



Campaigning for Better Cycling

(Formerly SHEPWAY CYCLE FORUM)

Minutes of combined meeting of Cinque Ports Cycleway Working Committee & Cycle Shepway held on 8 October 2013 at the Civic Centre, Folkestone

WORKING COMMITTEE

Present: David Taylor (Joint Chairman), Russell Tillson (Joint Chairman), Joe Grey (Deputy Chairman), Alan Joyce (Treasurer), Jean Baker (Founder), Paul Rees (Spokes and Sustrans), Alex Sansom (SDC Coastal Coordinator), Peter Phillips (Folkestone Town Sprucer), Chris McCreedy (representing Colin Finch, KCC senior projects officer) and Dave Kesby.

Apologies for Absence: Rhona Hodges (Secretary), Lynne Beaumont, Tim Prater, Martin Whybrow, Colin Finch.

1. **Welcome:** David Taylor introduced Peter Phillips, Folkestone's Town Sprucer, who would be available free of charge to clear shingle from the coastal cycle route within the town limits. He would work with Cycle Shepway volunteers to clear shingle thrown up by storms and high tides. DT led a round of applause for Russell Tillson whose proposal that Shepway District Council back the cycleway and adopt the recommendations of the 2011 Shepway Cycling Plan as policy was overwhelmingly supported at a full council meeting on September 18. DT announced that a new local newspaper was about to be launched, The Folkestone and Hythe Express, for which he had been invited to write a weekly column, so providing a guaranteed outlet for cycling publicity.

2. **Minutes:** Proposed by DT and seconded by Joe Grey, the minutes of the Working Committee meeting of 24 June were confirmed.

3. **Matters Arising:** It was agreed that Russell Tillson would broker a meeting between Cycle Shepway and Cllr Susan Carey, chair of the Joint Transportation Board, and Cllr Alan Clifton-Holt, SDC cabinet member for the economy, to explore their reasons for being the only members to oppose the SDC motion carried on September 18. Their opposition seemed to be based on false assumptions, possibly because they had not read the Cycle Shepway study. The main concern was that in opposing the cycleway, both councillors also implicitly rejected the Shepway Cycling Plan.
Action RT.

Chris McCreedy reported that 80 per cent of landowners were supportive of a major extension of the cycle path along the Royal Military Canal, although matters were still to be resolved on the stretch immediately west of Aldergate Bridge. He believed the Cinque Ports Cycleway had Kent County Council support. The routes were complementary rather than rivals.

Quick wins from Folkestone - Hythe. Peter Phillips confirmed that in addition to his shingle removal commitment, he would be cutting back overgrowth on the cycle route between Shorncliffe Road and Cheriton Road, Folkestone. Volunteers were welcome. Jean Baker praised SDC officer Bob Porter (not present) for having arranged the siting of four signs on the Sandgate stretch of the proposed cycleway indicating that cyclists and walkers were welcome to use promenade/maintenance gangway even though it was not a right of way. The acknowledgement was a major breakthrough.

Hythe Green – Dymchurch Redoubt Alan Joyce agreed to pursue negotiations for permission to cycle across the green. DT was contacting the Ministry of Defence to start negotiations over easing back some of the fencing along the northern perimeter of Hythe Ranges to accommodate the cycleway. **Action AJ and DT.**

Dungeness. DT said that Rhona Hodges had been in touch with Natural England regarding the westernmost stretch of the cycleway and there was little to report. Alex Sansom had also had a meeting with Natural England and the attitude to the cycleway had been “challenging but not impossible”.

JB reported her delight at the completion of work on the east-west Folkestone cycle route where it passed through the Three Hills Sports Ground. Thanks were due to Bob Porter, Ben Geering and the Roger De Haan Foundation. Work was still needed at either end of the sports ground and signage had been promised from funding by Lynne Beaumont from her ward grant allocation pot. JB agreed to contact LB re progress. **Action JB.**

JB had contacted Bob Porter over the possibility of dualling the use of footpaths at Radnor Park, Folkestone. The delay in having a reply was probably due to the necessity of referring the request to the Radnor Estate which owned the park. JB would pursue the request with Bob Porter. **Action JB.**

DT reported that he had contacted Waitrose to open negotiations with the manager of the Hythe store with a request for cycle stands to be sited on the canal side of the supermarket. **Further Action DT.**

