

WCA Transport Topic Group meeting

27th May 2021



Attendees: AN (Chair) RB, MG, MW, JWi, MB, JWa, JJ and AD (notes).

1. **Apologies:** received from JB and DK.

4. **WCA News / Upcoming Events**

The 26th May online **WCA-WC Strategy Consultation** went really well, lots of energy and good ideas and fully attended by 50+ WCA members.

Those who didn't attend are still able to send in comments to climate@wiltshire.gov.uk. Preferred by 31 March 2021. A link to the summary document (which links to the full document) is available [here](#). The council were recruiting two new Climate Officers to the team Ariane Crampton leads. Link to the vacancies [here](#) (note closing date 31/5/21).

WCA COP – Planning meeting went ahead just before this meeting. Although there is lots of work to do, WCA COP group is minded to commit to holding jointly with WC which will resource 1 day of it.

5) **Notes from 22/4/21** - approved

6) **GENERAL – ACTION UPDATES (Actions Brought forward from previous meeting notes)**

See AD's new list drawn up from minutes and the old task list, which was with added to the minutes.

Sustrans – AN has been in contact. Wiltshire area manager Maddy T is now on maternity leave – Max Longley will be the contact. WC could use them more for designing routes and facilities. **AN to contact.**

Green paper – ongoing.

E-Bikes Report (with Spindles Bikes co-op, Corsham) – ongoing. **Post-meeting note: AN met Spindles, 29 May: keen to help, and will assess Corsham's Cycle Network Map. E-bike supplies have dried up!**

Road Scheme Carbon Impacts – Adrian T-B cannot take this on at the moment. AN to try to progress through tools available from national groups (giving a good enough estimate). **Post-meeting note: AN's ACA contacts have asked national environment/transport NGOs to reply with data.**

Contact neighbouring counties – Linked to above, AN intends to contact key people, and/or reps on WGSTB in counties affected by proposed changes to the A350. **Action: AN with MW to draft and send**

Bikeability – JWa offered to research WC's' actual local & adult training (if any) available. **Action: JWa**

Cycle & E-bike Shop List for Wilts, Swindon & beyond – AN has researched/compiled a spreadsheet with contributions from DK, MG, AD – now on the group Google Drive. All are asked to contact one or two shops to check details and enquire about stock levels/range of bikes/e-bikes, and if training is available (see spreadsheet for guide) and fill in directly with findings. **Action: ALL**

Glossary of acronyms and key terms – Compiled by AD, this is now available in the Google Drive for ongoing reference, for use with these Notes, and to add to with any additional information.

Community Area Transport Groups (CATGs) – there was a discussion about representing TTG on the CATGs. AN explained that it's hard to get into them, and reps from the public are generally from an experienced local cycling or other group. This is appropriate as in reality they are quite technical meetings about issues on the ground, and budgets are quite small, so not so useful for general transport campaigning. They are centred on WC members and Town/Parish Councillors.

Discussion on recent developments in Chippenham. Traffic has been congested into the town / around Station Hill, as a new 3-way traffic light system has replaced the mini roundabout. Example of how it is

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unclear whether new systems will encourage more cyclists and pedestrians long-term (i.e. are worth apparent/initial congestion), and whether council planners have made the best decisions on the systems to put in. But we are starting to establish links to help us find out. MB wants to campaign for 20 mph zone in the centre of Chippenham. '20's Plenty' campaign did gain momentum before but was not well supported in some areas. Agreed may be worth trying to revive in line with active travel agenda and new cabinet – try to push through local groups/Area Boards. WC Highways are resistant.

Post-meeting: We should go on developing ideas (E-bikes on bridleways? - MG) in spite of 7(a) below.

7) MAJOR ISSUES DISCUSSION

a) CYCLING – REPORT BACK FROM MEETING WITH COUNCIL - See Notes [here](#)

AN gave a report on the meeting held on 17th May between WCA (DK, AN and JB) and Parvis Khansari (Head of Highways and Transport), Allan Creedy (Head of Sustainable Transport), Spencer Drinkwater (Planner) and Dave Thomas (Engineer).

Further to calls for fairer consultation on schemes, WCA offered to coordinate feedback for new schemes from cyclists, and WC have indicated they *may* accept and look at this, if early enough. WCA offered to help promote and educate on active travel; impressed the need for modal shift. LCWIP preparation is being staggered – Draft for Salisbury imminent (was on hold due to Covid), then Chippenham & Trowbridge next year, smaller towns after that. Time scale too slow – TTG. A WC Decarbonisation plan will be in place shortly [for WC not Wiltshire], and WC *say* they are aligning Highways priorities/funding further towards the active travel agenda. TTG is sceptical!

