter of support and referenced the issue in their critique of the LCWIP.

Mobility Hub/Winchester railway station consultation

CW contributed to the process.

WCC local plan

CW submitted a group response to the consultation.

Central Winchester Regeneration

CW attended a consultation forum and submitted a group response to the consultation.

North Walls Recreation Ground

CW attended on-line consultation and submitted a group response to the consultation. Separately, CW is making representation around the possibility of restoring cycle access from Durngate to Park Avenue, that avoids using North Walls Recreation Ground.

Solent Transport E-scooter/E-bike trial

CW contributed to the stakeholder briefing and consultation.

OneGreatWin

CW contributed to the 'Movement' working group.

Active Places Summit

CW attended the summit and contributed to the workshops.

Friarsgate Medical Centre

CW submitted a group response to the consultation.

2.1.6. Sir John Moore Barracks

CW initiated a meeting with consultants for the developers and with the MoD to highlight many specific opportunities to provide permeability for cycling/walking through the scheme that would enable active modes to reach many key destinations in the city. Implementation of the development is now subject to delay.

2.1.7. Barton Meadows

CW wrote to WCC regarding the unnecessary barrier installed at the end of the new cycleway through Barton Meadows and has agreement that it will be replaced with bollards that are passable by all cycles including larger cargo bikes, trikes and bike trailers.

2.1.8. St Maurice Covert

CW continues to liaise with WCC over replacement of bike parking lost during the refurbishment of St Maurice Covert, an example of when other agendas too easily trump the interests of cyclists.

2.1.9. Ecogen Planning Application

CW commented in opposition to the Ecogen Planning Application (and its revision).

2.1.10. Badger Farm Road

CW supported the campaign and petition that was launched on 38 degrees.

2.1.11. HCC Review of Cycling Barriers

CW circulated a call from Hampshire County Council to supporters to highlight instances

of barriers and no cycling signs in and around the city. A response was coordinated from entries received. Other Hampshire cycle campaign groups also responded for their local areas.

2.2. Indirect Campaigning

2.2.1. Social media & website

CW has continued to develop its on-line presence through a growing following on Facebook (542 followers), Twitter (276 followers) and Instagram (360 followers). In busy months we can have hundreds of unique visits to our website and publish articles (example: “M3 Junction 9: Highways England U-turns on cycleways”) that attract similar numbers of individual views. However, there are quiet periods too. It is noticeable – and unsurprising – how dependent traffic is on posting content that is regularly refreshed.

We believe that our social media presence played a particularly important role during the (Emergency) Active Travel Fund consultation of Feb/Mar 2021 managing to secure a majority in favour of the proposed schemes – a result which went largely unheeded by decision-makers.

2.2.2. Winchester Mass Ride

After the lifting of Covid restrictions a postponed Mass Ride 5 (MR5) finally took place on Saturday October 16th, 2021. Unusually the weather was favourable! Between 200 and 300 riders joined the ride. MR5 was different to previous mass rides for a number of reasons:

- publicity was based on door-to-door leafletting rather than using posters, reaching an estimated 3000 households;
- there was an informally arranged police escort (two community police officers on bicycles) which smoothed progress around the one-way system; there have already

been indications the same officers would want to be involved again, ideally with reinforcements;

- a route extension up to the HCC offices was included which not only meant more people in town could experience the sight of massed cyclists but also, as planned, cyclists could then cheer their support as a ‘town crier’ proclaimed the Winchester Cycling Charter (see 2.2.3.).
- we managed to get the BBC to cover the ride and proclamation: a two-minute package repeated on local news bulletins through the following Monday, including an interview with Emma Street.

All in all, it was a very successful morning, probably the best yet.

2.2.3. Winchester Cycling Charter

A cycling charter for Winchester was mentioned as an aspiration in the October 2020 Status Report. In February 2021, CW launched the Winchester Cycling Charter. Its aim is to take the debate away from “a few loud and angry voices in the local paper” and build a consensus of individuals, businesses and other significant organisations behind a vision of a cycle-friendly future for the city. It is intended to give decision-makers a push in the right direction but also give them confidence to take difficult decisions knowing that there is significant backing for measures to enable more people to cycle, more often.

The charter had a pre-launch in which twenty organisations agreed to be founding signatories in order to build some momentum at the outset. Sign-ups were steady for a while but had dropped off until a recent boost by the promotional event at the Mass Ride.

Ten months on from its launch we have nearly 750 individual signatories and 80

organisations on-board, amongst them major institutions like the University of Winchester, Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Peter Symonds College, Winchester Cathedral, Winchester College and Winchester City Primary Care Network and many important and/or well-known business names.

