

## ***Wheelrights***

### **Notes of meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2011 in the Environment Centre, Swansea**

Present: Don Ashman (DA), Martin Brain (MB) Claudine Conway (CC), Judith Cole (JC), Rhian Evans (RE), Colin Fielder (CF), Bill Gannon (BG), Nick Guy (NG), Mike Lewis (ML), David Naylor (DN), John Roach (JR), Kerry Rogers (KR), Alice Saville (AS) Geoff Wood (GW) , Veronica Wood (VW)

Apologies: Eifion Francis (EF), Phil Jones (PJ), Rob Wachowski (RW)

The meeting was chaired by NG.

#### **1. Matters arising** (from 25 Oct. 10 agm and not on agenda).

None

#### **2. Infrastructure and 2011 campaigning priorities**

##### (a) Infrastructure.

It was agreed to consider only the ***Boulevard*** and deal with other Infrastructure items at the next meeting.

DN tabled two drawings showing CCS's proposed shared use path on the south side of the Boulevard which Ben George had sent him. DN sought the advice of those present on how he, on behalf of Wheelrights, should respond to these proposals

Various concerns at what was proposed were expressed. These divided into a general concern that the drawings did not show a proper boulevard and details of the proposed path.. A number of questions which DN should put to CCS were suggested. These are summarised as follows.

- Do these plans show the final arrangement or are they temporary? This question arose because the road layout shown on the drawing appears to be the existing layout with just the shared use path added.
- What provision is there for north-south links? No information is provided about this essential feature of the Boulevard. CC and others were particularly concerned about the Wind Street/Somerset place crossing, this being a key link between the City Centre and the Marina.
- What bus lanes, if any, are to be provided? It was noted that these are useful for experienced cyclists and that an earlier drawing (tabled at the 24 November Cycle Forum) showed bus lanes on both sides of the thoroughfare.
- Will the originally proposed 20mph limit be imposed? This is a key feature which will make the carriageways safer for cyclists whether or not bus lanes are provided.
- Will at grade crossings be single phase Toucans? Related to this is the provision or otherwise of a central reservation. DN noted that single phase, desirable in any case, is essential where a central reservation is not provided.

The following concerns were expressed and comments made about the proposed path.

- That the 3m width shown on the drawings is insufficient for shared use. Ben George in his email to DN attaching the drawings stated that it would be 5m. Related to this was the question whether or not the path should be segregated. DN noted that Dutch practice was to segregate paths when cycle usage exceeds 50/hour. As this path would be used by commuters he reckoned that this criterion would be met and that we should recommend segregation. Those present did not respond to the Chair's request for opinions on this.
- There is a constriction in the path where it passes the bus stop on the north side of the LC. To widen it here would be difficult but DN noted that there appears to be an alternative route alongside the building here, requiring only the removal of a wall which closes its west end. CCS should be asked about the feasibility of this option.

- DN noted that a route round the south side of the LC, where it would join an alignment previously considered by CCS, avoided the bus stop constriction and some obstructing street furniture. He would ask them if this route had been considered. The mood at the meeting was that a route to the north of the LC would be preferred but that this alternative would be acceptable (although CC had reservations).
- Also discussed were the links to the path: both the north-south links and at the west and east ends. In addition to any at-grade crossing (see above) we would support Sustrans request (contained in Fraser Arnot's response to Ben George which DN read out) that the LC footbridge should be made shared use. At the west end DN noted that Wheelrights had been lobbying for some years now for the footpath between the Metro lane opposite Argyle Street and the foreshore to be widened and made shared use. He would include a request for this as part of our response.

It was recognised that urgent action was needed if an acceptable outcome was to be achieved and that we needed the support of councillors, in particular Rob Speht and John Hague; also Reena Owen, and NG offered to contact her if necessary. According to Ben George's email to DN construction is scheduled to start before the end of the financial year.

KR suggested that if it appears that the Boulevard plans breach the conditions for the EU funds financing it then we might raise this with our MEP, Derek Vaughan.

DN would base his response to CCS via Ben George on the above. **[Action DN]**

(b) Campaigning.

NG proposed that we give priority to a '1:10' campaign whereby people commit to cycling to work at least once every 10 working days. He advised that Reena Owen has already agreed to make this commitment. He suggested that as well as WR members themselves making the commitment we should encourage influential people such as councillors to do likewise. He thought that this could be used to reach out to other cyclists and raise the profile of Wheelrights. There was general acceptance of this proposal. **[Action All]**

**3. Bike Week** (19-25 June. We incorrectly assumed 12-18 June at the meeting)

DN proposed that we organise a Commuter Challenge. Key to this was involvement of the Evening Post. Richard Youle was mentioned as the EP reporter to contact. DN also proposed a bike ride in the City Centre on the lines of rides we had organised in recent Septembers to advertise In-town-without-my-car day. Its purpose would be to promote the benefits and pleasure of cycling. Both these proposals were accepted. Action needed (at the next meeting?). We will need to find out CCS's plans (if any) for Bike Week..

**4. Adult Beginners Classes**

We agreed to hold these on the following Saturdays: 9 April, 14 May, 18 June (ie at start of Bike Week), 16 July and 10 September (ie at the start of the GCF).