WC not receptive to ideas of WCA preparing route plans for Wiltshire – 'leave it to us' attitude.

OFF ROAD CYCLE ROUTES – AN has been researching ideas for off-road routes. Has identified potential greenway running alongside TransWilts rail line (Swindon-Chippenham-Melksham-Trowbridge, Westbury, then Warminster, Salisbury etc. or Dilton Marsh-Frome, etc.. Some groups are keen, AN plans to approach Network Rail and Sustrans to assess feasibility. Will need to deal with constraints on space, safety and to plan around bridges and other obstacles.

b) ACTIONS ON TOWN CYCLE NETWORKS

AN has prepared a tool to assess the progress (or lack of) for all the 'Town Cycle Networks' published on WC website [here](#). This link and the tool are available on our web pages [here](#). The WC maps were generated around 2014 and in many cases remain unchanged. There are existing and proposed routes. The proposed routes may not have been subject to the specific new methodologies (Propensity to Cycle etc) given in the guidance for preparing LCWIPs. Suggested action for all – look at the status of what is on the ground compared to the map in your town, via the tool, complete and feed in/upload to Google Drive. **Action: ALL, PLEASE.** We can then assess progress on the plans as a whole (to test claim that they are progressing) coordinate local feedback via our Area Board reps; and give overall feedback to WC Highways.

c) ROADS – A350 MELKSHAM BYPASS

Initial consultation report (to be discussed in first new Cabinet meeting 10am Weds 1st June) recommends consulting further, but dropping some scheme options (*including no scheme*). Option 10c seems to be preferred by Council.

A350 Corridor Alliance have been following. Some questions have been submitted for Cabinet. Discussion – not a good signal of intent for new term and decarbonisation. '*Building roads to reduce congestion is like buying bigger trousers to lose weight!*' There is still a lack of carbon budgets overall and for any individual proposed road scheme or linked greenfield development.

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UK hosting COP 26 (Nov 2021) must surely bring about stronger leadership, addressing gap between central policy and local government ability/mandate to deliver required reductions. Report states 400 houses/week will need to be retrofitted away from gas heating, for example. WC Cabinet meeting will start 10am (A350 Item 8 on its agenda) for those interested in joining.

d) PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Buses – JWi had attended the Option 24/7 meeting on 26/5/21, and reported back. WC want to set up a forum of stakeholders (users, bus interest groups, operators etc) to formulate their BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan), required by the government's 'BBB' guidance. To facilitate, the Melksham team have set up a website 'Priorityforpeople.org' to launch on 7/6/21, which will assess how and why people travel into Melksham. JWi recommended that Option 24/7 ask WCA members to help coordinate the adaptation of this for other areas. MW reported that in Salisbury some routes have already been identified for development.

Trains - MB highlighted that there is a new train co-operative 'GO-OP! Train', looking to connect Swindon to the South West (and South) through Wiltshire (Taunton-Swindon via Westbury), and provide better routes for journeys currently difficult by train. Info (and buy shares!) [here](#).

8) GROUP ISSUES

- a) **Area Boards – getting transport onto their agendas** – there is some WCA guidance / training emerging on how to participate. Reps are still needed on some boards, and we can have more on those with existing reps. See page [here](#). **Action all: visit page or contact Graham Martin**
- b) AN raised that a lot of work is being pushed centrally onto WCA Steering Group and Topic Groups; some needs to be pushed back out and down to local groups and Area Board reps.
- c) **Cover for AN?** – not imminently needed as his building works have been put back to the autumn, however he will need to do clearouts at home and his late father's.
- d) **Promotion of meetings and actions on transport to local groups/ WCA members?** – it would be good to have a push for more members to attend TTG. We will set up a Facebook event for each meeting we can share. **Action: AD**

Also discussed how to communicate / raise profile of the group. More via Writer's Group? The WCA Facebook page is limited and people don't tend to comment/share.

AN is booked in to do Glynis Hales' 'The Birds and the Bees' radio show; looking for a transport group member to join him: recording on Monday 7th June, provisional topics new roads, e-bikes. A related concern is how to get actions out to wider WCA membership on transport.

Post-meeting note: At TTG suggestion, WCA will start emailing out Topic Group progress / news.

9. Date of Next Meeting – Thursday 24th June 7.00 – 8.30pm.

10. AOB

MW raised that there is a **free webinar by Stonehenge Alliance on Thursday 3rd June at 7pm**, tickets [here](#), to raise the profile of the legal challenge against the tunnel/road scheme. Expert speakers on archaeology and transport policy (Prof. Phil Goodwin, an excellent progressive transport expert).
