**Attendees:** AN (Chair), MG, JWi, JWa, GA, JS, JB, DK, JJ, CR, NM, MW, AD (minutes).

1. **Introductions**

**Donation Link** – There is now a donation button on the top left-hand side of the home page of WCA’s website ([here](http://www.wiltshireclimatealliance.org.uk)) for contributions to the ongoing running of WCA. **Please use and share**

**Writer’s Group** – The group is looking for members of topic groups with good subject knowledge to check content of pieces. There is a list of potential articles (including cycle funding and the consultation WC are currently doing) which they need someone to help with. **Please consider and put yourself forward if you can help**

MW, GW and JWa asked for help from the writers with the campaign for reinstatement ofPeople-Friendly streets in Salisbury. AN to put them in touch with Hayley who is coordinating the group and has a contact at Wilts Times. **ACTION AN**

1. **Minutes (agreed from 12/11/20)**
2. **Roads (A) – Information**

**(i) Reports on News & Activity**

**People-Friendly Streets, Salisbury** – This scheme to reduce traffic through the centre of Salisbury has been mired with controversy and has now been suspended indefinitely by WC. The local MP had weighed in, and the City Council Head was sacked. Gates/barriers and some of the cameras have now been removed.
JWa, GW and MW explained that misconceptions circulating on Facebook and amongst the general public fuelled the decision. The initiative was perceived to be a ban on local cars driving into the centre for work/facilities, when it was in fact meant to ease congestion for local people by reducing rat-running of cars through the city, and by making better parking available. Many people also (wrongly) thought there hadn’t been a consultation. An extraordinary meeting is planned for 14th Dec.
**All members were asked to do the following:
1.) Like the Facebook page for People Friendly Salisbury** [**here**](https://www.facebook.com/PeopleFriendlySalisbury/) **2.) Sign and share the petition to reinstate the scheme** [**here**](https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/bring-back-people-friendly-salisbury-1?fbclid=IwAR2FjLiodIslV-CibhEU9ecCaPD2jhTHZYQPL6oEoISjb6EUjWiLIZYXzPA) **ACTION ALL**

**A350 Yarnbrook** – Campaigner PK’s view is that this is now unlikely to go ahead. SWLEP has pulled funding, as report showed endangered bat colonies were threatened. More information [here](https://www.wiltshireclimatealliance.org.uk/transport-roads).

**Melksham Bypass** – The link to the consultation was circulated on email. The comments section can take more characters than it first appears to. There isn’t massive support for the campaign against. The site (with petition) is [here](https://www.change.org/p/wiltshire-council-do-not-let-wiltshire-council-build-the-a350-bypass-south-of-the-kennet-and-avon-canal?utm_content=cl_sharecopy_25837401_en-GB%3A3&recruiter=35452086&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&utm_campaign=share_petition&utm_term=B%3ESearch%3ESAP%3EUK%3ENonBrand%3EExact). Cllr Jonathan Seed (Seend and Summerhill) seems to be approaching it as an inevitability, to mitigate. A Facebook campaign is growing for the road.

**A303 Stonehenge** – Following the Transport Secretary’s decision to go ahead with the Highways England proposal to build an expressway with tunnels through the site, a legal challenge (‘Save Stonehenge World Heritage Stie’) quickly gained its first £25K crowdfunding target. Behind this is an umbrella group comprising the various interest groups (archaeological, environmental, local). The decision went against the evidence of the 5 independent examiners, who agreed it would cause unacceptable damage to the site.

AN’s findings that traffic congestion is caused year-round by ‘rubbernecking’ (which has been underplayed as a cause thus far) is on the Topic group page [here](https://www.wiltshireclimatealliance.org.uk/transport-roads).

Many feel it would be a shame to stop the monument being visible by car (and without charge), but this could/should be regulated without tunnels (sledgehammer to crack a nut!).

Under the proposals, cyclists will be diverted into Amesbury and back out again as tunnels are being deemed too dangerous.

AN is mounting a further legal challenge, and intends to submit the first notification to the government by Christmas. He is sure this won’t undermine the case or funding of the main challenge, but may provide a second opportunity to contest in court, and more opportunity to flush out hidden costs, delay the process and help deter future schemes. More info to follow.

The Stonehenge Alliance site [here](https://stonehengealliance.org.uk/) links to the existing petition and legal crowdfunder.

There is also an action taking place on Sat (5th) at the site.

**Chippenham HIF Bid Road Scheme** – NM gave an update. There is a lot of confusion about when a consultation will be held, and how this will relate to the Local Plan consultation. Likely that consultations for road and housing will be separate, but they are the same project, and the award of funds is for both. The Head of Chippenham Council signed off the proposal without consultation and they are now trying to backfill the local plan. Campaigners are asking questions at every Council meeting, and making FOI requests.

Council view is that this is the ‘least worst’ option (better than developers being allowed free reign to put in isolated developments), but the proposed housing is not required and supported by local employment opportunities, so just further promotes out of town commuting by car.

‘Transport for New Homes’ campaign argues transport should come before homes, but employment a step before this? NM has repeatedly asked the economic development team at WC whether there is a long-term strategy in place to attract future economy employers to Chippenham, and finds there isn’t one.

JB asked about scope in Chippenham of recommending suitable brownfield sites and disused buildings for redevelopment. NM said WC claim is that this is limited.

There will be a protest on the black bridge (end of Riverside Drive) in Chippenham at midday on Sat 12th. MP for North Wilts James Gray, who objects to the scheme, intends to come.