2.2.4. Cyclist Profiles

Our October 2020 Status Report mentioned the wish to publish a series of profiles of 'People-Who-Ride-Bikes-in-Winchester'. The aim is to counter the myth that most cyclists are athletic types in bright lycra, sat on expensive machines, and usually out for leisure rides at the weekend. These profiles highlight the typical folk who, often unnoticed, traverse the city day-in-day-out, going about their business on a bike. We want to demonstrate that cycling is for anybody, not just a small elite. The twelfth profile in the series has recently been published.

2.3. Other

2.3.1. Outreach

In November '21 CW hosted a meeting by Zoom for anyone interested in finding out more about our activities and giving people an opportunity to share their own ideas about what could be done in the city to improve things for cyclists.

We were joined by over a dozen attendees. The evening generated some useful focal points for future activities (see 3.3.) and paved the way for one or two more volunteers to get involved with us.

2.3.2. Advice and information

We get regular enquiries to our group email hello@cyclewinchester.org.uk where we do our best to offer support to local cyclists. A recent example would be a family who are

new to the area asking about cycle routes in and around the city, including more child-friendly options.

2.3.3. Meet the Team

In response to a comment by an enthusiastic supporter of ours to the effect of 'so who is actually behind Cycle Winchester?' it was decided to add a 'Meet the Team' tab to our web pages. This is now in place with profiles showing a selection of members from the core team.

We hope it is helpful to see that we are not a bunch of cycling fanatics – just a cross-section of people who like to use a bike to get round; who share a belief that our city would be a much better place if cycling was a safe, easy, practical option; and, who are motivated to try and make that happen.

3 Looking forward

3.1. Campaigning

Undoubtedly the year ahead will be no different to that just gone, namely CW kept very busy maintaining our involvement in and oversight of many of the schemes in 2.1. whilst responding to new plans, pilots and projects that constantly come over the horizon.

Of particular interest are responding to the latest (02/22) consultation on LTP4, working to see the LCWIP become a much-improved template for the future, ensuring that HCC/WCC have cycling plans that will best capitalise on future ATF and Climate Strategy funding and maintaining pressure on National Highways to deliver on previous commitments at Junction 9, if it goes ahead.

3.2. Membership

The launch of our CW membership is imminent.

It will be an important step forward for CW, building a cohort of people who maybe follow us on social media but are also prepared to make a financial contribution.

Yearly subscriptions options have been set at £5, £10 and £20 and free for the unwaged. Members will be offered discounted membership of Cycling UK and discounts on purchases at two local bike shops.

There is still a donation option for anyone wishing to make a one-off financial contribution without becoming a member.

3.3. Sub-Groups

Discussion at our November outreach meeting (2.3.1.) centred around 3 main areas.

- Planning & development;
- Cycling to school;
- Cycle Parking.

Sub-groups have already met around the first two areas to plan a way forward.

The planning & development sub-group is interested in CW becoming better at:

- tracking large or strategic developments at an early stage;
- using the planning system to best advantage;
- monitoring schemes for compliance further down the line.

The *cycling to school* sub-group is looking at ways to support an individual school or group of parents to increase levels of cycling. Useful discussions are already underway with local councillors in relation to St Bede Primary School, particularly around the value of mapping local streets and hazards.

A pilot Bike Bus is scheduled for early in the New Year. There are plans to carry out surveys to understand more about the

barriers to cycling. A longer-term aim is to think about developing a 'tool-kit' that can be used with any school or parent group. The focus on schools is simply a convenient entry into the wider issue of getting more young people cycling.

Since the outreach meeting there has been a productive follow-up meeting with local councillors on the subject of cycle parking. The actions coming out of the meeting ranged from scoping work on converting a residential parking bay into a cycle hangar to reviewing current planning guidance to see if it reflects the need for cycle parking provision in new developments.

3.4. Communications

We would like to publish more regular content online and have more consistent email contact with our followers.

An imagined 'CW vacancies' page would certainly have 'communications coordinator' at the top of the list. Until that person appears we rely on the efforts of one or two of the core group who are already working hard on other things.

A few articles already in the pipeline include:

- review of CW's role in the Leisure Centre development;
- launch of CW's membership scheme - see 3.2;
- coverage of the Bike Train to St Bede - see 3.3;
- Winchester 10 minutes by bike.

3.5. Winchester Cycling Charter

Since the autumn Mass Ride, promotion of the charter has taken a back seat and as a result sign-ups have stalled. As we approach spring and hardened cyclists are joined by a wider demographic it will be a time to refresh and

augment posters/fliers around the city. There will also be efforts to engage more directly with the local business community presenting the case that increased levels of cycling is usually good for the economy and will be good for them.

