

Record of Monthly Meeting of Lewisham Cyclists (LC) at Lewisham Civic Centre on Wednesday 7th February 2024 6.30pm

Present: Alex Raha (LC Coordinator), Brian Turpin, Matt Begg, Judith Barrett, Jorge Martinez Lopez, Mario Toraldo, Alistair Morton.

Present online: Tim Collingridge (Secretary), Jane Davis (Community Engagement & Rides Coordinator), Mark Chapman, Malcolm Wills.

Apologies: Cllr Mark Ingleby.

The following items were discussed at the meeting:

- Topical Items

- Lewisham Council 'Purdah'. Because of the Lewisham Mayoral Election (7/3/24) and London Mayoral Election (2/5/24) there is a 'double' purdah situation in Lewisham this year - for the six weeks before the elections the decisions that Councillors & Officers can make are restricted. The periods are approximately 25/1/24 to 7/3/24 and 20/3/24 to 2/5/24.
- Judith's railway bridges motion to LCC AGM which was passed.
 - Wording of motion:
Many potential routes for cycling in London are made inaccessible by barriers. These barriers include narrow gates, steep access ranks, rough paths and closely placed railings. These barriers impact particularly badly on people cycling local trips, on people less able to carry or push their bike, on wheelchair users and on parents or carers pushing buggies or cycling with children.
A particular issue of concern are crossings of railways, by bridge or underpass, which are often inaccessible, and where there may be opportunity to work with Network Rail and local councils to seek improvements.
We propose that LCC works alongside allies to support accessible cycling across London and communicates with borough groups to identify significant railway-related problems such as bridges and underpasses.
 - Simon Munk has spoken to Will Norman about the motion to make him aware. If LC member(s) are prepared to lead on compiling the information Simon will put a reference to it in a Friday Post and will raise it at a Local Groups Forum.
 - Initial objective is the preparation of a map of bridges across London focusing on bridges that are 'inaccessible' to cyclists. In future this could be extended to all bridges that are problematic for cyclists i.e. general access issues or very hazardous.
 - In Lewisham the key railway pedestrian overbridges concerned are at Sydenham Park, Bellingham and Grove Park.
 - Alex and Jorge also volunteered to help Judith with this.
- Proposed Catford to Forest Hill cycle route via Elm Lane (Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) Ward funded).
 - According to the project plan the draft Feasibility Report is expected from Sustrans sometime this week.

- Friends of Elm Lane (FoEL) AGM is provisionally scheduled for 4/3 630pm. Judith is hoping to present the Feasibility Report at that meeting and Cllr Louise Krupski may attend.
 - The formal meeting where Sustrans present the report to Councillors, Council Officers, LC and FoEL committee members would have to take place between 7/3 and 20/3 due to purdah, or otherwise be deferred till after 2/5/24.
 - Judith is going to communicate with Sustrans to find out how they are getting on with the report and discuss potential timings for the formal meeting.
- Community Engagement & Rides
 - Upcoming one-off events:
 - LCC Women's Freedom Ride 3rd March 2024 - We are planning a Feeder ride. **Volunteers to marshal welcomed.** Ride is not solely for women.
 - Cycleway 4 Celebration Ride 10th March 2024 - in collaboration with Southwark Cyclists and Greenwich Cyclists. Subject to full opening of the route through Surrey Quays. Ride is provisionally Greenwich Cutty Sark to Southwark Park and return. Break in ride for picnic in Southwark Park. **Volunteers to marshal needed.** Initial planning meeting happening this week.
- Topical Items
 - Discussion on group communications strategy:
 - Group public communications - Twitter (X), Facebook, Instagram, 'Civi' mailouts, LC website posts.
 - Are we still comfortable using X and is it in line with the group ethos?
 - On X LC apparently has over 2,700 followers. Although we may be uncomfortable with the prevailing attitudes on X the meeting thought there was still value in making outgoing communications via X. Councillors are still significant users of X. Keep under review over the coming months.
 - LC has 3,300 followers on Facebook and a very active group. No plans to change our use of Facebook.
 - Interesting consideration is what the age and diversity cross-section is of the various platforms? To communicate more effectively with younger generations maybe we need to communicate more via Instagram or even TikTok?
 - Civi emails, which are LC specific mailouts using the LCC mailing platform, are mainly used for significant one-off local events e.g. DCS consultation, C4 celebration ride. It seems that new LCC members in Lewisham are not auto-subscribed to these, we would like LCC to auto-subscribe all new members - they can always unsubscribe later.
 - Campaigning communications and volunteering opportunities - Is 'Lewisham Cyclists' Slack working for us or should we move to WhatsApp (WA) or Google Groups?

