

Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum

Business Plan

1. Kent County Council Relationship

We will aim to create a strong, open honest relationship with Kent County Council with the aim of supporting and influencing decisions that would affect cycling in the Maidstone Area. Also use this relationship as an opportunity to compare best practices with other towns and cities in the County. Mark Whiting and his deputy Michael Payne are the KCC Cabinet Member and Deputy for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste.

2. Work with Maidstone Borough Council (MBC)

Maidstone Borough Council, is the local council for Maidstone and the planning authority. We should work with the Council to ensure that all planning applications ensure that facilities are developed for cycling and that the Maidstone Cycle and Walking Strategy is implemented.

3. Work with Highways England

The Highways Agency is the road authority for the Trunk roads in Maidstone Borough and is responsible for the following: A229, A249, and A20. The Forum will work and lobby the agency to improve facilities for cycling along these major transport corridors.

4. Produce a Mission Statement

The Forum needs a clear Mission Statement. Our charity objectives as part of our constitution and charitable registration are:

“The Charity’s Objects (The Objects) are to promote cycling for the public benefit in and around the borough of Maidstone as a means of furthering the following charitable purposes:

- (1) The promotion of public health;
- (2) The promotion of the conservation and protection of the environment;
- (3) The promotion of public safety, particularly on the highways;
- (4) The promotion of healthy recreation in the interests of social welfare, and community participation in healthy recreation;
- (5) The advancement of education; and
- (6) To support the relief of the needs of people with mental and physical disabilities.”

Our new agreed Mission Statement is

“To be the representative voice of the Maidstone Cycling Community”

5. Support Strategies which exist such as the Maidstone Cycle and Walking Strategy

Establish current strategies and work with local authorities to ensure they are embedded in their culture and planning activities. Make sure that the Strategies are implemented and work in partnership with the lead organisations to achieve full implementation in the interests of promoting cycling in Maidstone.

6. Aim to get Maidstone Cycle and Walking Strategy endorsed by Kent County Council (KCC)

The Maidstone Cycle and Walking Strategy has been adopted by the Maidstone Borough Council. We will do all we can to lobby and influence Kent County Council to get them to actively adopt the Maidstone Cycle and Walking Strategy. As this Strategy is the basis for getting KCC to enhance and promote and work with us to improve the cycling infrastructure round the borough.

7. Consider opportunities to incorporate the cycle strategies into new developments as proposed

Pro-Actively work with MBC to review all major proposals for new developments to see how cycling facilities and infrastructure can be in built in.

8. Understand the needs of the Cycling Community in Maidstone

- a. Survey views of people and groups who cycle in Maidstone
Contact all local cycling clubs and organisations associated with cycling, also seek support of local cycling shops (including Cycles UK, Senacre Cycles, Woods Cycles, Halfords, and Evans) to carry out a survey of cycling in Maidstone.
- b. Survey of people using cycle stands at Maidstone West, Maidstone East and offices.
To canvass existing commuting cyclists to gain an understanding of what makes the cycle commute difficult and what works well. Also to get a view of journey origin to establish whether some areas around Maidstone are more attractive to cyclists than others.
- c. Do an online survey
To help define our target audience, understand their needs and issues, and recruit supporters to the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum.

9. Lobby to get Road Closures and 20mph residential zones to make the safer for cycling and pedestrians
The Forum believes that limited road closures and contraflows would make residential areas and the Town Centre safer for cycling, as well as for pedestrians and less mobile people. Also 20mph zones are demonstrated to improve road safety. The Forum will lobby both MBC and KCC to achieve this.

10. Survey 'Cycle to Work' and 'Cycle to School' schemes

The forum needs to establish what surveys have been done and to prepare their own survey to fill any gaps. Sarah Deakin of Medway Rail Valley Partnership has done work on this and with Matt will ask Sustrans for any relevant data.

11. Links to other forums in Kent

The Forum will forge links with other cycle forums in the County, and work towards a consolidated approach to cycling issues across Kent.

12. The Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum will affiliate to Cycling UK

The Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum will affiliate to Cycling UK on a yearly basis. The benefits of membership include being part of a national membership organisation and also being covered for insurance when organising events etc.

13. Arrange Speakers to future meetings of the forum

To make the Forum membership meetings more beneficial to the membership, speakers will be invited to address the Forum on specific topics. Speakers to include those who have successfully campaigned for better cycling provision as well as influential people within local government who can talk about the problems councils face when trying to include cycling into their transport strategies

14. UK Bike Week –in June yearly

- a. Have a lecture on a cycling topic
- b. Halfords
- c. Cycling UK

UK Bike week is all about encouraging people to give cycling a go, so we should be targeting non-cyclists and those just starting out. We will consider organising an event – this year events (2017) included quizzes, bike polo, cycle speed dating, guided and themed rides. 9th to 17th June 2018. Cycling UK lead organisation, sponsored by Halfords.

15. CycleFest 2018

The Forum will continue to organise and hold yearly CycleFest events. CycleFest is a yearly celebration of all things cycling, involving local cycle groups, businesses and authorities. It is a fun day aimed at everyone from the keen cyclist to those just interested in getting started. We aim to make the day fun and informative.

16. Review of Major one-way systems and road systems in town and the gyratory

Establish good and bad routes and suggest ways to improve. Possibly produce an online map showing the best routes through town for cyclists. Review the Sustrans Audit and promote positive proposals.

17. Encourage cycling in parks

Parks offer a safe area for people to cycle and to learn how to cycle. A number of parks are located on potential cycle routes and would be suitable to be included. Work with MBC and KCC (in respect of Country Parks) to get relevant bye laws amended to permit cycling in parks. Look into possibly organise some guided rides incorporating one or more of the towns' parks.

18. Campaign on Pollution

A major environmental issue which affects cyclists and other road users is the issue of traffic congestion and pollution, which is especially bad along the main roads into Maidstone and around the two town centre gyratory systems. The Forum will campaign with other environmental groups to get improve air quality in Maidstone. As part of this campaign we will work with local Bus and Rail companies to improve the ability to carry Bikes on Trains and Buses. We aim to highlight the existing opportunities for taking your bike on public transport, as well as understanding what the barriers are and working with the transport companies to overcome them.

19. Direct Action

The Forum will reserve the right to consider the use of Direct Action in the future. Lobbying with mass cyclists etc. and demonstrations.

20. Newsletter quarterly or half yearly

The Forum will produce a newsletter to members as a membership communication tool on a quarterly or half year basis. We will seek sponsorship to help pay for publication costs.

21. Membership

Membership will be available to anyone who signs up to the objects of the charity. A membership fee will be levied by the Trustees. For 2018 this has been set at £10, and will be reviewed annually. Membership fees are set for a calendar year from the 1st January to the 31st December.

Payment of the membership fee entitles the member to the following:

- Attend all general and special meetings of the Forum.
- Vote on all issues at a meeting or where a vote of all members is required.
- Be able to benefit from any membership discounts achieved by the forum trustees.
- Receive copies of members newsletters
- Forum meetings will be held 3 time a year in January, May and September

22. Use of Social Media to promote the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum

Social Media will be utilised by the forum including our website and also look at a page on Facebook and setting up a Twitter feed.