

Minutes of Mole Valley Cycling Forum Meeting, Thursday June 22nd 2023

Held at MVDC Offices, Pippbrook, Dorking

Present: John Arnold (JA) [Chair], Roger Troughton (RT) [Secretary], Lisa Scott (LS) [Hookwood/Charlwood], Andrew Matthews (AM) [Bookham/Effingham], Rosemary Hobbs (RH) [Holmwoods], Eric Palmer [Leatherhead], Sam Parkinson (SP) [Dorking Cycling Club], Julia Dickinson (JD) [Bookham/Effingham]

Apologies:

Colin Brewer (CB) [Treasurer], Peter Mayor (PM) [Leatherhead], Corinna Osborne-Patterson [Newdigate]

1. Previous Minutes

Agreed.

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

It was announced that Andrew Matthews (AM) in his role of a newly elected Councillor, is to be the Cycling Champion for Mole Valley. JA suggested the AM contact SCC County Councillor Paul Deach, who is the Cycling Champion for Surrey.

At a previous meeting we had put forward the idea that MVDC might establish an All Party Cycling and Walking Group. Following the recent elections it might be more difficult to form such an "all party group", JA to share his thoughts on this proposal with AM.

It was confirmed that our Officer contact within MVDC is Luke Dickson, and it was suggested that AM might be able to persuade him to attend one of our meetings.

Regarding the ongoing action to identify some funds to cover MVCF expenses, RH indicated that MVDC did have small grants available, although it may be that these are only available for specific projects (eg. funding new leaflets and the like) rather than ongoing expenses. This led to a discussion on the provision of paper maps indicating cycle routes and how these could be tied in with electronic versions (eg. GPX tracks) which could be downloaded, and that some of these could be made available via MVDC's website.

Whilst this (<https://www.molevalley.gov.uk/home/leisure/keeping-fit-active/parks-open-spaces-walking-trails>) already has links to a couple of commercial websites, the suggested routes could be considered quite challenging for families and others new to cycling. This in turn led on to the meeting with Kathy Kyle (Dorking's new BID Manager) which was attended by JA, RT, SP and Dorking Cycling Club's Chair Neil James, during which the potential for cycling events and a possible cycling festival were discussed.

3. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Concerns were raised again that whilst the Forum had made significant contributions to the LCWIP development (the "cycleabout" was over a year ago now), we had heard nothing much since. We are being told that the issue is primarily one of funding the feasibility stage (SCC won't fund all of it) and now there are concerns that with government cutbacks there won't be much funding available. AM is on the Planning Policy Working Group which will have oversight of the LCWIP, and which is due to meet fairly soon.

A25 safety improvements

We need to see if we can get early sight of the plans to ensure that they are fit for purpose. It was suggested the Cllr Steven Cooksey may be able to point us in the right direction here.

20mph

JA reported that the DorkingTown Centre Forum is increasingly supportive of the idea. Generally there is more support for 20mph zones where the public are in favour. East St in Bookham has just been made 20mph, as has Anstie Lane, Coldharbour and a number of Parish Councils are increasingly interested. Speed restrictions are to be introduced in the Leith Hill – Abinger Common area.

4. BMX Track – next steps

LS confirmed that the £200 awarded by Surrey Climate Commission's Community Grants for Sustainability for signage has been received and that she is hoping to get local schools involved in designing and making these signs. LS also noted that Pat Smith has links with local school and via DoE scheme may be able to get vegetation clearance and track maintenance activities progressed.

5. Route & Infrastructure Updates

Leatherhead/Fetcham area

Regarding the Fetcham Residents Association proposals to move the path alongside the railway line JD noted that all parties were in agreement, the issue is down to one of funding.

At an earlier meeting JD pointed the potential for creating an access route for cycling/walking to improve permeability through the Business Park before the land originally purchased for a new Surrey Police HQ is resold.

RT and JD to liaise on this if not too late in the process (c/f).