VW expressed concern about insurance for these classes as we had had problems in the past with the Council. GW had inquired of the CTC if our insurance with them covered the training. It appears that it does if non CTC members in the class do not exceed 5; but of course they do! MB then advised that we would be covered if the classes are designated "Member Group events" and the instructors are sufficiently trained for the task. He is authorised to approve this. Linked to this is whether we are covered when we take those who have learnt to ride on short rides along the prom. – an important follow up which DN introduced last year. It appears that we are (again provided the leader is approved by the CTC) but that as this is not a normal ride a formal risk assessment may be necessary. (Post meeting note: RW subsequently has advised that the CCS insurance will cover the classes provided the instructors are trained to the "Authority's standard". He has advice on how we can ensure that they are.)

## 5. Wheelrights rides

Due to lack of support for our Saturday morning rides last year we would not repeat them this. Instead we agreed to organise just one or two rides and support suitable rides provided by others. Two successful rides last year where we did just this were the “meet Rosie” ride on 30 August (See last autumn’s Newsletter, No. 13) and the “Fairtrade” ride on 1 November (See the latest Newsletter, No. 14). Rides identified so far are a N. Gower ride on 19 March to celebrate NG’s 60<sup>th</sup> and our traditional N. Gower midsummer ride, planned for Monday, 20 June. CC suggested we join her on a night ride from Cardiff to Swansea on 20 May starting at midnight. Details to go on website. DN would be pleased to receive suggestions for rides. **[Action: DN and others with suggestions.]**

## 6. Gower Cycling Festival

NG announced that the second GCF would take place from 10-17 September this year. It would be organised by a small committee comprising himself, CC, CF, DN, RW a CTC rep. and probably one other.

DN had written a report on last year’s GCF. This is on the website. The link is [www.wheelrights.org.uk/GCF10report.pdf](http://www.wheelrights.org.uk/GCF10report.pdf).

## 7. Stricter liability

DN explained why a law change to incorporate *stricter liability* was needed to protect cyclists and that the CTC, judging that the time was now ripe, are encouraging people to write to their MPs. He had drafted a letter to his MP, Martin Caton, which he read out as he would like to send it on behalf of Wheelrights. (Included as the Appendix.) It was agreed that he should and others are encouraged to do likewise. **[Action DN]**

## 8. Wheelrights handouts

DN had had 500 Wheelrights postcards printed (by the *Print Partnership* at a cost of £25), a number of which he distributed. They are to replace our now obsolescent flyer. With a statement of our aims on the front and an application form on the back their purpose is for handing out to interested people (including attendees at our beginners’ classes), display at stands, etc.

DN had also prepared business cards and compliments slips for the Group’s officers. He can get these reproduced (again by the *Print Partnership*) at respectively 5p and about 7p each. Blank cards/comp. slips for members requiring them can also be provided. Those wanting some should let DN know how many. **[Action: CC, CF, NG & ?]**

## 9. AOB

RE advised all to take care as she had had stuff stolen from her bike panniers while shopping in Swansea.

## 10 Date of next meeting

It was agreed that the next few meetings will be approximately monthly. The next is scheduled for 7.00 pm in the Environment Centre on Thursday, 3 March. (Date changed from 28 Feb. because Env. C. not available then.)

Notes prepared by David Naylor  
(*Wheelrights*' Secretary)

## APPENDIX



# Wheelrights

the Swansea Bay  
cycle campaign group



Martin Caton, MP  
House of Commons  
Westminster SW1A 0AA

19 January 2011

Dear Mr Caton

### Stricter Liability

I am writing, not only on behalf of *Wheelrights* but I think of cyclists and vulnerable road users in general, to ask for your support for measures to get the law changed to incorporate *stricter liability* (also referred to as *strict liability*.)

*Stricter liability* means that in the event of a collision between a powered vehicle and a cyclist or pedestrian the vehicle driver is assumed liable unless proven otherwise; similarly if a cyclist hits a pedestrian the cyclist would be liable. The major problem with the law as it stands is that the onus is on the weaker party to prove their innocence. This has resulted in numerous cases where cyclists and pedestrians have been killed or seriously injured and the motorist who caused the accident has got off with nothing more than points on their license and a fine, or at the most a limited driving ban.

We are one of only four European countries that do not apply *stricter liability*; the other three are Ireland, Cyprus and Malta. The CTC (I am their *Right to Ride* rep. for the Swansea area.) have at the National level had *stricter liability* on their agenda for some time but have held back because they felt it would get nowhere due to opposition from the motoring lobby, but there are two recent developments which make them think that now might be a good time to take action.

The first is that the Commons Transport Select Committee has an enquiry underway on motor insurance costs and that this committee is willing to consider evidence of the effect of *stricter liability* laws. Proponents argue that such a law change would cut compensation claims as it would lead to more careful driving with a consequent reduction in accidents

The second is a letter from the Secretary of State for Transport, Norman Baker, to Richard Burden MP who had received a letter from a constituent of his (Clive Chapman) making the case for *stricter liability*. I have printed a copy of Norman Baker's letter overleaf. It is telling in that in essence he accepts the case, but notes that it is "likely to be very contentious" and that "strong evidence" is required before the law can be changed. I believe we have that evidence.

The website [www.stricterliabilityforum.org.uk](http://www.stricterliabilityforum.org.uk) provides further information. Finally I note that such a law change would arguably be the single most effective measure to improve the safety of cyclists and pedestrians – outweighing infrastructure changes, much as these are also needed.

With regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David Naylor (*Wheelrights* Secretary)

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