

Minutes of the Pedals meeting: Monday 21 December 2015 (taken by Thomas Madar)

These are the minutes of the Pedals meeting which was held at the Vat and Fiddle, near Nottingham Railway Station on Monday 21 December, starting at 7:35pm.

Attendance

Present were:-

Hugh McClintock,	David Lally,	Iain Lane,	Thomas Madar,
Paul Abel,	Roland Backhouse,	Hilary Backhouse,	David Easley

Apologies for absence from:-

Andrew Martin,	Mara Ozolins,	Arthur Williams
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Cycle routes through the city

There was much discussion on the provision of cycle routes through the city, and of cars being parked on cycle routes. There was a fair discussion on the reduction of lanes in Collin Street.

Foot-cycle bridges and pontoons across the Trent

Paul talked about a possible pontoon bicycle and pedestrian pontoon linking Colwick Park to Holme Pierrepont, which he is exploring. It would be difficult to obtain the right pontoon for the bridge. The supplier would have to visit the site so as to obtain a detailed idea of what was required. If time permits, the pontoon bridge would be installed in July for a brief trial. If there was good usage, this could strengthen the case for the construction of a more permanent pontoon facility.

There was further talk of the pontoon bridge being tried in various local locations so as to assess the demand for a more permanent bridge. There was much opposition from people in Beeston Rylands, on the grounds of crime prevention, to the proposals in 2006 for a foot-cycle bridge between Beeston Rylands and Clifton

Electrically Powered Bicycles

Paul talked about a failed Nottingham City Council bid to supply electrically powered bicycles. Such bicycles are very popular in Germany and the Netherlands, and enable people to cycle who would otherwise have to use a car or rely on public transport. For those able to use an unpowered bicycle, the assistance of an electric motor could extend the range of their cycling by up to three times.

Auditing cycle facilities (assessing their quality)

The quality of cycle paths was discussed as indicated below:-

- In Wales, there is a manual (the Welsh Active Travel Design Guidance Manual) offering guidelines for assessing the quality of routes used by walkers and cyclists. Now, these guidelines have been authorised for use in England.
- Indicators of quality are:-
 - Cohesion: Do paths join up so that the cyclist can ride from A to B without having to dismount or ride on the main road?
 - Safety: This is greatly enhanced by giving the cyclist priority on junctions.
 - Comfort: How good is the surface of the path?
 - Attractiveness: How attractive is the path to ride on? A close proximity to heavy traffic makes the path distinctly unattractive to ride on
 - Directness: The less distance a cyclist has to travel to get from A to B, the better it is.
- Junctions must be easy for cyclists to traverse, with plenty of time given for cyclists to cross the junction before the lights (if any) turn red. In cycle friendly countries such as Denmark, a

series of traffic lights may be timed so as to be always green when a cyclist transits the series at a set speed (known as a green wave). There was talk of a push for traffic lights which default to green on routes frequented by cyclists.

It was discussed that in some areas, there is an endeavour to remove traffic signals, and from the Netherlands, there arose the concept of shared space, where motor traffic, cyclists and pedestrians have equal priority on a road without pavements or markings.

It was remarked that the UK varies from the vast majority of countries in forcing cyclists and pedestrians to give way to motorised traffic when using paths set aside for their use. This seriously reduces the quality of these facilities in that cyclists and pedestrians have to stop each time their path is intersected by a minor road for the purpose of watching for higher priority traffic using this minor road. It was mooted that cycle and pedestrian paths in the UK benefit the motorist far more than they would the cyclist.

This practice of giving priority to motorised traffic dates from the late 1930s. Motorists were regarded as being respectable road users while cyclists and young children were regarded as prone to causing accidents.

Susan raised the issue of schemes designers placing street furniture in the middle of the cycle paths which they design. Many of those who work for Sustrans (if not their scheme designers) are not cyclists, she said.

There were comments raised about the high speed limit (40mph) on the Nottingham Ring Road and of the poor air quality over Trent Bridge. The only way to raise air quality would be to reduce motor traffic and to plant more trees.

It was remarked that by our AGM in March, we should have a list of policies for decent cycle provision by which new and existing cycle routes may be assessed.

A case study of proposed cycle facilities on Woodside Road

A discussion ensued over the council's proposal to remove one lane in each direction from Woodside Rd for the installation of cycle lanes alongside car parking bays, as part of the Western Corridor proposals, the subject of a recent City Council consultation. The following concerns were raised:-

- The possible proximity of (heavy) motor traffic to cyclists riding in the cycle lanes, making some cyclists feel less safe than on segregated path.
- The space required for local residents to park their cars. If there was good off-road car parking, there would be enough room for a good cycle path away from the carriageway, some suggested.

An idea (from the Netherlands) would be to make the road narrow, so that traffic would be forced to slow down (from 40 to less than 30 mph).

Meeting Closure

The meeting closed at 9pm, and was followed by festive refreshments.