

Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum

Registered Charity Number 1172691

www.maidstonecycling.uk



Newsletter – January 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.

Maidstone CycleFest, Jubilee Square - Saturday 29th September 2018

Many thanks to those who attended making this such a success. Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council attended and invited responses to their consultations.

Kent Community Rail Partnership and San Fairy Ann Cycling Club both made a great contribution to ensure its success.

Len Potts exhibited his world famous collection of vintage bikes and Kent Police offered free security marking of cycles.



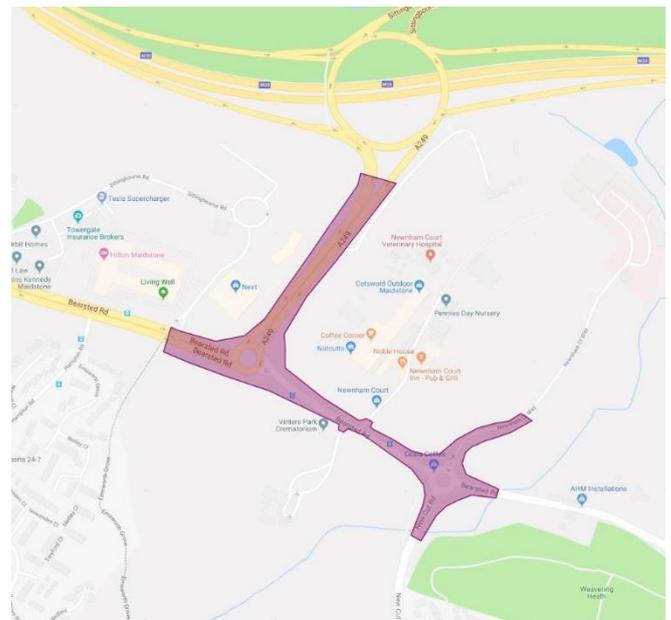
1 - Police security marking bikes at CycleFest 2018

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.



2 - 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.

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, Weaving. 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.



3 - 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.



4 - The current Mote Avenue entrance

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

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.

WSP Park and Ride Alternative Survey

We hope many of you had your say on how you travel to Maidstone town centre as part of the Maidstone Borough Council 5 week consultation.

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 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 are currently undertaking Post Scheme Monitoring to assess the performance of the new gyratory system in terms of reducing congestion and improving journey time reliability. MCCF have not been given the opportunity to be included in the Post Scheme Monitoring.

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.



5 - 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 MCCC have alerted the local authorities about our concerns with some sections.



6 - The River Medway Towpath

Grant Funded Work

The Let's Get Maidstone Cycling Project is intended to promote cycling in Maidstone using events during the year to promote cycling as a means for people to improve the environment of the borough they live in by changing journeys from cars to cycling.

Published Articles

New Roads Should Prioritise People on Bikes and on Foot over Cars

The Health Watchdog's statement as reported in Cyclist Magazine (www.cyclist.co.uk):

<https://www.cyclist.co.uk/news/5814/new-roads-should-prioritise-people-on-bikes-and-on-foot-over-cars-says-uk-health-watchdog>

Made to Move Report to MPs

Chris Boardman's presentation to MPs as reported by British Cycling (www.britishcycling.org.uk):

<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/campaigning/article/20180123-campaigning-news-Made-to-move--Chris-Boardman-presents-walking-and-cycling-report-to-MPs-o>

Thank you!

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

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

Cycle on!

Contact us at:

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Find out more on our website:

www.maidstonecycling.uk

