

Minutes of Mole Valley Cycling Forum Meeting, Thursday January 23rd 2025 Held at MVDC Offices, Pippbrook, Dorking

Present: Lisa Scott (LS) [Chair; Hookwood/Charlwood], Cllr Andrew Matthews (AM) [Bookham/Effingham], Roger Troughton (RT) [Secretary], Robert Whitcombe [Fetcham Residents Association (FRA)], Julia Dickinson (JD) [Bookham/Effingham], Ian Houghton [Bookham], Aldith Bruty (AB) [Fetcham/Leatherhead], Penny & Richard Tyson-Davies (PT-D) [British Horse Society/Newdigate],

Apologies:

John Arnold (JA) [Treasurer], Eric Palmer [Leatherhead]

1. Previous Minutes

No comments have been received, so these were accepted.

2. Matters Arising and Outstanding Actions from previous meetings not covered elsewhere

Establish a schedule of main contacts/reporting processes for cycling & road safety issues

– **RT** will be updating the corresponding webpage in due course.

Bookham & Dorking Masterplan Consultations

Various of those present attended the respective presentations on the proposed masterplans, eg. it identified a number of small projects that could improve Bookham. Worryingly it indicated a lack of joined-up thinking between MVDC Consultants and SCC's LCWIP Consultants and the local communities. It was evident that the LCWIP Consultants were highlighting the potential of improvements to the Guildford Road just as much as Lower Road, when local residents really wanted the Bookham Road to be the focus. The Head of Howard of Effingham School had emphasised Lower Road was the main route for Howard pupils on the consultation call.

A24 Horsham to Dorking Corridor Feasibility Study

RT had submitted some comments on the various proposed schemes – many of which would benefit pedestrians and cyclists. PT-D expressed concern that signalised crossings had been ruled out, however LS pointed out that traffic regulations require appropriate lighting to be in place for these.

3. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

No update had been requested from Luke Dickson (MVDC) as he was out of the office.

SCC and MVDC Councillors have had two briefings (September and December) from SCC and their Consultants since the site visit with FRA (including AM). AM noted that the LCWIP did not appear to be a priority for MVDC as it is seen as a Highways matter (SCC responsibility) and is being led by SCC. RW acknowledged this, but believes that MVDC should pay more attention given that they are contributing over £100k to the Feasibility Study (approx. half the cost).

RW noted that (in the July 2023 LCWIP Master Plan) there were issues with the way the various schemes had been scored. For the Effingham to Leatherhead route, the multi-criteria evaluation suggested that providing a new cycle way along the A246 Guildford Road/ Hawk's Hill was marginally better than the creation of a cycleway along Lower Road. Therefore the current Feasibility Study is investigating in some detail both routes. Yet the route along Lower Road would bring significantly greater benefit to cyclists (a) because the A246 route has a long, steep hill (Hawk's Hill) that is a deterrent to most users and (b) because around 76% of the households would be served by the Lower Road route yet only 26% by the Guildford Road route (data from AM). The Lower Road and Fetcham spur routes are particularly important for children cycling to Howard of Effingham and Therfield Schools respectively. The evaluation does not reflect this effectively and feasibility study money is being spent on a route that won't be used. RW is concerned that the Active Travel requirements may be setting too high a standard which would be very difficult to achieve along all Lower Road, and that compromise was necessary. SCC and their Consultants had been proposing one-way systems, which would be unacceptable, but a 20mph limit along Lower Road might be sufficient to make the "difficult" sections safer. One aspect that AB was able to confirm was that Cycle Instructors had not been consulted. There was doubt too as to whether the Travel Plans for the schools in the area had been taken into account. RW is keen that a technical meeting with SCC and their Consultants is set up, to highlight info as above and challenge constructively their approach. The issue is how we can help achieve this. RW has arranged a call with Marisa Heath (SCC Cabinet Member for Environment with an interest in promoting Active Travel, and who has already supported better Stakeholder Engagement on the LCWIP, as it helps to meet Climate Change targets) to push this point. The following actions (some carried forward) should help with our objectives:

LS & RW with assistance from **AM** would put questions to both SCC and MVDC cabinets.

