



# Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum Autumn 2020



The Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum (Registered Charity Number 1172691) has two objectives:

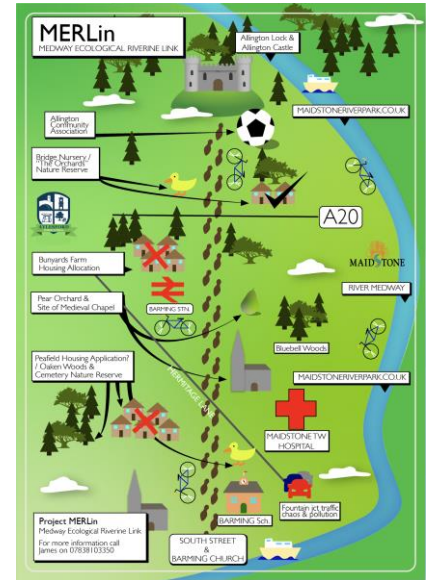
1. Encourage infrastructure for cycling specifically but active travel in general
2. Encourage more people to use their bikes for transport

The team is volunteer led by Clr Paul Harper, Tay Arnold, James Willis, Russell Chidwick, Matt Fraser, Angelo Martinez and Duncan Edwards

## Active Travel Planning

Project MERLin - Medway Ecological Riverline Link is an initiative to provide a green corridor between the River Medway at Allington and the River Medway at Barming. Sitting on the Maidstone / Tonbridge and Malling border this initiative seeks to support connectivity for active travellers and nature. This is a coherent plan which can protect key parts of the landscape as multiple development sites are proposed in the area.

An example of [MERLin](#) in action: Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum have responded to and supported the community in calling for active travel links on the Pea Field planning application in Barming [20/501773/FULL](#)



## Planning Applications

A planning application on the other side of Maidstone at Otham for over 400 houses is a big focus for MCCF at the moment. This has gone to a public enquiry and MCCF have taken rule 6 status in order to oppose the development due to the impact of traffic congestion and road danger on walking and cycling and to highlight the lack of accessible and convenient active travel routes across the proposed site.

## More People Cycling

MCCF publicised and supported the Sustrans Bike to School Week by offering to suggest routes and encouraging schools to take up the resources and plans provided. A number of schools took up the challenge, particularly Maidstone Grammar School For Girls. They published an excellent piece on their website [MGS Bike to School Week](#) This is an annual event so we plan to make it bigger each year.



# Road Schemes



MCCF wants to contribute to road schemes and improvements even where they are not primarily directed at cycling infrastructure. A recent example has been the changes made to Charing Hill which are still ongoing. MCCF was contacted by multiple people raising concerns that the narrowing and solid white line in the middle of the road which has the effect of holding motorists behind cyclists travelling up the hill. This is intimidating for cyclists and frustrating for motorists. It also raises safety concerns and has a tendency to put people off cycling. The alternative proposed from MCCF is that the extra space on the road is used for a cycle lane as this is an important link to Canterbury. The forum supports consultation on scheme so that we can “get them done right”. Please let the forum know about any schemes that we need to look at.

Covid-19 emergency funding was provided by the government to implement road schemes across the country. Two were implemented in Maidstone, one in King Street and the other in Earl Street.

The government asked councils to deliver these schemes quickly and to consult/evaluate after the implementation. This is now being done. MCCF have supported the need for disabled access and taxi services to be maintained which we believe can be appropriately accommodated. For future schemes MCCF are calling for implementation to be in accordance with [National Cycle Infrastructure Design](#) which would have resolved many of the identified issues.



## River Medway Towpath - Closure



The [River Medway Towpath](#) which runs between Aylesford and Barming (total length:10.5km) has been closed near Aylesford since 15th June due to landslip. MCCF have raised this with KCC officers and members and to date there is no positive start date for the work required. The current 'closure' expires on the 12th December and KCC are looking for another 6 month extension. Their update on the 30th October is that site investigations are nearly complete and that the path will remain closed until Spring 2021 at the earliest.

## Consultations

MCCF continues to respond to public consultations. They have responded to the:

- Kent County Council Strategic 5 year Plan
- 20 mph schemes in Maidstone
- Keep Maidstone Moving
- A229 Blue Bell Hill Junction Improvement Scheme - Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Review.
- The Department of Transport changes to the Highway Code improving safety for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders
- The Roads policing review
- Kent Rail Strategy 2021

All residents are entitled to participate in public consultations and have their say. Simply go to <https://kccconsultations.inconsult.uk/consult.ti/system/home> and register.

***Everybody with an interest in improving cycling in Maidstone is welcome to join the forum, contact us on the links above or search for Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum.***