A bit of discussion on JG, who, despite being in the Environment Select Committee does not demonstrate a robust understanding of climate change, but appears to be a good ally on this issue. **Come to the protest if you can!**

**(ii) Uploading files and links**

Files can be uploaded onto the Transport Topic Group website under two new pages (Transport – Roads, and Transport – Cycling). Members are invited to send to the group email: transport@wiltshireclimatealliance.org.uk, with a small introductory paragraph. We can also circulate information or calls for action to the group that are deemed urgent/important before the next meeting. Please note the inbox will be checked approx. 2-3 times per week.

1. **Roads (B): Actions & Who to contact**

**(i) Wiltshire Councillors**MW reported that she has recently been challenging Richard Clewer about his positive social media comments on the returned campaign for a Salisbury Bypass. RC doesn’t object to roads, and on transport matters is usually content to avoid responsibility (it’s Bridget Wayman’s area).
Group broadly agrees that councillors fundamentally don’t understand why we’re asking for a moratorium on new roads. Perhaps we need to meet personally to try to change hearts and minds, or identify key allies to speak for us. As there are 98 councillors, some of which will have no bearing, so better to target Cabinet members. A list is available [here](https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/mgGeneric.aspx?MD=Cabinet&bcr=1).
JS shared that cabinet Cllr Laura Mayes has been inputting on cycling group meetings in Devizes and seems keen to listen.

It was felt that we need to try to get more ordinary people writing to and in touch with councillors, not just usual lobbyists. It’s been reported that persistent lobbying at meetings is actually making some councillors less receptive.

JWi shared that Climate Outreach have just released their [‘Britain Talks Climate’ toolkit](https://climateoutreach.org/reports/britain-talks-climate/) for organisations attempting to engage people across all segments of society, starting with different core beliefs, which could be helpful.

May elections will be influential, and on people’s minds. Replacing candidates would be ideal but no mean feat as we don’t know who will stand again and the timescale is short.

WCA Steering Group and Outreach Topic groups are discussing what our approach could be.

**(iv) Other Campaign groups** - Mike Birkin at FoE may be able to offer expertise on transport matters. WCA is now officially registered on FoEs website and therefore we can ask them to share requests occasionally to their membership.

1. **Cycling (A): Information**

**(i) Reports (updates only); Cycle Path/roadmap for Wiltshire**

AN suggested that we need to perhaps temper expectations on cycle lanes. If we ask for segregated lanes in all instances this gives too much scope for backlash from the motoring lobby. We need to arrive at a pragmatic interpretation of the government guidance [(LTN/120)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120), which is not quite right for Wiltshire anyway, having been modelled on London examples. DK is encouraged that LTN/120 does contain some good core principles (e.g. cycle lanes need to be ‘road-tested’ by experienced cyclists to obtain sign-off).

MW called for us to coordinate with WC’s work on the LCWIP (Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan). They are also working on Local Transport Plan 4 so we need to ensure these are aligned. We could ask for a meeting with Laura Gosling, Spencer Drinkwater (Sustainable Transport team) and Ariane Crampton to try to set this up, but they may have limited influence.

Key Councillors (Portfolio Holders, Cabinet) are those with power to integrate plans, but we’re seeing misaligned planning as funds come in separately for cycling and road schemes. AN & DK agreed to draft a statement. **ACTION AN & DK**

**(iii) Do we form an umbrella group or brand e,g, WaSCAN?**Agreed a good idea but probably difficult. We would need to invite all the different cycling groups across Wiltshire, not all of which are currently represented in WCA /the Topic Group. It was also felt that different cycling groups have different aims and requirements in their campaigning.

For example, WCA Transport group seem to want to prioritise cycling replacing car use for everyday local trips, focussing less on routes on major roads. However, we could bring others into a forum.

1. **Cycling (B): Actions & who to contact**

**(i) Wiltshire/Swindon**

DK reported that there had been a meeting between cycle groups and WC recently, chaired by Graham Wright. Some actions are still in progress and some have informed consultation. Could call for another meeting in time.

Cycle Route Roadmap for Wiltshire – DK, JB and AN to work together on this (understanding first the existing process to develop the LCWIP), and incorporating existing local route plans (e.g. Chippenham has developed a ‘Cycling Opportunity Map’). **ACTION DK, JB & AN**

Potential then to identify the key routes to target first for funding. Laura Gosling had suggested this approach for RWB.

Cycling is often seen as less costly than roads, and consequently the costs of putting in good facilities are underestimated. Better cycle routes need bigger investments.
But return on investment is much greater than for roads given health benefits through exercise and lower pollution, and reducing congestion through towns and cities.
Governments lack of coherent policy and leadership means LAs not aligned so therefore no joined-up thinking / training for Highways officers /appropriate cost-benefit analysis on given schemes.

The current WC consultation on proposed schemes is available until midnight on 8th Jan, link [here](https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/highways-road-reallocation-schemes). **ACTION ALL**

**(ii) Sustrans -** How much will this work overlap with existing work by Sustrans? DK agreed to ask his contact what Sustrans is already doing to engage with local groups. **ACTION DK**

NM also has a contact through work in Chippenham.

AN’s idea of route alongside rail line inside Network Rail boundary. Could ask Sustrans for help with this (link with Network Rail?).

1. **AOB / Other Information**

This document was also shared in the chat: <https://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Homes-on-the-Right-Tracks-Greening-the-Green-Belt.pdf>