

Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum

Registered Charity Number 1172691

www.maidstonecycling.uk



Newsletter – April 2019

Who are we?

We are Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum, a charity representing the cycling community in Maidstone. Our aim is to improve the cycling conditions in Maidstone and encourage people to take up cycling as part of a healthy lifestyle and also as a practical and environmentally friendly alternative to cars for short journeys to shops, schools, etc.

Travel Choices – Cycling – A Healthy Option - Summit

A seminar to explore and share how well-designed roads and well-designed cycling infrastructure, can enable 'active travel,' and achieve a shift to more cycling and walking providing the community with a healthy travel choice for the benefit of all.

Tuesday 16th April – 1.30 p.m. to

5.00 p.m.

**Maidstone Community Support Centre,
39-48 Marsham Street,
Maidstone ME14 1HH**

Maidstone Council is committed under Local Plan Policy SP23, to delivering modal shift “through managing demand on the transport network through enhanced public transport and the continued Park and Ride services and walking and cycling improvements”.

MCCF support their aims to improve the infrastructure for walking and cycling and our Summit will explore the benefits and how these can be progressed.

Three high profile speakers, Rachel Aldred from the University of Westminster, Neil Guthrie from Atkins Global and Phil Jones, road engineering consultant

and chairman of PJA, will speak about the benefits of active travel and about their experience of how well-designed cycling infrastructure can achieve a shift to more cycling and walking.

We will then outline the SUSTRANS' assessment of the current provision for walking and cycling in the town centre and along the main corridors identified by Maidstone Walking and Cycling Strategy 2011-2031. This will open the debate on next steps.

MCCF have invited a full range of delegates including local MPs, elected members of MBC and KCC and their service directors/officers, representatives from TfL, SUSTRANS, British Cycling, Cycling UK, Kent Cycling Forums and cyclists.

The MCCF Summit which is part of our ‘Let’s get Maidstone Cycling Project’ will complement the Kent Cycle and Active Travel Campaign Group Summit ‘Creating Networks! Seminar’ to be held later in April.

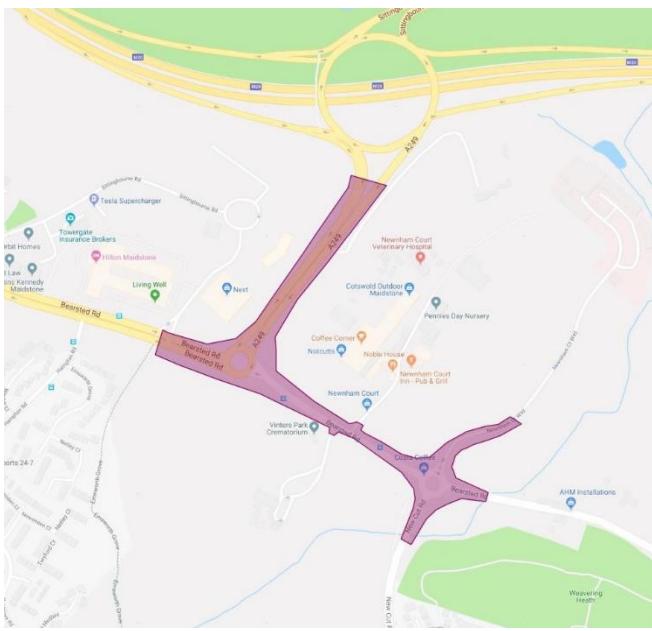
Consultations

A249 – Bearsted Road Improvement Scheme

We have commented on this scheme. Although the scheme does include provision for cycling, this does not fully conform to the Maidstone Borough Council Walking and Cycling Strategy 2011 - 2013. The main objectives of that strategy are spelt out in section 5.2. One is to create new links and another is to create a safer environment for walking and cycling.

The scheme proposes the creation of a new shared footway / cycleway on the north side of Bearsted Road, but it is not clear from the proposal how one would safely access that cycleway from the existing cycleway RR19 on Hampton Road which ends on the south side of Bearsted Road. As a minimum, a safe crossing should be provided with a fully compliant

cycleway to that crossing from RR19. Signage improvements will also be required.



The area affected by the scheme

Sustrans Design Guidance of April 2014 - Cycle Friendly Design. Table H8 of that document states a minimum width requirement of 3m for an urban unsegregated route. By following this guidance, users, both walking and cycling, would be presented with a safe environment in compliance with the MBC Strategy.

MCCF favours segregation of walking and cycling through clear markings, similar to the Ashford Road (Huntsman Lane to New Cut Road) Cycle Way, to avoid unnecessary confusion of users of the route.

KCC have replied stating that the scheme is currently going through its detailed design stage and all our comments have been passed to the design team for their consideration. They have further replied that the width of the new proposed footway cycleway on the northside of the Bearsted Road will be 3 metres wide.

There will also be an additional 0.5 metre strip of verge between the pavement and the new retaining wall.

As to the section on the southside of Bearsted Road the width will be maximised where possible and over most of the length 3 metres will be achievable. However, towards the eastern end, by the existing traffic signal crossing, the route is constricted by the Crematorium wall and as such will narrow down to approx. 1.83 metres.

3 Storey STEM Secondary School – New Cut – Maidstone

Planning application 17/501471/FULL. The cycling provision within the site is reasonably good with a wide path, joint use with walkers, which needs to be 3m wide to be in line with Sustrans Guidance. Good cycle storage facilities are being provided.