4. Seafront Signage from Folkestone to Hythe. Proposed by JB and seconded by Paul Rees, it was agreed that Joe Grey, Alex Sansom and Peter Phillips survey the seafront from Folkestone to the Hythe Bay restaurant with a view to siting shared-use signs, £2,000 having already been secured from KCC members’ grants for the manufacture of the signs to the design already agreed by the group. **Action JG, AS and PP.**

Additionally, it was agreed that Alan Joyce would pursue the possibility of a professional audit of the cycleway. **Action AJ and JG.**

5. Any Other Business. JB drew attention to Art in Romney Marsh, a festival of paintings, ceramics, drawing, sculpture, sound, video, film, digital and mixed media installations based at churches around the marsh. Significantly, the organisers had recommended cycling as a means of getting around the festival. Finally, DT proposed that the next meeting of the working committee be again combined with the regular meeting of Cycle Shepway since it was proving a such a success. This was unanimously agreed.

CYCLE SHEPWAY MEETING

Present: David Taylor (chairman), Joe Grey (Deputy Chairman), Jean Baker (Founder), Alan Joyce (Treasurer), Paul Rees (Spokes and Sustrans), Steve Burton, Peter Phillips (Folkestone Town Sprucer) and Owen Leyshon (Romney Marsh and White Cliffs Countryside Partnership).

Apologies for Absence: As Above.

1. **Minutes** of the meeting of 10 July were approved, Alan Joyce proposing and Paul Rees seconding.

2. **Matters Arising.** Jean Baker asked whether Richard Heaps, the KCC officer covering roads in Shepway, was joining Cycle Shepway. David Taylor said Mr Heaps had declined to become a member but would be happy to attend meetings when necessary – satisfactory given the good relations with Colin Finch of KCC, Bob Porter of SDC and Cllr Russell Tillson, SDC's Deputy Leader and Cycling Champion.

3. **Cycle Parking.** JB raised concern at the continued unsatisfactory cycle parking at Folkestone West railway station. On the south side, covered stands were very well used and more were necessary because of the number of bikes chained to posts etc. But on the north side the few stands there were on an uncovered part of the platform and should be re-sited under the canopy. Steve Burton said the station was known as the "alternative bike shop" because there had been so many thefts, despite double padlocks. He added that household insurance policies would no longer include bikes, despite every new house required to have space for a cycle. It was agreed that JB write to South Eastern Railways requesting action. **Action JB.**

Sandgate. The meeting learned that cycle stands donated by The Hub cycle shop had never been sited on the wide pavement next to The Ship. (Subsequent to the meeting, The Hub reported that the stands were no longer available and had been recycled.) It was agreed that DT write to Richard Heaps and Sandgate Parish Council asking for stands to be installed next to The Ship and on the seafront behind the toilets to replace the unsatisfactory racks presently sited there. Paul Rees would supply background. **Action PR and DT.**

Folkestone. SB reported that he had given up ten years ago trying to persuade SDC to site cycle stands outside the Activ cycle shop in Sandgate Road. It was agreed that Richard Heaps, Bob Porter and Alan Lague, SDC's highways officer, should be approached about additional cycle stands in Sandgate Road. **Action DT, JG.**

4. **Cyclist's Death.** Following the death of a cyclist on October 2 at the junction of Shorncliffe Road and Audley Road, Folkestone, in a collision with a car, it was agreed to keep a watching brief on such accidents, especially in this dangerous area, to see what lessons could be learned. PR would look out a coroner's report. **Action PR.**

5. **Members Activities.** Paul Rees reported that Steve Fawke was stepping down as chairman of Spokes, largely for health reasons. Webmaster Greg Williams was also resigning due to the pressures of a new job. After 25 years, Spokes was pushing on, but some new faces were needed at the top.

Steve Burton, owner of the Activ cycle shop, reported that business had boomed since June 28 “when the sun came out”. After recording a loss last year, 2013 was in complete contrast. The shop was so busy that some features of the business had to be dropped like a service fitting people for their bikes. Older people had been the biggest growth and they spent more on cycle clothing than on their bikes.

In general discussion the local boost in cycling was in large part attributed to the ease of riding off-road from Folkestone to Hythe and the extension of the the cycle path along the Military Canal to offer riders a glimpse of exotic wild life at Port Lympne. The resulting economic benefit had to be pointed out to councils and agencies to persuade them to invest in more cycle infrastructure.

SB promoted the idea of daylight cycling lights. Rather than enabling riders to see, daylight lights let riders be seen. With their brilliant white beam, SB said he felt much safer on the road with them. They were better, in his view, than hight-visability clothing.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 26, at 6pm which again will be a combined meeting of the Working Committee and Cycle Shepway.