3.6. Cycling Surveys & Cycling Data

In the New Year CW will be initiating a data gathering exercise with two aspects. One initiative is a count of passing cyclists at various nodes around the city. Planners and policy makers seem to have a poor idea of the routes cyclists actually use to get around – and how many of them there are. And the transformative effect of e-bikes is likewise not reflected in the current LCWIP. We want to ensure that any new scheme delivers the maximum benefit for current and potential cyclists.

The other initiative is to carry out surveys of cyclists at various destinations to better understand the views of the ‘ordinary’ cyclist we aim to represent.

3.7. Rides

The Mass Ride ethos has always been a celebration of cycling with a hint of protest. It’s always encouraging to hear stories of how much younger riders appreciate the simple pleasure of being in a big crowd of cyclists taking over the city streets.

Whilst contemplating further Mass Rides, CW is also interested in alternative ride scenarios with a sharper focus and clear protest element. An obvious candidate is to highlight the inadequacies of the new leisure centre route. A family-friendly ride and picnic in the Spring has been mooted. Or perhaps a ride to promote a cycle route from the station to the new leisure centre which is currently being proposed as a potential flagship walking route with cycling very much an afterthought.

It suggests that without some intervention the cycling option is in danger of becoming another ad-hoc, backstreet disaster.

4. Finances

Following a request for support at the conclusion of our Status Report in October 2020, we are very grateful that the majority of CW founding funders came forward with a further contribution. Our current balance is £191.89 in credit.

In November 2021 we opened our own Metrobank account and are no longer using the account of Winchester CTC.

The main outgoings in the past 15 months have been:

- annual membership of Cycling UK, mainly for the associated event insurance;
- printing costs for various promotional materials (posters, badges etc);
- material costs eg laminating pouches, cable ties;
- costume hire for promotion event of Winchester Cycling Charter.

It is hoped that the new membership scheme will enable CW to be self-supporting in the future. A Financial Report will be produced annually commencing January 2023.

5. Summary

The core group is continually dismayed, and often despondent, at the lack of meaningful action by the city or county council to enable more cycling in our city. Consultations sometimes seem to have become an end in themselves whilst delivery is for a day that never comes. The recent rejection of most of the Winchester Active Travel Schemes really stung because the usual excuse of ‘having no money’ couldn’t be made. Most of us have lived and cycled in the city for tens of years

and have seen no real beneficial change for cyclists in that time. If asked to nominate a 'big win' for Cycle Winchester, as we were recently, there would be silence. We all await a local cycling development to get really excited about. On the other hand, we can claim incremental gains.

Sustained pressure over a long period has won improvements to the cycle route to the new Sports and Leisure Park. Better than nothing although no-one can pretend that the overall scheme is anything other than an embarrassment.

More significantly, we are close to seeing changes that will allow contraflow cycling on Parchment Street and sections of the High Street – a positive step forward. Further down the line we look forward to a celebratory ride along the Kings Barton cycleway when it finally opens.

And if any of the many projects being consulted on ever come to fruition, we are confident that the cycling outcomes will be vastly better for our involvement.

More positive too is the changing conversation around active travel, albeit moving slower than we'd like. In the light of the climate emergency, congested roads, a health crisis and high streets facing an economic crisis it is good to know that cycling is part of the answer to so many of our societal problems. It has the potential to be a beneficiary of some large funding streams in those areas.

Locally we are beginning to see opportunities for more fruitful conversations earlier in the development process, not as an afterthought when too many decisions are already set in stone. We hope too that CW is getting better

organised and becoming a louder, clearer voice. We aim to show officers, councillors, developers – whoever it maybe – that they have a willing and capable ally when working to meet the needs of those people who do, or would like to, cycle but a tenacious opponent if tempted to sell cycling short.

6. Appendix: images



Guidance to supporters on completing Winchester Movement Strategy consultation.



People who ride bikes #12 Sara

Continued ►



Proclaiming the Winchester Cycling Charter



Mass Ride 5, 16/10/21

 **Cycle Winchester**
August 6, 2021 · 🌐

<https://cyclewinchester.org.uk/.../hcc-cancels-active.../>
As we feared, Hampshire County Council has chosen to remove existing, tranche 1, active travel schemes, and cancel the bulk of planned tranche 2 schemes. Cycle Winchester is asking HCC why. The evidence base for this decision seems flawed.



CYCLEWINCHESTER.ORG.UK
HCC cancels Active Travel schemes and we want to know why - cycle winchester

Campaign to reverse HCC Active Travel Scheme decisions



Emma Street, from CW core group, being interviewed by the BBC at MR5/Charter Proclamation 16/10/21