Bookham

The redevelopment of the existing Howard of Effingham site has currently been refused. JD is concerned that to ensure that there is permeability through any new development. It appears that there is a lack of policy within Surrey on cycling such that they are not following national policy. Active Travel England is now a statutory consultee for large developments, however there is nothing to stop their "toolkit" being applied to smaller developments: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/active-travel-england-planning-application-assessment-toolkit>
JD would like to see Planning Officers have training in this area, and to include LTP4. LS suggested that in some areas new developments are being submitted "piecemeal" so that they come in "under the radar".

Dorking Area

It appears that MVDC are now going ahead with the proposed sale of the football ground. Whilst in itself this is not of concern to the Forum, we would be concerned if the sale included the land around the edges which could prevent the development of any cycle route there. At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 6th June, it was decided that no further consideration was required, so work to complete necessary legal, financial and technical due diligence will now begin. This will lead to a further report to Cabinet for consideration and agreement prior to entering into any legally binding agreement. Apparently a "ransom strip" and/or a metre wide strip surrounding the ground are likely to be considered to constrain any future development.
It was suggested that there is still time for **RT/JA** to write to the Officers involved regarding our concerns.

Cycle Parking

After it was mentioned that MVDC were planning to install additional cycle parking as part of the St Martin's Walk, Dorking, car park refurbishment, JA and RT met MVDC's John Menlove, and it was agreed that it was not a suitable location, and there was little sense in proceeding. (Where additional cycle parking has been recently installed behind Sainsburys, it was again in an unsuitable location and has already been damaged by a vehicle.)
For information, CycleStreets (based on OpenCycleMap) indicates cycle parking. See example the here: <https://bikedata.cyclestreets.net/cycleparking/#13.96/51.23432/-0.32525> Clicking on a cycle parking icon yields more information (type, number of spaces, photo) – sometimes the info is incomplete but it can be updated.

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

SP reported that Dorking Cycling Club will have a stall at Brockham Fair on 15th July. They are also running taster rides on 23rd July – see <https://www.dorkingcycling.co.uk/event-details/taster-rides-starting-at-brockham-2>

JD reported on the Kiddical Mass event held recently in Guildford, and that another one is planned for Guildford's car free day on Sun 24th September. More details on this kind of event can be found here: <https://www.cyclesprog.co.uk/campaigning/setting-up-a-kidical-mass-event/>

7. Bike Week 2023

JA helped with the Surrey Hills AONB on the signing of the "Puttenham Loop" route which was formally launched during Bike Week (see press release: <https://mvcf.org.uk/assets/documents/surrey-hills-bike-week-2023>) (Currently SCC is not happy to sign similar cycle routes through Norbury Park as, despite owning the land, they are concerned about ash die-back and the potential insurance implications.)
By identifying the theme for Bike Week 2024 as soon as possible, we can establish what the Forum might do.

8. Dates and Venues for Future Meetings

The next formal meeting of the Forum will be at **7.00pm on Thursday 21st September**, most likely at **Park House, Leatherhead**, if the room is available.

An informal meeting will be held at **The Stepping Stones**, Westhumble (hopefully out in the back garden) from **7pm on Wednesday 19th July** (to be confirmed).

9. AOB

EP reported that the recent surface dressing that had taken place on Wonham Lane / Trumpets Hill Road area which had left the road in a hazardous state for cyclists. It was pointed out that after a period it is usual practice to sweep the loose chippings up.

RT reported that the Forum had received an invitation to attend a Surrey Cycling Networking Event on July 18th. RT to liaise with JA about attending.

The usual reminder that AM has set up a Facebook page for MVCF- <https://www.facebook.com/Mole-Valley-Cycle-Forum-113318514186934> and is after suggestions and contributions to help populate these pages. If you can assist, please contact RT who will forward on to AM.

Post-Meeting Notes (courtesy of AM):

AM has made enquiries into whether as a stake holder we are able to have an update and visibility of the LCWIP, and unfortunately the LCWIP is still under review and is strictly confidential.

Re Wonham Lane - Trumpets Hill Rd gravel dressing which is loose and dangerous. AM has escalated this to the SCC division member Helyn Clack and is awaiting a response.

Re meeting with Paul Deach; JD is going to liaise with Paul Deach and try to arrange a meeting involving SCC.