- Discussions highlighted that the group still finds Slack useful as it is easier to follow a thread of discussion than in WA. However this has been limited somewhat by the fact the free version of Slack now only allows 90 days of history. Decided to continue with Slack for now.
 - Agreed to reactivate a WA group for members who wish to help out with group activities, to make ‘announcements’ and requests for involvement covering Community Events and Campaigning Activities. **Tim to reactivate WA group.** Not for policy discussions - keep using Slack for that.
- Rides communication to members - currently using the LCC website events for bookings, Facebook events & LC website calendar for information. Drop Eventbrite?
 - LCC website is pretty clunky, but LCC do want rides to be on their website for promotional reasons and to qualify for LCC insurance cover.
 - Start charging nominal fee for rides - is that possible via LCC website? It is possible but monies would go to the LCC account and we would have to retrieve monies from there. General view of the meeting is that we don’t want to charge for rides or have an annual ‘subscription’. Preference is to set up a donations link on our website and on events if feasible. **LC to investigate what options are available and report back at next meeting.**
- Ride Leaders - communication seems to be working well through WhatsApp group. No plans to change this.
- Discussion on LC Campaigning Priorities and the LCC ‘Pathways’ approach.
 - LCC Pathways approach: <https://lcc.org.uk/news/lccs-pathways-approach-explained/>
 - Alex explained the LCC Pathways approach. He considers we are at Stage 3 ‘Critical Friends’ much of the time, but also sometimes Stage 2 ‘Any Win at All’ in some campaigning areas.
 - See this post for an overview of our current campaigning approach: <https://lewishamcyclists.org.uk/our-2023-campaign-objectives/>
 - Lewisham has been awarded a significant amount £774K of Cycle Network Development (CND) funding by TfL this coming financial year, a large chunk of which will probably go on DCS, Waterlink Way bridge and Southend Lane crossing. See here for the detailed funding award: <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/lewishamlipallocationletter.pdf>
Now that these projects are moving forward and have funding we need to focus our campaigning efforts on what comes next - remaining elements of Cycleway 18, Brookmill Road segregated cycle lanes, Lewisham Town Centre Levelling Up works etc.
 - LCC Campaigning Resources lots of useful stuff in here: <https://lcc.org.uk/campaigning-resources/>
 - Mark highlighted that TfL have a new approach to CND funding. First step is ‘seed’ funding to do the high-level design for a scheme. If TfL like the scheme they will then provide additional funding to take it

forward to detailed design and construction. Without a breakdown of the TfL funding award it is hard to tell what the CND funding covers...

- Attendees News & Views.
 - Mario raised the 150th Anniversary event at Kinder Primary School in New Cross which is happening on 8/6. Could LC have some form of presence e.g. Family Cycling Library or Dr Bike?
 - Mario also raised Cold Blow Lane in Deptford - their campaign for closure to through traffic. We understand Lewisham Council are planning to filter it with a Temporary Traffic Order - LC and Mario to follow up with Officers whether there has been any progress on this order.
- Meeting closed at 815pm.

The next Monthly Meeting will be on Wednesday 6th March 2024 at 6.30 pm at Lewisham Civic Centre in Catford.

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