However, what is not clear is how the new shared cycle / walk way connects with existing cycle routes. There needs to be a clear plan to improve the connection between the entrance / exit point and the existing cycle routes.

Our concerns have been raised with MBC councillors and the chair of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board.

We have received acknowledgement of our concerns and a site meeting with MBC and its Chair of Planning is awaited.

New 2 Storey Primary School and Special Educational Needs School

MCCF have responded to the planning application (18/506656/FULL) for the school development on Popesfield, Bearsted Road, Weavering. The application does not incorporate provision of a cycleway to enable cycling and walking to be a safe travel choice.

In summary it is our view that access from Bearsted Road cannot support provision of a 3m shared footpath/ cycleway and therefore access should be via KIMS where some provision is already in place.

MCCF received a reply from the Leader of Kent County Council stating “I share your view that the proposals in their current form do not maximise the opportunities available. As part of the ongoing discussions with the applicants’ consultants, we have highlighted how a route of access taken via the Kent Medical Campus (KMC) would offer considerable advantages to all road users. These include the scope to achieve direct connectivity to the dedicated pedestrian/cycle provision that already exists within KMC and that which will form part of the County Council’s planned road improvements.”

Our concerns were supported by resident objections and an amended application was submitted which has removed access from Bearsted Road and now

states “vehicular and pedestrian access via Kent Medical Campus, together with associated car parking and drop off area, pedestrian access”.



The KIMS site

Mote Park towards Town Centre Consultation

Kent County Council consulted on proposals to link up and improve the existing cycle route from the Mote Park entrance at Mote Avenue to the junction of the A249 and King Street. The closing date was 7th October and MCCF submitted a full response.

The final report was approved at the KCC - MBC Joint Transportation Board (Agenda Item 17) on the 17th October.

Work commenced in February and is nearing completion.



Mote Road looking towards Mote Park

We look forward to the consultation on Phases 2 and 3, which do not yet have funding, which will link it to Maidstone East station where an extensive joint

project has begun to improve pedestrian and cycle access.



Dropped Kerb Provision at Greenside

Queens Avenue Traffic Regulation Order Consultation

MCCF responded to the original consultation, however, despite this the Queens Avenue "No Entry" order has been confirmed without an exemption for cyclists.

Kent County Council Consultations A20 Harrietsham Highway Improvements Scheme

The consultation closed on the 18th March and MCCF responded to Kent County Council (KCC) proposals for highway improvements on the A20, Harrietsham to create a more pedestrian friendly environment and improve links between the new housing development sites, the existing housing and village centre. The project is now underway.

SUSTRANS Audit

SUSTRANS were commissioned by Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council to assess the current provision for walking and cycling in the town centre and along two Walking/Cycling corridors – Sutton Road and Hermitage Lane. The scope also included proposals for linking the corridors i.e. High Street - Maidstone West, East and Barracks – Medway Towpath. The report went to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and

Transportation Committee on Tuesday 12th June - Agenda Item 17. It was approved and the Mote Road cycleway is a first step in delivering their recommendations.

Maidstone Borough Council are now commissioning a further assessment adding to the scope of the original.

Maidstone Bridges (Gyratory)

MCCF have made proposals to MBC for improvements to cycling provision on the Gyratory. Details are on the Maidstone Cycling website.

A Road Safety Report on the Maidstone Bridges Gyratory went to the MBC/KCC Joint Transportation Board (JTB) on the 17th October.

The report included the impact of the project on pedestrians and cyclists. KCC have undertaken Post Scheme Monitoring to assess the performance of the new gyratory system in terms of reducing congestion and improving journey time reliability.

The JTB resolved that as the Board already had an item on the Work Programme to review the Bridges Gyratory System and therefore the points raised within the motion would be included in the review that was published for the JTB on 17th April. The conclusions was that The Maidstone Bridges Gyratory improvement scheme continues to be monitored against the original objectives that were set out in the SELEP business case. Since opening there have been very few negative comments and the system continues to be monitored with minor adjustments made to the traffic signal timings where necessary to maximise its' performance. KCC will continue to work with SELEP and the Independent Technical Evaluator to review the available transport data and establish the outcomes and impacts of the scheme following delivery. This will also include a further post scheme monitoring review after 3/5 years.

Disappointingly no reference was made to the challenging crossing of the A229 for pedestrians or the challenges facing cyclists using the Gyratory.

Medway Street Underpass

We are currently trying to persuade Maidstone Borough Council to resolve the flooding and safety issues with the Medway Street underpass which they have acknowledged they have funding for.



The Medway Street underpass

River Medway Towpath

The River Medway Towpath runs between Aylesford and Barming (total length: 10.5km). Unfortunately, some sections of the River Medway Towpath need improvements and MCCF have alerted the local authorities about our concerns with some sections.



The River Medway Towpath

Thank you!

Thank you for your interest. If you are not already, and would like to become, a member of MCCF please see our website. Your active support is really needed and would be very valuable to us.

MCCF look forward to working with you to take advantage of the benefits cycling and walking can make to getting about in and around Maidstone.

Contact us at: info@maidstonecycling.uk

Find out more on our website:
www.maidstonecycling.uk