AM to email SCC's Neil McClure asking for a technical meeting with Residents Associations and the MVCF, and for a site visit to look more closely at the Bookham / Effingham Lower Road sections and "back routes" to Howard of Effingham (especially for Bookham Representatives).

AB to ask SCC's Dave Sharpington about providing the school travel plan data to Atkins (the consultants working on the LCWIP), in particular for Howard of Effingham and Therfield Schools.

It was also noted that it may often be useful to point out that cycling infrastructure is likely to be of significant benefit to mobility scooter users.

4. BMX Track

RT has gained agreement from MVDC's Alex Bagnall to organise a work party at the BMX track on 5th February.
LS to review the template contract with **JA**.

5. Route & Infrastructure Updates (where there is anything to report)

Leatherhead/Fetcham area:

With the proposal to construct a new East Surrey Police building on the site originally earmarked for the Surrey Police HQ, along with keyworker housing, there is another opportunity to press for access across the site between the Business Park and Cleeve Road. The question is how best to raise this. It was suggested that in the first instance we contact Lisa Townsend (PCC) to ask who we should approach. **Action RT**.

- Givons Grove to Mickleham

RT is waiting on EP to confirm that the compressed version of his proposal is acceptable before adding it to the website.

Dorking Area:

- A25 Safety Improvements (see <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/road-safety/a25-dorking-to-reigate-road-safety-improvements-scheme>)

Duncan Knox has confirmed that the next part of the scheme to be consulted upon will be the proposals for the Brockham Lane junction. This will be followed by those for the Dorking end, which would be delayed if local elections are held.

- Dorking Southbound

It looks like this will now be encompassed within the A24 Horsham-Dorking proposals

- Meadowbank links

RT has put on hold his action to contact Cllr Nick Wright with the story so far, bearing in mind that there are proposals along similar lines included within the Dorking masterplan.

- Trig Street

PT-D updated the meeting with the current situation. Given the geology (the route is currently too wet to walk on at present) it needs a proper all-weather surface. Mary-Ann Edwards (SCC-RoW team) has put together a plan along with costings. Meanwhile various sums have been promised, but there is still a significant shortfall. It was pointed out that some of these promised sums could be considered as "matched funding" when applying for grants.

6. Gatwick DCO

A final decision is anticipated in the next month or so.

On behalf of the Forum in December, RT had submitted additional comments in response to the Secretary of State's request for comments from various parties, outlining our concerns including the point that MVDC was not one of these parties. These comments were also copied to various officers and councillors in MVDC and SCC.

JD wished it to be put on record that she was unhappy with the adequacy of the recent submission. As the meeting was drawing to a close, we had started to review the latest documentation, so further actions will be required.

LS to review the recently published responses.

Post meeting note: According to JD's searches, Active Travel England (ATE) has not been consulted. RT has written to ATE on this matter as well as the Planning Inspectorate.

7. Cycling Issues and Events: Road Racing/Sportives/Off-Road

Nothing to report.

8. Dates and Venues for Future Meetings

The next formal meeting of the Forum will be in the **MVDC Offices**, Pippbrook, Dorking in Committee Room 1, at **7.00pm on Thursday 24th April (TBC)**.

An informal meeting will be held at **The Stepping Stones**, Westhumble from **7.00pm on Thursday 6th March**.

9. AOB

A reminder that the SCC ROWIP consultation is open with responses due by 9th Feb.

MVCF Facebook Admin: JD was concerned that the Facebook page was being hit by "bots" although this may not be the case. The information on this page is getting quite dated and AM only has very limited time to update it, so any other volunteers would be very welcome to take on this role.

RW mentioned that when arranging his meeting with Marisa Heath, she had suggested asking Xavier Brice, CEO of Sustrans, to give a talk to MVCF, as he lives not far away (in Englefield Green). The suggestion is appreciated, but RW believes the Forum is too small (although he could be approached regarding flexibility in the standards). Agreed by those present.