

Wheelrights Meeting

Notes of meeting on 10th April 2024

In the Environment Centre, Pier Street, Swansea SA1 1RY (and on Zoom).

Present: Dawn Aplin (DA), Nick Bacon (NB), John Britton (JB), Phil Brophy (PB), Caroline Carter (CaC), Chris Carter (ChC), Rhian Corcoran (RC) Allyson Evans (AE), Nick Guy (NG), Bruce Hanlin (BH) Constanza Hanlin (CH), James Hewitt (JH), David Judd (DJ), David Naylor (DN) Pat Purcell(PP), Leonie Ramondt (LR), Dareyoush Rassi (DR), John Sayce (JS), Patrick Tribe (PT), Chris Walsh (CW) , Ian walker (IW), Ben Williams (BW) ^z, Stephen Williams (SW).

^z via Zoom; the rest were in the room.

Christine Boston, Director of Sustrans *Cymru* gave a presentation entitled:

Sustainable Transport for a better Life

The meeting was chaired by John Sayce who, having welcomed all including Stephen Williams Swansea Council's newly appointed Active Travel Officer, introduced the speaker.

The Presentation:

Christine highlighted the need for an alternative to the car for short journeys. She noted the pleasure learning to ride a bike gives to small children and how in our car-dominated society it is difficult to provide safe routes for them, eg, to ride to school. Despite the Active Travel Act walking and cycling has reduced in the last five years. 80% of journeys in Wales are by car and congestion has increased. She noted how, when she lived in Mumbles, the inadequacy of public transport made her aware of the importance of active travel.

She described how Sustrans began: initially as *Saddle Bag* in 1977 with the creation of the Bristol-Bath shared use path. It subsequently became *Sustrans* and in 1995 they obtained the lottery money to get started on the NCN. This now comprises 1600 miles in Wales and 60% of the Welsh population live within one mile of it.

Sustrans vision is to create a society where the mode of travel creates healthier places and happiness. She noted that more was needed than the provision of infrastructure to facilitate active travel (important though this is) and better public transport. She listed six challenges which need to be addressed: climate change; public health and inactivity; social isolation and loneliness; air pollution; road danger; and inequality. She backed this up with statistics which included the perhaps surprising finding that Wales has some of the worst air quality in the UK.

John Sayce thanked Christine for her presentation and invited discussion of it and other matters following a tea/coffee break. Several of those present raised questions and offered comments leading to an interesting discussion of the challenges ahead with general support for Sustrans.

Discussion

New Sustainable Transport movement

NG proposed that Wheelrights initiate a new movement, using the draft new website, which would include walking, cycling, buses and trains. Noting that we have helped CCS achieve a good network of bike routes he felt a new movement is needed to counter the kick back on 20 mph limits and Walter Rd plans.

A new movement could help change attitudes, encourage behaviour change, education and change the culture about travel. NG has had discussions with other organisations: Uplands Living Streets, Rhian in Env. Centre plus some younger WR members, who are all keen.

CaC suggested including Car Clubs, and that the Sustainability officers in large organisations like Universities, Health, DVLA, Council etc., need to be involved

Following discussion JS put the proposal to the meeting, which generally supported it. NG is arranging an initial planning meeting on 3rd May at 10am at Env Centre. **[Action NG]**

Other issues

SW (the new Active Travel officer) asked attendees for questions to CCS. JS suggested that these could be considered at a future WR meeting, there not being time at this one.

Notes prepared by
David Naylor and Nick Guy